

## Responsibilities of Supervisors and Mentors

Each postgraduate researcher should be provided with a **lead supervisor, co-supervisor** and a **mentor**. Co-supervision appointments should reflect the individual needs of the postgraduate researcher and the context of their study.

The **lead supervisor** is responsible for:

- The overall direction of the postgraduate researcher's research work in consultation with any member of the supervisory team and the mentor, as appropriate.
- Advising the postgraduate researcher of the respective responsibilities and roles of the members of the supervisory team and mentor as appropriate.
- Initiating formal monthly (or equivalent for part time) supervisory consultations and setting the agenda for such consultations.
- Advising the mentor of the progress of the postgraduate researcher's research if there are any significant pastoral problems.
- Ensuring that the postgraduate researcher is made aware of inadequacy of progress or of standards of work below that generally expected.
- Ensuring that, where necessary, a risk assessment for off-campus work required of the postgraduate researcher is prepared and that the postgraduate researcher has arranged appropriate insurance cover for the duration of such work.
- On receipt of the 'Intention to Submit Form' signing the form to acknowledge the intended submission and forwarding the signed form to the Research Student Administration Team. In signing the form the supervisor is not confirming that the thesis is fit for submission or that the submission will be successful.
- Making preliminary arrangements, in conjunction with the Head of School, in advance of the submission of the thesis, for the nomination of internal and external examiner(s) of the thesis, and in advance of the viva, for the nomination of a chairperson.

The **supervisory team** (lead supervisor and co-supervisor) is responsible for:

- Ensuring, as appropriate, that the postgraduate researchers' training needs are discussed at the beginning of each year of registration and arrangements made for suitable training, attendance at meetings and courses at appropriate times. Form GRS1 "Development Needs Analysis" should be completed each year. Unless the School prefers central record keeping, the lead supervisor should hold the record.
- Establishing with the postgraduate researcher, at an early stage, an understanding about the nature of the supervisor's responsibilities in relation to written work submitted by the postgraduate researcher.
- Giving guidance on:
  - the nature of research and the standards expected e.g. academic writing skills;
  - referencing and presenting bibliographic information, including how to avoid unintentional plagiarism and plagiarism issues, proof reading and editorial

assistance with academic writing – see Code of Practice on Plagiarism for details;

- planning of the research programme, literature and sources,
  - attendance at taught classes, research skills and techniques and arranging for training where necessary through the annual Development Needs Analysis process;
  - academic progress,
  - publication of results, intellectual property rights, and ethical considerations;
  - University Regulations and Codes of Practice and administrative processes relating to the PGR's progress, attendance, and examination of the research degree thesis.
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- Maintaining contact through regular tutorial, supervision or seminar consultations, in accordance with School policy and in the light of discussion of arrangements with the postgraduate researcher.
  - Being accessible at other appropriate times when the postgraduate researcher may need advice; this should normally be within one working week of a postgraduate researcher's request unless the supervisor has informed the postgraduate researcher that they will be absent from the University.
  - Giving detailed advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the thesis may be submitted within the period of study specified in regulations for the particular degree for which the postgraduate researcher is registered.
  - Requesting written work as appropriate, and returning such work with constructive criticism and in reasonable time (in normal circumstances written work will be returned within 20 working days).
  - Arranging, where appropriate, for postgraduate researchers to make oral presentations about their work within the University and at conferences, to publish material from their research (ensuring that proper credit is given for joint publications) and to have practice in oral examinations.
  - Completing the annual progress review and for making recommendations to the School Progress Panel.
  - Ensuring that the Postgraduate Researcher is registered for all compulsory and any optional taught modules. Provide timely (within 20 days) feedback on taught modules taken by postgraduate researchers if appropriate
  - Liaising with the Head of School in making alternative supervisory arrangements at times when they are absent from the University.
  - Assessing the Turnitin report on the postgraduate researcher's final version submitted for examination and reporting the outcome to the School Plagiarism Officer.
  - Being available on the day of the oral examination.
  - In conjunction with the examiners where appropriate, providing advice to the postgraduate researcher concerning the corrections and/or revisions required to the thesis following its examination.

