

Code of Practice for Research Supervisors

1. A decision to admit a student to a research programme should not be made unless a department is confident that:
 - a. The student is appropriately qualified;
 - b. A research topic suitable for that student's abilities and background is available;
 - c. The necessary facilities (e.g. computing, laboratory) can be provided;
 - d. Proper supervision can be given for the expected duration of the programme.
2. To ensure that these requirements are met the Head of Department* confirms on the appropriate form that the proposed supervision arrangements conform to the College criteria for the supervision of research students. For part-time students the supervisor will include on the form whether the student will be working virtually full-time on his or her research, and thus required to meet the milestones for full-time students, or if the student will not be able to devote more than two days per week to the research and thus governed by the milestones for part-time students.
3. In many cases it is possible, when making offers of admission, to indicate the likely research area and/or supervisor, and if so, it is preferable to provide this information.
4. In some cases, supervisors may make contact with their students before enrolment at College to advise on general background reading and to encourage an initial literature survey on the research topic.
5. At the beginning of the student's research the supervisor will give details of the facilities available in the department and any regulations or constraints governing their use.
6. In the initial period, supervisors will give appropriate guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, and about how to plan the programme so as to ensure that the normal expectation of submission of the thesis within three years may be met (and that in any event the thesis will be submitted no later than four years after commencement of study).
7. Supervisors may recommend where appropriate, especially in the first year, attendance at taught classes, which may be undergraduate lectures, part of an MSc or MBA programme or a special course for research students. They

* Any reference to "department" or "departmental" may include Imperial College schools, institutions, centres or divisions, as appropriate

will also ensure that instruction in requisite techniques, e.g. equipment design, is arranged if necessary. They will also approve and monitor attendance of the Graduate School's Professional Skills Development Programme.

8. Supervisors will ensure that students receive all necessary safety instructions.
9. Supervisors will give guidance on the systematic recording of data or theoretical calculations and the importance of keeping and maintaining a clear record of all that has been undertaken.
10. Where overseas students are experiencing difficulty with their English, supervisors will require them to attend English classes. Supervisors will also ensure that non-native English speakers, including Research Assistants and Clinical Research Fellows, are aware that continuation of PhD registration is dependent upon their English language proficiency being of an acceptable standard, as attested by the College [English Language Support Programme](#).
11. Supervisors will maintain regular contact with their students through tutorials, group meetings or at the bench. They should set aside normally a minimum of one hour per week (on average) for consultation with them.
12. Supervisors will guide students on the relevant use of library facilities, including approaching original literature and sources with a critical attitude and will give guidance on avoiding plagiarism.
13. Supervisors will arrange, as appropriate, for their students to talk about their work to staff and/or group seminars and to have practice in oral presentations.
14. Supervisors will ensure that students are made aware when progress is inadequate or when standards of work fall below those generally expected and, in appropriate cases, will report such occurrences to the department's Postgraduate Tutor or Director of Postgraduate Studies.
15. In accordance with procedures agreed by the Graduate School, supervisors will ensure that reports are made on all students during their period of registration with the College and will also prepare any additional reports required by funding bodies.
16. Where appropriate supervisors will encourage students to produce written work, which may often provide a basis for the preparation of the final thesis; they should return such work with constructive criticism and in reasonable time. The supervisor will impress upon students the need to complete and submit work by agreed deadlines. By twenty-four months they will draw up with each research student a plan for completing the research and submitting the thesis by the end of the third year.
17. Normally, supervisors will encourage their students to publish, singly or jointly, the results of the research as they emerge and are suitable for

publication. Individual departments may have local guidelines for publications in specific areas.

18. In those cases where students are encouraged to undertake further research as research assistants, supervisors will make every effort to ensure that such employment does not jeopardise the ability of the students to complete their research, and to submit their theses, within the normal College timescale.
19. Supervisors will ensure that students are aware of the [College Guidelines for Proper Scientific Conduct in Research](#), and the [Policy and Procedures for Investigation of Allegations of Scientific Misconduct](#).

Approved by Graduate School
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