



**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

# Supervision of Research Students Best Practice Guide

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# 1 Introduction

The Trinity PhD is a 4-year<sup>1</sup> structured doctorate with regular monitoring of the student's progress by the supervisor(s) and/or by a supervision team, as well as a Thesis Committee. Supervision is considered to be a crucial part of doctoral training<sup>2</sup> and this handbook has been developed as a resource for supervisors in this critical academic role.

This document outlines the key principles of best practice for supervising research students and also provides some practical advice and a list of links that will enable academic staff to best meet the training and support needs of their research students.

The content of the handbook will be complemented by the Research Supervisor Development Programme that runs during the academic year, supported by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Academic Practice. Further details on the workshops are available at the [Academic Practice website](#).

Other useful guides include the [Calendar Part III](#), which specifies who is eligible to supervise, the [IUA Doctoral Skills Statement](#), the [National Framework for Doctoral Education](#) and the [LERU statement on Holistic Doctoral Supervision](#).

<sup>1</sup> Some funding agencies only provide funding for 3 years although a Trinity PhD candidate is entitled to 4 years on the PhD register.

<sup>2</sup> The guidelines outlined in this handbook would also generally apply to students undertaking the research component of a taught Masters or Professional Doctorate, or a Research Masters.

# 2 The Trinity PhD

**The Trinity PhD candidate is expected to advance knowledge in a specific field through original research and demonstrate their capability to carry out independent research. The regulations governing the award of postgraduate research degrees are published in the Calendar, Part III.**

The Trinity PhD is awarded to those who have been able to demonstrate:

- a systematic comprehension of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field;
- that they can conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial piece of research with scholarly integrity, rigour and discrimination, which may involve the development of new skills, techniques, tools or materials;
- that they are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;
- that they have made a significant contribution through original research which extends the frontiers of knowledge by developing a body of work, some of which merits publication in national or international refereed publications;
- that they can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise in a sustained and exact manner;
- the ability to promote scientific, technological, social or cultural advancement within an academic context, with due regard to ethical considerations.

# 3

## The structured PhD in Trinity

**The Trinity PhD is a structured Doctorate and all students, irrespective of how they are funded, are expected to take taught modules to support their research and assist in the development of transferable skills that are relevant to a career both within academia and beyond.**

All students must complete between 10 and 30 ECTS of taught modules before they are confirmed on the doctoral register. Students registered on the Non-Resident PhD programme are required to complete a minimum of 20 ECTS of taught modules prior to the confirmation interview. All incoming PhD students are required to take the mandatory 5 ECTS module in “Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era”. The module is delivered online and must be taken at any stage prior to the student undertaking their confirmation / transfer process. As supervisor, you should discuss particular skill requirements with your student and identify which taught modules will best support them in meeting those requirements. It is important to remember that students need to develop skills and competencies beyond specific disciplinary research requirements.

Structured PhD modules may be developed locally and, in certain areas, may involve inter- institutional cooperation. Information on discipline-specific modules should be available in the School handbooks for PhD students.

Generic and transferable skills modules are available in themes such as communication, information literacy, research and career planning and statistics. Workshops and accredited modules are available in Teaching and Supporting Learning for postgraduate students who assist with undergraduate teaching (see Appendix 1).

These modules are available to Trinity PhD students across all disciplines. They are provided free of charge<sup>3</sup> to PhD students registered in Trinity.

In all but the most exceptional of cases, taught components must be successfully completed before a candidate can be confirmed on the PhD register.

<sup>3</sup> A fee may be payable for English for Academic Purposes.

# 4

## Maintaining a good student-supervisor relationship

**The relationship between supervisor and research student is a defining feature of postgraduate education and training. In accordance with the Salzburg Principles<sup>4</sup> for doctoral training, arrangements for supervision should be based on a transparent agreed framework of shared responsibilities between the PhD student and the supervisor(s).**

The role of the PhD supervisor(s) should be to encourage, challenge and support the student in order that they may develop the skills and attributes outlined in Chapter 2. A positive and collaborative interaction between student and supervisor will enhance the student experience and increase the prospects for a successful outcome for the project. Both supervisor and student can contribute to this relationship through interactions based on mutual respect and confidentiality, courtesy, accessibility, clarity of communication and application of effort.

A Supervisor – Research Student Agreement provides a good basis for understanding the roles and responsibilities of both student and supervisor and facilitates a discussion about matters relating to learning, research, wellbeing, training and administrative requirements.

The agreement template includes open fields for students and supervisors to mutually agree on the type and frequency of communications, and how they propose to raise and resolve matters as they arise within the relationship.

As such, the Agreement facilitates a shared understanding of goals and promotes open communication between supervisors and their students, providing a platform for addressing concerns.