The **Mentor** is responsible for:

- The mentor should be responsible for undertaking duties similar to those of a personal tutor for undergraduates, i.e. pastoral support. They do not need to be an expert in the postgraduate researcher's area of research and should not act as a second supervisor.
- Mentors should be available for consultations but meetings are not compulsory. Discussions between the mentor and postgraduate researcher will remain confidential if the postgraduate researcher so wishes.
- In some Schools it may be appropriate for the Welfare Tutor to undertake this role.

### **Responsibilities of Postgraduate Researchers**

- Postgraduate researchers are responsible for the content, completion and submission of their theses for examination within the period of study for their particular degree as prescribed in Regulation 6.2.3(a).
- Ensuring that they are familiar with and comply with University Regulations, Codes of Practice, School guidelines and procedures relating to their degree, and terms of any sponsorship.
- Ensuring that in every year of registration they meet all of the University's administrative arrangements, including completing the annual online registration process at <http://www.my.bham.ac.uk>.
- Discussing with their supervisor(s) the type of guidance and comment they find most helpful, and agreeing a schedule of consultations.
- Initiating any necessary supervisory consultations other than those prescribed in paragraphs 2.20 and 5.1.3 and setting the agenda for such consultations.
- Taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties (including illness or other exceptional circumstances), however elementary they may seem (e.g. in relation to supervision, project work or facilities provided) with the supervisor(s), co-supervisor or mentor as appropriate.
- Ensuring work progresses in accordance with the stages agreed with the supervisor(s), including in particular the presentation of required written material in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussion before proceeding to the next stage.
- Completing the Development Needs Analysis, in conjunction with their supervisor; attending research training and other appropriate training as directed by the supervisor(s), presenting papers within the University and at conferences, preparing papers for presentation, etc. as appropriate.

- In accordance with School procedures to provide an annual formal report on progress, for example a GRS3 form.
- Ensuring that they understand the nature of their supervisor's responsibilities in relation to written work submitted and that supervisors have many other commitments.
- Advising their supervisors(s) of any illness, holidays or any other occasions (for example, for urgent personal circumstances) when they will be absent from the University or from their study taking note of Regulation (6.2.3(g)) and the Code of Practice on Leave of Absence Procedures.
- Deciding when to submit their thesis (after the minimum period of study and before the end of the maximum period of study specified in Regulations), taking due account of the supervisor's opinion which is only advisory.
- Advising the supervisor of the proposed date of submission by submitting a "Notice of intention to Submit a Thesis" at least three months before they are due to submit their theses, in order that arrangements for the nomination of examiners may commence.
- On submission of the thesis for examination at the same time to submit an exact copy electronically for checking through Turnitin.
- Where a 'third party' editor has been used, to comply with the University's statement on the use of Third Party Editors, available at <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentervices/graduateschool/rsa/submittinyourthesis.aspx>.

This text has been taken from the *Code of Practice on Supervision and Monitoring of Postgraduate Researchers* (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/legal/15-16/code-of-practice-supervision-monitoring-progress-postgraduate-researchers.pdf> )

For full copies of all postgraduate researcher-related University Regulations and Codes of Practice please go to: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/legislation/codesofpractice/index.aspx>

Postgraduate researchers are encouraged to contact the **University Graduate School** or the Guild of Students' **Advice and Representation Centre** with any questions you may have regarding these Regulations and Codes of Practice or the support you are entitled to from your Supervisory team:

University Graduate School  
 Tel: 0121 414 6376  
 Email: [graduateschool@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:graduateschool@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

ARC  
 Tel: 0121 251 2400  
 Email: [thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk)

**Useful sources of additional information:**

Thesis submission & examination:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/student-services/graduateschool/rsa/thesis-submission.aspx>

Registration and academic progress:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/student-services/graduateschool/rsa/regprogress.aspx>

Training and skills development:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/student-services/graduateschool/skills/index.aspx>

Student Help: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/student-hub/homepage.aspx>

ARC: <http://www.guildofstudents.com/support/thearc/contactus/>