Supervisor Handbook: Guidance for Faculties

1. Overview and context

1.1 All Faculties should produce a handbook, or set of guidelines, for their supervisors. Handbooks should contain key information based on the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) and Higher Doctorates (Regulations) and [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#) (CoP), whilst at the same time reflecting differences in subject disciplines and local policies and procedures. However, first and foremost it is intended that Faculty handbooks will be of practical use to supervisors on a day-to-day basis. This document contains core guidelines to assist Faculties in the production of supervisor handbooks.

1.2 Many sections of a Faculty handbook can be taken directly from the CoP, augmented where necessary with local information about how various aspects of the CoP are implemented in that particular Faculty (and School where disciplinary specialism dictates). To aid this process, the following guidelines are in bullet point form as they are intended primarily as a checklist for ensuring that all areas are covered.

1.3 Aspects relating to student diversity have not been separately highlighted in every section, except under a few obvious headings such as Student Support. However, Faculties are advised to keep diversity issues in mind throughout their handbooks, and to consider the different needs of international students, students for whom English is not the first language, students with learning and other disabilities, part-time students, students studying at a distance, and students with caring responsibilities. For example, Faculties should bear in mind the particular importance of induction for these students, plus any special research training they may need, and should consider diversity aspects when advising supervisors on how to provide academic guidance.

2. Introduction section: setting the local context

2.1 Governance structures (e.g. Faculty Graduate School Committee, School Programmes Committee, Faculty Education Committee).

2.2 Roles: who does what for postgraduate research students within the Faculty and School (e.g: Faculty Director of the Graduate School (FDoGS), Director of Doctoral Programme (DPD), Graduate School Office.

2.3 Sources of help and support.

2.4 Role of the Faculty Graduate School.

2.5 Contact details and web links.

2.6 Any other useful local information (e.g. supervisor forums).

3. Selection and Admissions section

3.1 Admission processes within the Faculty (and School where disciplinary specialism dictates).

3.2 Role of main selector and other academic staff.

3.3 Information on the needs of specific groups of students (international, disabled, etc).

3.4 where potential supervisors can seek advice and guidance.

3.5   This section should be cross-referenced to paragraphs 3 to 24 of the CoP to ensure compliance and consistency of practice.

4.   Induction section

4.1   What supervisors need to know about induction arrangements in the Faculty (or School where disciplinary specialism dictates).

4.2   Appendix 1 of the CoP should be cross-referenced to ensure compliance and consistency of practice.

5.   Funding and Financial Support section

5.1   Sources of funding.

5.2   How to advise applicants regarding studentships (ORS, Research Council, Faculty studentships etc. as applicable in the Faculty and School).

5.3   Conference attendance and other travel (e.g. fieldwork): the availability of funding and how to apply for it, what forms to fill in and who to ask for advice.

6.   Student training section

6.1   A Faculty statement on its policy on PGR training, including the minimum requirements as set out by the Doctoral College.

6.2   A description of Faculty's formal processes for identifying training needs (both generic/transferable and research skills).

6.3   Information on when and how often to do an academic needs analysis (ANA). Cross-reference to paragraphs 28 and 29 of the CoP to ensure compliance and consistency of practice; what forms to use, and how these should be submitted.

6.4   What to do once the ANA has been completed, how it feeds in to the personal development plan (if the Faculty uses these).

6.5   A list of available resources for meeting the training needs and how the Faculty ensures that paragraphs 30 and 31 of the CoP are adhered to.

6.6   Faculty processes for collating and responding to ANAs (e.g. for developing new courses, etc).

6.7   Research training: a list of required courses for research methods training, instructions for the student on how to enrol, guidance for advising students if there are choices to be made; how to find out about any other training opportunities within Southampton or elsewhere (especially for research council-funded students), information about any assessment processes or where progression depends on satisfactory performance in a specific course, information for students studying at a distance.

6.8   Transferable skills: information about what is available where, and how students can register.

6.9   How and where to record attendance at training courses, and procedures to be followed if attendance is unsatisfactory.

7.   Supervisory team section

7.1   Local operationalistion of the CoP (e.g. numbers of supervisors in the team (cross-reference to paragraph 14 of the Regs and paragraphs 37 to 39 of the CoP for compliance).

7.2   Arrangements for mentoring of junior supervisors, different roles (if any) in the team (cross-reference to paragraphs 41 to 47 of the CoP). Information on ensuring appropriate alternative arrangements are made if the main supervisor (in particular) is absent for a period of time, or if there is a need to replace any member of the supervisory team must be included.

7.3   Information on the responsibilities of the supervisor and responsibilities of the student (cross-reference to the CoP paragraphs 40 and 48 for compliance) with any additional local or discipline-specific material, such as attendance at specific research training courses, transferable skills training, safety training where relevant, seminars, forums or other sessions put on by the Faculty (and/or School).

8. Supervisor support section

8.1   Information on staff training courses, both mandatory (cross-reference to paragraph 43 of the CoP) – and optional, mentoring, opportunities for personal development training, local arrangements within Faculties (e.g. supervisor forums).

8.2   Information on the Faculty's procedures for monitoring and follow-up of supervisor training.

9. Progress monitoring and review section

9.1   Information about the requirement to consistently adhere to paragraphs 63 to 79 of the CoP.

9.2   A formal description of the stages of progression (a flowchart may be helpful) with milestones clearly identified with corresponding criteria for proceeding to the next stage (ensuring compliance with paragraphs 64 to 69 of the CoP).