1. **Communication:** It is essential that supervisors and students maintain clear and open lines of communication. Supervisors should encourage students to bring to their attention any difficulties or issues that potentially may interfere with their work.
2. **Early intervention:** If difficulties do arise, early intervention is always advisable. Supervisors and students should not simply wait and allow a problem to persist or get worse in the hope that the issue will resolve itself eventually.
3. **Clarity:** It is essential that both student and supervisor reach a clear and agreed understanding about the nature of any issue that might affect progress and of the steps necessary to resolve this issue.
4. **Avoid misunderstandings:** It may be beneficial for the supervisor and student to exchange written summaries of their respective views of the outcomes of their discussions on any difficulty so that they are clear where they both stand.
5. **Constructive criticism:** Such criticisms are part of the obligations of a supervisor and constitute a key feature of responsible research supervision. Criticism, no matter how constructively intended also has the potential to create conflicts between student and supervisor so a discussion about the nature and purpose of constructive criticism at the outset of the project may help reduce tensions that may arise later.
6. **Maintain records:** Supervisors and students may find it helpful to keep a record of their meetings for future reference. Where a student or supervisor feels that the other party is unresponsive to requests for a meeting, a record of their attempts to raise this issue with the other party should be kept. They should approach the Director of Teaching & Learning for advice in resolving the situation.
7. **Notification:** If following discussions and meetings the supervisor or student still feels that progress has been consistently unsatisfactory, the other party should be notified in writing about the reasons for this view and be given an opportunity to respond. All progress should be reported in annual review reports. Both supervisor and student should consider whether involvement of the Thesis Committee may be helpful in reaching a resolution.

# 5

## The roles & responsibilities of the supervisor

### Supervisors of research students in Trinity will:

1. Be familiar with the [regulations](#) and guidelines which operate within their School and within College.
2. Be familiar with the supports and services available to students within their School and within College.
3. Participate in the selection process for entry to the research register in conjunction with the Director of Teaching & Learning.
4. Guide the student in identifying their research topic; within the first three months (or per School/Discipline requirements) have agreed a suitable topic of research which can be completed as a research project and written up within the prescribed period of study (normally four years full-time or six years part-time).
5. In consultation with the student, and within three months of registration, identify and nominate [Thesis Committee](#) members and ensure that the student has been introduced to their Thesis Committee.
6. Support attendance at personal/professional development courses (e.g., through ensuring time is provided for these activities). Point to the Trinity Careers Service for information about career planning, employability and work-based learning.
7. Encourage the students to attend relevant taught modules and other relevant activities, where possible and appropriate.
8. Ensure that, where applicable, risk assessment of laboratory and/or field-based activities has been carried out in accordance with the university and discipline procedures and that the student receives the required safety training.
9. Ensure that the student is familiar with the [College Policy on Academic Integrity](#).
10. Ensure that ethical approval for the research project has been obtained in accordance with university procedures. For further information, please visit the web page for [REAMs](#).
11. Ensure that the student is aware of the [Trinity Policy on Good Research Practice](#).
12. Monitor progress according to agreed milestones (and revising same based on issues in the field).

13. Establish a practice of regular meetings with the student at which all matters relating to the research project can be discussed. Provide commentary, constructively and within a reasonable timeframe, on the student's oral and written work. It is recommended that details of the meetings are recorded.

Discuss and agree mutual responsibilities and expectations within the supervision relationship. The [Supervisor – Research Student Agreement](#) can be a useful support in this discussion.

14. Ensure that the student is aware of their entitlements to leave (up to 30 days annually exclusive of public holidays) and their obligations in notifying you as supervisor of any planned absences.

15. Alert the student to what they may expect from you by way of a critique of work (some supervisors have a policy of only reading their student's work once; others are happy to read it more often).

16. Arrange (in consultation with the co-supervisor, where relevant and the Director of Teaching & Learning) for a replacement in the event of absence for a period exceeding 4 weeks. Please refer to Chapter 6 for guidance on co-supervision arrangements.

17. Complete annual [review reports](#) in conjunction with the student in order to monitor the student's progress and highlight any unexpected problems which can then be addressed. Engage in direct dialogue with the student in reviewing the annual review report submitted by the student.

18. Inform the student about the procedures for transfer from the Masters register or confirmation on the PhD register. The supervisor should ensure that transfer/confirmation occurs within 22 months of registration for a full-time student (extended by a further year for part-time students) and provide guidance in the drafting of the [report](#). The supervisor and/or co-supervisor may be in attendance as observers at the confirmation/transfer interview conducted by the Thesis Committee as appropriate to local and discipline norms. The Chair should ensure that time is allocated for the student to speak with the Thesis Committee without the supervisor(s) present.

19. Encourage the student to present work in progress from time to time, as appropriate, including the Thesis in 3 competition, and to attend relevant conferences, meetings and workshops.

20. Provide guidance on the preparation of the thesis and on the *viva voce* examination and nominate examiners to the Director of Teaching & Learning.

21. Advise the student to maintain their records of research in a manner which can be accessed and understood by anyone with a legitimate right to enquire.

22. Engage in appropriate professional development for supervising research students.



## 6 Joint supervision of research students\*

**Joint supervision is strongly encouraged in Trinity and is a necessity for interdisciplinary projects. There are two main models:**

1. A formal co-supervision model where two supervisors contribute equally to the supervision process, even where one signs off as the principal supervisor; in such a model, the co-supervisor is eligible and expected to assume the role of principal supervisor should the need arise. A co-supervisor *must* be appointed if the principal supervisor anticipates being absent from the university or unable to engage in supervision for a period longer than three months.
2. An informal primary/secondary supervision model, where a principal supervisor has responsibility for the student and oversees the research and the secondary supervisor(s) contribute(s) according to their specific area of expertise. Secondary supervisors do not need to meet the eligibility criteria for Principal and Co-Supervisors.

This latter model in particular can act as a means of providing training and support to those academics newer to supervision and can ensure that all relevant expertise is available to the student as needed.

There are undoubtedly benefits to joint supervision, but there are also challenges to such collaborations, especially managing supervision activities and reaching agreement on responsibilities. It is essential that these potential challenges are discussed at the start of the project.

