UCD Policy for Supervision of Research Degree Students

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Policy owner	UCD Graduate Studies	Approval date and body	19ᵗʰ March 2020 ACEC

1. Purpose

The UCD Policy for Supervision of Research Degree Students, outlines each party's roles and responsibilities governing the professional relationships between supervisor(s) and students. The policy is applicable to all research degree programmes and is supplementary to the UCD Academic Regulations.

2. Definitions

2.1 Research Degree: A research degree is an award at NFQ level 9 or level 10 characterised by a significant contribution (original contribution in the case of a PhD, MD) to scholarship, based largely on a major research project which is complemented by the development of a range of transferable and professional skills.

2.2 Principal Supervisor: The Principal Supervisor is the person with primary responsibility for the academic supervision of a research degree student.

2.3 Co-Supervisor: The Co-supervisor(s) supports the Principal Supervisor in the supervision of the research degree student.

2.4 Adjunct Supervisor: Is a member of Adjunct or Visiting staff to the University who has been specifically appointed as a Principal Supervisor or Co-Supervisor by the Academic Council or its relevant committee, and their name is entered on the Register of Approved Adjunct and Visiting Supervisors.

2.5 External Supervisor: Is a senior member of staff in an external organisation, appointed by the relevant Governing Board for a specific research degree student and their name is entered on the Register of Approved External Supervisors.

2.6 Research Studies Panel (RSP) The RSP is comprised of the Principal Supervisor, any Co-Supervisor(s), and advisers appointed by the relevant Governing Board.

All policies and policy related documents and forms are subject to amendment. Please refer to the UCD Governance Document Library website for the official, most recent version.

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3. Scope

This policy refers to but does not cover:

- Progression from Stage 1 to Stage 2 of PhD Programme: *Policy on Progression in Doctoral Programmes*
- Conflict Resolution: *Policy on Conflict Resolution for Supervisors and Research Degree Students*
- Student Complaints: *Complaints Policy*
- Assessment Appeals: *Assessment Appeals Policy*
- Theses Preparation: *Theses in Graduate Research Programmes*
- Split Site Arrangements: *Policy for Split Site PhD and other Graduate Research Degree Arrangements*

    All policy documents are available in the UCD document library
    https://www.ucd.ie/governance/documentlibrary/

4. Principles

The University is committed to achieving the highest standards of excellence in the research training, professional development and supervision of research students and expects all relevant parties to adhere to the following core principles.

4.1 Proactive engagement in forming and cultivating a positive, professional relationship founded on mutual respect.

- Supervisors and students are expected to clarify their expectations of the relationship at the start of, and at appropriates stages, throughout the research programme. Specifically agreeing, how they will maintain clear and regular communication, how they will schedule and prepare for meetings, how and when feedback will be provided and how the research degree student will meet their milestones.
- Supervisors and Schools must work together to provide continuity of supervision throughout the research programme and in instances where a change of supervision is needed, must source alternate supervision for the student.
- Supervisors and students will engage with University processes and procedures for resolving conflict. Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a satisfactory solution to conflict, ideally coming to a settlement that benefits all parties.
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4.2 Developing research degree students as independent researchers.

- There is a mutual responsibility for supervisors and research degree students to work together to develop feasible research projects.
- Both supervisors and students must work together to maintain consistent progress in the research, engage in the Transfer Assessment and other review processes and complete the research programme in a manner defined in the Academic Regulations.
- Supervisors must support candidates in the preparation of an examinable thesis.

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4.3 Promoting a strong research training culture and environment based on an intellectual and collegiate research community.

- Supervisors and students are expected to engage in developing and promoting a culture supportive of networking, mentoring and development, including expanding research and generic skills to support the candidate's personal and professional development.
- Supervisors and students should be mindful about managing conflicts and competing interests in such areas as authorship and intellectual property.
- Grievances between student and a supervisor must be sensitively and proactively managed by Schools.
- Supervisors and students are expected to engage in publication and/or dissemination of research findings appropriate to disciplinary norms.

4.4 Practice research according to the fundamental principles of research integrity, excellence and safety.

- Supervisors and students will promote and uphold the principles of academic integrity in the conduct of their learning and research activities.
- Supervisors and students must conduct their research with integrity and in accordance with the regulations, policies and guidelines of the university and applicable legislation.
- Supervisors, in consultation with the Head of School, are expected to identify and agree that appropriate resources are available to support the proposed research activity.
- Supervisors must have an active and continuing participation in research.
- Supervisors and students will promote and uphold the principles of academic integrity and excellence in the conduct of their learning and research activities.
- Each research degree student admitted after 31st August 2019 must satisfactorily complete Research Integrity Training.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Role of the Principal Supervisor

The Principal Supervisor has primary responsibility for the academic supervision of the research degree student. i.e. the Principal Supervisor takes overall responsibility for the student's research training and must strive to provide an excellent educational experience for research students which defines international best practice. The Principal Supervisor also has primary responsibility for the conduct of the student-supervisor relationship, management of the student's research progress and in guiding the student to conduct their research with integrity and in accordance with the regulations, policies and guidelines of the university and applicable legislation.

5.2 Role of The Co-Supervisor

Where appointed, the Co-Supervisor supports the Principal Supervisor in the academic supervision of the student. The Co-Supervisor may assume (where appropriate) the responsibilities of the Principal Supervisor in the event that the student's programme of study exceeds the duration of the initial Principal Supervisor's contract and the status of the Co-Supervisor's contract facilitates this.

