**Guidance for postgraduate research students, supervisors and examiners on inclusion of a COVID-19 impact statement with thesis submissions**

Aberystwyth University recognises that the measures taken by the University and by governments within and outside the UK, in response COVID-19 pandemic, will have directly or indirectly impacted the work of many of our postgraduate researcher students. Following the lockdown at the end of March 2020, campus facilities began re-opening in the summer, but some researchers will be disrupted until all campus research facilities are open, and operational at full capacity, fieldwork can resume safely and/or personal circumstances become more manageable.

Many students have been, or will be, able to accommodate the disruption to their research plans by changing the scope, phasing or design of their project. Others will have received funding and/or deadline extensions where they could not adjust projects and required extra time to complete them.

We encourage PGRs who wish to make their Examiners aware of the impact COVID-19 has had on their research plans and thesis to prepare an Impact Statement for consideration during the examination process.

The University asks examiners to take the Impact Statement into account when assessing the thesis, and at the viva examination. Standards for awards, as set out in the University’s regulations and awards criteria, and the QAA’s expectations of research degree outcomes, must still be maintained. These can be found at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/cy/academic-registry/handbook/regulations/degree-criteria/>

The QAA has issued guidance on how standards for Doctoral awards can still be achieved despite adjustments due to covid, for instance where the volume of research, length of thesis or size of datasets is less than planned. As long as national standards are still achieved, the thesis can pass and will be no less valid than a degree awarded at any other time. The same principles apply to MPhil awards. Students and supervisors are advised to consult this guidance while completing the form:

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/advice-on-doctoral-standards-for-research-students-and-supervisors.pdf>

In judging the scope and content of the thesis, and in requesting corrections before the award is finalised, examiners should bear in mind what can be reasonably expected within the overall time limit for the degree and the extent of disruption caused by COVID-19.

Candidates are encouraged to discuss the statement with their supervisory team before submitting the statement within the thesis presented for examination.

The inclusion of a COVID-19 impact statement is optional. Should a candidate and their supervisors decide that they wish to include such a statement, the statement should appear after the Abstract and before the main text of the thesis.

**ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY: COVID-19 IMPACT FORM**

This form is not compulsory but is intended to be a helpful note to examiners. You may submit this form in your thesis. The purpose of the form is to detail how your thesis has been impacted by the Covid-19 disruption.

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| **STUDENT’S DETAILS** | |
| Name: | Registration Number: |
| Department: | Faculty: |
| **Please provide details on how COVID-19 disruption impacted the research (for example, limited ability to collect/analyse data, alteration to methodology or to the scope of the project - 500 words maximum)** | |
|  | |
| **What would planned work that could not be conducted have added to the thesis (e.g. through method development, development of analytical skills or advancement of hypotheses - 500 words maximum)** | |
|  | |
| **Please summarise decisions / actions taken to mitigate for any work or data collection/analyses that were prevented by COVID-19 (500 words maximum).** | |
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| **Student signature and date:** | |
|  | |
| **Supervisor signature and date; please add any additional relevant comments:** | |
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