Through dialogue the optimal management of supervision and the allocation of specific areas of responsibility can be made clear to each supervisor and the student.

\* Thesis Committees do not have a formal supervisory role. For guidance on roles and responsibilities of Thesis Committee members view the [Thesis Committee Guidelines](#).

## Benefits

1. Students can benefit from a broader range of expertise and perspectives.
2. Students can benefit from a broader range of personalities.
3. Supervisors can broaden links and relationships with other faculty members.
4. Supervisors can learn from each other's supervision styles.
5. The process provides back-up for supervisors ill or on leave.

## Challenges

1. It can be challenging for supervisors to agree on a path and process, especially where expectations or cultures differ in different Disciplines/Schools.
2. Supervisors may have different styles resulting in tension or confusion.
3. Students may find it difficult to negotiate the different views of the supervisors.
4. It can be challenging to find suitable times to meet.
5. The process can become 'unmanaged' especially in situations where responsibilities have not been clearly allocated and agreed.

## Effective joint supervision practice depends on many good practices. Some suggestions for supervisors entering the joint supervision process include the following:

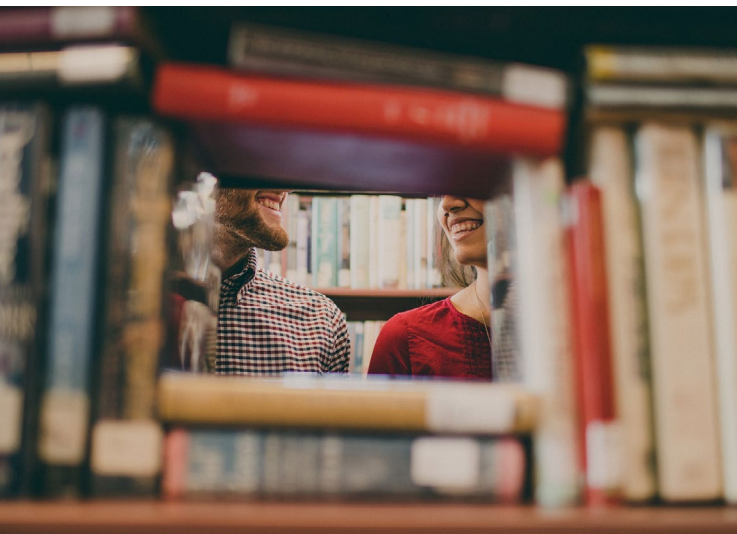
1. The principal and co-supervisor should meet to discuss such things as respective supervision styles, expectations, and to agree on relative contributions expected.

Questions that might be considered include:

What can the student expect from each supervisor? Who is going to manage the process? Who will initiate or respond to emails? Who will call the meetings? What meetings will supervisors have separately and what meetings will supervisors have jointly with the student? How will supervisors give feedback?

Early in the relationship, supervisors should discuss and agree their needs, responsibilities and expectations with the student, both individually and as a supervision team.

2. The supervisors should establish guidelines with the student so that each person knows what is expected of them, acknowledging that this will need to be renegotiated between all parties periodically. The [Supervisor - Research Student Agreement template](#) may be a useful resource to agree the expectations, roles and responsibilities.



# 7

## How to support your research student and resolve issues

**Supervisors should expect that from time to time, over the course of their studies, personal or academic issues will arise for research students, and that students will require additional assistance and support.**

It is **not** the role of the supervisor, in most cases, to resolve these issues directly but, as their primary College-contact, research students may seek advice or assistance from their supervisor in identifying the correct service or support pathway. Additionally, the research student body is diverse and includes many mature students, part-time students and international students as well as many other groups. An inclusive approach to supervision practice acknowledges that associated with this diversity, a variety of life challenges can arise that may impact on student progress.

### Being prepared:

- Supervisors should ensure they are informed of the student support services in College and, as far as is practicable, make their students aware of these services and how to access them (see Appendix 2 for support services available to postgraduates).
- Supervisors should also ensure they are aware of the College policies which relate to student support including, but not limited to College's Accessible Information Policy, Fitness to Study Policy, Dignity and Respect Policy, Sexual Misconduct Policy and College's regulations pertaining to Graduate Studies and Higher Degrees (University of Dublin, Trinity College, Calendar Part III).

## Starting well:

- It's important that any academic, health or personal issues which may impact a student's progress are highlighted early on, whenever possible.
- Supervisors have a key role in establishing an open dialogue and should, at their first meeting with a research student or soon after, agree how best to highlight any queries or concerns the student has regarding their study, wellbeing or general social integration and 'life' at Trinity so that they may be signposted to the relevant service.
- Research students and supervisors may address general queries to the Postgraduate Advisory Service (PAS) where they are not sure how best to resolve a query.

## Orientation:

- Many complex queries can be prevented where a student is aware of relevant services and seeks support early. A comprehensive week-long orientation programme for all postgraduates is run at the start of the new academic year. Content includes campus tours, social events and workshops on accessing services, managing physical and promoting good mental and physical health, academic Integrity and managing the student-supervisor relationship. All content is delivered in a hybrid format and each session is recorded and accessible from [the Student Life/Orientation website](#).
- Additionally, a mid-semester PhD Skills for Success programme runs twice annually, with sessions tailored for students at different stages of their research degree: year 1, post-confirmation, and final year. Supervisors should

encourage their students to attend these sessions wherever possible and, in the case of late registrants, ensure the students are aware of the recordings and where to access these.

