

UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTMINSTER 

**Graduate School**

**Handbook for**

**Doctoral Supervisors**

**2025/26**

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## Handbook for Doctoral Supervisors 2025-26

The Graduate School has been in existence for 14 years, and over this time all those involved have been successful in establishing consistency and high expectations across the university. During this time, the percentage of these submitted within registration periods has risen from below 50% to over 75%. One of the benefits is that the university is now eligible to take part in UKRI funded schemes for doctoral funding, and we have welcomed seven cohorts of doctoral researchers as part of the *technē* AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership. This autumn we will be launching our New Landscape AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership ready for 2026.

The Graduate School has had great success over the last few years in providing infrastructure to support doctoral researchers and give them the best possible experience. In 2020 we successfully applied for QHT funding to support 10 studentships per year for three years, and we welcomed our first cohort funded through this in September 2020. The final cohort who are part of this funding started in September 2022. The Graduate School has secured a continuation of this funding from QHT, and the next cohort of QHT funded students will begin their degrees in the autumn of 2025. Via the [Globally Engaged Research Doctoral Scholarship Scheme](#), we have been able to give financial support which enables doctoral researchers to present at national and international conferences and to attend training workshops. Doctoral researchers can also apply for up to £1,500 to host conferences, seminars and other research events. Since 2020, we have been hosting the [Professor Geoffrey Petts Memorial Fund](#) in the Graduate School. The fund supports doctoral researchers through covering costs incurred by fieldwork and research equipment. This year we are launching the Doctoral Researcher Hardship Fund, which is a source of funding specifically for those experiencing financial hardship.

Directors of Studies support doctoral researchers and ensure all researchers have the best possible experience.

Supervising doctoral researchers can be one of the most exciting and rewarding parts of an academic's job, but it also requires a serious commitment on the part of the supervisor. The Graduate School is committed to supporting all Director of Studies and supervisory teams in their important role.

This Handbook is designed to help make your supervisory experience as successful and rewarding as possible, whilst ensuring the quality and consistency of the experience of our doctoral researchers. It sets out the expectations for supervisors, gives updates on the work of the Graduate School and the regulations for doctoral researchers, and provides links to various places where additional useful information can be found.

This Handbook provides:

- an overview of the role of the Director of Studies/supervisory teams
- information on training and development opportunities for Directors of Studies and guidance on where information useful to supervisors can be found

- an update for Directors of Studies/supervisory teams on the role and work of the Graduate School
- contact details for colleagues involved in the running and management of our doctoral programmes
- guidance on responding to a range of situations that may arise during the supervisory relationship

## The Role of the Director of Studies

There is no single model of a successful supervisor. Like all relationships, the one between doctoral researcher and supervisor is unique. However, there are principles of good practice, and all supervisors and students work within a regulatory framework. The role descriptors for Directors of Studies and for second supervisors can be found in the Appendix.

### *The Supervisory Team*

All doctoral researchers are assigned to a supervisory team that consists of a Director of Studies who will take the lead in the academic direction and administration of the project. The team will also include at least one, and sometimes two, second supervisors, who will be experts in an aspect of the research area and/or have wide supervisory experience. All supervisory teams must have the experience of supervising at least two completed research degrees between them.

The maximum number of students that a member of staff can supervise at any one time is 12 overall, with a limit of 6 as the Director of Studies.

The university WAM tariff for the supervision of doctoral researchers is 60 hours per doctoral researcher. These hours will be divided among supervisory team members based on their input into the project.

There is an expectation that supervisory teams will fulfil the following 3 roles (however, it is up to each supervisory team as to how these roles are divided among them):

1. Academic supervision of the doctoral research project and supporting the timely submission of the doctoral researcher's thesis (including Annual Progress Reviews, upgrade from MPhil to PhD at APR 2, and submission of the final thesis) – *this role should normally be carried out by the Director of Studies.*
2. Establishing (through an initial skills audit) and reviewing the doctoral researcher's training and development needs, being a champion of the DRDP, and signposting relevant development opportunities (see section on DRDP below).
3. Providing pastoral support to doctoral researchers and signposting to the appropriate University services.

