Charter for Supervision and Co-Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students

Mary Immaculate College

BRIATHAR DÉ MO LÓCHRANN

MIC

MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
COLÁISTE MHUIRE GAN SMÁL

Supervision must be a collective effort with clearly defined and written responsibilities of the main supervisor, supervisory team, doctoral candidate, doctoral school, research group and the institution, leaving room for the individual development of the doctoral candidate. Providing professional development to supervisors is an institutional responsibility, whether organised through formal training or informal sharing of experiences among staff. Developing a common supervision culture shared by supervisors, doctoral school leaders and doctoral candidates must be a priority for doctoral schools. Supervisors must be active researchers.

(Salzburg Principles 2005 and 2010, I and II)
https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/salzburg%20ii%20recommendations%202010.pdf

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Charter Preamble

1. The Postgraduate Environment at MIC

Several essential components underpin the success of research masters (NFQ Level 9) and doctoral studies (NFQ Level 10) programmes (HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education, 2023). Critical among these are a high-quality and vibrant research and learning environment; academic supervision appropriate to all postgraduate research students (PGRs); comprehensive Graduate School support and academic administration services; a high quality professional and transferable research skills programme; access to research resources and professional development opportunities; opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction; demanding but fair academic standards; and the need for the candidate to be self-critical and to take mature responsibility for research progress and output. A substantial literature has emerged in recent years dealing with multiple aspects of masters and doctoral studies, including academic supervision. Much of the currently published material has been assembled in bibliographic format by Taylor (2020).

Specifically, in relation to PGR supervision, Mary Immaculate College (MIC) recognises that the academic knowledge-base, discipline skills, management-craft, commitment and academic instincts of an effective supervisor are fundamental to successful academic progress and development of the PGR. The PGR's relationships with their supervisor / supervisory team is critical in bringing the research journey to successful completion and ultimately to graduation of the student (MIC Framework for Doctoral Education, 2021). The central role of academic supervision within the postgraduate environment is acknowledged by higher education providers, including MIC, whereby supervisors may count their supervisory achievements in making their case for academic promotion.

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2. The Operation of this Charter

The operation of this Charter and linked processes and protocols will reflect the College's commitment to the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion and will be fully compliant with the provisions of prevailing equality legislation, including gender equality.

The Mary Immaculate Research Ethics Committee (MIREC) will support supervisors and PGRs to ensure that research is carried out with full regard for the welfare of human participants in accordance with legal, professional and ethical standards. Research conducted by PGRs that involves human participants requires prior approval by MIREC, including all research involving children and vulnerable persons.

The terms of this Charter do not -

- replace or prejudice working relationships, reporting mechanisms or standard custom and practice at MIC.

- replace or prejudice the academic regulations of MIC.

At MIC, research data, including research data generated by PGRs, are managed in compliance with the provisions of GDPR (2018) and linked MIC policies and protocols.

This Charter will be reviewed at 3-year intervals, except where compliance provisions or other regulatory measures introduced externally or by the College require review and amendment to take place sooner.

This Charter for Supervision and Co-Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students is scaffolded by two Standard Operating Procedures documents (RGS-SOP218- Appointment and Alteration of Research Degree Supervisors; and RGS-SOP219- Contracting Paid External Co-Supervisors for Postgraduate Research Students), as well as a Request form for RGS SOP219.

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Commitments to Supervisors and PGRs

The MIC Research & Graduate School, Departments/School

In accordance with the MIC Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures and the MIC Student Handbook, MIC will provide:

- Appropriate supervision for every PGR;

- Academic support for all academic aspects of the PGR's research programme through the Research & Graduate School, Departments/School;

- A programme of professional transferable skills offered through the Research & Graduate School;

- Appropriate research facilities for PGRs, including an adequate study space in the JHN campus for normal duration of studies, managed by the Research & Graduate School;

- Access to learning and skills training activities and professional advice that will support the fundamental requirements of research education, and career development, in line with the Irish Universities Association Skills Statement (2021);

- The Research & Graduate School also provides:

  - information to MIC-funded PGRs in relation to tutoring or other academic work;

  - information to externally funded PGRs in relation to their funders, funding schemes and related requirements;

  - information on financial support to present papers at academic conferences;

  - information and advice to PGRs in relation to the annual progression process (Research Review, Research Confirmation, Research Progression Appeal);

  - Advice on both formal and informal mechanisms to resolve issues pertaining to: appeals, complaints, disciplinary matters, student-supervisor academic relationship and support services.