## Students with Disabilities:

- A wide range of disabilities and conditions can impact a student's academic progress. The choice to disclose these disabilities and conditions remains with the student. Supervisors should be aware that disclosure of a disability or ongoing condition is a source of significant anxiety for many PhD students, many of whom fear negative academic or professional repercussions.
- Trinity's disAbility Service provides needs assessments and agrees reasonable accommodations suited to the student's needs and mode of research. These may include assistive technology, occupational therapy, or a recommendation to record supervision meetings.
- When a student discloses a disability directly or via the disAbility Service, supervisors are expected to implement reasonable accommodations as recommended. It is not possible to disregard a recommended reasonable accommodation, but where an accommodation is not considered feasible due to the nature of the research being undertaken, the supervisor must flag this with the student and their disability officer to discuss and, if possible, agree an alternative.

## When an issue has arisen:

- Discussions around personal or academic issues should be treated confidentially and in a non-judgmental manner.
- The supervisor should be supportive and respectful of the student's feelings, maintain a professional demeanour and be mindful of the student's dignity.
- Similarly, they should not take on the role of a support service themselves and should be aware of their own limitations.
- They must actively suggest relevant support services and should follow-up with the student two days after the initial discussion and encourage feedback and regular communication regarding the issue, and how it will affect the student personally and academically.
- They should further make a generic note that such an issue has arisen, and what steps they and the student have agreed to take ahead of the possibility that the student case will escalate, or in the event that the issue should be taken into account when assessing the student's academic progress, or if an application is made to go off-books, for an extension or in the case of an academic or disciplinary appeal.
- Supervisors can and should contact support services for advice on dealing with student issues in a general manner but cannot divulge specifics of a case without their student's permission.

## In the event of serious concern:

- In the very rare event that a student's behaviour constitutes a concern (in particular where there is on-going or escalating concern about a student's wellbeing, personal safety or behaviour) supervisors or Directors of Teaching & Learning (Postgraduate) may activate the [College's Fitness to Study procedure](#).
- However, should a supervisor have reason to suspect that a student has become a danger either to their own or another's safety, the supervisor should contact College Health or the Student Counselling Service immediately and seek guidance from them.
- Similarly, if a child protection concern is raised, the supervisor must seek support from the College Child Protection Officer in the Secretary's Office.



# Avoiding the breakdown of the student-supervisor relationship

In most cases the student-supervisor relationship will proceed smoothly but if difficulties do arise there are a number of considerations and support services that supervisors and students may find helpful. Guidance for resolving issues arising in supervision is available on [the Graduate Studies website](#).

Managing relationships is an active process and challenges can arise at any point. The supervision relationship has some specific characteristics that can make resolving challenges more difficult.

1. The supervisory relationship has a power dimension and raising issues, querying aspects of the relationship, or challenging the dynamics of their supervision is a daunting task for many students.
2. Supervisors should note that the dynamic of the relationship and fear that it may break down is a common concern for postgraduate students.
3. A strained relationship is often retrievable. Should the supervisor feel that there is deterioration of communication, they should review and evaluate any written feedback or record of previous meetings with the student ahead of their next meeting. The supervisor should seek to engage in a frank discussion about what happened within and as an outcome of previous meetings. Focusing on identifying what was helpful in previous meetings can provide a useful starting point for a solution-focused approach.
4. Following this discussion, it may be necessary to realign the plan of work agreed with the student, provide more details in the record of meetings, or to ask the Director of Teaching & Learning (or another member of

staff with the Director's approval) to attend some subsequent meetings as an observer. The student should also be directed to the informal advocacy supports offered by the TCDSU / AMLCT and the Postgraduate Advisory Service (PAS).

5. Should significant deterioration be apparent, the Director of Teaching & Learning should help to mediate a solution, where one is possible, and/or to offer alternative arrangements for the supervisor and student. The student should again be reminded of the advocacy supports of the TCDSU / AMLCT, Counseling Service and the PAS. All parties are required to engage with the mediation process.

Occasionally the relationship between student and supervisor may simply breakdown despite the best efforts of supervisors and students. Schools should have in place a mechanism to work towards resolving the difficulties that may arise under these circumstances. In extreme cases, the outcome of an unresolved breakdown in the relationship is a formal complaint by a student or the supervisor. The regulations governing complaints concerning supervision are outlined in the College calendar, Part III.

Such instances are always difficult for everyone involved, especially where one party feels they have done everything possible to maintain a positive, supportive relationship. Supervisors should ensure that they engage with their Head of School and Human Resources for any supports that they need for their own personal wellbeing.

## 8 Timelines

(see also Appendix 3)

**The variety of research approaches and disciplinary conventions make it impossible to prescribe in detail the nature and timeline of all doctoral research projects. Nevertheless, the University of Dublin Calendar specifies a number of activities that must or should be achieved by certain target times.**

Similarly, there are tasks that typically become relevant or even necessary and must be attended to at some stage during students' progression through their doctoral studies. Below is a non-exhaustive list of tasks and timelines in chronological order that supervisors may need to consider.

The appropriate times for the relevant activities (selected from this list by the supervisor and student) should be negotiated and explicitly agreed between students and their supervisor(s). Such agreements may be filed (and updated) by students and supervisors. Any activities not deemed relevant by supervisor(s) and student should be marked as 'not relevant' and signed off by supervisor(s) and student.