### *Supervisory meetings*

All doctoral researchers should have at least six supervisory meetings with their Director of Studies each year if full-time, and at least three if part-time. These are the minimum requirements as determined in the Research Degree Academic Regulations, and many doctoral researchers will meet their supervisors more often. Each doctoral researcher should have at least one full supervisory team meeting each year.

All supervisory meetings should be logged via the Virtual Research Environment (VRE). Keeping good records of these meetings on the VRE is vital for many reasons. It is helpful for supervisors and Doctoral researchers to have a written record of their meetings, and it is useful for the supervisory team, the school coordinators, and the Graduate School to be able to assess and oversee progress via the supervision logs. For overseas students, supervisory logs are also an important contact point for visa monitoring for UKVI reporting. Logs can be started by a supervisory team member or by the doctoral researcher. If a log is created by a doctoral researcher, then it will need to be confirmed and signed off by the supervisor, and vice versa.

The Graduate School will regularly audit the frequency of supervisory meetings, using the supervisory meetings recorded in the VRE, to ensure that this regulation is being met. Please also see Page 7-8, regarding the audit of Skills Assessment Forms.

The logs on the VRE include a button through which supervisors can record concerns about their student's progress. Concerns can be provoked by a whole range of issues – the doctoral researcher's health, their financial situation, their academic progress – and because of this, recording concerns should not be seen as disloyal or derogatory to the student. In many cases, supervisors express concerns to flag up difficult situations being experienced by doctoral researchers, and these records are very useful when the Graduate School makes decisions about, for example, applications for suspensions, MCs or extensions.

### ***Student Progression***

The Annual Progress Review (APR) is key to your doctoral researcher's development and progression. APRs 1 to 4 are a chance for them to gain useful feedback on their work and crucially the APRs ensure that doctoral researchers are writing and developing their ideas right from the beginning of their registration.

For full-time doctoral researchers, APRs will be due each year on 1 May (for September starters) and 1 October (for January starters). This pattern is the same for part-time doctoral researchers, but the APRs are due every other year. If doctoral researchers suspend, their APR schedule is recalculated and may be different from this. The APR schedule for each student can be found by pressing the 'APR' button on their doctoral research project page in the VRE. Earlier deadlines for APRs can be requested (for example, if particularly good progress is made) by using the 'Request Changes' button on the same page.

### ***Timely Submission***

As noted above, our submission rates are key for several institutional reasons, but timely submission is also important for doctoral researchers for them to feel confident in their progress. For full-time doctoral researchers, the maximum registration period is four years, and the expectation is that doctoral researchers will submit after around three and a half years. For part-time doctoral researchers, the maximum registration period is eight years,

and the expectation is that doctoral researchers will submit after around 7 years. If doctoral researchers have not submitted by their end of registration date and have not applied for MCs or for an extension, they will be excluded.

If you see that doctoral researchers are experiencing issues which delay their progress at any point during their degree, the best thing to do is to encourage them to apply for a **suspension** as soon as possible.

**Extensions** are available for doctoral researchers who experience unforeseen circumstances which delay their progress towards the end of their registration period. However, if a doctoral researcher has an extension approved, this will mean that when they do submit it will not be counted as a timely submission. This will, of course, negatively affect the university's overall timely submission rate. The doctoral researcher also incurs additional fees. Extensions are very much a last resort (and are rarely approved), and all the other support structures and processes are in place to prevent them from being needed.

**MCs** can be applied for if something unforeseen has prevented a doctoral researcher from meeting a deadline, such as an APR deadline or the deadline for thesis submission and can extend the deadline up to two weeks, and in exceptional cases, for longer.

Applications for MCs, suspensions and extensions must all be accompanied by appropriate evidence and requests are made via the VRE. If you have questions about these processes, contact your School's Doctoral Coordinator.

