



Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Degree Students

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1. INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

The UCD *Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Degree Students* provides University-wide support and guidance for the conduct of relationships between research students, their supervisors and Research Masters and Doctoral Studies Panels. The Code offers a set of general principles and details parties' roles and responsibilities as a guide for the establishment of a general framework of norms and standards to govern the relationship between supervisor(s) and students. The Code is applicable to all research degree programmes and may be supplemented by additional guidelines to cover specific School practices or areas requiring specialist research guidelines.

The Code is supplementary to the approved *Regulations for Research Masters Degrees*, *Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)*, *Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD)* and the *Regulations for the Degrees of Doctor of Nursing (DN) and Doctor of Midwifery (DM)*.

2. SCOPE & PURPOSE

This code of practice is intended to provide research students and supervisors with a set of principles in respect of their roles and responsibilities to guide the conduct of research supervision.

It is intended that this will help to ensure that the expectations of all parties are established clearly at the outset and are reviewed throughout the period of the student's studies and research. Guidance on conflict resolution is also provided.

It is recognised that there is diversity in supervisory arrangements in operation across the University to accommodate the varying needs of students within the context of differing disciplines and collaborative research arrangements.

This Code of Practice focuses primarily on the responsibilities and the relationship between the Principal Supervisor and research student. The responsibilities and roles of second or any other additional supervisors are also detailed in brief.

This Code of Practice should be read in conjunction with the University's *Academic Regulations*, including the *Regulations for Research Masters Degrees*, *Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)*, *Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD)* and the *Regulations for the Degrees of Doctor of Nursing (DN) and Doctor of Midwifery (DM)*.

Structure of the Code:

- General Principles
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Meetings, Monitoring and Review



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- Progression
 - Grievance Resolution

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

There are a number of key principles which underpin the University's commitment to achieving the highest standards of excellence in the research training and supervision of research students. This Code aims to provide students and supervisors with guidance on quality and best practice relating to the student-supervisor relationship.

The University expects supervisors and students to become familiar with these principles from the outset and that they inform the conduct of their relationship.

- Excellence in the pursuit of research degrees requires mutual respect between students, supervisors and all other related parties. It is important that at an early stage of a student's research studies both parties establish their expectations of each other.
- Students and supervisors should seek to establish good working relationships by meeting all formal requirements as stated in the *Academic Regulations* and by paying due regard and respect to the codes and norms governing the conduct of relations between student and supervisors as here outlined in this Code and as conventionally accepted in academia.
- An essential aspect of achieving excellence within the University's research programmes is the demonstration of integrity. In this respect, students and supervisors should make every effort to ensure that the conduct of research follows the highest ethical and professional standards.
- The successful progression of a student through a research degree is dependent upon the time and resource commitments of both supervisors and students. Students, with the support of their supervisors, should endeavour to meet all milestones agreed in the student's Research and Professional Development Plan.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Research students may expect to receive quality supervision, mentoring, guidance and good advice throughout their programme of study. This support will be provided mainly by the allocated Principal Supervisor and the Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel (where relevant) – see Appendix I for the Research Masters / Doctoral Studies Panel Terms of Reference. All research degree programmes involve a professional partnership between the student and their Principal Supervisor. A good working relationship is vital for the successful completion of research degrees and can be achieved by both parties understanding their roles and responsibilities within the relationship. Agreed expectations should not necessarily prescribe the way in which a student should work, but they should establish some basic guidelines to ensure the development of a good working relationship. The student-supervisor relationship is dynamic and therefore the expectations can be adapted appropriately as the student develops independence in their study.

4.1. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

A key value outlined in the University's Strategic Plan is the pursuit of excellence in teaching, learning and research. In the pursuit of excellence, however, it is essential that University staff and students promote and uphold the principle of academic integrity.

In the conduct of their learning and research activities, students should note the following in particular. It is the responsibility of the student to;



- Be aware of the University's expectations with regard to the appropriate methods of acknowledgement when drawing on the work or contributions of others and should be aware of the relevant University's regulations and policies in this respect. In respect of plagiarism, for example, it should be noted that the University will not tolerate any such misconduct ¹ http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/plag_pol_proc.pdf.
- Make every effort to properly and accurately report research results and findings.
- Ensure that any research funds or grants made available to them are properly utilised, accounted for, acknowledged and conditions thereof properly honoured and respected.
- Demonstrate independence, critical thinking and originality in their work.

4.1.1. RIGHTS OF AUTHORSHIP

While norms and traditions in respect of rights of authorship of work emanating from PhD research vary across the University, it is appropriate that ownership of research outputs and rights to authorship be established and agreed between supervisor(s) and student as early as is practicable. Such agreements and understandings entered into by a student and supervisor(s) should be notified to and agreed with the student's Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel (where relevant).

