



NORTH WEST DOCTORAL TRAINING CENTRE

Guide to Co-Supervision (Updated June 2015)

This is a guide for NWDTC students who are co-supervised across more than one NWDTC institution. Students will follow the ordinances and regulations from the institution where they are registered. Co-supervisors from another institutions will have to familiarise themselves with such regulations and will therefore follow those regulations.

It is also expected that co-supervisors will familiarise themselves with the host institution's electronic progression system. It is expected that the first and second supervisors should work together for the benefit of the student.

Supervision ordinances and regulations:

Lancaster:

http://www.lancs.ac.uk/sbs/registry/docs/PG/guidance_notes_for_supervisors_oct_2010.pdf

Liverpool:

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/student-administration/research/pgr-code-of-practice/>

Manchester:

http://www.researchsupport.eps.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate_home/policy/

Student Responsibilities

Students are required to take responsibility for their own personal and professional development throughout their degree. Your main supervisor is your primary point of contact for consultation on all matters, academic, professional and personal; but you should also be aware of the opportunity to consult other members of your supervisory team and your adviser, as indicated in the responsibilities listed above.

Doctoral students will:

- (a) Maintain regular contact with supervisors, according to the pattern of meetings agreed between the supervisor and the student. The frequency of meetings will be determined by the nature of the research that is undertaken and the stage of development of the student's research, but a normal expectation would be for such meetings to take place every fortnight;
- (b) Prepare adequately for meetings with supervisors;

- (c) Keep to timetables and deadlines for the planning and submission of work, and generally maintain satisfactory progress with the programme of research. Develop, in consultation with the supervisors, an agreed schedule for progressing and submitting the thesis in a timely manner;
- (d) Make supervisors aware of any specific needs and of any circumstances likely to affect their work, and take the initiative in raising issues or difficulties as soon as they arise, particularly in relation to targets relating to progress and achievements;
- (e) Attend and participate fully in any training and development opportunities, research-related and other, that have been identified when agreeing their development needs with their supervisors;
- (f) Be familiar with relevant University regulations and policies;
- (g) Ensure that any reports and the final thesis presented to the supervisor is written in accordance with requirements relating to the correct use of English language and presentation of tables, references, figures etc.;
- (h) Decide when the final thesis should be submitted, taking into account the opinion of the supervisors. A supervisor's agreement to submission does not indicate that the examiners will find the thesis acceptable for the award of the research degree;
- (i) Accept ultimate responsibility for his/her own research activity;
- (j) Prepare periodic progress reports on the research project as may be required by external agencies;
- (k) Inform the supervisor of any communications from the sponsoring or other external body in relation to the research project;
- (l) Maintain adequate records of the progress of the work and of the development of the project and their own skills;
- (m) Gain approval, in advance, from their supervisors if they wish to issue questionnaires. If a student wishes to use the University's address for this purpose, the text of any communication must be approved by the supervisors before it is sent;
- (n) Make every effort to provide feedback on the supervisory experience, through completion of the annual student satisfaction survey for postgraduate research students;
- (o) Inform the supervisor of any paid or unpaid work they are carrying out or wish to carry out in addition to their full time study;
- (p) Inform their supervisor of any intention to take holiday and discuss the timing of the intended holiday in relation to academic priorities;
- (q) Meet with the supervisory team as a whole to discuss progress at least twice per year.

Responsibilities of the Main/First Supervisor (at the student's home institution)

- a) Giving guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, the planning of the research degree programme, literature and sources, attendance at taught courses where appropriate and about requisite techniques (including arranging for instruction where necessary);
- b) Maintain contact with the student through regular meetings. The frequency of meetings will be determined by the nature of the research that is undertaken and the stage of development of the student's research but a normal expectation would be for such meetings to take place every fortnight for full-time students. All pathways should, however, expect students to meet with their supervisors at least on a monthly basis. In all cases the schedule of supervisory meetings will be agreed with the student in advance. The meeting schedule for part time students should be agreed at the beginning of the programme, but students registered on a part time basis would normally be expected to meet with their supervisor once a month. Where students are away on fieldwork, some contact and communication may take the format of email, phone and video conferencing;
- c) Being accessible to the student at other appropriate times for advice and responding to difficulties raised by the student by whatever means is most suitable given the student's location and mode of study;
- d) Giving detailed advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the thesis may be submitted within the required time;
- e) Requesting written work or reports as appropriate and returning written material with constructive feedback and in reasonable time. Students should give the supervisor due warning and adequate time for reading any drafts;
- f) Ensuring the student has opportunities to present their work to staff and graduate members, partly as preparation for the oral examination of the student at the end of the degree and partly to introduce the student to the culture of the dissemination of research;
- g) Ensuring that the student is made aware when progress is not satisfactory and facilitating improvement with advice and guidance;
- h) Ensuring that the student is aware of the health and safety regulations and academic rules (including academic malpractice, such as plagiarism) regulations and codes of practice of the University and of the need to exercise probity and conduct his or her research according to ethical principles, and of the implications of research misconduct;
- i) Helping the student identify his or her specific training needs, both in relation to research skills and in relation to the development of other transferable skills; inform the student of the means to develop these skills; and monitor the student's progress in these areas;
- j) Helping the student interact with other researchers by making him or her aware of other research work in the school and University and by encouraging attendance at conferences and, where appropriate, advising on the submission of conference papers and articles to refereed journals;

