

## 3C.1 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES and INDUCTION – RESEARCH STUDENTS AND STAFF GUIDANCE

### ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESEARCH OFFICER

- i) Each School, or significant area of research activity, has a senior academic to act as overseer of post-graduate research students: the Research Officer. There are Research Officers at the present time in the Schools of Business, Clore Lab, Humanities, Law, Psychology, Applied Computing, Medicine and Allied Health. The Research Officers meet termly, at the University Research Committee.
- ii) The responsibilities of the Research Officer shall include:
  - a) appointing appropriate supervisors in their area, and inducting new supervisors;
  - b) requesting and collating the supervisors' termly reports on postgraduate research students in their area, and presenting the reports to the Research Committee;
  - c) [for PhD students (not for Masters students)] organising an Annual Review in which the student's progress during the previous year is evaluated and the proposals for the forthcoming year outlined. This should provide the student with practice in oral examinations, but should also include written reports from the first supervisor and the student on which to base further discussion. Following the Annual Review the Research Officer will prepare a brief report. A copy of this must be given to the student, and another copy sent to the Registry Officer for inclusion in the student's central file.
  - d) problem-solving in their area. For example, where a student's first supervisor leaves the University, the Research Officer may either permit a transfer of registration to the supervisor's new institution (if appropriate), or appoint an alternative supervisor (normally in consultation with the student).

### ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERVISOR

- iii) There are normally two supervisors per student, called the first and second supervisor. Their role is to lead the student through a successful apprenticeship in research in their area, to guide their project, hopefully towards the successful completion of the degree for which they are enrolled. (The following procedure reflects the general recommendations of the UK Quality Code: *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*.)
- iv) The responsibilities and duties of the supervisor shall include:
  - a) Ensuring that s/he has sufficient time to take on a new postgraduate research student, where appropriate via sensible discussion with the Dean/sub-Dean. The review of the workload management shall be included within the Personal Development Review (PDR) process.
  - b) Checking at the beginning of a student's studies that an appropriate Personal Tutor has been appointed.
  - c) Assisting the student with the preparation of the research proposal/plan, and ensuring that this is completed within the time-limits specified in the General

- Regulations for Candidates Intending to Proceed by Thesis.
- d) Providing guidance to the student on, and talking through with the student at least the following:
    - (a) the 'Postgraduate Feedback Questionnaire', as a means of considering responsibilities and entitlements, and the process of the degree;
    - (b) sections of this *Research Degrees Handbook*, highlighting at the appropriate time the parts relevant to the progression of the student's studies;
    - (c) the nature of research and the standards expected;
    - (d) requisite techniques;
    - (e) the literature and resources available. This should include directing the student to the subject-specialist librarian for induction and for SCONUL card and Athens password to electronic resources.
  - e) Providing guidance to the student on the wide range of ethical issues that may potentially arise in the course of research thereby raising student awareness and informing the student of the University's framework for the promotion and consideration of ethics in relation to research: i.e. the working of the University's Ethics Committee; the working of the School Ethics Committee, or the committee within the School where ethical issues are considered; the Code of Practice for Study by Research, School-specific ethical guidelines, where these exist; other ethical codes in the research area;
  - f) Providing guidance to the student on the issue of plagiarism raising student awareness and informing the student of the academic and University's antiplagiarism code, including the seriousness of plagiarism as viewed by the wider academic and professional community. Guiding the student on copyright and the need to obtain permission from third parties.
  - g) Checking the work submitted for the annual report and the draft thesis for evidence of plagiarism using Turnitin and discussing with the student any issues that arise.
  - h) Taking special care of overseas students. The supervisor has a specific responsibility for care of overseas students in that they may need frequent contact in the early stages of their studies. Problems with English language must be highlighted and where necessary appropriate advice about English language training given.
  - i) Maintaining contact through regular meetings in accordance with the General and Special Regulations for Higher Degrees to ensure that the student's progress remains focused and progress is maintained within the student's overall plan.
  - j) Being accessible to the student at other appropriate times when the student may need advice.
  - k) Advising on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the work may be submitted within the scheduled time.
  - l) Requesting written work as appropriate, and returning such work with constructive criticism within a reasonable time.
  - m) Ensuring that the student is made aware of inadequacy of progress or of standards of work below that generally expected.
  - n) Providing a brief termly report on the student, in the prescribed format, to the Research Officer, for consideration by the Research Committee; and, in addition, for a PhD student, a brief annual report to the Research Officer as part of the Annual Review.
  - o) Ensuring that the student is made aware of any subsidiary guidelines, which may

