

What Research Students and their Research Degree[†] Main Supervisor Might Mutually Expect from Each Other – Our mutual expectations

The document provides a suggested starter list of expectations that research students and their main supervisor might expect from each other. It is designed to facilitate conversations to establish effective partnerships, and it is a requirement that the document is discussed at the first meeting between a main supervisor and a new student and re-visited prior to the Early-Stage Assessment and again by the Late-Stage Review. It is recommended that the document is discussed at other relevant points throughout the partnership, as needed.

It should be noted that this is not exhaustive, and that departments may have variations in roles and responsibilities; supervisors should be aware of any such variations and will feed this into their discussions with students. Further, it is recognised that supervisors may not always be best placed to meet all the expectations laid out in the document, but should be aware of who, in their department, can. Students and main supervisors are encouraged to discuss, tailor and personalise the document further to suit.

Finally, students and supervisors are reminded that Imperial's Values (Respect, Collaboration, Integrity, Excellent and Innovation) are designed to support effective student-supervisor partnerships and should be embedded in the way they work together: [Values and Behaviours | About | Imperial College London](#)

[†] PhD, MPhil, EngD and MD[Res]

Establishing our mutual expectations

This suggested starter list and any list research students and their main supervisor subsequently produce are designed to facilitate conversations to establish effective partnerships. They are not intended to be legally binding and not intended to form part of the student's contract with Imperial. **To maintain this clarity, it is recommended that this wording is copied over in all future and personalised iterations of the list, should they be made. It is also good practice for students and supervisors to make a record of their meetings to provide evidence of these discussions taking place.**

Academic Development

As your supervisor, I will:

1. Work with you to develop an appropriate project that you can deliver within the period of your studentship funding, ensuring that you have clear strategic aims and objectives, and an initial plan of work that will be reviewed throughout your project. I will work with you to ensure that you can progress to completion.
2. Ensure you have adequate space and resources in which to carry out your research. Communicate requirements for the proportion of time you must be on campus, as determined by the research programme and any reasonable adjustments for disability. For any times you are working remotely, I will discuss your local environment with you and will direct you to any appropriate sources of support. We can also explore your access to digital resources and remote access to laboratory equipment where appropriate.
3. Ensure you receive appropriate safety, research and technical skills training, relevant to your research, noting that these may be available through distance, blended or face-to-face delivery.

As your student, I will:

- Work with you to understand what is required of me, taking responsibility for my progress. I will strive to display the initiative, commitment and work ethic required to successfully complete my project.
- Review my working environment and access to digital resources, alerting you to where there are potential shortfalls impacting on my ability to progress my research. Attend in person on campus for the periods required.
- Attend any safety, technical or research skills training required to progress my research.

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| 4. Provide you with guidance on how to access and critically review original literature and other sources of information. I will also help you to develop your writing and presentation skills, and refer you to training from ECRI and CfAE where appropriate. | Read the key literature in my field, develop critical thinking skills, undertake training (e.g. from ECRI and CfAE) to develop my writing and presentation skills, and take responsibility for writing my thesis. |
| 5. Provide you with guidance on record keeping, including bibliographic and research data management, where appropriate. | Keep accurate records and notes of my research and progress. |
| 6. Provide you with appropriate guidance about the nature of research, standards expected for each milestone and help you to plan your research so that you can submit your thesis on time. If your milestones and <i>viva</i> examinations take place remotely, I will explain how these will operate and refer you to Imperial's guidance on this. | Comply with Imperial's Academic Regulations (Research) and other Imperial procedures. I will work at a pace which is sufficient for me to make good progress with my research. I understand that where I have been advised that my work is unsatisfactory, I will need to take steps to bring my work up to the required standard. |
| 7. Provide you with timely and regular constructive feedback on research progress and written work. I will also provide you with timely and constructive feedback on your milestone reports, thesis chapters and oral presentations. I will let you know if the standard of your work is below that which is expected by Imperial, and, if appropriate, refer you to ECRI and CfAE to receive further feedback and training. | <p>Actively seek guidance and feedback from you on my progress, including how and when I can expect to receive feedback on my oral presentations and written work. If appropriate, I will seek further feedback from ECRI and CfAE.</p> <p>Submit any drafts for feedback in a timely manner as per agreed deadlines.</p> |
| 8. Ensure that you receive an appropriate induction and Health and Safety training, relevant to your research and that you actively review and amend your working practices as required for your project. | Comply proactively with Imperial's Health and Safety requirements, including ensuring that appropriate risk assessments are in place, including before any new research activity is undertaken. I understand that maintaining safe working is a partnership between myself, my |

colleagues and supervisor(s) and the relevant safety staff.

