

A Brief Guide to the Administrative Side of being a PhD Supervisor

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GENERAL CONTACTS

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ADMISSIONS

PhD projects

We are in the process of re-establishing a (non-exhaustive!) list of possible PhD projects. If you would like a project to be added to this list, please email the PGR inbox (pgr-maths@manchester.ac.uk)

FindaPhD.com

The Department has a (limited) number of advertising space on findaphd.com. We are required to use the spaces within 6 months of purchasing them therefore the remainder of these spaces will expire. If you have a particular project (funded or non-funded) that you would like to advertise then please send the PG admissions team (pgr-maths@manchester.ac.uk) the details. A reminder of what you need to do is given below:

If you wish to advertise a project on FindaPhD.com please make sure that you send the following:

- A project title
- A project description (max of 700 words)
- Who the main supervisor will be (can also name up to 3 other supervisors if necessary)
- The project start date
- Any other associated subject areas i.e. Applied Physics, Material Science
- Whether it is available for Home or International students and if it has funding attached

When the deadline for applications will be (can be anything up to a maximum of 12 months)

Some details about how the spaces work:

- All of the spaces must be used within 6 months of purchasing them otherwise we lose them.
- Once a project is live, the space used is then available for 12 months. During this time we are able to edit aspects of the project except change the name of the principal supervisor.
- When a project has expired i.e. we reach the application deadline date or the position is filled, the space can be used for another PhD project but only by the principal supervisor already named.
- The space can only be used to advertise a specific project for a specific supervisor. We are not allowed to advertise the general availability of one or more studentships within a department or research group.
- If at any point we receive more than 10 requests to advertise, priority will be given to externally funded projects, followed by the usual secondary criteria (new lecturer, applicant with significant grant income, Athena Swan, etc.). This decision will be made by the PGR Director.
- All enquiries about the projects will initially be sent to the PGR inbox then forwarded on to the relevant Academic.

PhD applications

For PhD Admissions we have 4 start dates within an academic year: September, January, April and July. An academic year starts in September and ends the following August.

The Department can only consider applicants who apply through the University's central admissions system, available here <https://www.maths.manchester.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/how-to-apply/>. Once the Department receives a complete PhD application, it will be sent to the relevant PGR programme director(s). They will circulate it electronically to appropriate potential supervisors. Act on these emails and give each application serious consideration. If you cannot supervise a student it is helpful for your group's PhD course director if you record a reason (briefly!) why this is the case.

How to accept a student

Once you decide you are interested in a student you should arrange to interview them (Skype/Zoom is acceptable). Two interviewers are needed. It is University policy that **all** PhD students that we accept are interviewed. The PGR committee requires a summary of the interview (and other interactions) with applicants when it comes to funding decisions. There is an interview form available on the Department's intranet at <http://intranet.maths.manchester.ac.uk/media/eps/school-of-mathematics/intranet/documents-and-minutes/REPORT-ON-INTERVIEW-OF-PHD-APPLICANT.txt>. Once you have made a firm decision, you should ensure that you send the project title, a brief project description (100-200 words) and the name of the co-supervisor to the PG Admissions team who will prepare the offer letter. The letter is produced and electronically signed by the Admissions Manager and then emailed to the Programme Director, Supervisor and Co-Supervisor for checking. You would then send an email confirming you have checked it and the letter is sent out via email to the student.

Please note that while we accept "0%-co-supervision" arrangements (see below), agreeing to be a co-supervisor does imply that you are expected to take over the supervision if the main supervisor leaves the university, say. So please don't agree to this without being aware of the possible implications. In particular, you should participate in an interview with the student.

Visas/CAS

To apply for a visa to study at The University of Manchester, international students must have a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) issued by the University. The CAS is a unique reference number which confirms that the University has agreed to be a Tier 4 sponsor and provides information about the student and their study to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) as part of their visa application. Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) number will be sent if the student:

- holds an unconditional offer
- has accepted the offer

The earliest as student can apply for a Tier 4 (General) student visa is three months before the start date of the course.

