

CARDIFF
UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL
CAERDYDD

**POLICY ON RESEARCH STUDENT
SUPERVISION**

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Alignment with the Expectations and Core practices of the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education

This policy aligns with the following relevant Expectations and Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education:

Expectations for standards	Expectations for quality
	Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.	From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
Core practices for standards	Core practices for quality

	The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.
	The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
	The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
	The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.
	Where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments.
	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.
	The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.
Common practices for standards	Common practices for quality
The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.	The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.
	The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

Policy on Research Student Supervision

1. General Statements

- 1.1 A Head of School is responsible for:
- .1 the appointment of staff as supervisors to the research students enrolled in their School;
 - .2 the ongoing adequacy of supervision arrangements, including under collaborative arrangements;
 - .3 ensuring that supervisors appointed to students in their School have received adequate training and guidance, including external supervisors;
 - .4 the mentoring and monitoring of their staff appointed as supervisors;
 - .5 putting new supervision arrangements into place, wherever feasible and with minimal delay, where circumstances arise that require a temporary or permanent change.
- 1.2 Each research student must have a core supervisory team comprising at least two academic supervisors.
- 1.3 At least one of the academic supervisors must be designated as a main supervisor, and be a member of the academic staff of the student's home School via a contract of employment of at least FTE 50%, and which includes research student supervision as part of their role: typically, this is lecturer grade or above, or research fellow grade or above.
- 1.4 Joint supervisors and/or second supervisors can be appointed from another School.
- 1.5 Where a student has more than one main supervisor (e.g. there is joint-supervision), one of these will be identified as the first point of contact for the student and will be the lead supervisor.
- 1.6 It is the practice in some Schools to include a separate pastoral supervisor or mentor in the supervisory team. In all cases, students benefit from the broad support and advice provided by the Director of Postgraduate Research.

2. Criteria for the Appointment of Supervisors

- 2.1 To be appointed to a supervisory team, a supervisor should:
- .1 hold a doctoral degree or have comparable research and/or professional experience;

- .2 possess an appropriate understanding of the proposed project to be able to make a positive contribution.
- 2.2 At least one member of the supervisory team, typically a main supervisor, should:
 - .1 be currently engaged in high-quality research in the discipline;
 - .2 have supported at least one doctoral student to successful completion.
- 2.3 A member of staff who has not previously been part of a supervisory team that has supported at least one doctoral student to successful completion may be appointed as a main supervisor but must jointly supervise with an experienced colleague. It is more usual for new supervisors to assist experienced staff with their supervisory duties as part of their training.
- 2.4 External supervisors from another university or organisation can be appointed to the supervisory team. These will be additional to the minimum two members of academic staff from the University, unless the supervision arrangements are managed within a formal collaborative partnership. (See section 3, below.)
- 2.5 Post-doctoral researchers (typically, research associates whose role is not commensurate with their appointment as a core academic supervisor) can also be appointed, additionally, to the supervisory team as assistant supervisors.
- 2.6 In the case of EngD students, at least one industrial supervisor, who is engaged by an industrial organisation associated with the research programme, should be appointed.
- 2.7 In the case of MD students, at least one clinical supervisor should be appointed.
- 2.8 In appointing supervisors, the Head of School should ensure that they have sufficient time for supervision of an appropriate standard, and its associated administration and development activities, in accordance with the applicable workload model. A supervisor should have sufficient time for adequate contact with each research student.
- 2.9 As a guide, an individual member of staff should not normally, at any one time, be supervising more than 6 students as a main (or joint-main) supervisor; it is recognised, however, that some supervisors may have the capacity to supervise a higher numbers of students effectively, depending on their individual commitments and the nature of the research environment in which the student is supported.
- 2.10 All supervisors must have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities, which is also shared by the student. In all cases, the primary

point of contact must be clear to the student, and an alternative contact if the main supervisor is not available.

3. Collaborative Supervision

- 3.1 Research students may be registered for a Cardiff University degree under a collaborative partnership arrangement, where co-supervision with another university or research organisation is a feature of the partnership agreement. A doctoral training partnership or a centre for doctoral training may be an example. In these cases, an academic supervisor may be appointed from the partner institution, and there is not the standard requirement for at least two academic staff from Cardiff University to be part of the supervisory team if not considered necessary for the particular circumstances.
- 3.2 As part of the admissions process, however, the School's Director of Postgraduate Research or Postgraduate Admissions Tutor will be required to consider replacement supervision arrangements that might be put in place in the event of the Cardiff main supervisor and/or other key contributors to the supervision leaving the University or becoming unable to continue in their role. This may mean the identification of a replacement supervisor who will play no role in the student's supervision unless unforeseen circumstances arise.
- 3.3 The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that all collaborative research degree projects are appropriately supported and documented by completion of a Collaborative Supervision Form or Individual Research Studentship Agreement, as appropriate.
- 3.4 A Collaborative Supervision Form is required for each student who has a co-supervisor who is external to the University, where that co-supervision is important to the project and its withdrawal would have a significantly negative impact on the project's feasibility or student experience. The co-supervisor may be from another university or research, business or professional organisation, or be any individual appointed as an external supervisor. The collaborative supervision may be for the full duration for the research programme or for discrete stages, including periods of study based at the premises of the co-supervisor.
- 3.5 An Individual Research Studentship Agreement is required for each student who is registered under a formal collaborative provision agreement that leads to a joint, double or split-site award.