9. Draw your attention to Imperial's Guidelines for Proper Scientific Conduct in Research and the Policy and Procedures for Investigation of Allegations of Scientific Misconduct.

Act in accordance with the Guidelines for Proper Scientific Conduct in Research and the Policy and Procedures for Investigation of Allegations of Scientific Misconduct.

10. Help you interpret your Turnitin originality report for the ESA.

Submit a copy of my ESA to Turnitin for an originality check.

11. Discuss with you early on, any departmental/funder expectations for publishing and the established protocol for paper authorship, noting that the priority is for you to complete your research and submit your thesis for examination within the specified time- frame. I will also draw your attention to relevant training provided by ECRI ([Research Communication | Imperial](#)), CfAE ([Communication provision for doctoral students](#)) and elsewhere to help support you.

Listen to what is expected of me in terms of publishing but agree to talk to you if I am worried about meeting the requirements of my thesis whilst meeting departmental expectations to publish (where these are in place).

12. Ensure you are made aware of the Shared Workspaces Code of Practice, **addendum a** of this document, prior to you accessing any shared facilities.

Adhere to Imperial's code of practice and expected behaviours for when accessing shared facilities or workspaces for my research and studies, as set out in **addendum a** of this document.

Managing our Partnership

As your supervisor, I will:

As your student, I will:

13. Be available to you, normally for at least one hour every one or two weeks (on average), and endeavour, where necessary for your research and/or working preferences to meet 1-2-1. Other interactions may take the form of individual meetings (tutorials),

Be on time and be prepared for meetings (tutorials), seminars and any other arranged activities.

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group meetings or lab meetings. We will agree the most suitable platform for communication platform for each meeting type.

14. When I know that I will be unavailable, I will work with you to identify a suitably qualified member of academic staff who can discuss your work with you.

15. During our meetings, I will work with you to build trust and enable an effective and respectful partnership. I confirm that I am familiar with Imperial's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

During our supervisory meetings, I will build trust and confidence to enable an effective and respectful partnership. I confirm that I am aware of Imperial's commitment to ensuring equality and inclusion for all staff and students. I understand that if I am concerned about our partnership, I can raise this with you, the Department's Senior Tutor (PGR) or with the Director of Postgraduate Studies.

16. Ensure you receive appropriate supervision for the duration of your research degree.

Recognise that your primary role is not to dictate but rather to advise, guide and oversee my research.

17. Introduce you to (remotely or in-person) other staff and students who will be involved with your supervision and wider research experience at Imperial. I will make it clear what their role is and what support you can expect from each person.

Work collaboratively with colleagues in person or remotely in my lab or office.

18. Ensure that any teaching or supervision that you carry out does not jeopardise your ability to complete your research or submit your thesis on time.

Understand that I may be expected to teach or supervise undergraduate and/or master's students and help other colleagues in the lab or office.

19. Celebrate your achievements and encourage you to get involved with the wider Imperial community, including by presenting your research progress, and to engage with the Graduate School and the Imperial College Union. Many activities, events and competitions are being held remotely. In addition, I will support you if you wish to participate in extra-curricular activities offered by the Graduate School and Imperial College Union ([We are Imperial College Union | Imperial College Union](#))

Take steps to share the findings of my research with the wider Imperial community and develop my own networks outside my immediate research group.

Supporting Good Health and Wellbeing

As your supervisor, I will:

As your student, I will:

20. Encourage you to maintain a healthy work-life balance and good wellbeing. In a remote environment, it is especially important to take regular breaks and exercise. The Imperial Student Support Zone offers help and tips in this regard: [Student Support Zone | Imperial students | Imperial College London](#)

Do my best to look after myself and maintain a healthy work-life balance. I am aware that I can access support outside my Department through information provided on the Student Support Zone website and through the Early Career Researcher Institute.

21. Encourage you to take holiday leave, in line with Imperial's [Research Degree Student Leave Policy](#). In accordance with the rules laid down by the Research Councils, students are entitled to up to eight weeks holiday leave, each year, including students with Tier 4 visas.

Take holiday leave in line with the Imperial's [Research Degree Student Leave Policy](#). Requests for holiday leave will be made with you in good time, and at a time which is appropriate to my research, noting that my funder may have specific requirements.