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

ATAS clearance is required by the Government to ensure that overseas PhD students working in certain disciplines aren't (for example) working on WMDs or other research projects that have security implications. Whilst this is unlikely in practice in our Department, we still have a legal requirement to ensure all our overseas PhD students (with the exception of those in probability and statistics) have ATAS clearance. Students must apply for ATAS before they apply for their visa. We are required to check that students are still studying the project described in ATAS on an annual basis and students must obtain a new certificate if their topic changes.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme>

Distance Learning PhDs

We do not currently offer distance learning PhDs. We need to be confident that our students have access to the relevant materials, supervision and research environment in order to successfully complete a PhD or we could be liable for any shortcomings.

Split Site PhDs

It is possible to run a PhD between 2 institutions, however there are strict controls and conditions which need to be met. If you are interested in this then the rules (and application form) are available here <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=7462>

Visiting PhD students

Visiting PhD students need to formally apply (as, for international visiting students, there are visa implications). A fee is also charged. The University policy on visiting PhD students is here <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=20693>. Please ask the admissions office for more details.

Fees

Fees are set by the Department on an annual basis. There are only 2 classes for PhD students, International and Home fee rate. These cannot be amended on the recommendation of the supervisor.

Funding Applications

The funding meetings normally take place monthly from January onwards and applicants are nominated by your programme director. You should ensure that any application you wish to put forward is the best possible reflection of your nominee, that references are useful and relevant and that any research potential is highlighted. You must prepare a case that is clear to colleagues who are not experts in your area. It is also helpful to include any notes from the interview.

Exceptionally strong candidates who have offers from other universities can be considered at any time via the "Fast-Track" procedure. Please discuss this with your group's PhD programme director.

The committee offers funding to students primarily based on their academic track record, their references, and the interview reports and other supporting information provided by the anticipated main supervisor. Secondary criteria (such as the student being from an under-represented group; the student being the first PhD student for a new lecturer; etc) are taken into account only if the primary criteria are insufficient to distinguish between applicants.

Sometimes members of staff are "promised" studentships by the Head of Department/School as part of their start-up package, or to support grant applications. Such studentships are handled separately and are not allocated by the committee. However, the students still need to apply formally, and then be made an official academic offer by the group's course director.

While the quality of the student is the primary criterion for awarding funding, the PGR committee aims to distribute studentships under its control fairly across the Department. If a main supervisor already has a new PhD student who has been offered funding by the committee, this fact will be used as a (negative) secondary criterion if a further student is put forward for funding by that main supervisor in the same funding cycle. Within each funding cycle, funding will not usually be offered to more than two new students with the same main supervisor. Rare exceptions to this need the explicit approval from the Head of Department.

Available funding

The Department has two types of funding available under its control:

1. DTA funds, provided by EPSRC. These are only available for UK students. Subject to certain residency requirements. For UK students, they provide fees and living expenses for 3.5 or 4.0 years.
2. Department Scholarships. These are funded entirely by the Department. They can be used to fund the fees and living expenses for UK students, or to part-fund international students. For UK students, living expenses are paid at the same rate as DTA-funded students. For international students, a Department Scholarship normally covers the cost of the fees. Department Scholarships last for 3.5 years.

In practice, there are few differences between DTA scholarships and Department Scholarships. The most important difference is that only students who are at least 50% funded by the DTA are eligible for the EPSRC Doctoral Prize (essentially a one-year post-doc, funded from the DTA); for this reason, we try to split the funding 50% DTA and 50% Department funds for the strongest applicants in order to maximise the pool of students who will be eligible for the Doctoral Prize.