## **Doctoral Researcher Development Programme (DRDP)**

The Graduate School is committed to the delivery of a programme which is doctoral researcher centered, inclusive, flexible, which provides opportunities for engagement at all levels and enables the sharing of best practice. Furthermore, it has been designed to meet a baseline standard of quality which is externally benchmarked. Our [Doctoral Researcher Development Programme](#) is developed around the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#) which sets out the values, knowledge and behaviours of effective researchers such as research management, and engagement an impact. This means that our doctoral researchers explore topics and issues identified nationally by practicing researchers, approaching them from a discipline-specific perspective and considering research activity in a wider context.

Development of doctoral researchers' skills and competencies also happens as they progress with their independent research, through their interaction with their research community, in their research group, their School, with their peers across the university and with the wider research community.

The professional relationship between a doctoral researcher and their Director of Studies and supervisory team plays a critical role in their development, and we encourage all supervisors to engage with the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme.

More information about the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme (DRDP), full workshop listings and descriptions, and useful information including the Skills Assessment Form are available on the [DRDP website](#).

The DRDP is also supported by the platform Inkpath, where doctoral researchers can book workshops, plan and record their development activities. Doctoral researchers can be directed to the [Inkpath webapp](#) or to install and open the mobile app (Android & iOS).

The Graduate School is always keen to hear from colleagues who wish to take part in the delivery of workshops. If you would like to find out more about workshops and opportunities to contribute, please do contact your School DRDP Coordinator or the University's Doctoral Researcher Development Manager as appropriate. For their details please see the contacts list on the [DRDP website](#).

### ***Skills Assessment Form***

Conversations with doctoral researchers to support the identification of skills/training needs and planning for these will happen at the beginning of each academic year (September or January depending on the student's first point of registration), including the completion of the [Skills Assessment Form](#).

The Graduate School will conduct an audit to ensure the Skills Assessment Form is uploaded to one supervisory meeting record in the VRE per year. For those researchers joining in September, the Skills Assessment Form should be uploaded to a record of a supervisory meeting that takes place before 30th November of that year, and for those joining in January, the Skills Assessment Form should be uploaded to a record of a supervisory meeting that takes place by 28th February of that year.

The Skills Assessment Form should be uploaded to the VRE with the student's APR1 submission.

### **Training and Development Opportunities for Supervisors**

There are a range of developmental events and professional development opportunities available to supervisors.

#### ***University Certificate of Special Study in Developing Researchers: Doctoral Supervision and Academic Practice.***

Delivered by the Graduate School and the **Centre for Education, Teaching and Innovation (CETI)**, this module is open to all supervisors. It is mandatory for those new to supervision, and for those new to supervising doctoral researchers at the University of Westminster.



This is a 20-credit module. Hours are not calculated separately/specifically for this and will come out of colleague's professional development hours. Colleagues should speak with their line manager before enrolling on the course to secure WAM allocation.

The module runs at least twice each academic year, and registrations can be made online: [CETI Registration Form](#).

The Graduate School also works with the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO) to provide training and events to support researchers and research culture. Resources and events are published on the [RKEO blog](#).


### ***Graduate School Supervisor Programme***

The Graduate School hosts three Supervisor Forums each academic year. These are open to all supervisors and staff planning to supervise. These events provide an opportunity for staff to network, share good practices, share their experiences, and explore a range of topics relevant to supervision within the University of Westminster and across the sector. Events often feature presentations and workshops from external speakers. These events are published on the Graduate School website [Supervisor Resources page](#), and invitations are circulated by email to current supervisors as well as the wider GS community.

The Graduate School website also includes key documents and a useful list of external resources and references.

### ***UKCGE Research Supervision Recognition Programme***

The Graduate School is a member of the UK Council for Graduate Education, which provides support and good practice across key areas, one of these being doctoral supervision. The [Research Supervision Recognition Programme](#) is an opportunity for supervisors to reflect on their supervisory practice in the context of the [UKCGE Good Supervisory Practice Framework](#).

Submissions are reviewed and the applicant receives comprehensive, constructive feedback on their account from UKCGE reviewers. Those who are successful will become UKCGE Recognised Research Supervisors. The Graduate School supports up to 10 supervisors a year who wish to apply for this recognition scheme, by covering the submission fee. If you would like to be part of the scheme, please [contact the Graduate School](#) .