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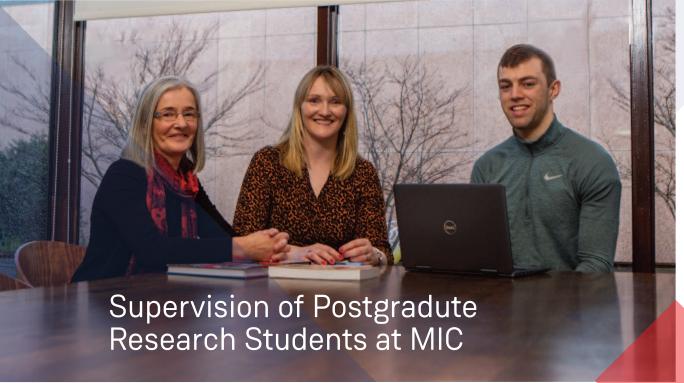## Commitments of Supervisors to PGRs

Supervisors will:

- Supervise PGRs whose research aligns with their research interests and expertise;

- Create and maintain a professional working relationship with the PGR, including documentation of an agreed written schedule of meetings, calendar deadlines for submission of written work, an agreed progression plan, timelines/dates for feedback on research progress and written submissions, advice on dissemination of research findings, and authorship;

- Have a working knowledge of the MIC Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures, including codes of conduct, as well as all relevant MIC policies and procedures;

- Facilitate alternate supervision during any extended absence from the College through the Postgraduate Research Subcommittee (PRSC);

- Agree to continue supervision of existing PGRs while on any form of research leave;

- Support the PGR in preparing for the annual Research Student Progression process (Research Review, Research Confirmation, Research Progression Appeal);

- Advise PGRs who encounter difficulties to avail of the support(s) available to them, and refer them to the Research & Graduate School and other appropriate College services;

- Avail of supervisor training offered by the College or by recommended external agencies.

Commitments of PGRs to Primary and Co-Supervisors

- Agree the parameters of engagement (including meeting frequency / responding to emails / feedback etc.);

- Agree a project plan, including milestones, with the aim of meeting progression requirements and submitting a research thesis within a reasonable time frame set out at the outset of studies;

- Agree a research skills plan and revisit regularly;

- Attend all planned supervisory meetings with supervisors except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness, *force majeure*);

- Keep a written record of decisions and tasks agreed at supervision meetings, and share this as an *aide memoire* with your supervisor(s) immediately following meetings, allowing for clarifications by supervisor(s) where needed;

- Respond to all professional communications in a timely manner, preferably in writing;

- Seek an open dialogue with supervisors, discussing any issues at an early stage, and make written notes to assist recollection;

- Bear in mind that supervisors have many commitments and obligations within their overall portfolio of work, and be respectful of their workload by adhering to the work plan agreed with them at the outset.

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Commitments of MIC to Supervisors

MIC is committed to establishing a supervisor support and development framework for staff engaged in the supervision of PGRs. This is in line with the idea of a formal Framework for Supervisor Support and Development first proposed by NAIRTL (NAIRTL, 2012 - *Developing an institutional framework for supporting supervisors of research students: A practical guide*). This Supervisor Support Framework, including a comprehensive supervisory skills training component, will be developed through consultation with the relevant stakeholders, officers, bodies and committees, and led by a highly visible working group on supervisor training. The Supervisor Support Framework will be embedded within the policies governing postgraduate research and will be processed by the Research Committee and adopted by *An Comhairle Acadúil.* Within this context, supervision of PGRs will be reckonable within the Staff Workloads Model adopted by MIC, and will be a significant criterion within the MIC Framework for Promotion to Senior / Principal Lecturer.

