

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS  
GRADUATE BOARD

**Eligibility for Research Degree Supervision**

(for appointments made with effect from session 2016/17)

1. It is the responsibility of the Dean of the Faculty or Head of School<sup>1</sup> to recommend suitable supervisors for appointment to the Graduate Board. Each supervisory team<sup>2</sup> must satisfy the requirements of [Chapter B11: Research Degrees of the QAA Quality Code](#) (June 2012).
2. The Graduate Board recognises the following key principles in respect of supervisory support:
  - reasonable accessibility of supervisors to Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs);
  - appointment of supervisors who have the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support, encourage and monitor PGRs effectively;
  - each PGR will have at least one main supervisor, with additional supervisors as appropriate. In all cases a PGR should have an identified single point of contact which will normally be the main supervisor;
  - at least one member of the supervisory team will be currently engaged in excellent research in the relevant discipline ensuring the direction of and monitoring of the PGR's progress is informed by up to date subject knowledge and research developments;
  - the supervisory team will ensure that the PGR receives sufficient support and guidance to facilitate their success.
3. The Graduate Board must be satisfied that a supervisory team can provide an appropriate level of support and guidance to a candidate before confirming the appointment of the supervisor(s). Where co-supervisors are appointed, one is to be identified as the main supervisor. It is not necessarily the case that the main supervisor will be the most senior or experienced member of the team of supervisors.
4. The expectation is that the PGR will be supervised by an individual from within the School in which they are registered<sup>3</sup>. Where two or more Faculties/Schools are involved in supervising a PGR, the persons concerned should agree which is acting as the PGR's parent Faculty/School and notify Postgraduate Research and Operations accordingly. This Faculty/School should then take full administrative responsibility for the PGR and should ensure that the PGR receives appropriate supervision.
5. Where two or more Faculties/Schools are involved in a candidature, it is normally expected that the main supervisor will be from the candidate's parent registration school. Permission must be sought from the Graduate Board's Programmes of Study and Audit Group where this is not the case.

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<sup>1</sup> Or individual to whom responsibility has been delegated.

<sup>2</sup> The Board encourages the joint supervision of research degree candidates. Where only one supervisor is appointed for a PGR a Mentor/Advisor must also be appointed.

<sup>3</sup> Exceptional arrangements may be approved by the Graduate Board's Programmes of Study and Audit Group for some CDTs to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the research programme. In all cases either a supervisor or an advisor from the CDT's parent School will be appointed. The parent School will retain responsibility for the candidature regardless of the home School of the supervisor(s).

6. The Graduate Board requires members of staff to attend a course on research degree supervision organised by the Staff and Departmental Development Unit before being recommended for appointment as a supervisor.<sup>4</sup>
7. At least one of the supervisors must be a member of the academic staff holding a permanent appointment of the University of at least 0.5 FTE (with any relevant probationary period having been confirmed<sup>5</sup>) and who has a minimum of three years previous experience of research degree supervision.<sup>6</sup>
8. No member of staff should be appointed as sole supervisor<sup>2</sup> unless
  - (i) they have a reasonable expectation of continuing in post for the duration of the relevant research degree candidature; and
  - (ii) it can be shown that adequate provision for supervision will be available should the sole supervisor leave the University; and
  - (iii) they fulfil the criteria set out in paragraphs 6 and 7 above.
9. The following categories of staff may not normally be the sole supervisor of a research degree candidate, but may act as a joint supervisor with an individual who fulfils the criteria set out in paragraph 6 and 7 above:
  - Members of staff who are themselves currently registered as candidates for research degrees;
  - Members of academic staff who hold probationary appointments;
  - Research Fellows;
  - Members of staff who have retired or resigned and those who hold research, honorary, part-time or fixed term University posts (but see below for “Honorary Professors” within the Faculty of Medicine);
  - Members of staff who have had less than three years previous experience of research degree supervision.
10. Early-retired members of staff or staff who have been re-engaged on part-time contracts by the University (including those who have had applications to leave the University accepted under the Voluntary Leavers Scheme (2010) may be permitted to act as sole supervisors for existing PGRs proceeding under their supervision<sup>7</sup>. Where new PGRs are commencing study early-retired members of staff may act as joint supervisors with an individual who fulfils the criteria set out in paragraph 6 and 7 above, with full responsibility for the supervision of the PGRs reverting to the other joint supervisor(s) after the conclusion of contracted employment.
11. External joint supervisors may be appointed provided that:
  - (a) the proposed external supervisor is conversant with the level and nature of the research necessary for the degree concerned;
  - (b) the external supervisor is made aware of, by the relevant School, the University’s expectations of the supervisor’s role and are offered the opportunity to engage in developmental activities including SDDU courses for supervisors;

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<sup>4</sup> Where a member of staff has not yet attended a course, arrangements may be agreed whereby they are required to attend the next available SDDU course.

<sup>5</sup> In the case of University Academic Fellows the successful completion of 3 of the 5 years probationary period will satisfy the probation requirement

<sup>6</sup> The Graduate Board has, however, expressed the view that the preferred level of experience is supporting a doctoral candidate through to successful completion.

<sup>7</sup> The Head of School is required to provide confirmation that the terms of the re-engagement include postgraduate research supervision.

- (c) the arrangements for supervision by the University supervisor meet the criteria set out in paragraphs 6 and 7 above.
12. Recommendations for staff on fixed term contracts to act as sole supervisor are considered on an *ad personam* basis, but if the recommendation is to be approved the individual is normally expected to satisfy the following criteria:
- (a) have been employed as a member of the academic staff of at least 0.5 FTE at Leeds or elsewhere for at least three years or have completed a probationary period at Leeds or elsewhere;
  - (b) have obtained a PhD degree;
  - (c) have previously acted as a sole or joint supervisor for a period of at least three years;
  - (d) have a reasonable expectation of continuing in post for the duration of the relevant research degree candidature.
13. An honorary member of staff may act as a main supervisor for an MD or DClinPsychol degree candidate provided that:
- (i) they have already acted as a Joint Supervisor at the University of Leeds, whilst having co-supervised with a tenured member of staff;
  - (ii) they have attended a recognised training course in the supervision of research PGR provided by SDDU;
  - (iii) they have a minimum of three years previous experience of research degree supervision;
  - (iv) a co-supervisor is appointed, with at least 0.1 FTE, who satisfies the eligibility criteria set out in 7 above
14. The Graduate Board considers special cases from time to time.

ST/CM, Ext 35778, 18/08/2016

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