22. Appreciate that there may be times when you or members of your immediate family are unwell and during those times, I will be supportive of you taking appropriate action to get your needs met or those of your family I will make suitable reasonable adjustments according to your difficulties and will point you in the direction of further

Inform you if I am unable to attend Imperial activities (in-person or remotely) due to illness or other personal circumstance and will inform the Department's Senior Tutor (PGR) if I am away from Imperial for more than three days. I understand that I will need to provide a medical certificate if the illness extends beyond seven days.

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help and support to suit nature of your illness or personal circumstance.

23. If you are experiencing financial hardship, I shall be flexible and sympathetic and point you towards potential sources of support such as the Student Support Fund. In addition, I understand that you may need to supplement your stipend by taking paid part-time work.

Professional Development

As your supervisor, I will support your professional development by:

As your student, I will:

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| 24. Providing you with regular opportunities to talk about your research to other staff and students and to have practice in oral presentations, e.g. in journal clubs or local seminars. | Take the opportunity to share the findings of my research with the wider Imperial community. |
| 25. Providing you with the opportunity to present at conferences and other external development activities, either in person or remotely. I will also work with you to help identify conferences relevant to your field of research. | Take the opportunity to share the findings of my research externally, which can help me develop my own professional network |
| 26. Encouraging you to publish your work, where appropriate, and working with you to identify journals relevant to your field of research. | Understand that I would normally be expected to write papers during the course of my research. |
| 27. Working with you to identify at least 4 professional development courses (provided by ECRI) you should look to complete, in addition to the compulsory online plagiarism awareness course, and the compulsory DACR initial training (provide by CfAE). I may also refer you | Discuss my professional development with you and complete the required number of ECRI Professional Skills courses and compulsory online plagiarism awareness course . I will also complete the compulsory CfAE DACR initial training and, where appropriate, utilise the recommended CfAE resources. I understand that the thesis must be all my own work and that |

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to CfAE and their resources for further training.

all quotations from other sources, whether published or unpublished, must be properly acknowledged.

28. Encouraging you to explore your future career aspirations inside and outside of academia.

Date approved by PRQC: October 2025

Addendum a: Imperial Shared Workspaces – Code of Practice

Background

Imperial College London recognises collaboration with external partners as integral to advancing science, innovation, and impactful research. We actively encourage students to engage in shared laboratory and workspace environments, promoting rich interdisciplinary and collaborative interactions. However, adherence to the following code of practice is essential to maintaining safety, integrity, confidentiality, effective management of intellectual property (IP) and a compliant approach to your work.

Purpose of this document

This document sets out Imperial's code of practice and expected behaviours for Research students (PhD and MRes) who may be accessing shared facilities or workspaces for their research and studies. Shared workspaces are defined as environments or facilities where multiple individuals or groups collaboratively utilise common resources, equipment, or office areas. Shared workspaces are present across Imperial, and you may also have access to shared workspaces at external institutions (e.g. another university, central facility, industry partner) as part of your research. This may include:

- Shared Specialist Equipment Facilities: Labs with high-value equipment, such as electron microscopes, accessible to multiple research groups, or with specific safety requirements.
- Open-plan Laboratories: Large labs used collaboratively by researchers across multiple projects and disciplines.
- Collaborative Innovation Hubs: Spaces where academia and industry partners jointly develop research and technology.
- Hot-desking and Co-working Facilities: Flexible desk arrangements available to research students, visitors, or external collaborators.
- General Shared Office Spaces: Open-plan offices or meeting rooms shared by researchers, students, and visiting collaborators for everyday research activities and discussions.
- As a student you may be accessing a shared workspace as part of a research project, some examples of those arrangements can be found below:
- Collaborative PhD projects co-funded by industry partners, combining academic research with practical applications i.e. Industrial CASE PhD Studentships
- PhD routes involving joint supervision between Imperial College and sponsoring companies i.e. as part of a Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP)
- MRes Programmes with Industry Placements: Projects where MRes students carry out research supported directly by industrial sponsors.
- Industry-funded Research Grants: Projects within workspaces funded by industry sponsors aiming at solving specific industrial challenges.

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- Laboratories and workspaces at Imperial shared with Imperial NHS Foundation Trust and/or the Medical Research Council (MRC).

This Code of Practice summarises the key responsibilities, under the below headings, extracted from the University's core policies, and should be consulted prior to the use of a shared facility. For complete information, please consult the full policies provided in the resources section below.