### ***Where to go for support***

Our doctoral researchers represent a huge range of backgrounds and places of origin. The diversity of our doctoral researcher body is one of the many excellent things about it.

This range means that many of our doctoral researchers have demands on their time and energies beyond their research work – as employees, as parents, as carers, and so on.

The Graduate School has in place several policies and processes to support doctoral researchers when anything occurs that may impact their ability to study. The regulations around applications for suspension, extensions and MCs are available in the [Research Degree Handbook 2025/26](#).


Below you will find information on and links to useful pages regarding issues that may arise for your doctoral researchers.

### ***Doctoral Tutor***

The Graduate School supports a doctoral tutor who offers pastoral support to all doctoral researchers. They have surgeries each week, both in person and online. The name and contact details of the doctoral tutor can be found [here](#).

### ***Disability***


The Graduate School works closely with [Disability Learning Support](#). If doctoral researchers have a disability or specific learning difficulty, they are strongly advised to register with Disability Learning Support as soon as possible after they begin their degree. Their needs will then be assessed to ensure that appropriate support is in place through reasonable adjustments.

If you feel that your student could benefit from an assessment by DLS, you can refer them by [emailing DLS](#) . They will then contact the doctoral researcher, who will be able to decide for themselves whether they wish to take up this offer.

### ***Writing***

Writing is key in all disciplines of doctoral work, but it is something which many students find difficult at some point. If your doctoral researchers are struggling with writing, there are several ways of supporting them.

**The Centre for Education, Teaching and Innovation (CETI)** runs a tailored module entitled Academic English for Doctoral Researchers which runs twice a year. It is open to all students, whether international, or home. [This comprises of seven taught sessions and one tutorial to improve written and spoken skills.](#)

Further information about the module and the application process is provided on the [DRDP website](#) and the module [contact is Richard Paterson](#) .

[The Academic Liaison and Learning Development Team](#) offers a range of services which help support information searching, learning and writing, including one-to-one tutorials.

[The Graduate School](#) offers a series of workshops and surgeries – *Writing and Thriving* -- on all aspects of doctoral writing every week throughout the academic year.

In 2025-26, the Graduate School will be offering Writing Retreats both on and off campus. A residential writing retreat takes place in December. Information about the application process is provided on the [DRDP website](#).

Beyond the University, there are several platforms dedicated to giving writing support. Focusing specifically on writing, ['Shut up and Write'](#) runs in person and online writing groups that are usually structured around an hour of focused writing time, sharing writing goals, and achievements during the session. There are also a few Bluesky hashtags that bring together resources specifically for doctoral researchers or for the wider academic community e.g., AcWri #PhDChat.

There are several resources on the internet, which can guide doctoral researchers about academic writing. [The Writing Base](#) is a useful diagnostic tool designed to help academic writers think about various aspects of their writing practice.

### ***International Students***

International doctoral researchers often have very particular challenges, from homesickness, to the unfamiliarity of a new educational system, to navigating social etiquette and the systems of public transport. There are a number of ways that international doctoral researchers can be supported.

Supervisor sensitivity is perhaps the most important of these, and it is good to take the initiative in making sure your doctoral researchers know they can come to you for help and advice.

[Student Advice](#) also offers various kinds of support for international students.

[Visa issues](#) are often very stressful for international students. The Visa compliance team can give advice on all aspects of visas and can be contacted via the Student Centre or Live Chat function.

**Drop-in surgeries** are run each week by [counselling](#) for all students. Doctoral Researchers can talk about any difficulties they may be experiencing and be helped to find appropriate information.

The times and places of the surgeries and advice for staff are listed on the [SharePoint](#) site.

## Support for Supervisors

### *University*

The Graduate School supports supervisors in several ways throughout the academic year and [resources are available on the Graduate School website](#).

The doctoral supervision module runs at least three times a year.

### *Outside the University*

#### *Vitae*

University of Westminster is a member organization of [Vitae](#). This allows staff and doctoral researchers to access additional resources in the members' area of the Vitae website. To view the [resources dedicated to doctoral research supervision](#), you will need to log in with your university email address.