There are also a very small number of University and Faculty-level scholarships (the **Presidential Doctoral Scholar** (PDS) and **Dean's Award**, respectively). The Department sometimes has access to

PDS 'top-ups' that we can award to the best applicants; these are worth an additional £1,000 p.a. on top of any Department/DTA funding that is offered to the student. There are other PDS awards which (almost) fully fund students available at Faculty level. The competition is fierce and the deadlines tight for Faculty-level PDSs. The first Faculty-level PDS round is in December of each year and is typically only for international students. Any PDS money at Faculty-level that is left is allocated at the second Faculty-level PDS round in March; this is usually available for UK and international students. Normally there are Dean's Awards available during March. These are awarded competitively across the Faculty at the same time as the March round of the PDSs and are available for UK and international students.

Chinese students may also be eligible for the [China Scholarship Council awards](#).

Industrial CASE studentships

Students receive funding for a full EPSRC studentship for 4 years. Companies provide additional top up to the project of a minimum of a third of the EPSRC funding. The student must spend at least three months at the company, and the company pays any travel and subsistence costs. If you have an iCASE/CASE project please let the admissions office know as soon as possible as well as contracts and FSE Non-Research.

Deferring students

Students can defer the start of their programme once and for no more than 1 year. If they want to defer their place on the programme for longer then they will need to reapply. However, funding is typically restricted to a start within the same academic year for which the funding offer was made.

CURRENT STUDENTS

Supervisory teams

Each student has a supervisory team consisting of:

- A **Main Supervisor**: the student's main point of contact
- One (or more) **Co-supervisor(s)**: provides additional advice/guidance on the research project (but see also below)
- A **PGR Adviser**: someone to go to if the student needs additional pastoral support.

Co-supervisors are nominated by the supervisor when the offer of a place is made. Advisers are allocated by the Teaching & Learning Office and will normally be somebody from a different research group.

The workload split between the supervisor and co-supervisor can range from 100:0, 50:50, to 0:100. **You must inform the office of any splits for workload/REF reasons. If no other information is in the file we will assume 50:50.**

New academics cannot be listed as the supervisor but can co-supervise students. The same comment applies to retired/emeritus members of staff. We can 'promote' a new academic to main supervisor after the first year has been successfully completed. This arrangement has been approved by the Associate Dean, in order to switch please let the PGR Director and Administrator know once the first-year progression decision has been processed.

Normally if the supervisor is unable to supervise the student (because they leave Manchester, due to ill health, or because of parental (maternity, paternity) and adoption leave) then the co-supervisor takes over the role of supervisor. The University policy on PGR supervision is available here: <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=615>

Adviser meetings

Any new PhD student will be required to meet their adviser at some point during the first 5 weeks of their programme.

Internal assessors

Supervisors will be asked to nominate an 'internal assessor' during month 8 of the student's first year. The role of the internal assessor is to be **responsible** for the end of year assessment for the student and, normally, to be the internal examiner at the viva. (A different internal examiner can be appointed if the scope of the research project changes over time.)

An alternative internal assessor will be required for years 2 and 3 of the programme as the internal assessor may only take part in ONE End of Year Assessment and then act as Internal Examiner. The 2nd and 3rd year assessors can be the same.

Independent assessors should hold a PhD, be research active, and must not be part of the student's supervisory team.

eProg

Whilst we appreciate that eProg is not perfect, it is a compulsory part of PhD supervision. One very important feature of eProg is that it creates a paper-trail for students whose progress is not satisfactory.

This (ideally) allows problems to be recognised, and consequently addressed, much sooner so that the student can get back on track; alternatively (less ideally) it strengthens our case should we want to not let the student proceed on the programme.

Currently there are the attendance (monthly) milestones which are used to track student attendance to aid submission rates and to ensure we meet immigration regulations. It is vital these are completed every month and students who are marked as absent without reason will be chased up and potentially withdrawn from their programme. This is especially critical for international students on Tier 4 visas, as missed attendance milestones can be reported to the UKVI, which could result in a student's visa being revoked.