5.3 Role of Adjunct Supervisor

An adjunct or visiting faculty member entered on the Register of Approved Adjunct and Visiting Supervisors can be appointed as a Principal Supervisor or Co-supervisor and would assume responsibilities of that role if so appointed.

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5.4   Role of External Supervisor

An External Supervisor must be specifically approved by the Governing Board on the recommendation of a School and their name entered on the Register of Approved External Supervisors. If a research student is based for longer than one trimester off campus in an external organisation including research institutes, industry laboratory or studio, government agency or non-government organisation and an approved Adjunct Supervisor is not in place, a member of staff of the external organisation must be appointed as an External Supervisor. The External Supervisor must be a member of the Research Studies Panel.

5.5   Role of the Research Degree Student

The research student has responsibility for their own research activity and learning. It is expected that research degree students will make reasonable efforts to achieve goals and milestones agreed with their Principal Supervisor and Research Studies Panel. The research student is expected to ensure that all or any ethical requirements associated with their research are addressed at the appropriate time and are required to comply with best and ethical practice and the regulations, policies and guidelines of the University and applicable legislation in the conduct of their research. The student must document their educational, training and personal and professional development needs as part of their Research and Professional Development Planning (RPDP). Research degree students must comply with UCD Academic Regulations.

5.6   Role of the Research Studies Panel (RSP)

The role of the RSP is to enhance the supervisor(s)-student relationship by the provision of advice in accordance with the University's policies, practices, guidelines and procedures. The Research Studies Panel will monitor progress against the prescribed programme of research and study and the RSP will meet at least twice in the first year and at least once a year thereafter. Each meeting will be documented and an agreed action plan, written by the Chair, will be signed off by the RSP members. RSP Terms of Reference are detailed in Appendix 1.

5.7   Role of the School

The School will establish appropriate processes and procedures to monitor the progress of individual research students registered in the School. Schools will monitor the number of students that Principal Supervisors and Research Studies Panels are responsible for, so as to prevent the overburdening of the relevant parties.

5.8   Role of the Head of School

- Support a nomination and make a recommendation for admission of the candidate to the Governing Board.
- Ensure that robust procedures in accordance with University policies and procedures are in place to address any alleged breaches of academic integrity.
- Highlight appropriate supports, training and/or professional development programmes for research supervisors in their school.
- Make appropriate arrangements for the supervision of a student. Should the Principal Supervisor be unable to supervise the student or where a degree of conflict has arisen that a recommendation of appointment of a new Principal Supervisor be made to the relevant Governing Board.

5.9   Role of the Governing Board
- Be responsible for the development, approval, and review of the graduate research programmes of the University.
- Develop policies, procedures, guidelines, and initiatives as appropriate to promote effectiveness, excellence, and fairness in the delivery and governance of graduate research programmes.
- Ensure procedures are in place to monitor;

- o   trends in the progress of research students, including completion rates and progression times.
- o   supervisor, transfer assessment panel, examination committee recommendations to ACCE; and the career progression of research graduates.

5.10   Role of the University

- Provide professional development opportunities and training to ensure that supervisors at all levels and stages are able to evaluate and develop their supervisory skills further.
- Have a duty of care and legal responsibilities to its students and staff for health and safety, equality and diversity, data protection and dignity and respect. Supervisors and students are covered by these policies:
  - Student Code
  - Mental Health
  - Data Protection
  - Dignity and Respect
  - Authorship Policy
  - Code of Good Practice in Research
  - Intellectual Property Policy
  - Procedures for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research
  - Research Integrity Policy
  - Research Ethics Policy

6 VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date	Summary of Changes		Changed by
1	12 Apr 2007	Approved by Academic Council		
2.0	28 Apr 2011	Amended and revised document approved by Academic Council		Lynn Foster
3.0	6.Feb.2020	Code of Practice developed into Policy document in accordance with the UCD Policy Framework		Janet Carton
4.0	19.Mar.2020	Code of Practice developed into Policy document in accordance with the UCD Policy Framework		Janet Carton

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APPENDIX 1

RESEARCH STUDIES PANEL
Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

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

2. Terms of Reference

The responsibilities of a Research 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 Studies Panel are to;

2.1.	Enhance the supervisor-student relationship by the provision of advice in accordance with the University's Policy for Supervision of Research Degree Students
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 (RPDP)
2.4.	Review on a regular basis, 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.	Seek to resolve any difficulties that may arise in the supervisor-student relationship. Where matters are unresolved, they will initially be addressed at the local or School level and ultimately be referred to the Chair of the relevant Governing Board if escalated.
2.8.	Notify all changes in the membership of the Research Studies Panel to the relevant Governing Board
2.9.	Offer additional specific support for students or supervisors which the Governing Board may request.

3. Governance

2.10.	The Research Studies Panel is, in all activities and decisions, subject to review by the Governing Board and the Academic Council or its relevant committee.
2.11.	A Research Studies Panel may support one or more students at a time.

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4. Composition of Research Studies Panel

- Principal Supervisor
- Any Co-supervisor(s) if relevant
- A number of advisers (at least two but normally no more than four)

Where thematic and/or inter-institutional PhD programmes are offered a Research Studies Panel can be configured as appropriate, subject to approval by the relevant Governing Board.

6. Conduct of Business:

- The Research Studies Panel should meet at least once soon after the student begins their graduate research programme of study. The Research Studies Panel should meet to review progress on a regular basis, but at least twice in the first year and at least once a year thereafter.
- A Research Studies Panel will conduct its business in accordance with relevant UCD policies and regulations, including the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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