If work is published from a student's research degree dissertation, it is expected that they would acknowledge that the work was undertaken while studying at UCD.

4.2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESEARCH STUDENT

RESEARCH STUDENT LIFE CYCLE

It is difficult to set out a fixed timetable for every research student, but it is important that a planned programme of work is followed. Students should be aware of the structure and broad timelines that students on research degree programmes are expected to follow. Schools may stipulate required milestones to help students complete their programme of study within the required time period.² Appendix II outlines a typical full-time, doctoral student life-cycle and describes stage-by-stage formal procedures and milestones and typical student progress. This timetable may be developed locally to allow specific programme milestones to be indicated. Information regarding the structure of the Research Masters and MD degrees may be found in the *Academic Regulations* (section 10 and section 26 respectively).

Role expectations of supervisors and students should be established at an early stage. The understanding should accord with any University regulations, policies and codes as well as relevant College or School guidelines. Students must familiarise themselves in particular with the regulations which govern their research degree programme – the *Regulations for Research Masters Degrees*, *Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)*, *Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD)* or the *Regulations for the Degrees of Doctor of Nursing (DN) and Doctor of Midwifery (DM)*.

The University expects that students will make all reasonable efforts to:

¹ The University's *Policy on Plagiarism* defines plagiarism to be "the inclusion of another person's writings, ideas or works in any formally presented work which may form part of the assessment requirements for a module or programme of study without due acknowledgement either wholly or in part of the original source of the material through appropriate citation."

² Further information regarding the required registration period for the University's research degrees is available in the *Academic Regulations* (http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/academic_regs.pdf) – see for example *Academic Regulations* 8.6 (Research Masters), 16.6 (PhD), 24.4 (MD) and 32.3 (DN and DM).



- Accept responsibility for their research activity and learning;
- Achieve goals and milestones agreed with the Principal Supervisor, as documented in the Research and Personal Development Plan;
- Attend the agreed schedule of supervisory meetings and discuss progress with the supervisor regularly;
- Maintain a summary record of outcomes agreed at supervisory meetings;
- Meet with the Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel (where relevant) at required intervals and highlight any difficulties that may arise in a timely fashion;
- Seek permission for any extended periods of absence away from the University;
- Take full cognisance of supervisory advice;
- Comply with UCD ethical standards, copyright, intellectual property, data protection and privacy guidelines and legislation, and all health and safety requirements;
- Contribute to the Graduate School community, for example by attending other students' research seminars, providing feedback and generally being supportive of other students' research activities and efforts.

4.3. ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR

The Principal Supervisor takes overall responsibility for the student's research training, the conduct of the student-supervisor relationship and management of the student's research progress. The Principal Supervisor provides the necessary intellectual and pedagogical advice and support for the student. Supervisors should endeavour to make the student aware of all relevant regulations, policies and codes of practice.

The following are the key responsibilities of the Principal Supervisor.

The Principal Supervisor should, where possible, seek to:

- Provide guidance and advice in relation to the student's research topic;
- Encourage the student to develop abilities such as initiative, independence and the capacity for critical thinking. These abilities should be developed through the co-operative efforts of the student and supervisor(s);
- Motivate the student;
- Give advice and guidance whilst respecting the intellectual freedom of the student consistent with the traditions of the discipline and/or School;
- Encourage the student to publish, participate in colloquia, seminars and conferences in accordance with School and disciplinary traditions;
- Offer advice in respect of the selection of taught courses;
- Provide guidelines to the student to support timely completion of the programme;
- Provide prompt feedback, normally in writing, to the student when they submit written work or research results. Such feedback should include a considered and serious reflection on the student's work;
- Maintain a summary record of outcomes agreed at supervisory meetings;
- Advise on thesis preparation;
- Supervise the student's attainment of goals outlined in the Research and Personal Development Plan and provide appropriate feedback;
- Assess and support the facilitation of the student's training needs;
- Maintain regular communication with the student;
- Assist with the development of the Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel (where relevant) as an additional supervisory resource;
- Ensure that the student has reasonable access to their second supervisor and Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel (where relevant);



- Provide an annual report on student progress for submission to the Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel;
- Alert the student and Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel (where relevant) to any period of leave of absence that is planned in the course of the studentship;
- Ensure that Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panels (where relevant) reports are forwarded promptly to the School Graduate Co-ordinator;
- In the case of doctoral programmes, provide a written 'Statement of Progress' to the Assessment Panel when the student is being considered for transfer from Stage 1 to Stage 2 of their doctoral studies and be available for interview by that panel if required (see *Academic Regulations* 19.2 (PhD) and 35.3 (DN and DM));
- Promote the highest ethical and academic standards, making the student aware of all relevant regulations, policies and codes of practice;
- Make every reasonable effort to inform the student of health and safety policies and procedures and the student's obligations to comply with same.