Whilst the immigration regulations are there only for international students, poor attendance can signify that there are problems with the student's progression. Poor attendance has been used in the past as part justification for withdrawing home students. In order to treat all students equally, the attendance monitoring forms must be completed for **all** students (home and international)

Milestones also include the annual expectations milestone which is designed to ensure there is a record of your discussion of key points of the research process with your students. As the same form is used across the University, some of the questions on the expectation's milestone form are not relevant for mathematics; in this case, writing 'not applicable' where appropriate is fine. Other

questions (for example, encouraging students to think early about their future careers) are more appropriate.

There are also the quarterly progress milestones, where students demonstrate how they are progressing on the PhD. Also in this section are the 'end of year' reports. Students will not be permitted to proceed to the next year of the programme (or paid if they are on a studentship) until all milestones are complete and the end of year report is passed, therefore it is important that they are submitted in good time. These milestones are also used in the decision-making process for interruptions and extensions and will be used as evidence in case of appeal.

End of year progression

PhD students must submit a report towards the end of each year and undergo an oral examination. The content of the report is left to the discretion of the supervisory team but should be substantial enough to convince you that the student is progressing well and is on course to submit their thesis within 4 years.

After the report is submitted **by the student via eProg** there must be an oral exam. The oral exam should be conducted by at least two people, normally the internal assessor and the supervisor. The examiners then decide if the student should be allowed to progress into the following year and complete the progression decision form on eProg. If the examiners decide that the report and/or oral exam is unsatisfactory then they can either not let the student proceed (which will withdraw them from the University), to transfer to the MPhil programme, or to undertake some remedial work on the report. Once the remedial work is completed there should be a second examination where a final decision on progression is made, and the appropriate eProg form completed.

The point of this regulation is to ensure that students either progress (or not) cleanly at the end of each year.

Start month	Date end of year report is due	Date by which oral exam must be held	Date by which any remedial work must be submitted and examined
September	30 th June	31 st July	30 th September
January	30 th September	31 st October	31 st December
April	31 st December	31 st January	31 st March
July	31 st March	30 th April	31 st July

MAGIC/APTS and other compulsory courses

ALL PhD Students are required to complete 100 hours of taught courses over the first 2 years of study. At least 60 hours should be undertaken in year 1. This is an EPSRC requirement and is not negotiable.

MAGIC courses are either 10 hours or 20 hours each. APTS courses are week-long residential courses; each week comprises of 2 courses and counts for 33 hours. MSc courses are 33 hours each. (Sensible rounding applies: for example three 10-hour MAGIC courses plus two MSc courses = 96 hours = 100 hours after rounding.)

Other

Students are expected to complete the online **Health and Safety, Research Integrity, Export Controls**, and **Plagiarism** courses - in Year 1.

First year students must undertake 'Introduction to Research' (run by Faculty) and there is a wealth of other short courses on offer to research students. Some short courses (for example, the ones on careers and employability, public engagement, and 'Viva Survivor') are likely to be useful; others are not so relevant for mathematics.

Students who act as demonstrators must take the Faculty 'Graduate Teaching Assistant/Demonstrating' course. Students can book onto Faculty courses via eProg. Students should also take any Department-based training.

Funding

Students are sponsored by various groups, including governments, private companies, funding councils and the Department. Each sponsor has different rules and regulations and you should ensure you are familiar with what the student can expect before they commence their PhD. Please note that the Department will not provide money for year 4 of a PhD should the student's previous funding end before they complete. Similarly, we cannot offer funding to students who have already started their PhDs or self-funded students.

Home students on Department and EPSRC scholarships are now offered 3.5 or 4.0 years of maintenance stipend which cannot be extended. You should aim for your student to complete their PhD before they run out of funding.

Maternity/Paternity Leave

Students who are pregnant must also apply for interruption for leave in line with the Maternity/Paternity Guidance for PGRs:

<https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=55092%20>. Students are not permitted to return to study during the first two weeks from the date of childbirth. This is classed as a period of compulsory maternity leave.