1. Intellectual Property (IP) Management

Intellectual Property is a valuable outcome of research. For PhD and MRes students, understanding how to manage IP within shared spaces ensures that your discoveries have maximum impact and appropriate recognition.

- Awareness and Respect: IP created during your research will be subject to the University's IP Policy, typically owned in the first instance by the creating student, unless specifically stated within your grant or contract, or as set out in the IP Policy. Never use or claim IP belonging to others without permission. Always respect colleagues' IP contributions and the bank of knowledge developed by the research group before the start of your project.
- Documentation: Keep accurate, detailed, and dated lab records. *Example:* Maintaining detailed records ensures correct IP attribution and protection.
- Disclosure: Avoid premature or unauthorised disclosures. *Example:* Discussing unpublished results externally risks invalidating IP protection. Ask for your supervisor's permission before sharing results outside your research group.

2. Confidentiality Obligations

Confidentiality is critical in research, especially when collaborating in shared laboratory spaces. Research students must protect sensitive information diligently to preserve trust, collaboration, and academic integrity. Your funding arrangements may also require that confidentiality is maintained.

- Strictly protect sensitive, personal or research-related information.
- Confidential information must only be shared with authorised individuals.
- Breaching confidentiality is considered as misconduct with disciplinary consequences.

3. Integrity and Conflict of Interest

Maintaining integrity and appropriately managing conflicts of interest is fundamental to your academic reputation and the trust placed in your research. Students must remain transparent to ensure unbiased and credible research outcomes.

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- **Transparency:** Demonstrate honesty, openness, and independence.
- **Declaration:** Clearly disclose external interests potentially conflicting with Imperial duties.
Example: External consultancy or setting up a start-up company related to your PhD must be declared.
- **Management:** Address potential conflicts proactively and transparently.
Example: Family connections with suppliers require disclosure and careful management.

4. Ethics and Responsible Conduct

Imperial expects research students to demonstrate independence, honesty, and transparency in all their activities, proactively managing and declaring any potential, perceived, or actual conflicts of interest. Relationships with external partners should always be carefully considered and managed appropriately, taking into account the rights, interests, and reputational impact on all parties involved, including Imperial itself. For detailed guidance, see [Student Code of Conduct | About | Imperial College London](#) and the University's full [Ethics Code](#).

5. Safe and Respectful Collaboration

Effective collaboration thrives in an environment of mutual respect and safety awareness. As research students regularly sharing facilities, your conduct directly influences the safety, productivity, and atmosphere within the shared workspace.

- Respect colleagues, keep workspaces clean, and follow safety protocols.
- Immediately report issues or safety concerns.
- Ensure the IT equipment you use for your research is fully protected against hackers and viruses.

6. Familiarity with policies and additional support

All research students must ensure they are familiar with Imperial's policies and clearly understand their responsibilities within shared workspaces. Additional support and guidance is always available through supervisors, departmental contacts, or dedicated policy teams. Regular training sessions will also be provided, and attendance is strongly encouraged to reinforce understanding and compliance. If you require further clarification or support at any time, please reach out to your departmental supervisor or the contacts outlined below:

Intellectual Property & Commercialisation (IPC):

- [Imperial IP Policy](#) and [Student IP Guidance](#)
- **Policy Owner:** Research Office
- **Contact:** ipc.team@imperial.ac.uk

Confidentiality and Integrity:

- [Imperial Research Integrity Framework](#)
- **Policy Owner:** Human Resources and Secretariat

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- **Contact:** secretariat@imperial.ac.uk

Conflict of Interest:

- [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- **Policy Owner:** College Secretariat
- **Contact:** coi@imperial.ac.uk

External Interests:

- Register of External Interests and Annual Declaration Policy
- **Policy Owner:** College Secretariat
- **Contact:** secretariat@imperial.ac.uk

National Protective Security Authority (NPSA) - Shared Workspaces - Users Guidance

- [Shared Workspaces - Users Guidance | NPSA](#)

7. Breaches and Misconduct

Students are expected to behave appropriately in shared workspaces, as outlined above, to maintain the integrity, reputation, and safety of the research environment – further information is contained within the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Students can seek support and guidance from their departmental supervisors regarding the application of these policies.

Breaches of the policies outlined in this Code of Practice, including misuse of intellectual property, confidentiality violations, undeclared conflicts of interest, or unsafe laboratory conduct, will be treated seriously. Deliberate breaches would constitute misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with Imperial College's disciplinary procedures. For further details, students should refer to Imperial's [official disciplinary guidelines](#) or contact their departmental supervisor.