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Supervisory relationships and line management

Occasionally, PGRs may be members of MIC staff. In such cases the following is recommended for reasons of avoiding potential conflicts of interests:

- the MIC supervisor is not a member of the academic department of the PGR;

- the MIC supervisor is not the line manager (or in any work oversight role) of the PGR;

- the MIC supervisor is not related to the PGR (e.g. spouse, other family, guardian, next-of-kin).

In general, it is recommended that members of MIC staff should not register for L10 studies in MIC so as to avoid these or any real or perceived conflicts of a similar nature. PGRs who hold MIC employment contracts are required to have two external examiners on their viva voce examination panels.

Roles and responsibilities of supervisors

At MIC, PGR supervision is provided by expert individual supervisors or supervisory teams that are responsible for oversight of all academic aspects of the research. In cooperation with the Research & Graduate School, the supervisor(s) must facilitate effective management of administrative issues relating to the PGR's registration, annual progression and examination. Critically, the supervisor(s) must support the PGR in preparing a thesis for examination (Taylor, 2019) and fulfilling required amendments in the case of conditional awards.

For each PGR, the Primary Supervisor must be a member of the academic staff of MIC (MIC Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures, April 2025) whose appointment has been approved by the MIC President, and at least one supervisor will be an active researcher in the broad area of the student's research topic and will usually hold a doctoral degree. See also Section D of this document.

It is expected that everyone involved in the supervision and management of PGRs will undertake training provided through MIC and be familiar with principles and practice in the following areas:

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a   The Athena SWAN Charter: The College is working towards building an inclusive environment that promotes equality, values diversity and respects the rights and dignity of all persons without prejudice. The frameworks used at MIC and across the globe to support and transform gender equality in higher education and research are reflected in the MIC Gender Action Plan 2023 - 2027 that specifies implementation of Athena SWAN at MIC, including *inter alia*, maternity leave, gender balanced panels; equal opportunity;

b   Research Integrity: provides guidance to the MIC academic community for the performance of their duties in research in an ethical and professional manner and in compliance with the policies and procedures adopted by the College, as well as relevant legislation and (inter)national guidelines. The MIC Research Integrity Policy (2018) and the Code of Good Practice in Research (2020) specify implementation at MIC;

c   Research Ethics: MIC supervisors and researchers must ensure that their research is carried out to the highest possible ethical standards, with particular regard for the welfare of human participants and in accordance with recognised legal, professional and ethical standards. MIREC oversees implementation of all aspects of research ethics carried out by MIC Staff and MIC PGRs.

Appointment of supervisors
(See also RGS SOP218- Appointment and Alteration of Research Degree Supervisors)

- PGR candidates are assigned a Primary Supervisor (as well as Joint Supervisor(s) or Co-supervisors where appropriate) approved by the PRSC.

- The Dean (in consultation with the Head of Department / Programme Leader) and PRSC must be satisfied that there is capacity within the workload of the staff member(s) before an appointment is approved.

- Normally, staff members within four years of retirement should not undertake a new PGR supervision role.

- Prospective PGRs may contact a member or members of MIC academic staff with a request to explore the possibility of studying for a research degree in their area of expertise, and under their supervision. The member(s) of academic staff may agree to supervise, subject to: a) Agreement of the Dean and Head of Department; b) Confirmation of capacity within the workload of the staff member(s); and c) Approval by the PRSC.

- Alternatively, a prospective PGR may contact a Department or the RGS with a request to explore the possibility of studying for a research degree in a particular academic area. In these cases, enquiries will be sent to potential academic supervisors. Academic staff members may agree to supervise subject to a) Agreement of the Dean and Head of Department; b) Confirmation of capacity within the workload of the staff member(s); and c) Approval by the PRSC.

- In the case of research programmes, academic supervisors will be assigned by the Dean/Programme Leader subject to the agreement of the staff member(s) and a) Agreement of the both the Dean and Programme Leader; b) Confirmation of capacity within the workload of the staff member(s); and c) Approval by the PRSC.

- Supervision may be delivered through supervisory panels / communities of research practice, potentially involving groups of supervisors working with groups of supervisees, subject to the approval of Dean / Programme Leader and PRSC.