TIME	TASK
<b>Before commencement of study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check that the student is aware of the range of documentation that is required and that they are in communication with the Academic Registry.</li> <li>• Ensure that funding (where applicable) is in place (including any fee differential payment processes) and the student completes the registration (in Year 1 and the subsequent years).</li> <li>• Encourage the student to attend <a href="#">Postgraduate Students orientation</a> events.</li> </ul>
<b>During the first months of doctoral study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the student to ensure a clear understanding of the research focus and/or question.</li> <li>• Support development of realistic research programme with clear aims and objectives.</li> <li>• Provide guidance on standards expected for key milestones during research process.</li> <li>• Ensure membership of the <a href="#">Thesis Committee</a> has been agreed and shared with student.</li> <li>• Ensure a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities; the <a href="#">Supervisor - Research Student Agreement</a> can help clarify mutual expectations related to your partnership.</li> <li>• Discuss the requirements of the structured PhD pertaining to the taught modules, including the completion of the mandatory module on 'Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era'.</li> <li>• Encourage students to access the <a href="#">Research Student Handbook</a>.</li> <li>• Discuss relevant <a href="#">College policies</a> and promote compliance as relevant.</li> <li>• Facilitate and support appropriate training in safety, research and technical skills (including health and safety).</li> <li>• Encourage the student to explore available library and/or lab resources and support appropriate training in terms of bibliography management or other scientific literacy skills.</li> <li>• Provide guidance on how to access and critically review literature.</li> <li>• Encourage and facilitate engagement with wider community, including interaction with students outside of their discipline area.</li> <li>• Be generally aware of support services available to students in Trinity and encourage help-seeking where necessary, including participation in the <a href="#">Skills for Success</a> programme.</li> <li>• Ensure there is a clear and transparent agreement about any Intellectual Property or shared authorship issues that may arise over the course of the study.</li> </ul>

TIME	TASK
<b>During the first year of doctoral study (first two years for part-time students)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support development of thesis research schedule.</li> <li>• Encourage the student to develop a suitable data management plan, and point them to College rules pertaining to use, ownership and management of data.</li> <li>• Regularly review the student's progress and provide feedback.</li> <li>• Draw attention to any ethical issues and the requirements for ethical approval.</li> <li>• Where applicable, review and approve student's research ethics application forms before submission.</li> <li>• Support attendance at any formal modules or programme requirements as laid down by the School.</li> <li>• Support professional skills development by discussing a <a href="#">Personal Development Plan (PDP)</a> with the student.</li> <li>• Facilitate participation in multidimensional skills training, for example encourage networking and conference activities, teaching and engagement in the core academic life of the Department/School.</li> <li>• Agree timelines on submission of work throughout the academic year.</li> <li>• Ensure that student is aware of the process related to annual review of progress and how discussion based on <a href="#">annual review reports</a> will be facilitated.</li> <li>• Discuss feedback from the annual review with <a href="#">Thesis Committee</a>.</li> <li>• Introduce the student to staff and students within your School to facilitate community building.</li> <li>• Encourage annual leave taking (up to 30 days per year exclusive of public holidays).</li> </ul>
<b>During the second year of study (3rd year for part-time students)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the <a href="#">Supervisor – Research Student Agreement</a> with the student and adapt it as the project develops.</li> <li>• Ensure that the student is 'on track' in so far as their initial plans are concerned.</li> <li>• Ensure the student is aware of the requirements of the <a href="#">confirmation process</a> and its timelines.</li> <li>• Review and provide regular and constructive feedback on research progress, oral presentations, written work and thesis writing.</li> <li>• Encourage healthy work/life balance.</li> <li>• Be flexible and supportive, encourage help-seeking and signpost to College support services including Postgraduate Advisory Service, Counselling and College Health.</li> <li>• Support attendance at personal and/or professional development courses and training (e.g., through ensuring time is provided for these activities).</li> </ul>

TIME	TASK
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to information about teaching / demonstrating / tutoring opportunities.</li> <li>• Monitor the student's teaching / demonstrating commitments and their impact on research progress.</li> <li>• Provide regular opportunities to discuss research with other students and staff.</li> <li>• Support opportunities to present at conferences / external events (in person or remotely).</li> <li>• Review the <a href="#">confirmation report</a> with the student before submission to the Thesis Committee and discuss feedback.</li> <li>• Ensure student is aware of next steps for the coming academic year and that they have taken necessary annual leave.</li> </ul>
<b>During the third/ fourth year of study (fifth/sixth year for part-time students)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage timely write-up of thesis and provide regular feedback on drafts.</li> <li>• Encourage participation in the <a href="#">Thesis-in-3</a> initiative.</li> <li>• Regularly meet with the student to discuss any issues arising.</li> <li>• Support the student in preparation to Year 3 <a href="#">annual review</a> and discuss feedback from Thesis Committee.</li> <li>• Encourage and facilitate participation in relevant training and mobility opportunities as agreed in <a href="#">Personal Development Plan (PDP)</a>.</li> <li>• Support development of publications, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Point to <a href="#">Trinity Careers Service</a> for information about career planning, employability and work-based learning.</li> <li>• Monitor the student's teaching / demonstrating commitments and their impact on research progress.</li> <li>• Advise on the timing of thesis submission and discuss process for selecting examiners.</li> </ul>
<b>Final Year (preparing for submission)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise the student of the submission deadline for the <a href="#">Intention to Submit form</a> (at least one month prior to thesis submission), which initiates the formal nomination of examiners for the thesis.</li> <li>• Advise the student on preparation to the <i>Viva Voce</i> exam. Offer opportunity for <i>viva</i> preparation.</li> <li>• Encourages participation in the <i>viva</i> preparation supports offered through Student Learning and Development.</li> <li>• Encourage students to review the <a href="#">Trinity PhD Viva Voce Guide</a>.</li> </ul>

Note: Timelines for these activities may in part be discipline dependent.

