

Research Degrees: Guidance notes series

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES / MANAGING THE SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

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Key Roles: Doctoral Hub Coordinator, Supervisory Team, Director of Studies, Doctoral Student, Doctoral Student Support, Hub Scrutiny Panel

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES / MANAGING THE SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

Related document

Policy 2R: Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students
Procedure 4L: Student Academic Misconduct Procedure

Further reading

General Information for doctoral students
<https://www.solent.ac.uk/research/research-degrees/studying-research-degree>

International support at Solent University
<https://www.solent.ac.uk/international/international-students>

Intellectual Property Rights at Solent University
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/documents/academic-services/policies-procedures-guidelines/intellectual-property-rights-policy.pdf?t=1534437839680>

INTRODUCTION

1. The University manages doctoral students via four Doctoral Hubs
 - Business and Society
 - Creative and Digital Industries
 - Maritime, Technology and Environment
 - Sport, Health and WellbeingEach Doctoral Hub is supported by a Doctoral Hub Coordinator and has a Hub Scrutiny Panel
2. The Doctoral Hub Coordinator is the Chair of the Hub Scrutiny Panel and on behalf of the Hub arranges key processes in recruitment and monitoring of the doctoral student experience.
3. Solent University cannot guarantee students will be able to work with any particular supervisor, or that they will have the same supervisor throughout their period study at the University.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4. The quality of the University's research degree provision rests on the integration of student focused services and the core relationships and activities which form the doctoral student experience (also known as PGR). The respective responsibilities of the key relationships in the research degree process are set out in these guidance notes.
 - Doctoral Hub Coordinator
 - Supervision Team
 - Director of Studies
 - Doctoral Student
 - Doctoral Student Administration
 - Hub Scrutiny Panel

The Doctoral Hub Coordinator

5. The Doctoral Hub Coordinator supports the following processes within each Hub
 - **Admissions:** Undertakes initial review of applications and project proposals, arranges applicant interviews with academic staff, confirms preliminary supervisory arrangements and, when successful, authorises the offers to applicants.
 - **Supervisory arrangements:**
 - i. in conjunction with Doctoral Student Administration ensures that supervisor loading does not exceed the maximum permitted
 - ii. confirms supervision team composition (including any external supervision arrangements) meets the regulatory requirements of the University and supervises all proposed changes to supervision teams
 - iii. ensures that supervisors have training and support required to undertake effective supervision

- iv. seeks out suitable solutions and / or replacements when a member of a supervisory team leaves or where a supervisory relationship has irretrievably broken down
- **Doctoral student support and administration:**
The Doctoral Hub Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the key milestones for doctoral students within their Hub.
 - i. **Project Approval:** arranges the project approval panels with the Doctoral Student Administration team, organises any subsequent changes to supervisory teams and submits outcome reports to the Doctoral Student Support team.
 - ii. **Annual monitoring:** organises the Scrutiny Panel review session(s) and appoints the independent academic reviewer to conduct each of the doctoral student interviews. They record recommended outcomes of the progression and independent reviews, initiate appropriate action to resolve issues arising from the reviews, and report on these to Doctoral Student Administration.
 - iii. **Transfer to PhD:** arranges the viva at the request of the Director of Studies, including the appointment of the Transfer Panel and independent chair.
 - iv. **Examination:** reviews the proposed examination team, ensures they have relevant expertise and experience in accordance with the University's regulations, liaises with Doctoral Student Administration in relation to the appointment of an Independent Chair of the viva and monitors the outcome and any subsequent re-examination.
6. The Doctoral Hub Coordinator is expected to make a contribution to sustaining the research environment and culture at the University. They will:
- contribute to the research supervisor training and leadership events,
 - ensure awareness across the University of doctoral student training and events, external speakers and research seminars, and
 - support and enhance the research environment in which doctoral students participate.
7. The Doctoral Hub Coordinator is also a member of the University' Research Degrees Committee (RDC) and reports to the committee on the Doctoral Hub's activities and development. They act as Chair of the relevant Hub Scrutiny Panel, coordinate the activities of the panel and report on the findings of the panel to the RDC, including feedback from the student body, analysis of progression and attainment rates and analysis of external examiner reports.