4.4. ROLE OF SECOND AND ADDITIONAL SUPERVISORS

There is a wide range of supervisory arrangements in operation across the University which accommodates the varying needs of students within the context of differing disciplines and collaborative research arrangements. In some instances, it may be appropriate that, in addition to the Principal Supervisor, a second Supervisor be appointed. The nature of the role of the second or additional supervisors should be agreed between the student, the Principal Supervisor and the Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel (where relevant).

Activities of a second or additional supervisor may include, but are not limited to:

- the provision of specialist subject area expertise or methodological advice;
- the provision of academic and/or supervisory support to a Principal Supervisor where the latter is assuming the role for the first time;
- reviewing student's progress reports and providing feedback on draft chapters.

Academics at the start of their careers might be encouraged to act as a second supervisor to a research student in order to gain valuable supervisory experience.

4.5. ROLE OF THE RESEARCH MASTERS AND DOCTORAL STUDIES PANELS

The role of the Research Masters and Doctoral Studies Panels is to enhance the student-supervisor relationship and to ensure the quality of the research student experience in the context of structured graduate research programmes. The Research Masters and Doctoral Studies Panels comprise the Principal Supervisor and any second or additional supervisors or advisors who are appointed in consultation with the Principal Supervisor and Head of School. The Terms of Reference of the Research Masters / Doctoral Studies Panel are outlined in-full in Appendix I.

It is recommended that the Panel should meet with the student soon after the commencement of the student's doctoral programme to review their Research and Professional Development Plan (see Appendix III for a synopsis of the RPDP).

Each school will make appropriate arrangements to operationalise Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panels (where relevant) as befits the area of research and the number of students under its supervision. The University does not stipulate a minimum or maximum number of students which may be overseen by a Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel.



4.6. ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

The responsibilities of the School are as follows:

- Schools and/or Thematic Doctoral Programmes should appoint a Doctoral Studies Co-ordinator.
- It is important that the School or Schools, in the context of Thematic Doctoral Programmes, support the work and development of its supervisors and provide the appropriate training and opportunities for the development of good practice in supervisory skills.
- Schools, through Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panels, should provide guidance on any local procedures regarding the supervision of research students. This, for example, might include the provision of guidance in respect of the frequency of supervisory meetings, feedback on students' progress and the establishment of milestones.
- In cases where the supervisor is a 'first-time supervisor' it is desirable that they are mentored and receive training in research degree supervision.
- It is advisable that Schools monitor the number of students that Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panels, and Principal Supervisors, are responsible for so as to prevent the overburdening of the relevant parties.
- Wherever possible, the School will normally notify the student of the composition of their Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel prior to registration.
- In allocating a supervisor to a student the School should pay due regard to staff members' contractual status, entitlement to sabbatical leave and time-to-retirement.

5. MEETINGS, MONITORING & REVIEW

Monitoring the ongoing progress of a research student is a key responsibility of the Principal Supervisor.

With respect to doctoral programmes, students and/or Principal Supervisors may be required to attend for an oral interview with an Assessment Panel at the end of Stage 1. Therefore it is essential that both parties are fully informed regarding the progress of the student's programme of study.

Styles of monitoring and review will vary according to discipline and area of research and students should be notified of the nature and form of monitoring and review that is adopted by a School. There are a number of good practice principles that both parties should establish at the beginning of the research process. The following are offered as norms of good practice.

- An important aspect of the student's learning experience is the feedback received from their supervisor(s) on progress made at different stages of their research project. Regular contact between the student and supervisor(s) will ensure that the process of feedback is ongoing and informative. Monitoring activities, established by the School or programme, should be designed to be a positive experience, giving an opportunity to identify priorities in future work planning and in the provision of appropriate student support.
- Both students and supervisor(s) should take a pro-active role in ensuring that regular contact is maintained. A schedule of meetings should be agreed at the beginning of each semester. Good practice would recommend that students should meet with their supervisor(s) frequently and at



least once a month during a semester to review progress. The establishment of such a norm is considered very important for monitoring student's progress. Ideally, the student should bring written work or research results to the meeting to provide a basis for discussion. It may be that on some occasions there is little to report or no written work is submitted for comment, but regardless the maintenance of regular contact is key to the development and progression of students' research.