4. Supervisory Meetings and Formal Contact

- 4.1 A supervisory meeting is considered to be a formal, structured interaction, to which sufficient time and attention is devoted. Both the student and supervisor(s) should be clear on the purpose of the meetings and keep agreed, documented records of the outcomes.

- 4.2 The expected frequency and format of scheduled meetings with both the main supervisor(s) and with member(s) of the wider supervisory team should be agreed at the outset and adjusted, as appropriate, as the project progresses. The University expects that:
- .1 the student will meet with their main supervisor(s) at the commencement of their programme;
 - .2 the student and their supervisory team will then meet in accordance with an agreed frequency of formal meetings;
 - .3 although the frequency may vary (e.g. between disciplines; at different stages of the research project), supervision meetings should take place on at least a monthly basis, in person or by video;
 - .4 the schedule of supervisory meetings will be integrated with the requirements of the Policy and Procedure on the Monitoring of Research Students.
- 4.3 These expectations apply to both full-time and part-time students, and to those undertaking period(s) of their research away from Cardiff.
- 4.4 Where the student or supervisor is working away from the University for a period of time, there may be some occasional circumstances where video meetings are not feasible. In such cases, a schedule of formal contacts should be agreed: the student should normally be required to provide a report to their supervisor on at least a monthly basis, and the supervisor should respond with feedback within an agreed time.
- 4.5 Some students may encounter or work alongside one or more of their supervisors on a frequent basis. These interactions are additional to the formal meeting schedule: they do not replace the requirement for a formal meeting to be held at least monthly; and it is not a requirement of this policy that a written record of additional interactions to be kept.
- 4.6 It is a requirement that a log of supervision dates is submitted by the student as part of each monitoring event under the Policy and Procedure on the Monitoring of Research Students.

5. **The Training, Mentoring and Monitoring of Supervisors**

- 5.1 A Head of School is responsible for ensuring that all supervisors assigned to research students in their School have received appropriate training.
- 5.2 Specifically, the University requires supervisors to have received training in both research supervision skills and the relevant University regulations and policies before they are appointed to their roles.
- 5.3 An inexperienced supervisor should be supported by an experienced colleague in the supervisory team who will take on the role of mentor.

- 5.4 A Head of School is responsible for ensuring that the performance of supervisors is monitored through staff appraisal mechanisms and routine feedback (e.g. from students and examiners), and that appropriate action is taken where required.
- 5.5 Research students must be given regular opportunities to comment on their supervisory arrangements: this will typically coincide with their progress monitoring events but will be separately managed, so that the comments can be given in confidence.
- 5.6 The route for discussing the possibility of changing the supervision arrangements must be made clear to both students and supervisors.

6. **Changes to Supervision Arrangements**

- 6.1 Circumstances may arise that require a temporary or permanent change to supervision arrangements. A Head of School is responsible for ensuring that alternative arrangements are put in place as quickly as possible to minimise the disruption to the student.
- 6.2 Where there is a delay in making changes to the supervision arrangements that has a serious adverse impact on the student's progress which cannot be alleviated through adjustments to the Research or Completion Plan, the student may report the disruption as extenuating circumstances or through the Student Complaints Procedure.

Temporary absences

- 6.3 The temporary absence of a supervisor may be accommodated through the support provided by the existing supervisory team, particularly where the absent supervisor is able to remain accessible. Supervisors on research/study leave are expected to retain their supervisory role for their leave period. In some cases, however, an additional supervisor may be appointed to cover the absence.

Permanent changes

- 6.4 Permanent changes to supervision arrangements are required when a main supervisor (or one with a specialist role) leaves or becomes incapacitated, or there is an irreconcilable breakdown in the student-supervisor relationship. It will be necessary to make new appointment(s) or make adjustments to the team so that all roles can be covered.
- 6.5 If a supervisor ceases to be a member of the University staff, they may continue to provide guidance as an external supervisor. Where this is the main supervisor, another member of academic staff in the student's home School must adopt the role of main or joint-main supervisor, to ensure that overall responsibility for supervision and monitoring rests within the School.
- 6.6 If a supervisor is unable to continue in their role, or there is an irreconcilable breakdown in the student-supervisor relationship, a Head of School should

consider options for alternative arrangements. As the match between student, project and supervisory team is arrived at on an individual basis, and, as there may be additional constraints of sponsorship or partnership, each case should be considered in light of its particular circumstances.

- 6.7 In some circumstances, a short-term solution may be identified until permanent new arrangements can be agreed.
- 6.8 In some circumstances it will be appropriate for the student to transfer to another School.
- 6.9 If the necessary expertise is unavailable from within the University, external supervisory support may be procured if this presents a workable solution.
- 6.10 Where an agreed change to supervision arrangements requires the project to take a significant change of direction, the registration period may be recalibrated; the submission deadline may be adjusted with the approval of the relevant College Postgraduate Dean.
- 6.11 A Head of School is responsible for taking all reasonable measures to appoint replacement supervisors when required. In extreme circumstances, however, it may not be possible to find an adequate solution. In such cases, the School should provide information and guidance to the student in order for them to identify potential transfer opportunities if they wish to pursue their topic at another university.
- 6.12 Where a solution is not clear, the School should seek advice from Education Governance (PGR Quality and Operations) to discuss potential options.