The Supervisory Team

8. The supervision team is composed of one primary supervisor, the Director of Studies (DoS) and one or two co-supervisors. All supervisors should be familiar with the University's regulations for research degrees (Academic Handbook, section 2R).
9. Supervisors will:
- Provide regular constructive guidance and criticism to the doctoral student on their research, methodology and written work both in meetings and through written feedback. At minimum full-time doctoral students should meet with a member of

their supervisory team at least every 6 weeks and part-time doctoral students at least every 8 weeks.

- Provide guidance on relevant literature and exemplars of good research practice in the relevant field.
- Advise the doctoral student on health and safety and research integrity including consideration of ethical aspects of the research and the University's research ethics policy and processes.
- Encourage the doctoral student to engage with current developments and debates within their own and wider disciplinary contexts through publication, external and internal events such as discipline specific conferences, symposia, seminars and workshops, and participate fully in the research culture of Solent's Schools and the Solent doctoral student community.
- Maintain a record of all formal supervisory meetings with their doctoral students (whether location based or via telephone, skype or other online mechanism) including dates, times, discussion points and agreed actions. The actions arising from each meeting must be agreed by the supervisor and student following each meeting and copied to the rest of the supervisory team. It serves as an aide memoir for subsequent meetings and is submitted to each Annual Monitoring progress review.
- Undertake to regularly engage with the Supervisor Training delivered at the University and to update themselves annually of any amendments to the regulatory framework published at the start of each academic year either via the relevant supervisor training session or by downloading the latest iteration of the regulatory statements.
- Support the doctoral student to prepare for key monitoring milestones and the final viva including reading and commenting on completed drafts prior to their submission, provided that they are made available by the doctoral student in reasonable time for feedback.

The Director of Studies

10. In addition to the expectations placed on supervisors listed above, the Director of Studies (DoS) is also responsible for:

- Ensuring the doctoral student is aware of the facilities and resources available to them within the Schools and across the University.
- Ensuring the doctoral student is familiar with the University's policies and procedures and relevant legislation including, but not limited to, health and safety, research integrity and ethics, data protection, student academic misconduct, research misconduct and intellectual property rights.
- Tracking the institutional deadlines applicable to each of their doctoral students and ensuring they are prepared to meet the requirements of each deadline and monitoring point, including Project Approval, Annual Monitoring, Transfer and Viva. (See relevant Guidance Notes).
- Ensuring the doctoral student submits drafts through Turnitin and reviewing the originality reports prior to Project Approval, Transfer and Viva.

- Ensuring the doctoral student engages with internal and external training where appropriate to their programme of work.
- Monitor the frequency and standards of supervisory meetings and that the maintenance of the supervisory meeting record is current.
- Discussing with the doctoral student on a timely basis any issues of inadequate progress, barriers to accessing resources or to progressing with their research, or failure to engage with the Supervision Team or University services including Doctoral Student Administration.
- Prior to the completion of the thesis, discuss with the doctoral student and supervisory team options for internal and external examiners, and forward the nominations to the Doctoral Hub Coordinator no less than six months prior to submission of the completed thesis.
- Ensure the doctoral student is familiar with the conduct, regulations and expectations of the final viva examination.

The Doctoral Student

11. As for the supervisory team and DoS, the doctoral student is also subject to obligations and responsibilities in their relationship with the University and their supervisory team.