- be provided by the Degree Programme.
- p) Reading the thesis in its near-final or final form, and approving for submission for examination, or recording any reservations, via completion of the 'Notice of Intention to Submit a Thesis for a Higher Degree'.

## INDUCTION OF SUPERVISORS

- v) Where a proposed supervisor, who has a successful record of supervision elsewhere, is newly in post at the University, then s/he must undergo at least A (ii), B (iv), and C in the induction process for new supervisors (below).
- vi) The Research Officer in each subject-area is primarily responsible for the induction of a new supervisor. There are four elements:
- A.** The new supervisor should him/herself seek to understand proactively the role. This should involve at least:
- i. the study of educational literature on the role and responsibilities of a supervisor, and on what helps and hinders effective supervision. Standard works are in the library: i.e. Delamont, Sarah, et al. *Supervising the PhD: A Guide to Success* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2004), etc.;
  - ii. reading of the *Research Degrees Handbook* (obtainable in hard copy from Registry, or on the university website), in particular the 'Postgraduate Feedback Questionnaire'
  - iii. reading one successful recent PhD thesis from within their department or subject-area, and the examiners' report on the thesis obtainable from Registry;
  - iv. reading feedback from previous students of the same School if this is available.
- B.** The induction meeting with the Research Officer should cover at least the following:
- i. the needs of research students and the issues they face. The new supervisor should reflect on her/his own experience of supervision when working for the PhD, and what was good and bad in that experience;
  - ii. effective approaches to supervision and the range of strategies available;
  - iii. how both the supervisor and his/her students will effectively engage in the wider research environment, both within and beyond the University: this may involve consideration of Funding councils, conference/seminar attendance, funding and grant applications, research resources and libraries elsewhere, computer and data-based resources, research grants available within the university, and so forth (in accordance with QAA Quality Code Chapter B11: Research Degrees).
  - iv. the normal progression of a research student, and the formal Regulations and Procedures governing that progression, as laid out in the *Research Degrees Handbook*. This will include discussion of how the supervisor advises the student on development of a research plan and maintains contact with the student;
  - v. transferable skills outlined by the UK Research Councils and how these might be developed in the student. See Research Council training requirements, see QAA Quality Code Chapter B11: Research Degrees);

- vi. An awareness of the workload management of the supervisor so he can manage his supervisory obligations accordingly.
- C. A new Supervisor should normally attend at the meeting of the Research Committee, in the term s/he is starting supervision or in the next term. Meetings are on the Wednesday afternoon in the second week of each term. Attendance at the meeting will allow the new supervisor to meet the other Research Officers, get a wider view of the university's research environments, and see in the round how research students' progression is discussed and monitored, and the problems research students face.
- D. Where it is deemed appropriate, and where available, the new supervisor should be funded to attend the next appropriate external course on the role of the supervisor.

## **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PERSONAL TUTOR**

1. Every student upon Registration will be allocated a Personal Tutor. Each School will notify the student of this allocation, of any subsequent alterations and how a student can request alternative Personal Tutor arrangements in exceptional circumstances.
2. The number of tutees allocated to Personal Tutors is set by the School at an appropriate level to ensure that they can have meaningful contact with each of their personal tutees.
3. Personal Tutors have an over-riding duty of care to report concerns about their tutees to the Head of School, should this occur the student may request alternative personal tutorial support if they feel the existing tutorial relationship will compromise their position.

