Annex H: Supervision

1. School Directors of Graduate Studies Committees are responsible for ensuring that all students have access to appropriate levels of supervision and support. This includes ensuring that an appropriate supervisory team is in place prior to the admission of any research student. This section of the Code of Practice sets out detailed requirements in relation to such supervision.

2. Team Supervision

2.1. The University operates a system of team supervision for its research students. A supervisory team will comprise at least two members of academic staff.

2.1.1. Where a supervisory team is appointed to a student, there must be a supervisor designated to act as the student’s main point of contact for support and advice (Main Supervisor). Please see the responsibilities of the Main Supervisor in section 4.2 below.

2.1.2. The appointment of a supervisor must take into consideration the overall workload of the individual and allow for sufficient time for adequate contact to fulfil the responsibilities as outlined in the Code of Practice for the Quality Assurance of Research Programmes of Study.

2.1.3. The supervisory team must have a designated Chair of the Supervisory Team (Supervisory Chair) approved by the University to act in this capacity. Please see the responsibilities of the Supervisory Chair in section 4.1 below.

Note: The same individual can undertake the roles of the Main Supervisor and the Supervisory Chair provided that there is at least one additional staff member within the Supervisory Team.

3. Supervisors

3.1. The criteria for the approval of academic staff as Supervisory Chairs are:

3.1.1. evidence of research activity relevant to the programme in the past five years and

3.1.2. at least three years’ experience as a main supervisor and to have supervised a candidate from the start of a PhD through to successful completion. Note: In the case of programmes which incorporate practice research, the appropriateness of proposed Supervisory Chairs with regard to these criteria must be specifically in the context of the practice research.

3.1.3. Attendance at Graduate School Supervisory Chair briefing.

3.2 In order to act in this capacity, members of academic staff must be approved by the relevant Faculty. Supervisory Chairs approved by the Faculties should be reported to the Faculties Support Office so that a central register of approved Supervisory Chairs can be maintained.

3.3 The Supervisory Chair is only approved to act in this capacity on designated programme(s).

3.4 Applications to act as Supervisory Chair for additional programmes must be approved by the relevant Faculty.
3.5 Once approved, it is the responsibility of the School Director of Graduate Studies to ensure that the status of Supervisory Chairs appointed to new candidates remains current in the light of these criteria.

3.6 Only members of University academic staff may be appointed as Supervisory Chairs.

3.7 Individuals who do not meet the criteria for approval as Supervisory Chairs may, at the discretion of the School Director of Graduate Studies, act as Main Supervisor or as part of a supervisory team, providing that they meet the first criterion (3.1.1 above).

4. Supervisory Responsibilities

4.1 Supervisory Chairs are responsible for:
   1. Ensuring that the requirements of the Code of Practice are met with regard to students for whom they are appointed.
   2. Overseeing the operation of the supervisory team to ensure that supervisory and student responsibilities are being fulfilled as outlined below.
   3. Providing support and guidance to members of the supervisory team as and when required.
   4. Participating in and preparing for student progress reviews as required by the Faculty and by this Code of Practice (see Annex K: Progression and Examination).

4.2 Main Supervisors are responsible for:
   1. Offering guidance on the student’s research project (in consultation with other members of the supervisory team).
   2. Advising the student of the respective roles and responsibilities of each of the members of the supervisory team.
   3. Ensuring that the student is aware of his/her responsibilities during the period of research.
   4. Scheduling regular meetings with the student and setting aside adequate time to discuss progress and future work. The minimum requirement is one formal meeting per month. (See 6.2 for further explanation about meeting requirements.)
   5. Ensuring that students are introduced to all School, Faculty and University facilities which are relevant to their research.
   6. Making sure that students’ training needs (both subject-specific and transferable) are reviewed regularly through consideration of the skills audit and encouraging them to take up training opportunities.
   7. Ensuring that the particular needs of international students are taken fully into account during the early stages of research and to give help and advice on language problems and training where necessary.
   8. Advising students on academic matters including expected attendance, research standards, methodologies, academic writing, plagiarism, progression and examination.
   9. Approving a timetable of work and overseeing this to completion. Timely completion of research projects is expected by the University.
   10. Keeping the School Director of Graduate Studies informed of any absences likely to impact upon time available for supervisory duties.
11. Ensuring that students are made aware of inadequacy of progress or standards of work below that generally expected. This should be recorded formally in notes of supervisory meetings and progress reviews.

12. Taking action to bring to the attention of the Supervisory Chair (where this is a different member of staff) and School Director of Graduate Studies (with responsibility for research programmes) any concerns about a student’s unsatisfactory progress.

13. Ensuring that there are clear records on the Student Data System of supervisory meetings and interactions with their students.