Doctoral student will:

- Attend the induction event, held at each intake point. Attendance is mandatory for all new doctoral students. Students who elect to register late must attend the next scheduled induction event. Students who elect to register after the intake date for their entry point should be aware that their maximum registration period will be calculated from the University's intake date and not from their personal start date.
 - Once registered, all formal communication from the University to the student will be via the university email account provided to them. If they intend to use any other personal email address, they are responsible for ensuring all emails are reliably forwarded from their university student email account to their preferred personal email account and for notifying the Doctoral Student Administration team of any changes to their full contact details.
- Be responsible for re-registering at the start of each academic year and for paying their fees on time.
- Become familiar with all applicable regulations, policies and processes and working with their supervisory team to ensure they comply with the University's regulatory requirements, ethical and health and safety considerations, progression timeframes and monitoring milestones.
- Establish, in discussion with their supervisory team, a regular schedule of meetings whether in person or virtual, and advise their DoS in good time of any planned absences which will take them away from the University or out of contact for an extended period of time.
- Ensure that they are meeting their registration mode obligations for average weekly engagement with their doctoral studies:
 - Full-time 37 hours*
 - Part-time 17.5 hours‡

* A full-time student may undertake a small amount of paid work compatible with the student's full-time studies, with the expectation that the total demand on the student's time is no more than 6 hours per week. (*see Academic Handbook, 2R, Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students*)

‡ Members of the University staff are permitted to register for a research degree in the part-time mode. To ensure that their proposed programme of work can be completed within the permitted registration period, the amount of time that the applicant can devote to the research must be agreed with the Dean of School or Director of Service before registration to ensure that an average weekly commitment of 17.5 hours per week is achievable.

- Maintain with their supervisory team a complete record of all supervisory meetings, including dates, times, agenda, points of discussion and agreed actions.
- Regularly review their development needs with their DoS, respond to supervisory guidance and advice and pro-actively seek supervisory comment to support their developmental evolution towards independence in the research process.
- Frequently submit their work for supervisory review and, especially at key monitoring stages ensure, on the advice of their supervisory team, that work is submitted in reasonable time for supervisory feedback to be received and acted upon. Also that they prepare in good time to meet all the reporting requirements of each monitoring milestone.
 - Project approval (*see Guidance note #4*)
 - Annual monitoring (independent review and progress review) (*see Guidance note #6*)
 - Transfer (to PhD) (*see Guidance note #5*)
 - Viva (*see Guidance note #7*)
- Recognize the supervisor's role is to offer constructive advice on academic content and general presentation of work. It is the student's responsibility to proof-read their own work, the supervisors are not expected to provide detailed correction of written English.
- Actively engage, guided by their supervisory team, with current developments and debates within their own and wider disciplinary contexts through publication, external and internal events such as discipline specific conferences, symposia, seminars and workshops, and participate fully in the research culture of Solent's Schools and the Solent doctoral student community.
- Respect the contribution and intellectual property right of their supervisors and other collaborative relationships in external outputs.
- Pro-actively address issues or problems that arise which may affect the progress of their research with their DoS in the first instance, and make formal application for approval of periods of suspension or extension as appropriate. Doctoral Students who do not wish to share sensitive information with their DoS can also seek confidential support from the University's Support Services through the Student Hub. Doctoral students may also raise general issues pertaining to resources or facilities affecting the progress of doctoral students to the Doctoral Hub Coordinator, or through their doctoral student representative for consideration by the Research Degrees Committee.
- Decide when to submit their thesis for examination, taking into account the opinion of their supervisory team. The opinion of the supervisors at this stage is advisory

and doctoral students should note that their agreement to submission cannot be taken as a guarantee of success.

- Submit their thesis for examination within the permitted period of registration, and meeting all submission requirements laid out in the regulations and guidance documents. Doctoral students submitting practice based projects must submit any relevant documentation and arrange to exhibit or perform their work at the convenience of the examiners.
- Inform their supervisors or other individuals with whom their work is being discussed of any conflict of interest, for example in relation to joint publications, so this may be taken into account when examiners are recommended for appointment.

Doctoral Student Administration

12. Doctoral Student Administration is based in Research, Innovation & Enterprise and liaises with Doctoral Hub Coordinators, Supervisory Teams, Doctoral Students and the University's Professional Services, including the Income office and International office, to provide procedural support at all stage of the doctoral student journey.

