

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS  
PGR Programmes and Quality Group

**Eligibility for Research Degree Supervision**

(for appointments made with effect from session **2021/2022 updated January 2022**)

1. It is the responsibility of the Dean of the Faculty or Head of School<sup>1</sup> to recommend suitable supervisors for appointment to the Graduate Board. Each supervisory team<sup>2</sup> must satisfy the requirements of the UK Quality Code - Advice and Guidance Research Degrees.
2. The Graduate Board recognises the following key principles in respect of supervisory support:
  - reasonable accessibility of supervisors to Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs);
  - appointment of supervisors who have the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support, encourage and monitor PGRs effectively;
  - each PGR will have at least one main supervisor, with a co-supervisor(s). In all cases a PGR should have an identified single point of contact which will be designated as the main supervisor;
  - at least one member of the supervisory team will be currently engaged in excellent research in the relevant discipline ensuring the direction of and monitoring of the PGR's progress is informed by up to date subject knowledge and research developments;
  - the supervisory team will ensure that the PGR receives sufficient support and guidance to facilitate their success;
  - All named supervisor(s) must play an active role in the supervision of the PGR, in partnership with the other members of the supervision team, as appropriate to the FTE allocated.
  - Where there is a supervisory team of 3 or more the minimum FTE allocation for a supervisor on the team will normally be at least 0.1 FTE.
  - Where there is a supervisory team of two supervisors the FTE allocation<sup>3</sup> will normally be no higher than 0.8 FTE (80%) for one member of the team (therefore no lower than 0.2 FTE for the second supervisor).

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<sup>1</sup> Or individual to whom responsibility has been delegated (under the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures).

<sup>2</sup> The Board normally expects the joint supervision of research degree candidates. Requests for sole supervision will only be considered on an exceptional case by case basis, as set out in this document. In exceptional cases where only one supervisor is appointed for a PGR a Mentor/Advisor must also be appointed.

<sup>3</sup> This ensures that a second supervisor is sufficiently involved in the supervision to maintain continuity of supervision if one of the supervisors leaves or is away from the University for a prolonged period. Where the supervisory team includes an external supervisor as in the case of Split Site PhDs and Dual PhDs the Leeds supervisors (two) allocation may be different but as a guide it will follow the same 80%: 20% allocation split.

- The role of each member of the supervisory team must be made clear to the PGR at the start of their studies and at the point any change to the supervisory team is approved<sup>4</sup>.
3. The Graduate Board must be satisfied that a supervisory team can provide an appropriate level of support and guidance to a candidate before confirming the appointment of the supervisor(s).
  4. A co-supervision model is expected<sup>5</sup>, with one supervisor identified as the main supervisor. It is not necessarily the case that the main supervisor will be the most senior or experienced member of the team of supervisors.
  5. Requests for sole supervision will only be considered on an exceptional case by case basis, and require consideration and approval by both the Head of Graduate School and the Graduate Board's Programmes and Quality Group. Where exceptionally only one supervisor is appointed for a PGR an Advisor must also be appointed from whom advice might be sought and to whom problems might be referred.
  6. In exceptional cases a supervisory team may request that a person act as an Advisor who would not otherwise be eligible to be part of the supervisory team. For example, where the person is on a fixed-term contract and will only be available for part of the duration of the research degree. In each situation a case would need to be made and would require consideration by both the Head of Graduate School and the Graduate Boards' Programmes & Quality Group.
  7. At least one of the supervisors must be a member of the academic staff holding a permanent appointment of the University of at least 0.5 FTE (with any relevant probationary period having been confirmed<sup>6</sup>) and who has a minimum of three years previous experience of research degree supervision.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This will include expectations around attendance at meetings and whether all supervisors will attend all or some meetings. It is accepted that the pattern and attendance at meetings may vary according to the precise stage of the candidature, between subject areas and supervisory roles.

<sup>5</sup> With the exception of the early stages of an Integrated or 4 year PhD or DClinPsychol programme, where it is normal practice for the Director of the programme to be named as a nominal supervisor until the point the PhD project is selected. At that point a minimum of two Leeds supervisors must be appointed. An academic supervisor, should also be named for any visiting PGRs registered as Miscellaneous Postgraduate Researchers (MPR).

<sup>6</sup> In the case of University Academic Fellows the successful completion of 3 of the 5 years probationary period will satisfy the probation requirement

<sup>7</sup> The Graduate Board has, however, expressed the view that the preferred level of experience is supporting a doctoral candidate through to successful completion.