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Retirements / staff churn

Where a supervisor retires or leaves the College, the Dean of Faculty shall inform the PRSC. On the recommendation of the Dean and Head of Department, appropriate arrangements for the supervision of the student (including, where required, the appointment of a new supervisory team) will be submitted for approval by PRSC using standard forms and procedures in accordance with the MIC Handbook of Academic Regulations & Procedures.

Resignation of supervisors

As well as offering a professional academic service in line with the tradition of the Academy, staff members who take on the role of PGR supervisor concomitantly enter into an unwritten moral contract with the student. The PGR is normally dependent on the supervisor for academic guidance, mentorship, discipline knowledge, project management experience, know-how and inter-personal moral support. The resignation of a supervisor, particularly in the context of a breakdown in the supervisory relationship, can have serious consequences for all parties, but in particular for the PGR, and every such situation must be formally reported to the PRSC. The Vice President Research and the Graduate School Director within the Research & Graduate School will assist supervisors fulfilling their commitments to PGRs, as set out in Section B of this document, and will also do everything possible to mediate relationship difficulties. It is highly desirable that mature supervisory relationships are cultivated, developed and maintained throughout the L9/10 student experience. Technical processes for essential changes to supervisory arrangements are set out in the L10 MIC regulations. At MIC, all supervisory changes must be formally approved and recorded by the PRSC, in accordance with RGS SOP218.

Temporary remote supervision

The research for a L10 degree shall largely be carried out under the direct supervision of the supervisor(s) appointed by MIC, including research visits to other institutions. However, if a substantial proportion or all of the research of an MIC PGR is to be carried out in another institution under the general supervision of the supervisor(s), the prior approval of the PRSC must be sought. The PRSC may permit research to be conducted elsewhere on a case-by-case basis or may establish formal mechanisms for inter-institutional mobility of PGRs.

Annual progression & supervision

The supervision process is complemented in MIC by the Research Student Progression process for all PGRs, through which an annual Research Review Panel reviews and gives feedback to PGRs relating to their progress in the period under review. As well as recognising good progress and providing formative feedback and encouragement, Research Review Panels offer a vital opportunity to identify weaknesses and suggest measures for resolving problems that may arise, up to and including Research Confirmation Panels and Research Appeals Panels where required.

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PGRs per staff member - recommended ratios

When considering research postgraduate applications, the Dean of Faculty, the Head of Department and the PRSC must be satisfied that the proposed supervisor has sufficient workload capacity so that assignment of new additional PGRs is not unfair or unmanageable. The number of PGRs that an individual can supervise must be considered within the scope of their full spectrum of duties.

In MIC, the current recommended maximum of PGRs per staff member is the equivalent of five one-to-one supervisions (one-to-one supervision = 1; co-supervision by two supervisors = 0.5; co-supervision by more than two supervisors = 0.25).

Normally a supervisor cannot be approved unless their contract of employment extends beyond the expected period of registration and completion of the PGR's programme, therefore staff members within four years of retirement should not normally propose to undertake a new PGR supervision role. The College may consider exceptional individual circumstances on the recommendation of the Head of Department with the support of the Dean of Faculty.

External co-supervision

In certain circumstances, as set out in Section D (Section D Part 2 Subsections a-d) of this document, an additional appropriately qualified person (or persons) outside of MIC may act as co-supervisor(s) to support a PGR and the Primary Supervisor (see Section D). However, this must not conflict with the academic regulations that apply to supervision or to the appointment of external examiners at MIC.

Where MIC staff co-supervise PGRs at other institutions, this is reckonable as 'Academic Service' for the purpose of MIC promotions and related academic profile advancement.

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Models for Supervision and Co-Supervision at MIC

One-to-one supervision

A one-to-one academic relationship between a PGR and their supervisor in a departmental setting is sometimes referred to as the 'monastic' or 'apprenticeship' model. This model has proven durable in MIC and within academia, and generally works well.