Doctoral Student Administration will:

- Provide advice on the University regulations for postgraduate research students
- Process doctoral student applications, facilitate admissions and registration in liaison with the Doctoral Hub Coordinators, University Admissions team and Student Registry.
- Process forms relating to applications to:
 - Instruction to Offer (ITO) (*see Guidance note #3*)
 - supervision team approval (RD3S) (*see Guidance note #3*)
 - change mode (RD3MS) (*see Guidance note #3*)
 - change supervisory teams (RD4S) (*see Guidance note #3*)
 - transfer registration to writing up status (RD3WU) (*see Guidance note #6*)
 - suspend studies (RD5S) (*see Guidance note #3*)
 - extend studies beyond the maximum registration period (RD5E), (*see Guidance note #3*) or
 - withdraw a student from their registration (RD7CW) (*see Guidance note #3*)
- Process the forms and procedural elements of the doctoral student milestones
 - Project Approval (RD1PA) (*see Guidance note #4*)
 - Annual Monitoring (Independent review and Progress review) (*see Guidance note #6*)
 - Transfer (RD2T) (*see Guidance note #5*)
 - Viva (RD6E, RD7DEC, RD8, RD9-DEX/RD9PWE, RD10G, RD9R-DEX, RD10GR) (*see Guidance note #7*)
- Maintain up to date student records and produce statistical and monitoring data to inform Scrutiny Panels and the Research Degrees Committee in liaison with the Doctoral Hub Coordinators.
- Support the Doctoral Hub Coordinators to make arrangements for Project Approval, Annual Monitoring Reviews, Transfer and Viva examination.

- Coordinate the Doctoral Student Induction events, and support dissemination of information about training and development opportunities to doctoral students.

Hub Scrutiny Panel

13. The four Doctoral Hub Scrutiny Panels are comprised of subject experts and senior academics with supervisory experience. Scrutiny panels are chaired by the Doctoral Hub Coordinators and meet as a group or in sub-groups, either in person or virtually, to consider student applications, annual progress and independent reviews. Members may be asked to contribute, where appropriate to panels for Project Approval, Transfer or Viva examinations in the role of internal examiner or independent chair where they have relevant experience and have undertaken the appropriate training session(s). The Doctoral Hub Coordinator may elect to co-opt other academics with relevant experience to contribute to student reviews as appropriate.
14. The Scrutiny Panels will meet in good time prior to the Research Degrees Committee (RDC) to consider, at appropriate points in the annual cycle, student data, student feedback, analysis of progression and attainment rates and external examiner reports to identify issues relating to doctoral student provision and experience for reporting to the RDC.

MANAGING THE SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

15. It is recommended that doctoral students meet with their supervisory team as early as possible after induction to establish a mutual set of expectations. Discussion of roles and responsibilities should be recorded in an agreed set of expectations in the doctoral student record that can be referred to and reviewed over the period of registration.

Items to consider may include:

- **Confidentiality:** What level of confidentiality is appropriate to the research?
- **Definition of roles within the team:** Who is responsible for what and when?
- **Student meeting record:** Who will update the student meeting record, obtain sign off by all those party to the meeting, and circulate to the whole team?
- **Frequency of meetings:** Has a meeting schedule been agreed that is achievable by both student and supervisors, and does it meet the minimum frequency requirements of the University regulations?
- **Length of meetings:** How long will supervisory meetings usually last?
- **Time of meetings:** When is a mutually convenient time of day to meet?
- **Setting the agenda:** Who will be responsible for setting the agenda for each meeting and disseminating it in a good time so all parties can prepare?
- **Timely submission and feedback:** How long will supervisors normally take to feedback to students on submitted work?

- **Setting the tone:** Has a mutual expectation of been established for supervisory meetings to be conducted in a spirit of supportive and constructive criticism by supervisors and measured and reflective response by students.
- **Remaining in contact:** How will you stay in touch between meetings?
- **Losing contact:** Is there mutual understanding of the consequences and options should either side lose contact?