9.3   A description of the processes for recording progress, with stated minimum requirements. At the minimum this should include annual monitoring and the process for confirmation of PhD registration/upgrade/transfer from MPhil to PhD.

9.4   A clear statement of what specifically is being monitored, and how supervisors should ensure that their students have understood what is required of them (ensuring compliance with paragraph 40 of the CoP).

9.5   The mechanisms through which progress is monitored at each stage of candidature should be clearly outlined. This should include how supervisors engage with PGR Tracker and how supervisors can access training for using PGR Tracker.

9.6   The name and role of the member of staff who is responsible for pursuing supervisors when reports are outstanding.

9.7   How feedback is given to students on their progress (ensuring compliance with paragraph 40 of the CoP).

9.8   Actions to be taken when progress is unsatisfactory (ensuring compliance with paragraphs 63 and 69 of the CoP).

9.9   Confirmation of PhD registration/Upgrade/Transfer: when it takes place, what the student has to produce and demonstrate, who sits on the panel that makes the decision, what forms have to be filled in, what happens if the confirmation/upgrade/transfer is not successful (ensuring compliance with paragraphs 70 to 79 of the CoP).

9.10   Actions to be taken and forms to be filled in when a change of registration takes place (e.g. to nominal registration, and who is responsible for deciding that the criteria have been met (cross-reference to paragraphs 81 to 82 of the CoP).

10. Record-keeping section

10.1   A description of the respective roles and responsibilities of the supervisor and the student in record-keeping (e.g: whether it is expected that PGR students should take notes of meetings to aid their understanding, and to then send these notes to the supervisor so that any misunderstanding can be rectified).

10.2   The Faculty's policy on who has ownership/control/access to student records, where records are stored, and whether on paper or electronically, and the maintenance of records in PGR Tracker.

10.3   The expectations of what must be recorded in the student's file in addition to any documentation held by the supervisor or the student.

11. The thesis and examination section

11.1   Cross-reference to the <u>Submission and completion</u> and the <u>Examination and Examiners</u> pages on the Quality Handbook which provide guidance cover the production and submission of the thesis, and the viva voce (oral) examination. The following information should be included in the Supervisor Handbook:

11.1.1   guidance about the production of the thesis (ensuring compliance with paragraphs 83 to 89 of the CoP);

11.1.2   processes, actions to be taken and forms to be filled in when the student is completion the *Intention to Submit form*, and submitting the thesis;

11.1.3   guidance on what the supervisor can and cannot say to the student regarding the decision to submit (cross-reference to paragraph 84 of the CoP);

11.1.4   information on the supervisor's responsibilities regarding the organisation of the viva voce (oral) examination);

11.1.5   information on the nomination and appointment of examiners (cross-reference to paragraphs 93 to 95 of the CoP);

11.1.6   clear guidance on the availability of the supervisor at the viva voce (oral) examination (ensuring compliance with paragraph 96 of the CoP);

11.1.7   conduct of the viva voce (oral) examination (cross-reference to paragraphs 97 to 100 of the CoP);

11.1.8   the processes to be followed post-viva voce (oral) examination; procedures for corrections, and keeping in touch with students.

12. Student support section

12.1   Cross-reference information to that which is published within the Faculty student handbook.

12.2   Ensure that a list of all the centrally-provided sources of support available to students is published in the Supervisor Handbook: ensure that this information is consistent with that published in the Faculty student handbook.

12.3   Include specific information for named groups of students, e.g. students with learning and other disabilities, international students, students for whom English is not a first language, part-time students, students with caring responsibilities, students studying at a distance, etc. (cross-reference to paragraph 40 of the CoP).

13. Academic guidance section

13.1   General advice on the academic role of the supervisor, the nature of supervision and the value/status of PhD students.

13.2   Guidance about supervisor availability to students, the importance of supervisors' availability during their published office hours, the expectations regarding the timescales for responding to student emails. An explicit statement of Faculty policy on what is reasonable should be published (cross-reference to paragraph 40 b) of the CoP).

13.3   Pastoral roles and responsibilities and how this relates to the supervisor-student relationship: where to seek help if problems arise.

13.4   The appeals and complaints process: what to do when things go wrong, where to look, who to ask (cross-reference to paragraphs 106 and 107 of the CoP).

13.5 Ethical issues (paragraph 32 of the CoP), academic integrity (paragraph 89 of the CoP).

13.6 Giving careers advice, or referring students to appropriate source of information such as Careers and Employability Service.

13.7 Writing references for students.

14. General issues section

14.1 Teaching and demonstrating (paragraph 57 of the CoP and the Policy on research students who undertake teaching activities).

14.2 Health and Safety (cross-reference to paragraph 59 of the CoP): training (where relevant, e.g. in a lab setting), risk assessments (e.g. for fieldwork, conference attendance, overseas travel). Include information as appropriate for the disciplinary specialism; what the supervisor needs to know in order to advise students, what forms to fill in etc.

14.3 Holiday entitlement and absence for ill-health (cross-reference to paragraphs 61 to 62 of the CoP).

15. Appendices

15.1 Faculties may wish to include additional information as appendices in the Supervisor Handbooks, such as:

15.1.1   Flow chart of the PhD process

15.1.2   List of web links to relevant University documents

15.1.3   Copies of forms, cross-referenced to where they are used

15.1.4   The Vitae Researcher Development Framework

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