Under the one-to-one supervision model, the supervisor must be a member of the academic staff of MIC whose appointment has been approved by the MIC President. The supervisor will by default be the Primary Supervisor and will be an active researcher in the broad area of the PGR's research topic and will normally hold a doctoral degree. This model requires a strong and mutually respectful academic relationship between the supervisor and the PGR, and critically it requires that the supervisor has the interest, time and full range of discipline knowledge and skills to guide the PGR in all academic aspects and dimensions of their research project.

Co-supervision

1. **Co-supervision involving MIC staff (or voluntary unpaid external discipline experts) may arise in one or more of the following circumstances. These co-supervision roles attract no payment.**

   a   Where it is mutually agreed that two or more MIC staff (from one or more department(s) / Faculties) agree to take joint / collective responsibility for the supervision of a PGR, having between / among them the interest, time and full range of discipline knowledge and skills to guide the PGR in all aspects and dimensions of the research project. Under this model the supervisors contribute equally in the majority of the many aspects of supervision, even when one is the nominated Primary Supervisor (as required under MIC regulations). All supervisors must be members of the staff of MIC whose appointment has been approved by the MIC President.

   b   Where a proposed Primary Supervisor has not previously supervised or co-supervised a PhD to graduation. In this situation, co-supervision involving a second supervisor will enable a new or inexperienced Primary Supervisor to benefit from the support and guidance of an experienced MIC co-supervisor who can guide them on the important aspects of supervisory practice, and who should also have experience in the broad research field concerned. Co-supervisors in this role should be established supervisors who have

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experience of supervising one or more PGRs to successful completion of their degree and who have a good understanding of policies and procedures concerning PGRs. In a reversal of this arrangement, inexperienced staff members may gain experience through co-supervising the student of an experienced Primary Supervisor, while bringing expertise to the benefit of the student in question, while at the same time benefitting from the mentoring of the more experienced Primary Supervisor. Both supervisors must be members of the staff of MIC whose appointment has been approved by the MIC President.

c   Where a proposed Primary Supervisor does not possess the full range of discipline knowledge and skills required to supervise a PGR, and a significant amount of additional expertise is required. In such a case, the PRSC may agree a co-supervision arrangement involving one or more additional supervisors who are members of MIC staff whose appointment has been approved by the MIC President or by an unpaid external discipline expert who agrees to conduct this role on a voluntary, unpaid basis (see Section E).

d   Where the proposed MIC supervisor does not have a doctoral degree but the Vice President Research, the Dean of Faculty, the Head of Department and the Graduate School Director are satisfied that the staff member has significant experience of supervision at PhD level and has current and active involvement in research appropriate to the field of study, the PRSC may agree a co-supervision arrangement involving one or more additional supervisors who are members of MIC staff whose appointment has been approved by the MIC President.

2.   Co-supervision involving paid non-MIC staff.

Normally, where a prospective PGR approaches MIC requesting admission to a L9/10 research programme, they propose to conduct their studies under the supervision of expert MIC staff within an established field or discipline where the College has a research profile and track record. In the absence of adequate supervisory skills, time capacity or non-alignment to the research profile and track record of MIC, applications in certain areas may not be considered.

By way of exceptions, the scenarios given in a-d below may be considered. These will apply only where a Head of Department or Programme Leader makes a successful evidence-based case. Subject to prior approval by the College through the PRSC, co-supervision roles involving external co-supervisors may be performed under contract and payment will be offered.

a   Where it is clearly in the interest of the College to offer a L9/10 research programme place to the prospective PGR but the MIC Primary Supervisor cannot offer the full range of discipline knowledge and skills required to supervise the PGR, and the additional specialist expertise required is not available within MIC. In such a case the PRSC, on behalf of the College, may agree a co-supervision arrangement involving an appropriately qualified person or persons outside of MIC. The Primary Supervisor must be a member of the academic staff of MIC whose appointment has been approved by the MIC President. (See RGS SOP219 and associated request form).

b   Where it is clearly in the interest of the College to offer a L9/10 research programme place to the prospective PGR but no member of MIC staff in the particular discipline area has adequate time capacity to guide the PGR, the PRSC, on behalf of the College, may agree a

