

Changes to the Policy on Supervision for Postgraduate Research Degrees

Synopsis

This paper sets out revisions to the Policy on Supervision for Postgraduate Research Degrees. All changes to the policy were approved by the Graduate Education Group (GEG) on 19th July 2007 or 13th September 2007.

The policy on Supervision for Postgraduate Research Degrees can be found at: <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/code/supervision/>

Effective Date of Introduction

13th September 2007

Contact

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Changes to Policy

1. Change all occurrences of the term 'programme' to 'degree'
2. Change any reference to 'extension' or 'approved extension' to 'submission pending' in line with the forthcoming new examinations policy
3. Section 1 – Introduction

Change from:

"This document relates to all doctoral, MPhil and ChM degrees across the University, and also includes collaborative research degrees."

To:

"For the purposes of this policy, the term 'postgraduate research degrees' refers to all doctoral, Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Master of Surgery (ChM) and Doctor of Medicine (MD) degrees."

4. Section 2.3 – External / Collaborating Supervisor

Change the text to match the statement in the Split site policy regarding the location of the main supervisor.

Change from:

"Where a formal collaborative research degree arrangement has been approved between the University of Manchester and an external institution, supervisors are normally appointed at both institutions and an agreement should be made to determine which supervisor will take the main role in the supervisory process."

To:

"Where a formal collaborative research degree arrangement has been approved between the University of Manchester and an external institution,

supervisors must be appointed at both institutions. The Main Supervisor should be based at the University of Manchester.

5. Section 3.1b – Criteria for the selection of main supervisors

Change from:

“Members of staff appointed as main supervisor should normally be full-time employees of the University.”

To:

“Members of staff appointed as main supervisor should be full-time or part-time employees of the University.”

6. Section 3.1c - Criteria for the selection of main supervisors

Insert new text:

“Non-permanent members of staff should normally be appointed as co-supervisor. Under no circumstances should non-permanent members of staff be appointed as main supervisor if their contract is due to expire within the student’s proposed period of registration”

7. Section 3.1e – Criteria for the selection of main supervisors

Change the text from:

“Supervision should be provided by staff demonstrably active in research and with a research interest closely related to that of the student’s proposed research degree.”

To

“Supervision should be provided by staff who themselves undertake research and have a research interest closely related to that of the student’s proposed research degree.”

8. Section 4 – Supervision Responsibilities

Change the contact details for the Associate Vice President for Graduate Education and the Associate Deans for EPS, MHS and FoH

9. Section 4 – Supervision Responsibilities

Insert new text:

“Supervisors are expected to take into consideration the differing commitments (domestic responsibilities, paid employment etc) of part-time students which will affect time schedules and access to facilities. Every effort should be made to engage part-time students with the full-time cohort, the research group, School and the University either face to face or through information and communication technology.”

10. Section 4.1a –Responsibilities of the Head of School

Add

...“taking into account the student’s mode of study.”

11. Section 4.2b – Responsibilities of the Main Supervisor

Change from:

“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. In all cases the schedule of supervisory meetings will be agreed with the student in advance. Where students are studying on split-site research degrees, some contact and communication may take the format of email, phone and video conferencing.”

To:

“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 disciplines 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 studying on split-site research degrees, some contact and communication may take the format of email, phone and video conferencing.”

12. Section 6 – Changing Supervisor

Change from:

“If a supervisor is no longer in a position to continue with their supervision duties, (e.g. through moving to a new post at another institution) then the Head of School should discuss the options with the student and assess the most beneficial outcome for the student. The Head of School may be able to identify and allocate a new permanent supervisor with the appropriate academic background and supervisory experience. Alternatively, the supervisor who has moved to another institution may be able to continue to supervise at a distance, with support from a co-supervisor at this University, or may suggest the student transfers to the supervisor’s new institution.”

To :

“If a supervisor is no longer in a position to continue with their supervision duties, (e.g. through moving to a new post at another institution) then the Head of School should discuss the options with the student and assess the most beneficial outcome for the student. The Head of School may be able to identify and allocate a new permanent supervisor with the appropriate academic background and supervisory experience.

Alternatively, the supervisor who has moved to another institution may be able to continue to supervise at a distance, with support from a co-supervisor at this University. Using supervisors external to the University in this way is not in general desirable, but in certain circumstances there may be valid reasons why it may be in the best interest of the student and University. These arrangements would normally only apply to students in their final year, or submission pending period. A fee must be paid to the external supervisor, up to a maximum of £1000, and a formal agreement between the University of Manchester and the supervisor must be put in place. Faculties should contact the University’s contracts office for support in formulating a formal consultancy agreement. As a minimum the agreement must include the following and should be signed by the University and the external supervisor:

- An explicit statement that the new institution gives the academic concerned permission to finish their supervisory duties at the University of Manchester
- A statement that the supervisor must comply with the University of Manchester's supervision policy in order to ensure quality control over the standard of ongoing supervision
- The name of the member of staff at the University of Manchester who will act as co-supervisor and formally monitor the supervisory process at this institution as part of the supervisory team
- A statement which confirms that any funding bodies or sponsors have been informed of any change in supervisory circumstances
- The notice period should the supervisor decide for any reason that they can no longer continue to supervise the student

It may also be more appropriate in some circumstances, for the student to transfer to the supervisor's new institution."