8. The expectation is that the PGR will be supervised by at least one individual from within the School in which they are registered<sup>8</sup>. Where two or more Faculties/Schools are involved in supervising a PGR, the persons concerned should agree which is acting as the PGR's parent Faculty/School and notify Doctoral College Operations accordingly. This Faculty/School should then take full administrative responsibility for the PGR and should ensure that the PGR receives appropriate supervision.
9. Where two or more Faculties/Schools are involved in a candidature, it is normally expected that the main supervisor will be from the candidate's parent registration school. Permission must be sought from the Graduate Board's Programmes and Quality Group where this is not the case.
10. The following categories of staff may act as co-supervisor with an individual who fulfils the criteria set out in paragraph 7 and 8 above:
  - Members of academic staff who hold probationary appointments;
  - Research Fellows;
  - Members of staff who have retired or resigned and those who hold research, honorary, part-time or fixed term University posts (but see below for "Honorary Professors members of staff" within the Faculty of Medicine);
  - Members of staff who have had less than three years previous experience of research degree supervision.
11. Early-retired members of staff or staff who have been re-engaged on part-time contracts by the University may be permitted to act as main supervisors for existing PGRs proceeding under their supervision<sup>9</sup>. Where new PGRs are commencing study early-retired members of staff may act as co-(not main) supervisors with an individual who fulfils the criteria set out in paragraph 7 and 8 above.
12. External joint supervisors<sup>10</sup> may be appointed provided that:
  - (a) the proposed external supervisor is conversant with the level and nature of the research necessary for the degree concerned;
  - (b) the external supervisor is made aware of, by the relevant School, the University's expectations of the supervisor's role and are offered the opportunity to engage in developmental activities including ODPL courses for supervisors<sup>11</sup>;

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<sup>8</sup> Exceptional arrangements may be approved by the Graduate Board's Programmes and Quality Group for some CDTs to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the research programme. In all cases either a supervisor or an advisor from the CDT's parent School will be appointed. The parent School will retain responsibility for the candidature regardless of the home School of the supervisor(s).

<sup>9</sup> The Head of School is required to provide confirmation that the terms of the re-engagement include postgraduate research supervision.

<sup>10</sup> Separate arrangements are in place to facilitate access to GRAD by external supervisors

<sup>11</sup> To access these courses an external Supervisor will need to apply for a temporary login for the learning environment. Email [academicdev@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:academicdev@leeds.ac.uk) to book onto both courses and for assistance obtaining a login. It is possible to arrange access to GRAD and separate instructions are available from Doctoral College Operations ([pgrprogress@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:pgrprogress@leeds.ac.uk))

(c) the arrangements for supervision by the University supervisor meet the criteria set out in paragraphs 6 and 7 above.

13. An honorary member of staff may act as a main supervisor for an MD, DPaedDent or DClinPsychol degree candidate provided that:

- (i) they have already acted as a Joint Supervisor at the University of Leeds, whilst having co-supervised with a tenured member of staff;
- (ii) they have attended a recognised training course in the supervision of research PGR provided by ODPL;
- (iii) they have a minimum of three years previous experience of research degree supervision;
- (iv) a co-supervisor is appointed, with at least 0.1 FTE, who satisfies the eligibility criteria set out in criteria set out in 6 and 7 above.

14. The Graduate Board requires members of staff to attend a course on research degree supervision organised by the Organisational and Professional Development before being recommended for appointment as a supervisor.<sup>12</sup>

15. The Graduate Board considers special cases from time to time.

#### Changes to supervision arrangements

16. A supervisory team is set up with the intention that it will remain in place throughout the research degree candidature. In some cases, however, the supervisory team may need to change, for example where a supervisor leaves the University<sup>13</sup>, or where a supervisor is on a period of long-term leave. Where a supervisor is likely to be absent from the University in excess of two months, arrangements will normally be put in place to identify an alternative Main supervisor and/or co-supervisor to ensure the continuity of supervision is maintained. In such cases it is possible that there will be a period of time when there is one main supervisor whilst suitable alternative supervision arrangements are found. It is not necessarily the case that a co-supervisor will be expected to take over as permanent Main Supervisor in these circumstances.

| Document Version History  |                     |                |
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<sup>12</sup> Where a member of staff has not yet attended a course, arrangements may be agreed whereby they are required to attend the next available ODPL course.

<sup>13</sup> in some cases they may continue as external supervisor