## The Graduate School

### *Governance*

The **Graduate School Board (GSB)** is made up as follows:

**Ex officio members:** Head of the Graduate School (chair); Assistant Head of the Graduate School (vice chair); nine representatives from the Colleges; two student representatives; PVC Research; Campus Registry Services Manager; Chair DRDP committee; Q&S representative; Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange Office.

**Co-opted:** College Research Directors; Doctoral Researcher Development Manager; Graduate School Manager (secretary).

The **Research Degree Progression Committee (RDPC)** is made up as follows:

Head of the Graduate School, Assistant Head of the Graduate School, and the three doctoral coordinators, one from each college and chosen from those who sit on GSB. The Assistant Head of the Graduate School is the Chair.

The committee monitors progression, makes decisions on applications for suspensions, extensions, and MCs, and discusses regulatory changes before making recommendations to the GSB.

**The Doctoral Research Development Programme (DRDP) Committee** is made up as follows:

**Ex-officio members:** DRDP School Coordinators; Doctoral Researcher Development Manager; GS Events Coordinator (Secretary); Head of the Graduate School; Graduate School Manager.

**Co-opted members:** Doctoral Researcher Representative (maximum tenure 3 years).

The Committee is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme. This includes an annual review, ongoing review and enhancement of provision, particularly of the university level workshops, monitoring engagement, supporting Schools, promotion and administration matters and external engagement with the wider researcher development landscape.

## *Community and Events*

### **Graduate School Festival**

The festival comprises of a range of interactive events and resources including the Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) Competition. Dates and further details will be circulated by the Graduate School.

Annual School PhD Symposiums/Research Events

## **Opportunities for Doctoral Researchers**

**The Globally Engaged Research (GER) Doctoral Fund** is in its seventh consecutive year in 2025-26. Students can apply for up to £1,000 to cover expenses associated with presenting papers at conferences and attending training events to develop research skills and methods. Funding is also available from this scheme for doctoral researcher led conference organisation, and for specific skills training which is not provided through the DRDP. For the most up to date information and the application form, see the [Graduate School Website](#).

**The Geoffrey Petts Memorial Fund:** This offers funds up to £1,000 towards the costs of fieldwork. For the most up-to-date information and the application form, see the [Graduate](#)

[School Website](#).

## **Useful Information**

[The Research Degree Academic Regulations and the Research Degree Handbook](#) are both available to download as PDFs.

**DRDP Information and the Skills Assessment Form** are available on the [website](#).

### **Academic Integrity:**

The university [ethics policy and code of good practice](#).

Links to guidance on [referencing and avoiding plagiarism](#) can be found on the Library website.

### **[Counselling](#)**

### **[Disability](#)**

### ***Outside the University***

### **[UKCGE](#)**

You can find a useful [bibliography of work on supervision](#).

**Some particularly useful books on research supervision are:**

Anne Lee, *Successful Research Supervision: Advising Students Doing Research*, London: Routledge, 2020.

Gina Wisker, *The Good Supervisor: Supervising Postgraduate and Undergraduate Research for Doctoral Theses and Dissertation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012.

Stan Taylor, Margaret Kiley and Robin Humphrey, *A Handbook for Supervisors*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London: Routledge, 2018.

**Some books to recommend to students about doing a PhD and about academic writing are:**

Patrick Dunleavy, *Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Write and Finish A Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003.

Umberto Eco, *How To Write a Thesis*, Boston, MA: MIT Press, 2015.

Helen Sword, *Stylish Academic Writing*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Helen Sword, *The Writer's Diet: A Guide to Fit Prose*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Helen Sword, *Air, Light, Space and Time: How Successful Academics Write*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017.

Jerry Wellington, *Making Supervision Work for You: A Student's Guide*, London: Sage, 2010

## Key Staff

### *Graduate School*

**Head of the Graduate School:** [Contact Dr Margherita Sprio](#) ✉

**Assistant Head of the Graduate School:**

**Doctoral Researcher Development Manager:** [Contact Dr Nicola Allett](#) ✉

**Doctoral Researcher Administration Officer:** [Contact Dr Elle Larsson](#) ✉

Also Secretary to the Research Degree Progression Committee (RDPC).