- The RPDP process involves the formal documentation of a series of meetings between student and supervisor(s) at 1, 3, 6 and 12 months. These meetings are to review the student's progress against the objectives and milestones set out in the Research and Professional Development Plan. The supervisor(s) and the student are invited to sign off on these meeting reports so as to record what has been discussed, agreed and if necessary to acknowledge points of dispute or issues which require further discussion and clarification. It is incumbent on the supervisor(s) to sign-off on these meeting reports. The meeting reports will help the student capture important decisions reached at these early stages in their studies.
- E-mail communication should also be encouraged where the student is engaged in fieldwork or if the supervisor is absent for a period, but care should be taken to ensure that it is not used as a substitute for frequent face-to-face meetings.
- Both parties should be able to arrange a meeting at short notice; ideally within 1-2 weeks during semester if necessary.

6. PROGRESSION

See *Policy on Progression in Doctoral Programmes* - <http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/pol.htm>

6.1. UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS

It is recommended that Schools agree procedures to deal with unsatisfactory progress of its research students and in doing so may draw upon the following guidelines:

- It is desirable that unsatisfactory progress is addressed as soon as possible after it becomes apparent that a student is encountering difficulties. Supervisor(s) should make arrangements to discuss their concerns with the student as soon as practicable.
- There may be mitigating circumstances that account for a student's unsatisfactory progress, such as ill health or serious personal difficulties. In such cases, it is recommended that the Supervisor, the Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel (where relevant) and the student consider and agree an appropriate course of action.
- If there are no mitigating circumstances, or if the student, Principal Supervisor and the Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel (where relevant) agree that the student should proceed with their studies, it is recommended that the Principal Supervisor should assist the student in identifying the reasons for poor progress and agree measures that should be adopted to improve progress. The Research and Professional Development Plan may require some revision.
- In exceptional circumstances, the Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel (where relevant) will be asked to provide advice and assistance.



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- In the case of doctoral programmes, if progress does not improve by the end of Stage 1, the Assessment Panel, subject to review by the Head of School, may make one of the following recommendations to the College Graduate School Board:
 - (i) that the student should transfer to another graduate programme utilising, where appropriate, the credits accumulated in Stage 1 of the doctoral programme;
 - (ii) that the student should graduate with a Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Masters degree;
 - (iii) that the student's registration be terminated and that the student be issued with a transcript showing any modules for which credit has been awarded;

7. GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION

Please see UCD *Code of Practice for Conflict Resolution for Supervisors and Research Students*:
http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/con_sr.pdf



APPENDIX I – RESEARCH MASTERS / DOCTORAL STUDIES PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE**RESEARCH MASTERS / DOCTORAL STUDIES PANEL
Terms of Reference****1. Purpose:**

Research Masters / Doctoral Studies Panels are designed to enhance the supervisor-student relationship and to ensure the quality of the research degree student experience in the context of structured research degrees.

2. Terms of Reference:

The responsibilities of a research masters or doctoral studies panel include monitoring the progress of the student through their graduate research studies, ensuring the quality of supervision, providing advice, guidance and support to the student and supervisor. The key responsibilities of the Research Masters / Doctoral Studies Panel include:

- 2.1. Enhance the supervisor-student relationship by the provision of advice in accordance with the University's Code(s) of Practice.
- 2.2. Ensure quality, rigour and equity of the supervision process.
- 2.3. Advise the student on their professional and personal development training and monitor progress against their Research and Professional Development Plan.
- 2.4. Review on a regular basis, at least once annually, the progress of the student against an agreed research plan.
- 2.5. Provide appropriate academic expertise and where appropriate facilitate an interdisciplinary perspective.
- 2.6. Provide temporary support to the student in the case of the unforeseen absence of the Principal Supervisor.
- 2.7. In the event of difficulties arising in the supervisor-student relationship the Panel will seek to resolve such difficulties. Where matters are unresolved, they will be referred to the Director of the Graduate School.
- 2.8. A Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel may support one or more students at a time.
- 2.9. Notify all changes in the membership of the Research Masters or Doctoral Studies Panel to the Director of the Graduate School.
- 2.10. To offer additional specific support for students or supervisors which the College Graduate School



Board may request.

- 2.11. The Research Masters / Doctoral Studies Panel is, in all activities and decisions, subject to review by the College Graduate School Board and the University Graduate Programmes Board.

Composition:

Principal Supervisor

Any additional supervisor(s)

A number of advisors (at least two but normally no more than four)

Where thematic and/or inter-institutional PhD programmes are offered a Doctoral Studies Panel can be configured as appropriate subject to approval by the College Graduate School Board.