## APPENDIX 1 Modules that are available to research students

TITLE	ECTS	AREA	DESCRIPTION	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	HOW TO APPLY
<b>Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era</b>	5	Library	The concept of open scholarship has radically altered the way in which academic research operates in Europe, providing as it does both opportunities and challenges for research students. In addition, funders are increasingly demanding that researchers, including research students, must, as a pre-requisite to securing grant funding, have undertaken some training in research ethics. Finally, there are increasing pressures on students, as they conduct research, to be aware of and comply with obligations under intellectual property and data protection law and indeed to ensure the proper management of their research data. This module seeks to provide all Trinity PhD students with the tools necessary to navigate these issues as they proceed with their research.	None	PGR students are automatically enrolled.
<b>Teaching and Supporting Learning as a Graduate Teaching Assistant</b>	5	Academic Practice	Exposes postgraduates to the educational discourses on teaching at university level. Each participant develops an individual teaching philosophy and explores the praxis of their teaching: the link between their espoused theory and their classroom practice.	Participants are expected to have attended the Introduction to Teaching and Supporting Learning Module and be teaching concurrent to attendance on the module.	Students must seek School approval through their supervisor. Apply by contacting academic.practice@tcd.ie. For further information please visit <a href="https://www.tcd.ie/academic/practice/professional-development/graduate-teaching/">https://www.tcd.ie/academic/practice/professional-development/graduate-teaching/</a> .

TITLE	ECTS	AREA	DESCRIPTION	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	HOW TO APPLY
<b>Planning and Managing your Research Process (PMRP)</b>	5	Student Learning Development	Provides participants with opportunities to become equipped with the skills necessary to successfully plan and manage their research and career, and thereby ensure full contribution of their knowledge and skills to the wider society.	None	Students must seek School approval through their supervisor. Apply by contacting <a href="mailto:student.learning@tcd.ie">student.learning@tcd.ie</a> . For further information, please visit <a href="http://www.tcd.ie/student-learning">student-learning.tcd.ie/</a> .
<b>Careers, Employability and Work-based Learning</b>	10	Trinity Careers Service	Developed in collaboration with industry partners, the module helps PhD students develop transferable skills that can be applied during and after their PhD. The module offers a unique opportunity for participants to undertake work-based learning to prepare them for careers in academia and/or industry.	None	For further information, please contact the Careers Service at <a href="mailto:postgrad.careers@tcd.ie">postgrad.careers@tcd.ie</a> or <a href="http://www.tcd.ie/careers">www.tcd.ie/careers</a> .
<b>Careers and Employability</b>	5	Trinity Careers Service	Supports PhD students with career planning, critical reflection and decision-making and enables them to establish networks to help support their future career.	None	For further information, please contact the Careers Service at <a href="mailto:postgrad.careers@tcd.ie">postgrad.careers@tcd.ie</a> or <a href="http://www.tcd.ie/careers">www.tcd.ie/careers</a> .
<b>Postgraduate Certificate in Statistics (Online)*</b>	30	School of Computer Science & Statistics	The course provides a broad introduction to the statistical ideas and methods relevant to data gathering and analysis in a wide variety of research areas as well as business and administration.	None	Initial enquiry to <a href="mailto:pgcert.stats@tcd.ie">pgcert.stats@tcd.ie</a> . Applicants will also be processed via online PG application system.

\* If a student chooses to complete all 30-ECTS of modules and take the certificate award, then this cannot count towards their structured PhD (as this would mean that the same modules would count towards two different university qualifications). On the other hand, students who do not obtain the certificate can use credits obtained from having successfully completed particular modules towards their structured PhD requirements.

## Modules not for credit

TITLE	AREA	DESCRIPTION	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	HOW TO APPLY
<b>English for Academic Purposes</b>	School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Studies	<a href="http://www.tcd.ie/sllscs/postgraduate/english/">http://www.tcd.ie/sllscs/postgraduate/english/</a>	Must be registered TCD international student (fee may apply)	<a href="mailto:cellt@tcd.ie">cellt@tcd.ie</a>
<b>EndNote training</b>	Library	The EndNote training teams provide introductory classes on EndNote X5 for Windows.  These classes cover: Setting up an EndNote Library; Populating an EndNote Library with manual references, direct export references and imported references from databases and references from the Trinity College Library Dublin Online Catalogue; Managing your EndNote Library, changing reference styles and display features, editing references; Cite While You Write - placing references from an EndNote Library into a Word document.		Training schedule will be advertised via e-mail or contact the relevant Subject Librarian directly for more information.

Please visit: <https://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/students/research/structured-phd-modules/> to view the list of taught modules available to students on the Structured PhD.

