Framework for the support and development of Imperial College London PhD Supervisors

Principles of the Framework

- The College will continue to provide mandatory training for all new supervisors. Heads of Department (HoDs) will ensure that all new supervisors undergo this training.

- Supervisors with limited prior experience of supervising PhD students will be required to undertake the mandatory full day “Introduction to PhD Supervision at Imperial College” workshop, delivered by the Educational Development Unit (EDU).

- Upon appointment of a new supervisor who has experience of supervising PhD students at other institution(s), the HoD and Director of Director of Postgraduate Studies (DPS) will discuss with the new supervisor their experience and the role of PhD supervisor at Imperial and decide on a strategy for support; either attending the full day workshop or the online version of the training. Upon appointment of a new HoD, who was not recruited internally, the Faculty Dean will discuss with the new HoD on a strategy for support; either attending the full day workshop or the online version of the training.

- The online version of “Introduction to PhD Supervision at Imperial College” will be available to all supervisors as a refresher course at any time. The Graduate School will provide a termly departmental report of all supervisors who have completed this online course.

- Experienced supervisors who complete the online version may be called upon to share their knowledge, expertise and best practice by contributing to the “Focus on Best Practice in Supervision” workshop and possibly “A Practical Guide to Assisting with PhD Supervision”, a workshop traditionally undertaken by postdocs and delivered with the help of experienced PIs.

- A new optional online course in Doctoral Student Wellbeing will also be available to supervisors at any time. The Graduate School will provide a termly departmental report of all supervisors who have completed this online course.

- Continuing professional development is an important part of employment at Imperial College London, and supervisors are encouraged to take a range of development courses. All supervisors are required to undergo CPD specifically related to supervision which, in addition

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1 This document applies to all PhD, EngD, MPhil and MD[Res] main and co-supervisors. It does not apply to assistant supervisors who are normally postdocs.
to the training courses for new supervisors described above, involves contributing to a departmental “Focus on Best Practice in Supervision” workshop, at least once every six years.

- The departmental “Focus on Best Practice in Supervision” workshop is led by the department with support from the EDU and the Graduate School. The workshop will draw input from the following: HoD and DPS; outcomes from Graduate School-led departmental student focus group held prior to the workshop; actions relating specifically to supervision as a result of periodic and precept review; departmental PRES results and the Student Experience Survey; departmental student feedback mechanisms. The Senior Tutor (Postgraduate) may also wish to lead a discussion around the wellbeing of doctoral students and there may be input from the Centre for Academic English (if appropriate).

- The College requires that all supervisors within a department attend a workshop at least once every six years but the cycle of participants and frequency of the “Focus on Best Practice in Supervision” workshop will be decided upon by the HoD and DPS. Attendance at these workshops will be recorded and provided to departments in order to assist with record keeping.

- The number of participants in each departmental “Focus on Best Practice in Supervision” will usually be between 10 and 20 participants but the Department will make the final decision, depending on the nature of the workshop and topic(s) of focus.

- The College Research Degree Precepts make provision for the CPD of supervisors and a summary of departmental “Focus on Best Practice in Supervision” workshops will be required at Periodic Review. As part of Periodic Review, Departments will be expected to demonstrate that their supervisors undergo CPD and that there are Departmental systems in place in order to check this.

[Note: Supervisors employed by the Crick but who supervise Imperial PhD students are required to complete the online Introduction to PhD Supervision at Imperial College – developed specifically for Crick supervisors. The Crick is responsible for ensuring these supervisors complete this course with assistance from the Manager of the Graduate School]

Graduate School

Approved by the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee, May 2017