14. Requesting written work as appropriate and returning such work with substantial constructive feedback within an agreed timetable.

15. Participating in and preparing for student progress reviews as required by the Faculty and by this Code of Practice (see Annex K: Progression and Examination).

16. Advising students on the ethical implications of their research and appropriate routes for ethical approval where appropriate.

17. Arranging, where appropriate, for students to make oral presentations about their work within the University and at conferences and to publish material from their research (ensuring proper credit is given for joint research).

18. Recommending examiners for the student’s thesis to the School in good time.

19. In conjunction with the examiners where appropriate, providing advice to the student concerning the corrections and/or revisions required to the thesis following examination.

20. Remaining familiar with and understanding the requirements of the Regulations for Research Programmes of Study and the Code of Practice for the Quality Assurance for Research Programmes of Study.

21. Considering the safety implications of their students’ research.

**Note:** Supervisors are responsible for all aspects of safety which fall within their control and in particular for the safe conduct of experiments carried out in the course of their students’ research. Further information is available from the University Safety Officer.

**Note:** Where there is good cause, individuals from without the University may also act as a Main Supervisor.

### 4.3 Second Supervisor

The role of a Second Supervisor may include any of the responsibilities of the Main Supervisor, although in most cases the role of the Second Supervisor will be to offer an alternative perspective on the research project and provide additional support to the research student whenever this is required. The same individual may undertake the roles of both Supervisory Chair and Second Supervisor in cases where the role of main supervisor is being fulfilled by another member of staff. This Code of Practice specifies the minimum requirements for supervision; Schools or Faculties may wish to further specify the role and responsibilities of the Second Supervisor. The Second Supervisor would be expected to undertake responsibility for the supervision of the student in cases where the Main Supervisor becomes unavailable or leaves the University.
5. **Student Responsibilities**

Research students are responsible for:

1. The content, completion and submission for examination of their theses under the supervision of academic staff members. The student should take ultimate responsibility for his or her research.

2. Ensuring that they are familiar with and comply with University regulations, School guidelines and any other procedures relating to their degree.

3. Attending a skills review workshop in their first year of registration.

4. Completing a skills audit and discussing this and their training needs with their supervisors on a regular basis.

5. Providing annually a formal report on progress.

6. Preparing adequately for formal progress reviews (as required by Annex K: Progression and Examination) and supervisory meetings.

7. Ensuring work progresses in accordance with the stages agreed with the supervisor(s).

8. Advising their supervisor(s) of any illness, holidays or other occasions when they will be absent from the University.

9. Seeking advice from their supervisor(s) in an active manner and taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties (including illness or other exceptional circumstances) with their supervisors.

10. Agreeing a programme of work with their supervisor(s) at the beginning of their first year and reviewing this at appropriate intervals in each academic year in consultation with the supervisors ensuring that any deviation from the programme is reported to supervisors as soon as possible.

11. Agreeing a schedule of meetings with their supervisor(s).

12. Devoting appropriate time and effort to their studies.

13. Taking note of the guidance and feedback provided on their work by their supervisor(s).

14. Keeping records of supervisory meetings

15. Complying with health and safety requirements.

16. Complying with ethical requirements.

17. Ensuring that they complete registration and make payment of fees at the appropriate time.

18. Assisting the University in keeping their records up to date by cooperating fully with administrative procedures.

19. Contributing to the research environment of the academic School, wider university community and externally (as appropriate) by taking up opportunities to present work at seminars and by networking with other researchers.

20. Providing feedback on their student experience through annual reports, postgraduate surveys, postgraduate representatives and Student Voice Committees (as appropriate).
21. Reporting any concerns about their supervision to the School Director of Graduate Studies without delay. If the School Director of Graduate Studies is a member of the supervisory team, concerns should be reported to the appropriate Associate Dean (Graduate Studies).

6. **Supervisory Meetings**

6.1 While it is acknowledged that research students may work closely with their supervisors and may have a great deal of informal supervision, it is a requirement of the University that students are also involved in regular formal supervision meetings. Where there is a tradition of team or laboratory research, this supervision meeting may not take place on a one-to-one basis.

6.2 It is the expectation of the University that these meetings should normally take place at a minimum of every four weeks (for part-time students this can be a minimum of every eight weeks) during the calendar year (up to a maximum of 50 contact hours per year, although these may be concentrated into term time). Schools and Faculties may require supervisory meetings to take place more frequently. The meeting will be a substantial period of discussion focussed on the research project in which substantive matters are raised and progressed between the student and supervisor. A meeting may be face to face or may take the form of video conference/SKYPE. It may on occasion be necessary for the meeting to take the form of an email or telephone conversation in which substantive matters are raised and progressed. This may be particularly appropriate if students are on field work, studying at another institution or on placement. Variations on this timetable may take vacations into account. During July and August it will be acceptable that one report covers both months.