## APPENDIX 2

### Support services for research students

STUDENT SUPPORT	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
<b>TCDSU / AMLCT</b>	Represents postgraduate students throughout College. The Union offers assistance in academic and welfare issues and provides facilities such as lockers in the 1937 Reading Room, or a key to the Postgraduate Common Room.	<a href="https://www.tcdsu.org/">https://www.tcdsu.org/</a>
<b>Postgraduate Advisory Service</b>	A confidential service available to registered postgraduate students. It offers a comprehensive range of academic, pastoral, and professional supports dedicated to enhancing the student experience.	<a href="https://www.tcd.ie/seniortutor/students/postgraduate/postgrad.support@tcd.ie">https://www.tcd.ie/seniortutor/students/postgraduate/postgrad.support@tcd.ie</a>
<b>Student Learning Development (SLD)</b>	Offers a wide range of learning development opportunities including workshops on writing skills, time management, procrastination, study skills, critical thinking, thesis writing, presentation skills, viva practice and many more.	<a href="https://student-learning.tcd.ie/services/student.learning@tcd.ie">https://student-learning.tcd.ie/services/student.learning@tcd.ie</a>
<b>College Health Service</b>	Provides healthcare for all students.	<a href="https://www.tcd.ie/collegehealth/">https://www.tcd.ie/collegehealth/</a> + 353 1 8961591 or + 353 1 8961556
<b>Student Counselling Service</b>	Provides students with information on the support options available if experiencing either personal and/or academic/study concerns.	<a href="https://www.tcd.ie/Student_Counselling/student-counselling@tcd.ie">https://www.tcd.ie/Student_Counselling/student-counselling@tcd.ie</a>
<b>disAbility Service</b>	Provides appropriate advice, support and information to help students with disabilities.	<a href="http://www.tcd.ie/disability/askds@tcd.ie">http://www.tcd.ie/disability/askds@tcd.ie</a> +353 1 896 3111
<b>Student 2 Student (S2S)</b>	If anything is on your mind and you'd like to share it with a good listener then a Peer Supporter would love to help.	<a href="mailto:student2student@tcd.ie">student2student@tcd.ie</a> 085 7833 548
<b>Nursery</b>	Provides full time care for children aged 3 months up to 4.5 years of age.	<a href="https://www.tcd.ie/daynursery/strahanl@tcd.ie">https://www.tcd.ie/daynursery/strahanl@tcd.ie</a>
<b>Trinity Trust Travel Grants</b>	A travel grant scheme for PhD students operated by the Graduate Studies Office.	<a href="https://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/students/research/travel-grant/genadgso@tcd.ie">https://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/students/research/travel-grant/genadgso@tcd.ie</a>
<b>Trinity Careers Service</b>	Careers Services for research students.	<a href="http://www.tcd.ie/careers">www.tcd.ie/careers</a> <a href="mailto:careers@tcd.ie">careers@tcd.ie</a> +353 1 896 1721
<b>Library Support and Training</b>	Provides support for academic staff, researchers and postgraduate students through its team of dedicated Subject Librarians, training and guides.	<a href="https://www.tcd.ie/library/support/research.php">https://www.tcd.ie/library/support/research.php</a>

## APPENDIX 3

### Research supervisor's checklist

This checklist is designed as an aid to those who would like to become Supervisors and as a guide for new Supervisors. It prompts to key topics to consider and discuss with the students at key milestones of their academic journey.

#### On application:

- Are you eligible to supervise as a Principal Supervisor?
- Have you capacity to supervise?
- Have you/your School the space and resources for another postgraduate research student?
- Are the applicant's qualifications and/or experience sufficient?
- Are you competent to supervise the student?
- Is the research plan acceptable/feasible?
- If the application is marginal, would a probationary year on the M.Litt./M.Sc. register be appropriate or should the student be asked to register as a postgraduate student not reading for a higher degree and be asked to do appropriate courses? Discuss this option with your School's Director of Teaching & Learning (Postgraduate) or the Dean of Graduate Studies and, if appropriate, then set an adequate programme of assessments. Make sure that these conditions are outlined in any conditional offer recommendation submitted by the School to Academic Registry.
- Is there sufficient funding available for the student and their project? Is the student clear on their financial responsibilities and liabilities?
- If the student is from overseas, have they got sufficient resources to survive?
- Has the student sufficient English for research purposes?
- Has the student applied for any awards? For guidance visit: <https://www.tcd.ie/study/international/scholarships/postgraduate/> and also <https://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/awards/>

- If the application is acceptable, which register is most appropriate? (M.Litt., M.Sc., Ph.D., M.D., M.A.I., M.Dent.Sc., M.Dent.Ch., M.Ch., D.Clin.Psych., LL.M., M.Ed., M.St.)
- If the application is acceptable, is part-time registration required (only for those in full-time teaching, research and administration)?

#### On registration:

- Have you discussed the research plan with the student?
- Have you set up a schedule of meetings with the student?
- Have you discussed auxiliary modules that the student might attend?
- Has a probationary student registered for the modules set?
- Have you stressed the importance of full and accurate notes on sources and references from the outset?
- Has the student attended the orientation meeting for postgraduate students and are they therefore informed about the services available from the Counselling Service, Student Health Service, the Accommodation Office, the Library, Information System Services and the Chaplains and do they know the name of the Director of Teaching & Learning (Postgraduate)?
- Have you shown the student around the School and introduced them to people?

