

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

MASTER'S PROJECT MAIN SUPERVISOR

This document outlines the typical duties expected of the post holder. The descriptions of the post cannot be exhaustive and the post-holder may be required to undertake other duties, normally these will be broadly in line with the listed key responsibilities. Roles and responsibilities may also be subject to change.

All Master's Project Main Supervisors are reminded of the online [Supervisors' Guidebook](#) which, although primarily designed to support research degree Main Supervisors, provides relevant information and support which may be helpful.

It should be noted that there may be variations in responsibilities to reflect departmental procedures and processes. Therefore, Project Main Supervisors may wish to discuss their role with the Programme Organiser.

It should also be noted that this document applies to the supervision of substantive Master's projects, comprising 30 ECTS or more and should be read in conjunction with the Mutual Expectations for the Master's Student and Project Supervisor Partnership document.

1. Summary of role. As a Master's Project Main Supervisor, you

- 1) are ultimately responsible for all health and safety aspects of your students' research
- 2) should be welcoming to new students;
- 3) should ensure new students are inducted into the research space, noting that other colleagues may be responsible for carrying out the induction;
- 4) should help students to plan their project;
- 5) should provide students with feedback on their written work and/or presentations, providing guidance on what is expected and letting students know when standards are falling short of what is expected;
- 6) should engage with supervision and meet regularly (as appropriate to your department) with your student(s); ;
- 7) should ensure students have sufficient resources to implement the mutually agreed project plan;
- 8) should help students resolve difficulties they encounter and/or direct them to others who can assist within your department or elsewhere;

You should also:

- 1) be familiar with the
 - [Regulations for Taught Master's Degrees and the Regulations for the Examination of Master's Levels Degrees,](#)
 - other [procedures for taught courses](#)
 - Programme Handbook.
- 2) although not your primary role, be mindful of the pastoral and wellbeing needs of postgraduate students and be ready to sign-post to others in your department, the Faculty or elsewhere who can support students.

Duties and key responsibilities:

2. Health and safety

- a. As the Master's Project Main Supervisor, you are ultimately responsible for all health and safety aspects of your students' research, relevant risk assessments and for ensuring that students receive appropriate training in order that they can carry out their research safely. **Please ensure that your student receives an appropriate health and safety induction if this is not carried out by you.**
- b. There is general College guidance on health and safety but additional Faculty policies may apply. In particular, the latter applies to lone working and working out of hours. [View the general College guidance on responsibilities for Health and Safety.](#)
- c. You should also ensure that instruction in requisite techniques, e.g. equipment usage, is arranged, where necessary.
- d. Where students are undertaking projects involving travel, you should ensure the necessary health and safety checks and any risk assessments have been carried out.

3. Project set-up

- a. The decision to admit a student to undertake a specific research project should not be made unless you and the Programme Organiser are confident that:
 - the necessary facilities (e.g. computing, laboratory) and other resources can be provided;
 - supervision can be given throughout the duration of the project;
 - that ethical permission, where appropriate, has been granted;
 - that CBS and GMO authority is available, where relevant.
- b. Prior to the start of the project and if appropriate, it is recommended that you make contact with your project student(s) to advise on general background reading and to encourage an initial literature survey on the research topic.

4. Managing the partnership

- a. If there is more than one supervisor working on the project, or perhaps postdocs and colleagues from industry, you should lead discussions with this project team to identify individuals' roles and responsibilities. This should take place prior to any student(s) starting the project so that all are clear about their remit and to ensure clarity of direction for the student(s). You should then communicate the outcome of this discussion to the student(s).
- b. At the first meeting with your new student(s), it is recommended that you discuss the College's *Mutual Expectations for the Master's Project Student Supervisor Partnership*. This document is designed to stimulate conversations to agree how the partnership will work and to manage expectations.

5. Supporting the progression of the project

- a. Do maintain regular contact with your student(s), at a frequency determined by your department. This may be through individual meetings, tutorials, group meetings or at the bench.
- b. In the initial period, give appropriate guidance about the nature of the research and how to plan the project so that it is finished on time.
- c. Where appropriate, encourage your student(s) to produce written work, which may often provide the basis for the preparation of write-up. You should return this work to your student(s), providing constructive feedback in a reasonable time, as determined by your department.
- d. Ensure that students are made aware when their progress is inadequate or when standards of work fall below those generally expected and, in appropriate cases, report such occurrences to your department's Senior Tutor (PGT)/or Director of Postgraduate Studies.
- e. Provide students with guidance on the systematic recording of data or theoretical calculation and the importance of keeping and maintaining a tidy, clear record of all that has been undertaken. You should review your students' data and be reassured of its quality and integrity.
- f. Provide students with information on where they may find help and support on approaching original literature and sources with a critical attitude and on matters related to copyright and on avoiding plagiarism.
- g. Highlight where there are opportunities for your student(s) to talk about their work to staff and/or at group seminars, and to have practice in oral presentations.
- h. Encourage your student(s) to participate in professional development opportunities provided by the department, the Faculty and the [Graduate School](#) and where appropriate, support provided by the Centre for Academic English.

6. Supporting the wellbeing of students

- a. Everyone at College has a responsibility for the welfare of colleagues and students. Although the pastoral care of students is not your primary function, you should be aware of the issues and challenges affecting students and how these can impact on their well-being and work-life balance.
- b. It is important for all supervisors to champion inclusive working practices. An inclusive working environment should embrace the richness of diversity of backgrounds, culture, gender and perspectives of staff and students of the College. Every member of College staff has a responsibility to:
 - eliminate discrimination;
 - anticipate need;
 - make reasonable adjustments.
- c. You should be aware of arrangements for postgraduate tutoring, welfare and pastoral support in your department and refer students to these where appropriate.
- d. Alert your departmental Director of Postgraduate Studies if you have a concern in terms of attendance for students with Tier 4 Visas.

7. Commitment to College

- a. Please promote and encourage completion of the College's (PG SOLE) and national surveys such as the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES).
- b. Ensure that your students are made aware of the College's [Guidelines for Proper Scientific Conduct in Research](#) and the [policy on, and procedures for, the investigation of allegations of research misconduct](#).