What to do if your student is falling behind in their research

Submission is becoming ever more important to the Department and the university. We are assessed (both by the Faculty and EPSRC) on the proportion of students who submit within 4 years and this has an impact on the value of the DTA. (Note that EPSRC look at submission rates of *all* students, not just EPSRC-funded one.)

Students will **automatically fail** their PhD if they do not submit on time.

With this in mind, the following processes are in place for students who are experiencing difficulties:

- **Interruption:**
Interruptions are for when the student is experiencing personal, health or family problems to the extent that they are unable to work on their research. The '4-year clock' pauses when a student is interrupting. Interruptions are only available in programme (i.e. not submission pending) and are granted by Faculty. Students complete the relevant application form (on

the Faculty website: (<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/fse/faculty-support-services/research-business-services/postgraduate-research/regulations-and-policies/>) and provide evidence of their case. This should be completed as soon as the problem arises. Retrospective interruptions cause problems with our highly trusted sponsor status for international students and should therefore be avoided. Interruptions can only be granted on events since the last eProg monitoring point.

- *Extension to programme:*

This is used where students require extra lab/research time and is for significant unforeseen delays (which can include severe equipment failure); bad time management or poor planning are not acceptable reasons for any extension. This should be completed at least 2 months before the end of programme. Extensions can only be granted on events since the last monitoring point.

If a student is granted an extension then the '4 year clock' continues to run. Therefore, if a student is granted and uses an extension, this will be counted against us when calculating the number of our students who submit within 4 years. As the proportion of our students who submit within 4 years directly affects the amount of DTA funding awarded to the Department it is vital that extensions are used as sparingly as possible.

- *Extension to Submission Pending:*

This is where students develop severe problems in their writing up period. Again, it can only include evidence since the last monitoring point as that was proof that the student was on track to complete on time. This must be completed at least 2 months before the submission date.

If a student is granted an extension to submission pending then the '4-year clock' continues to run. Therefore, if a student is granted and uses an extension, this will be counted against us when calculating the number of our students who submit within 4 years. As the proportion of our students who submit within 4 years directly affects the amount of DTA funding awarded to the Department it is vital that extensions are used as sparingly as possible.

Please note all relevant forms are available on the website:

<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/fse/faculty-support-services/research-business-services/postgraduate-research/regulations-and-policies/>

Other important rules

Demonstrating

Students in years 1, 2 and 3 can undertake up to 22 hours per semester without asking their supervisor. They can do more teaching than this, but it needs the supervisor's approval.

Students in year 4 are only permitted to undertake demonstrating with the permission of their supervisor.

Students in year 5 (usually those who have submitted their PhD) are not be permitted to demonstrate.

All demonstrating arrangements must be made through the Teaching and Learning Office or your student may not be paid for the work they undertake. You cannot allocate teaching to your student without it going through the Teaching and Learning Office. Students who act as demonstrators must take the Faculty 'Graduate Teaching Assistant/Demonstrating' course. Students can book onto Faculty courses via eProg. Students should also take any Department-based training.

Holidays

Students are permitted up to 8 weeks holiday per year IN TOTAL. This **includes** all bank holidays, Easter and Christmas. You should not normally give your students permission to return to their home country for weeks at a time. Students should also still be working during your absence from the University. There is a form that students must complete when they intend to be absent for more than 1 week and they will need the PG Director's permission to take more than 4 consecutive weeks or more than 8 weeks in total.

Internships

The Department strongly encourages students to undertake internships. However, some students cannot undertake internships due to the nature of their visa or restrictions on their funding. It is important to check this before organising a potential internship.

Students on scholarships will have their payments affected by an internship and it will take time to process these arrangements; we also need to ensure cover for any demonstrating work the student would normally be undertaking. Permission must be granted by the PG Director before students can undertake an internship. The application form is on the School website (<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/fse/faculty-support-services/research-business-services/postgraduate-research/regulations-and-policies/>).