- k) Ensuring that, the student produces a research report normally every six months, to which the supervisor should add comments on progress. The supervisor's comments on progress should be signed by the student to confirm that they have been seen, before the report is submitted by the supervisor to the appropriate supervisory body according to School/Faculty procedures;
- l) Keeping other members of the supervisory team apprised of the student's progress;
- m) Recommending examiners for the student's thesis after discussion with the student to ensure that the proposed examiners have not had, or continue to have, a significant input into the project, a significant personal, financial or professional relationship with the student, or that there is no other good reason to doubt the suitability of the recommendation;
- n) Ensuring the student is aware of institutional-level sources of advice, including financial, academic and careers guidance, health and safety legislation and equal opportunities policy;
- o) Providing effective pastoral support and refer students to appropriate other areas of support including student advisers and others within the student's academic community;
- p) Helping the student prepare for the oral examination of the thesis (or equivalent). Normally, this is done by the organisation of a mock viva in years two and three of the degree. Supervisors cannot, however, be involved in the examination of the final thesis other than as silent observers and to answer questions put directly to them;
- q) Ensuring that his/her duties are fulfilled with regard to any formal requirements from external bodies or agencies in relation to the submission of reports, training etc.;
- r) Ensuring that appropriate agreement has been obtained with all parties, including external sponsors, in relation to the communication of research outputs;
- s) Ensuring they have formal arrangements in place to plan and initiate a programme of research and maintain contact with those research students working away from the University such as part-time, or students on fieldwork;
- t) All newly appointed members of staff with responsibilities for supervision are required to attend their University's programme of training for new supervisors. Existing members of staff with supervisory experience are required to attend professional development sessions as required by their University;
- u) The supervisor is responsible for being aware of their University's Research Code of Practice;
- v) Ensure that examiners are nominated in good time so that the examination can go ahead as soon as possible after submission of the thesis; internal examiners can be recruited from any of the three NWDTC institutions and the external examiner must come from outside all three institutions.

Responsibilities of Other Members of the Supervisory Team

Members of a supervisory team are not expected to meet a student with the same frequency as the main supervisor nor are they expected to read all of the student's work. They should, however, be actively involved in the supervision by making themselves fully aware of the research programme that has been agreed between the student and the main supervisor and by reading appropriate pieces of the student's work. Their role, then, is to be available to the student for consultation and advice on academic matters relating to the degree and to offer support and guidance on non academic matters. In circumstances where the main supervisor is not able to continue supervising a student, a member of the supervisory team may be expected to take over this role. In addition, postdoctoral researchers within the supervisory team, working closely with a doctoral student, can fulfil a valuable day-to-day research guidance role.

In some academic groups, the role of supervisory team for each student may be organised through PhD committees, with regular periodic meetings to monitor and advise on your development and progress.

Role of the Co-Supervisor (from another institution)

The co-supervisor will normally be appointed to contribute their specific expertise in assisting the main supervisor throughout the development of your research degree and may act as a supervisor of sections of work in progress in consultation with the main supervisor. The co-supervisor may be required to offer specialist advice or to provide continuity of supervision when the main supervisor is absent from the University in addition to providing you with a second opinion on research matters. Essentially, the co-supervisor should be knowledgeable in the area of research study but does not have to have the specific expertise of the main supervisor.

The balance of responsibility for your day to day supervision should be negotiated between you and your supervisors as the research progresses.

The co-supervisor should familiarise him/herself with his/her student's host institution regulations and electronic progression system. It is the responsibility of the co-supervisor to check the governing regulations with the main supervisor. It is expected that the co-supervisor will travel to the student's host institution however the student may wish to travel to see their co-supervisor if appropriate.

Role of the Industrial (or 'CASE') Supervisor

Some studentships are funded as Co-operative Awards in Sciences of the Environment (CASE studentships) which involve the joint supervision of the student by a member of staff of an academic institution and a scientist from industry, business, commerce or a public sector research institute. Their role is the same as that of a Co-supervisor (see above).