## APPENDIX 3 (continued)

### Research supervisor's checklist

#### After three months:

- Has the student submitted a research plan (and bibliography, if relevant)?
- Has the research plan been scrutinised by other members of staff, who may be co-supervisors or involved in informal supervision of specialised aspects of the project work?
- Are the resources of the College sufficient for the plan to be executed? If not, have funds/plans been made for use of resources elsewhere?
- Have you discussed professional development opportunities with the student?
- Have you discussed which taught modules might be beneficial to the student and informed them about the mandatory Research Integrity and Impact in an Open Scholarship Era?
- Have you involved the student in the appointment of their Thesis Committee?

#### Things to check annually:

- Has the student paid fees and re-registered? Students must register and pay fees, every year, until their thesis is submitted.
- Has a first year annual review report been submitted? (year 1 on the research register is probationary) Annual Review reports must be submitted prior to re-registration.
- Are there sufficient funds for continuation of the project?
- Is statistical advice or other training likely to be necessary?
- Has a completion date been discussed and if appropriate set?

- Have you completed an annual review report on your student(s)? Have you kept a local copy of the annual review report?
- Has your student applied for funds for a conference or research visit?

#### After one year (with annual review report):

- Is the project going according to the plan drawn up at three months? If not, has an alternative formal plan been adopted?
- If on the research Masters register, is the project worth transferring to the PhD register?
- If so, have you discussed the upgrade with the student and with your Director of Teaching & Learning (Postgraduate) to make arrangements for the transfer?
- Has the student been confirmed on the PhD register by 22 months?

#### After two years:

- Has a schedule for chapters, completion of first draft etc. been agreed?
- Have you seen further drafts of chapters/tangible evidence of progress in the second year? Have you considered that the time limit for an M.Litt./M.Sc. is two years?

#### After third and subsequent years (with annual review report):

- Now that any award may have ceased, how is the student funding themselves?
- Have you considered that the time limit for a PhD is four years (six years for part-time)?
- If the student is part-time, are they aware of fee implications if they aim to submit before the sixth year?

#### Writing up:

- Have you read the whole of the final draft?
- Have you given appropriate feedback on the drafts provided?
- Has your student read, and does the thesis conform to, the 'Guidelines for theses' outlined in the Calendar Part III?
- Have you discussed examiners' names with your Director of Teaching & Learning (Postgraduate) for them to nominate to the Dean of Graduate Studies?
- Have you approached a possible external examiner informally to find out when and, if, they can complete the examination within an acceptable time period?
- Is the student clear that the decision to submit their thesis is theirs and theirs alone? Have you clearly communicated your views on this topic to the student?
- Is the student currently registered? If not do they know that examination cannot proceed until they are on books?

#### Examination:

- Have you read the regulations governing examination of higher degrees in the University Calendar Part III? Supervisors have no direct, formal role in the examination process.
- Is the candidate aware of the format of the examination process in College, and do they know what will happen to their thesis once it has been submitted?

#### Minor corrections or Re-examination:

- If a thesis is referred back for minor corrections or major revisions have you made sure that the substance and detail of the examiners' comments are conveyed to the student?
- Does the student know that normally minor corrections must be completed within 2 months (or 3 months if part-time) and major revisions within 6 months (or 9 months if part-time) and in the latter case they are liable for fees?
- Does the student know that the same examiners are used for re-examination as for the original examination, but that a second *viva voce* is not permitted?
- Is the student clear that the decision to resubmit their thesis is theirs and theirs alone?

## APPENDIX 4 Additional resources for academic staff

HEA, National Framework for Doctoral Education (2023), <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2023/02/National-Framework-for-Doctoral-Education-2023.pdf>

Quality and Qualifications Ireland, Ireland's Framework of Good Practice Research Degree Programmes (2019), <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/Ireland%E2%80%99s%20Framework%20of%20Good%20Practice%20Research%20Degree%20Programmes.pdf>

Hillebrand, H and Leysinger, C (2023), LERU's View on Holistic Doctoral Supervision, [https://www.leru.org/files/Publications/2023.02.28\\_LERU-view-holistic-Doctoral-Supervision-full-paper.pdf](https://www.leru.org/files/Publications/2023.02.28_LERU-view-holistic-Doctoral-Supervision-full-paper.pdf)

Irish Universities Association, IUA Doctoral Skills Statement (Third Edition, 2021), <https://www.iua.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/IUA-PhD-Graduate-Skills-Statement-2021-final.pdf>

European University Association 2010. Salzburg II Principles (2010), <https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/salzburg%20ii%20recommendations%202010.pdf>

Taylor, S (2018), Enhancing Practice in Research Supervision, UK Council for Graduate Education, <https://ukcge.ac.uk/assets/resources/32-Enhancing-Practice-in-Research-Supervision-2018.pdf>

Lee, A. (2008) Supervision Teams: making them work, London. SRHE.

Lee, A. (2012) Successful Research Supervision: Advising students doing research. Routledge.

Tinkler, P. and Jackson, C. (2009) The Doctoral Examination Process - A handbook for students, examiners and supervisors, Open University Press.

Wisker, G. (2005) The Good Supervisor: Supervising Postgraduate and Undergraduate Research for Doctoral Theses and Dissertations, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.

For guidance relevant to international students, visit the Trinity Global website: <https://www.tcd.ie/global/study/>.

## APPENDIX 5 Forms for research supervisors

[A co-supervisor request form](#)

[Adjunct supervisor request form](#)

[Annual review report](#)

[Confirmation report](#)

[Nomination for the appointment of external & internal examiners of research thesis](#)

[Personal Development Plan \(PDP\) Template](#)

[Supervisor – Research Student Agreement](#)





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