

Imperial College London

Process for appointing Assistant Supervisors

Postdocs make important contributions towards the supervision of the College's students¹ and it has been agreed that the title of Assistant Supervisor is an appropriate way for the College to recognise this. By formalising this contribution, it is hoped that postdocs will record this title on their CV.

It should be noted that appointment to Assistant Supervisor will not result in a contractual change to the individual and does not come with remuneration.

The process described below is available to all postdocs within the College who are defined as research staff:

- with a PhD or equivalent
- who are within the first 10 years (full-time equivalent) of their postdoctoral research activity (counted from the viva date) - note that career breaks are allowed and will be accounted for
- who are employed to undertake research commonly on an externally funded contract

1. Appointment Process

1.1 Before a postdoc can be assigned as an Assistant Supervisor, they should be made fully aware of what the role entails and complete the mandatory training. A roles and responsibilities document for Assistant Supervisors has been developed, together with a continuing professional development framework to support this. It should also be noted that many students approach postdocs informally for help with experiments. **This also needs to be considered when assessing the contribution that an individual postdoc makes, to ensure that no postdoc is over-burdened.**

1.2 The following process can be used to assign the additional title of Assistant Supervisor to an individual:

Line Manager of the postdoc considers the following:

1. Is the individual fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of an Assistant Supervisor?
2. Is the individual engaging with continuing professional development including completion of "*Introduction to being an Assistant Supervisor*", (available as either an online course or a face-to-face workshop)?

¹ Undergraduates, students attending the College as part of a placement, Occasional Students, UROP, Erasmus, Master's and research students.

[Note: The Graduate School will send a monthly report to Departmental Operations Managers of all staff who have completed the mandatory training]

3. If the line manager of the individual is satisfied that the above criteria have been met, then an email can be sent to the HR Staff Hub, via the staff hub portal, confirming that formal assignment of the postdoc to Assistant Supervisor can be made:
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/human-resources/ask-staff-hub/>

[Note: Change to contract forms are not required, an email will suffice. Departments should decide how they would like to manage this part of the process].

4. The HR Staff Hub will issue a formal letter to the individual postdoc confirming their assignment as Assistant Supervisor (**Appendix 1**). Assignment to this additional role will also be recorded on ICIS. No end point to this assignment will be recorded.
- 1.3 The line manager may wish to discuss how the postdoc is developing in the role of Assistant Supervisor as part of PRDP discussions.
 - 1.4 Further information for Assistant Supervisors can be found on the [Assistant Supervisor Website](#).

2. The appointment of Postdocs as Co-Supervisors to PhD students

- 2.1 The College's [Policy for Research Degree Supervision](#) states that:

Exceptionally, subject to the agreement of the Head of Department, and provided the individual has completed the College's mandatory continuing professional development training requirements for Co-supervisors, a person in this category of postdoctoral research fellows, with appropriate seniority may be appointed a co-supervisor. Further, a person in this category can only be appointed a co-supervisor if they will be present for the duration of the student's research programme.

- 2.2 The College already has in place a framework for the support and development of Imperial College London PhD main and co-supervisors. Postdocs appointed to the role of co-supervisor are subject to this Framework in the same way as all other College main and co-Supervisors. Further, a postdoc should only be considered for assignment to co-Supervisor if the following criteria are met:

- Appropriate seniority as determined by the Head of Department
- Contracted to College for the duration of the research student's period of registration
- Permission from the Head of Department is granted

- 2.3 The following process for the assignment of postdocs to Co-Supervisors has been agreed:

Line Manager of the postdoc considers the following:

1. Is the individual engaging with continuing professional development as stipulated in the [Framework for the support and development of Imperial College London PhD Main and Co-supervisors](#)?

2. Has the individual completed “[Introduction to Supervising PhD Students – a course for Main and Co-Supervisors](#)”, available as an online or face-to-face workshop?
3. Does the individual have appropriate seniority as determined by the Head of Department and has permission from the Head of Department be given?
4. Will the individual be contracted to College for the duration of the research student’s period of registration?
5. If the line manager of the individual is satisfied that the above criteria have been met, then an email can be sent to the HR Staff Hub, via the HR portal, confirming that formal assignment of the postdoc to Co-Supervisor can be made. **Please note that HR Staff Hub will also require the name of the student being co-supervised and expected end date of the student’s registration:** <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/human-resources/ask-staff-hub/>

[Note: Change to contract forms are not required. An email to the HR Staff Hub will suffice. Departments should decide how they would like to manage this part of the process].

6. HR will issue a formal letter to the individual postdoc confirming their assignment as Co-Supervisor (**Appendix 2**). Assignment to this role will also be recorded on ICIS and will be associated with an individual PhD student. Therefore, appointment to Co-Supervisor will end once the research student has completed their PhD.

2.4 The line manager may wish to discuss how the postdoc is developing in the role of Co- Supervisor as part of PRDP discussions.

2.5 To ensure that the PhD student(s) being supervised are clear about the roles of supervisors within their supervisory team, the students’ main Supervisor should lead discussions with the co-supervisor and any Assistant Supervisors, about how the supervisory team will work and communicate this to the student. To facilitate this discussion, the following document can be used, [Defining the Roles within Research Degree Supervisory Teams](#).

Version 1.1 29.08.18

Version 1.2 10.06.19

Appendix 1:

PERSONAL

Dr xxxx

Department of xxxxxx

Faculty of xxxxxx

Dear Dr xxxxxx

Appointment as Assistant Supervisor

I am writing to confirm your appointment as Assistant Supervisor in the Department of [insert name of Department]. Please find enclosed a copy of the roles and responsibilities document for this post, together with the College's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Assistant Supervisors.

The appointment will commence on xxxxxx and will run until further notice.

There is no honorarium associated with the duties that you will be carrying out in connection with this post.

All other terms and conditions of service remain unchanged.

If you do not agree to the change above, please contact me in writing.

If you wish to discuss anything within this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

HR Coordinator

Appendix 2:

PERSONAL

Dr xxxx

Department of xxxxxx

Faculty of xxxxxx

Dear Dr xxxxxx

Appointment as Co-Supervisor

I am writing to confirm your appointment as Co-Supervisor to [insert name of student] in the Department of [insert name of Department].

The appointment will commence on xxxxxx and will run until [expected end date].

There is no honorarium associated with the duties that you will be carrying out in connection with this post.

All other terms and conditions of service remain unchanged.

If you do not agree to the change above, please contact me in writing.

If you wish to discuss anything within this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

HR Coordinator