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co-supervision arrangement by an appropriately qualified person or persons outside of MIC. In these cases, an internal Primary Supervisor must be appointed. The Primary Supervisor must be a member of the academic staff of MIC whose appointment has been approved by the MIC President. (See RGS SOP219 and associated request form).

c   Where it is clearly in the interest of the College to offer a L9/10 research programme place to a prospective PGR to undertake inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary research, an internal Primary Supervisor must be appointed. In such a case, the PRSC, on behalf of the College, may agree a co-supervision arrangement by an appropriately qualified person or persons outside of MIC provided no MIC co-supervisor is available. The Primary Supervisor must be a member of the academic staff of MIC whose appointment has been approved by the MIC President. (See RGS SOP219 and associated request form).

d   Where it is clearly in the interest of the College to offer a L9/10 research programme place to the prospective PGR but the proposed MIC Primary Supervisor does not have a doctoral degree but the Vice President Research, the Dean of Faculty, the Head of Department and the Graduate School Director are satisfied that the staff member has significant experience of supervision at PhD level and has current and active involvement in research appropriate to the field of study, the PRSC, on behalf of the College, may agree a co-supervision arrangement involving an appropriately qualified person or persons outside of MIC provided no MIC co-supervisor is available. The Primary Supervisor must be a member of the academic staff of MIC whose appointment has been approved by the MIC President. (See RGS SOP219 and associated request form).

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Co-Supervision: The Primary Supervisor, Co-Supervisors and Panel Supervision

According to the MIC L10 regulations (Section 5.5) *"Each candidate for a postgraduate research degree shall be assigned a Primary Supervisor and, where appropriate, joint supervisor(s) who have been approved by the Head of Department and the Postgraduate Research Committee".* Within the MIC context, before co-supervision by an appropriately qualified person (or persons) inside or outside of MIC is approved by PRSC, first an internal, permanent member of MIC staff must be appointed as Primary Supervisor of each PGR as required in the MIC regulations.

Primary Supervisor

The Primary Supervisor must be a member of the staff of MIC whose appointment has been approved by the MIC President. The Primary Supervisor has the principal duty-of-care responsibility for oversight of the PGR, both in terms of oversight of their academic progress, and ensuring that they have access to other academic supervisors/panels, the Research & Graduate School and the Head of Department/School for advice and mentorship (e.g. preparing for Annual Progression, preparing for a viva voce, other professional guidance and advice). The duties and obligations of the Primary Supervisor may not be delegated.

Co-Supervisor(s)

General
Co-supervisors (one or more individuals, or a panel, as required) are obliged to remain engaged in the supervisory process throughout the PGR's programme of study, meeting regularly with the Primary Supervisor, supervisory colleagues and the PGR to review progress and to fulfil the roles specified in Section D above. All supervisors will be named on the candidate's initial application form, or will be added through the submission of a PGR7 form to PRSC for approval and sign-off. The duties and obligations of co-supervisors may not be delegated.

Voluntary Unpaid Co-Supervision
Commonly, the tradition in the third level sector has been that academic peers and colleagues are satisfied to act informally as named co-supervisors. This occurs within and across

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institutions in a spirit of collegiality and in professional solidarity, sometimes at the behest of the Primary Supervisor, sometimes in order for the second co-supervisor to gain desirable insights and/or experience in a particular research field. Customary practice in this regard is often reciprocal within professional academic networks. No contract is involved and no fee is payable, but usually co-supervisors are recorded at Examination Boards / Graduation Ceremonies. Informal co-supervision of this kind is a desirable academic practice and should remain as an option for use in MIC in appropriate circumstances.

Paid External Co-Supervision

Co-supervision as set out in D.2 (a-d) above represents circumstances that are fundamentally different to traditional, informal co-supervision and occur only in particular and unusual situations. In the D.2 contexts, supervision solely by an existing member(s) of MIC staff is not possible/optimal. In such cases, it is considered necessary by the College to put in place formal external co-supervision arrangements to guarantee appropriate expertise, standards and accessibility to supervision for PGRs throughout the duration of their studies. This can be achieved by the College through appointment of an MIC Primary Supervisor in the usual way, but with additional accompanying complementary co-supervision involving a paid, appropriately qualified external person (or persons) outside of MIC. In such cases, arrangements must be approved by the PRSC, the Vice President Research, and the Dean of Faculty. Paid external co-supervision must be formally underwritten by a contract of work issued by HR and payment must be offered to the external co-supervisor(s) by MIC.