The Personal Tutor will:

1. Establish initial contact with tutees following Registration; this is regarded as the single most important element in establishing the basis of a sound tutor: tutee relationship.
2. Arrange a schedule of individual one-to-one meetings with tutees, with a reminder that Personal Tutors are in a position to advise and guide at all times, not just when difficulties occur.
3. Wherever circumstances allow and within office hours, respond positively to requests from tutees for assistance in understanding School or University procedures, provide careers advice and mentoring in research scholarship.
4. Check that any necessary reasonable adjustments or concessions are in place to support learning on the research programme.
5. Refer students to the University Welfare Support Team as necessary, with the student's agreement.
6. Keep a written record of each meeting or significant contact with tutees.
7. Act as an advocate for students during appeals or similar processes

## **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT**

- v) A postgraduate research student should work diligently in their research, gradually taking ownership of their project, while being guided by their supervisor(s) towards the project's completion. The responsibilities of the student shall include:
  - a) The preparation of a fully-fledged research proposal/plan, with the support and guidance of the supervisor, within the timeframe specified.
  - b) Discussing with the supervisor the type of guidance and comment he or she finds most helpful, and agreeing a schedule of meetings.
  - c) Taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties at meetings, however

- elementary they may seem.
- d) Maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with the schedule agreed with the supervisor, including in particular the presentation of written material as required.
  - e) Considering carefully the importance of avoiding plagiarism taking heed of the academic and University's antiplagiarism code, including the seriousness of plagiarism as viewed by the wider academic and professional community. Checking the work submitted for the annual report and the draft thesis for evidence of plagiarism by using Turnitin. Checking copyright issues and the need to obtain permission from third parties.
  - f) Considering carefully the importance of ethical questions in research and the need to consider University (and where relevant Departmental) guidelines.
  - g) (for PhD students, not for Masters students) providing a brief annual report on progress to the Research Officer, to form part of the Annual Review. It will also be usual for the student to submit a part-chapter or chapter, and/or to prepare a brief presentation of their work, and to deliver this at the Annual Review.
  - h) Deciding when he or she wishes to submit in accordance with the General Regulations for Higher Degrees, having taken the advice of his or her supervisor.
  - i) Consulting with the supervisor before undertaking any work requested or assigned by another member of staff.
  - j) Contacting their Personal Tutor for pastoral support when concerns or problems arise.

## **INDUCTION OF STUDENTS**

- vi) The induction of research students is delivered in Schools by supervisors and Research Officers. Students are made aware of the Research Degrees Handbook, and discuss relevant content with their supervisors, including arrangements for supervision, meetings and feedback, and procedures for annual review and assessment. They also set objectives and agree projects outlines. Students are advised about the research environment, their personal development and any local opportunities provided for them including research seminars and skills development training. All students are assigned, and meet with early in their programmes, two supervisors and a Personal Tutor.
- vii) Supervisors and Research Officers should also bring to the attention of students the following initiatives:
  - a) Library seminars for research students to help them with article searching and literature databases.
  - b) Research Methods courses and specialised writing workshops delivered in a number of programmes to support students in improving their research skills.
  - c) Social 'meet and greet' sessions, as well as networking events, seminar series and symposiums for students to formally present their work.
  - d) Centrally organised training workshops for students on research skills.
  - e) Mentoring systems for senior research students to support newer students

## **MATTERS RELATING TO RESPONSIBILITIES**

- viii) Where a student or supervisor has difficulty in establishing a good working relationship with the other, this should be reported to the Research Officer for resolution. If the problem cannot be

resolved by the Research Officer the matter should be referred to the Research Committee. The Complaints Procedure should only be used as a last resort.

- ix) The division of responsibilities between supervisors should always be clear, as, for example, between first and second supervisors, or where there are two joint supervisors, or a supervisory team. The principle supervisor allocated to a student, should be an employee of the University. The precise division of responsibilities between supervisors should be made clear at the Annual Review and if necessary be a point of discussion at the Review.
- x) Where the Supervisor and the Research Officer are one and the same person the rules outlined above are to be read with common sense.