Schedule of Meetings:

The Research Masters / Doctoral Studies Panel should meet at least once soon after the student begins their graduate research programme of study, to review the Research and Professional Development Plan. The Research Masters / Doctoral Studies Panel should meet to review progress on a regular basis, but not less than once per annum.



APPENDIX II – DOCTORAL RESEARCH STUDENT LIFE-CYCLE

Stage of Doctoral Research Programme	Formal Milestones	Typical Student Progress
<u>1 – 3 MONTHS</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Approval of nomination by CGSB & student admitted ➤ Assignment of Principal Supervisor, second supervisor where appropriate and Doctoral Studies Panel ➤ 1st Meeting with Doctoral Studies Panel ➤ Development of a Research and Professional Development Plan – which will prescribe the programme of research and study. ➤ Agree schedule of meetings/communication plan with Principal Supervisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify modules to be taken ➤ Familiarisation with the research area
<u>STAGE 1</u> <i>Normally 1 calendar year</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Doctoral Studies Panel review of Research and Professional Development Plan ➤ Completion of normally 90 credits of advanced education, generic skills training, research training (60 credits at level 4 or above) ➤ Decision on progress of Assessment Panel (end of stage 1, 12-15 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identification of area of research, the formulation of a research question and have developed a clear theoretical and methodological framework for the dissertation. Further requirements will be developed at School level.
<u>STAGE 2</u> <i>Normally 2-4 calendar years</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students may be admitted directly to Stage 2 on the basis of a relevant Masters Degree ➤ Completion of a minimum of 180-270 Credits (minimum 240 credits of original research for the entire PhD Programme) ➤ Extern Examiner(s) appointed ➤ Submission of completed thesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Completion of research and draft framework for thesis ➤ Write up thesis

This document draws, in part, from similar documents produced at the University of Warwick, Auckland University, University of Central London, European University Institute, Kings College London, University of Manchester, Monash University and University College London.



APPENDIX III – RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN SYNOPSIS

The Research and Professional Development Plan (RPDP) is an integral part of the structured research programme at UCD. The University *recommends* the development and use of a Research and Professional Development Plan for all Research Masters students. For all doctoral students admitted after 31 August 2007, the student *is required to* document their educational, training and personal and professional development needs through use of a Research and Professional Development Plan (RPDP).

The RPDP has been specifically designed to aid graduate research students in the planning, monitoring and completion of their programme of study. The RPDP is a set of tools to aid in the planning and progress of a graduate research student's research and professional skills. It is primarily owned by the graduate research student, but is intended to be beneficial to both the student and the supervisor(s). It will have great benefits for the management and timely completion of the graduate research degree programme. It is flexible and ensures agreement between student and supervisor(s).

The RPDP will play a major part in directing the course of a student's graduate research and in their training and development as a researcher. It will aid the student in planning research, will be useful resource when it comes to writing up, and will also help students develop key skills which will be invaluable to both their current research and their future career.

The RPDP is comprised of 4 main parts, each of which has a specific objective in terms of a student's research and professional development:

Student Summary – This is a short section in which the student can record relevant details about themselves, their programme, their area of research and any pertinent funding details.

Research Plan – The Research Plan provides a means for the student to agree with his/her supervisor the key objectives in the graduate research programme. It also enables the student to identify milestones in the research project. The research plan provides a mechanism for review of progress, assessment of priorities and determination of future direction for the graduate research work.

The research plan can be updated as often necessary so that it accurately reflects the student's research. The objectives and milestones can be as general or as specific as is required for the research area and the student's current stage of progression. Early plans may be to read the relevant literature and prepare a review. Later plans may then be more detailed, for example plans of experiments. The research plan will aid in the planning of the graduate research and will help the student complete on time. It will also be useful to refer to it when the student starts to write up. Finally, it is also a valuable introduction for students into how to plan research, something that will be an integral part of their future career if the student intends to continue in research after completing their studies.

Professional Development Plan – The Professional Development Plan enables the student to identify current skills and to plan for development in any relevant areas. Employers, both in academia and outside, are placing an increasing emphasis on skills and their development. It is therefore very important for students to be able to demonstrate that their skills have been actively developed over time. By developing these skills students will not only be more productive researchers, but will also be much better placed to compete for employment opportunities after completing their studies.

Meetings – The RPDP process also involves the formal documentation of a series of regular meetings between student and supervisor(s). These meetings are to review the student's progress on both the research and the professional development plan. These meetings are held at important times during the student's graduate research studies, although the student will probably be meeting with the supervisor(s) more often than these formal meetings. The meeting reports will help the student capture decisions reached during these important meetings.



Version History

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	12 Apr 07	Approved by Academic Council	
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