**Graduate School Events Coordinator:** [Contact Lesley McDonagh](#) ✉

Lesley is the University DRDP Coordinator and Secretary to the DRDP Committee.

**Doctoral Researcher Administrator:** [Contact Nicholas Rousseau-Williams](#) ✉

### *College Research Directors*

**College of Design, Creative and Digital Industries**

**College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

[Contact Professor Miriam Dwek](#) ✉

**Westminster Business School**

[Contact Professor Franz Buscha](#) ✉

### *School PhD Coordinators*

**College of Design, Creative and Digital Industries**

**School of Architecture and Cities:** [Contact Dr Kate Jordan](#) ✉



School of Arts: [Contact Dr Ozlem Koksall](#) ✉

School of Computer Science and Engineering: [Contact Dr Aleka Psarrou](#) ✉

School of Media and Communication: [Contact Dr Alessandro D'Arma](#) ✉

## **College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

School of Humanities: [Contact Dr Sylvia Shaw](#) ✉

School of Social Sciences: [Contact Dr Dan Greenwood](#) ✉ (Sem 1), [Contact Dr Adam Eldridge](#) ✉ (Sem 2)

School of Life Sciences: [Contact Dr Polly Hayes](#) ✉

School of Law: [Contact Dr Ruth MacKenzie](#) ✉

## **Westminster Business School**

Spinder Dhaliwal is PhD Coordinator for all 4 Schools.

### ***School DRDP Coordinators***

Humanities: [Contact Dr Alison Hess](#) ✉

Social Sciences and Law: [Contact Professor Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos](#) ✉

Life Sciences: [Contact Dr Polly Hayes](#) ✉

Computer Science and Engineering: [Contact Dr Alexander Bolotov](#) ✉

Arts: [Contact Professor Roshini Kempadoo](#) ✉ and [Contact Professor May Ingawanij](#) ✉

Architecture and Cities: [Contact Dr Constance Lau](#) ✉

Media and Communication: [Contact Dr Ed Bracho-Polanco](#) ✉

WBS: [Contact Dr Spinder Dhaliwal](#) ✉

## **APPENDIX**

## The Westminster Doctoral Supervisor: Role Descriptors

The University's strategy, as set out in *Being Westminster 2018-23*, puts a 'vibrant body of PhD students at the heart of its research aims and activities. Supervision is central to the vibrancy of the doctoral researcher student body and to the experience of it for each individual student. The importance of supervision is recognised by the University through the continuation of it through research leave and sabbaticals and through the resources and support offered by the Graduate School in the training and development of supervisors. The descriptor below makes clear the critical responsibilities integral to the supervisory role and is not exhaustive. Its expectations are based on the necessary accountability of all colleagues who take it up.

At Westminster all doctoral researchers have a Director of Studies and at least one additional supervisor. The descriptions of the roles cannot be exhaustive, and both Directors of Studies and additional supervisors may be required to undertake other duties. Normally these will be broadly in line with the listed key responsibilities.

The maximum number of doctoral candidates that any academic colleague should be Director of Studies for at any one time is six, and the maximum number of supervisory teams that a member of staff can be a member of at any one time is 12 (including no more than 6 as Director of Studies). The expectation is that all Readers and Professors are supervising at least one doctoral researcher at any time.

### Director of Studies Role Descriptor

Directors of Studies are responsible for the support of doctoral researchers in all aspects of their research.

They are the key points of contact and support for their doctoral researchers. They do not necessarily have to fulfill every role in their support, but they should be able to accurately advise their doctoral researchers and direct them to the suitable areas of the university where support can be found.

The key duties and responsibilities of the role are:

- To maintain regular contact with the doctoral researchers and to respond to their communications in a timely manner. A response or holding communication should usually be sent within two working days.