RGS SOP218 and RGS SOP219, which detail the procedures for contracting a paid, appropriately qualified external co-supervisor under the terms of this MIC Charter for Supervision and Co-Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students, are available from the RGS Intranet, as well as a bespoke Request Form on which a request for a paid external co-supervisor may be submitted. The duties and obligations of paid external co-supervisors may not be delegated.

Panel Supervision

Panel supervision is primarily used in the context of 'Structured'-type postgraduate programmes, but is not necessarily used in all such programmes or limited to such programmes. Under the panel supervision model at MIC, a Primary Supervisor will be appointed for each PGR, with the option to appoint a second and additional supervisor(s) where appropriate on the recommendation of the relevant Programme Leader / Head of Department / Dean of Faculty. Where the Primary Supervisor is not known at the commencement of the PGR's programme, a temporary provisional supervisor may be proposed to the PRSC by the Faculty Dean for approval. The Primary Supervisor must be a member of the academic staff of MIC whose appointment has been approved by the MIC President. The members of the panel will normally have sufficient experience of supervising PGRs and/or the relevant academic expertise required to support and enhance the supervisor-PGR relationship effectively. The panel members shall normally be members of the staff of the College, or adjunct, or affiliated academics or professionals approved by PRSC. Normally, supervisory panels will not require inclusion of paid external members. The duties and obligations of the panel may not be delegated. In the Panel Supervision context, at least one supervisor will be an active researcher in the broad area of the PGR's research topic and will usually hold a doctoral degree.

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Benefits and Challenges of Co-supervision

A number of benefits and challenges that may arise in co-supervision may be envisaged, especially in the sharing of activities and responsibilities. There is no standard formula to address potential challenges (but see Kearns & Finn, 2017), so it is vital that co-supervisors mitigate risks in this regard through careful planning and written agreement before the start of the PGR's project. In this way the optimal management of supervision and the allocation of specific areas of responsibility are made clear to each supervisor and the PGR in advance of commencing supervision.

The benefits and challenges may include:

Benefits

- PGRs can benefit from a broad range of expertise, personalities and perspectives
- Supervisors can broaden links and relationships with other academics
- Supervisors can learn from each other's supervision styles
- Back-up for supervisors absent or ill or unavailable for any reason

Challenges

- Agreement on a path and process
- Supervisory styles may require articulation and integration
- PGRs must be enabled to incorporate expectations, personalities and perspectives of the supervisors
- Logistical difficulties (e.g. finding times to meet; integration of document reviews)
- Conflict resolution

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Effective co-supervision practice depends on shared good practices, including:

- The supervisory team should meet to discuss supervision styles and expectations, and to agree on the nature and scale of the relative contributions expected. Questions might include:

  - What can the PGR expect from each supervisor?

  - Who is going to manage the overall process of supervision?

  - Who will initiate or respond to emails, who will be copied etc.?

  - Who will call meetings, when, how, where?

  - What meetings will supervisors have separately and what meetings will supervisors have jointly with the PGR?

  - How will feedback from supervisors be provided?

- From the outset, supervisors and the PGR should discuss and agree their needs, responsibilities and expectations.

- Supervisors should establish good practice guidelines and manage expectations with the PGR, acknowledging that these may need to be re-set periodically.