6.3 There may be rare occasions where it is not possible for the monthly meetings to take place, for example when on field work due to lack of suitable facilities. In such cases the supervisor must indicate on the Student Records System that the student is on field work and a statement of how support will be provided during this time is required prior to the student’s departure.

6.4 Students should also be monitored monthly (every other month for part-time students) during their continuation year and during any approved subsequent writing-up period.

6.5 Following the viva examination, supervisors should be available for email contact with students for minor corrections. In the case of major corrections or resubmission students should have monthly supervision meetings.

6.6 It is essential that both students and supervisors keep records of the outcome of their monthly (every other month for part-time students) meetings. In order that a clear progression is agreed in a timely manner, students are expected to complete their report within one week of the meeting and supervisors are expected to provide written feedback within two weeks.

7. **Absence of the Main Supervisor**

The School Director of Graduate Studies should ensure that appropriate arrangements for supervision are made should a student’s Main Supervisor be absent from the University for a period greater than four weeks. The Second Supervisor would be expected to undertake responsibility for the supervision of the student in cases where the Main Supervisor became unavailable or left the University for a period. The University will undertake to employ an external supervisor with relevant subject expertise where
alternative subject-specific supervision is unavailable within the University, should the Main Supervisor, for whatever reason, be unable to continue to offer supervision. It would be expected that the external subject-specific supervisor would co-supervise the student in conjunction with a University staff member who would provide the student with general supervision.

8. Supervisor/Student Relationship

Supervisors and students are expected to treat one another with courtesy and discuss any problems at the earliest opportunity thus allowing any issues to be resolved quickly and effectively. In cases where there is a more serious breakdown in the main supervisor/student relationship, the matter should be brought to the attention of the School Director of Graduate Studies who will review the situation. In cases where there is an irreparable breakdown in the student/supervisor relationship, an alternative main supervisor will be provided. If such a situation occurs around the time of a progression review (see Annex K: Progression and Examination), the student may request a review panel independent from the supervisor or supervisory team.

9. External Supervisors

9.1 It may be beneficial or necessary under certain circumstances for a School to arrange for the appointment of an external supervisor to assist with the supervision of a research student. This may occur when: (i) it is identified at the commencement of a research project that it would be beneficial for a student to receive external supervisory expertise from a partner university or non-HEI partner, (ii) the main supervisor is absent for a period of time or leaves the University or (iii) when a research project takes an unexpected turn which ideally requires some input from an external subject specialist. The costs of the appointment of the external supervisor will be covered by the School except in cases where it is agreed that this will be part of a separate agreement. In all cases where an external supervisor is appointed to a student, there should also be two members of University academic staff appointed as part of the supervisory team.

9.2 Role of an external supervisor

The role of an external supervisor will be:

- To assist in the supervision of the research work of the research student (including final preparation of the thesis up to the point of submission and successful completion of the research award).

- To contribute to any progression reviews as required by Annex K: Progression and Examination of the University’s Code of Practice for the Quality Assurance for Research Programmes of Study during the external supervision period.

- To maintain a comprehensive record of documents, emails and correspondence relating to the external supervision of the student. These records should meet the requirements of this Annex.

- To respond with feedback to the research student in a timely fashion following submission of research work to him/her for consideration.
9.3 Termination

The University reserves the right to terminate the appointment of an external supervisor without notice where the Vice-Chancellor considers that the supervisor has not properly undertaken the duties set out above.

9.4 Appointment process

1. The School Director of Graduate Studies should consider the case made for the appointment of an external supervisor and determine whether the reasons outlined by the Supervisory Team for this appointment are justified.

2. The School Director of Graduate Studies should liaise with the proposed external supervisor to explain the role and appointment process.

3. The School Director of Graduate Studies should obtain a CV from the proposed external supervisor.

4. The School should complete an Appointment of External Supervisor form which will require the approval of the Head of School, the Dean of the Faculty and the Dean of the Graduate School (see the template).

5. The Appointment form (once approved by the Head of School, Dean of the Faculty and the Dean of the Graduate School) will be forwarded to Human Resources.

9.5 Payment of external supervisors

The School Administration Manager should set up a timesheet paid staff contract for the external supervisor. The cost of the external supervisor will be covered by the School and the rate of pay should be agreed by the Head of School. The external supervisor will be paid for time spent in supervisory contact and in the preparation and reviewing of student work. Completed timesheets for all such work must be returned to the relevant School Administration Manager for processing and payment.