- To ensure that an appropriate number of supervisions are conducted each year, including at least one meeting each year with the full supervisory team. The **minimum** number of supervisions are three per year for part-time students and six per year for full-time students.
- To maintain appropriate contact with second supervisors.
- To ensure compliance with all university policies and regulations, including the key policies and procedures relating to supervision and examination, risk assessments, research ethics, research integrity and open access. ([Regulations for research degrees](#)).
- To engage with doctoral researchers at the beginning of each academic year (September or January) to discuss their training and development needs for the year and to complete with the doctoral researcher, the skills assessment form. This will require familiarity with all the [training and development sessions offered as part of the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme](#).
- To ensure that the doctoral researchers attends the training and development sessions selected on the skills assessment form.
- To ensure that doctoral researchers are appropriately informed about all progression processes and milestones.
- To support students in Annual Progress Reviews and to provide timely feedback and timely engagement with related tasks on the VRE. The Graduate School commitment is that, following submission, a decision on all APRs will be reached within eight weeks, and the bulk of this time is given to the work of the assessor.
- To ensure that between them and their doctoral researchers supervision logs are completed in a timely fashion and appropriately detailed for each supervisory meeting.
- To request written work as appropriate, and to return such work with constructive criticism within a reasonable time period, usually no longer than one month.
- To support doctoral researchers in the planning and arrangements of activities associated with their research such as fieldwork or archive trips.
- To ensure that the doctoral researcher is made aware of lack of progress or of standards of work below those generally expected, including by formally raising concerns in the supervision logs.

- To ensure progress such that the doctoral researchers can submit within the registration period.
- To identify prospective external examiners.
- To complete the exam arrangements form at least three months before the planned submission of the thesis.
- To support the student in preparing for the final viva, such as through a mock viva.
- To be aware of arrangements for welfare and pastoral support and refer doctoral researchers where appropriate.
- To ensure that doctoral researchers are appropriately informed in a timely manner about support for their wellbeing, such as through suspensions, MCs and RAFs.
- To encourage their doctoral researchers to be actively engaged with the life of the research degree community at the university, and of the wider research community at school, disciplinary or Research Community level.
- To encourage doctoral researchers to engage in research communities and networks beyond the university through, for example, giving papers at conferences and seminars.
- To ensure and encourage doctoral researchers to fulfil the requirements of their funders and of any doctoral training centres that they are part of.
- To support the doctoral researchers as appropriate in their post-doctoral plans.
- To maintain appropriate levels of skills, knowledge and expertise in order to fulfil these roles and responsibilities, for example through engagement with Graduate School forums, briefings and symposia.
- To continue the supervisory role through any research leave or sabbaticals.

In addition to the above roles and responsibilities, the following activities are encouraged as part of the relevant school's recruitment and admissions work.

- To actively engage in recruitment of doctoral researchers through their own networks and research groups.
- To engage with potential doctoral researchers before formal application, including providing advice and feedback on research proposals.

- To take part in the recruitment and selection of research degree students in collaboration with doctoral coordinators and admissions tutors.

## **Second Supervisor Role Descriptor**

The role of second supervisor is always to provide academic support alongside that of the Director of Studies. However, the role of the second supervisor varies according to the nature of the doctoral researcher's research and the makeup of the supervisory team. It may be, for example, that the second supervisor is involved only in a particular aspect of the doctoral researcher's research. In cases of the extended absence of the Director of Studies, the second supervisor may take a more direct involvement and more academic responsibility for the student's progress. The roles of each member of the supervisory team should be discussed and agreed as part of the admissions process.

The key roles and responsibilities of the second supervisor are:

- To work closely with the Director of Studies and any other second supervisors to ensure the doctoral researcher is supported and that they are making progress.
- To maintain contact with the doctoral researchers as appropriate and to answer communications in a timely manner, usually within two working days.
- To take part in at least one meeting per year of the full supervisory team and the doctoral researchers.
- To read and provide constructive feedback on written work in a timely manner, usually within the month.
- To maintain appropriate levels of skills, knowledge and expertise in order to fulfil these roles and responsibilities, for example, through engagement with Graduate School Supervisor forums, briefings and symposia.