The '4-year clock' is paused whilst the student is on an internship – a 6-month internship means that the student gets an extra 6 months to finish their thesis, **unless** the internship is part of the programme, such as an industrially funded student doing an internship with the industrial partners, in this case the clock is **not paused**.

Project/Consultancy

Please see internships. There are restrictions on what can and cannot be expected of students and permission must be given in advance for this type of work.

Conferences

Students must apply in advance for funding for conferences using the PG Travel form on the PGT Student Intranet:

https://online.manchester.ac.uk/webapps/blackboard/content/listContentEditable.jsp?content_id=_13275504_1&course_id=65026_1&mode=reset

Failure to do this will mean the student is not able to claim any expenses. Applications for funding are considered by the Department's PGR Committee.

Examination

The PhD thesis must be submitted on time. This is normally 4 years from the start of the programme, however if your student has interrupted/extended their programme, their end date will have changed. You can see their current submission date in eProg. The examination process now runs through eProg – you should look under the tab 'My Examination Tasks'.

All forms are now on-line and you can see the progress of your student's examination, including the Department's approval, date sent to examiners, date of viva and upload of examination reports. PLEASE ensure that you complete all eProg forms carefully as this includes the embargo button which should be used to keep the thesis from general release if required.

Submission of theses

Students need to complete the 'Notice of Submission' form on eProg before they submit their thesis. This will allow you to complete the 'Nomination of Examiners' form (see below for who is eligible to act as examiner). Currently, all PGRs are required to submit their thesis electronically but the University won't require physical copies of the thesis until further notice, more information is available on the PGR FAQ page:

<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/coronavirus/faqs/pgr/#progressionandassessment>

Internal and External examiners

These examiners require approval by the Faculty.

Internal examiners should hold a PhD and be research active. They must not be members of the supervisory team (i.e. co-supervisors cannot be internal examiners). If there are no suitable people to act as an internal examiner, then you should appoint two external examiners and an internal chair (who does not need to be an expert in the area but does need to be familiar with the University PGR regulations; the internal chair must also be at least a Senior Lecturer.)

External examiners should be experts in the relevant field and be qualified to the level being examined. For full information please see

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=7444>

The viva

The viva must be held during normal office hours. If the viva is to be held in-person, it must be on University of Manchester premises. You can use your own office or book the Horace Lamb Room or the Small Meeting Room (the Maths Operations Team can book these for you). Zoom-based vivas have become common due to COVID-19 restrictions, and are likely to remain an option provided that all examiners and the student is happy with this format.

Vivas should normally be held within 8 weeks of the date of submission of the thesis and must be held within 12 weeks of submission. It is the internal examiner's responsibility to organise the viva.

The Faculty Graduate Office will send the thesis to the internal and external examiners. If an examiner wants an alternative copy of the dissertation, then they must ask the Faculty Graduate Office (eps-subs@manchester.ac.uk) to arrange this; examiners must NOT ask the student directly.

The examiners must complete individual reports ahead of the viva, these can be uploaded onto eProg directly or sent to the Faculty Graduate Office (eps-subs@manchester.ac.uk). The examiners'

joint recommendation form is completed after the exam and uploaded onto eProg (or sent directly to the Faculty Graduate Office). In the case of an A(ii) recommendation ('award subject to minor corrections') or below, a complete list of corrections must also be sent to Faculty. All forms must be returned within 3 working days of the viva.

The Faculty Postgraduate Research Degrees Panel formally approves the award. Normally this is by chair's action, but the Panel can (and do) overturn recommendations made by the examiners if the case for awarding a PhD is not clearly made. Therefore, it's important to give as much detail as possible on the report forms (and not just write 'Fine').

In the case of an A(ii) award, the internal examiner signs off the corrected thesis via a form on eProg. The student then **uploads to eScholar. It is recommended that the student e-mails eps-subs@manchester.ac.uk to confirm that this has taken place.**

Complete details are here: <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=7445>