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Payment of External Co-Supervisors

Where it is necessary to put in place formal paid external co-supervision arrangements using an appropriately qualified person (or persons) outside of MIC, approval must be given by the PRSC. For this purpose, a bespoke Request form for RGS SOP219 is available on the RGS Intranet. The procedures related to requests of this kind are set out in detail in RGS SOP218-*Appointment and Alteration of Research Degree Supervisors* and *RGS SOP219 Contracting of Paid External Co-Supervisors for Postgraduate Research Students.*

Contracting of external co-supervisors must be overseen by the HR Department following approval of the Request Form by PRSC and completion of the related workflow. Co-supervision arrangements must be formally underwritten and payment must be offered by MIC.
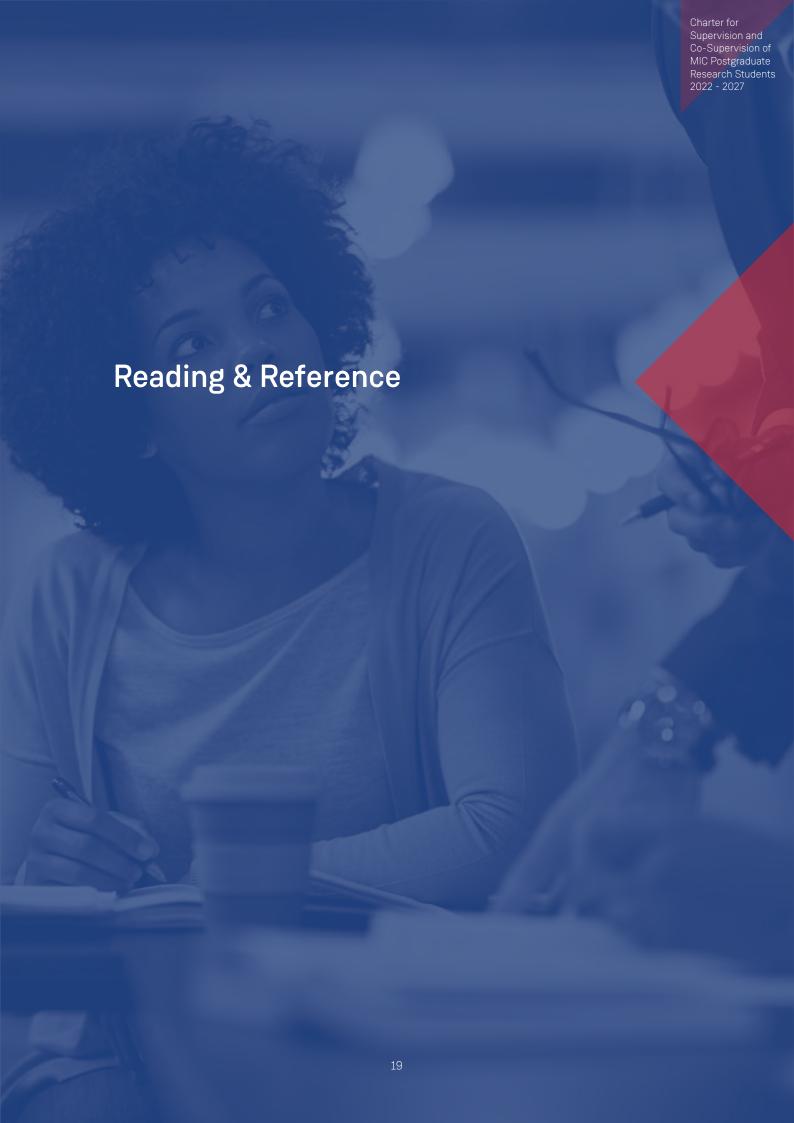
HR will arrange for the proposed external co-supervisor to submit evidence of qualifications and for Garda Vetting to be completed in cases where the co-supervisor's role will require that they have contact with children or vulnerable adults. Once this is complete, the Director of HR will arrange for a contract of employment and relevant documentation to issue to the external co-supervisor.

Schedule of Payments

The model for payment for external co-supervisors is as follows:

- Master's Degree by Research (normal duration 24 months) €800 *pro rata, per annum,* retrospective

- PhD (normal duration 48 months) €1000 *pro rata, per annum,* retrospective

- SPhD (normal duration 48 months) €1000 *pro rata, per annum,* retrospective

- ProfDoc (normal duration 36 months) €1000 *pro rata, per annum,* retrospective

Any proposed deviation from this model would require written approval from Executive Team.

Reading & Reference

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2022 - 2027

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