

What Research Students and their Research Degree¹ Main Supervisor Might Mutually Expect from Each Other

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 recommended that the document is discussed at the first meeting between a main supervisor and a new student. 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. It is also recommended that students and their main supervisor re-visit the document throughout their partnership.

¹ PhD, MPhil, EngD and MD[Res]



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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 the College. **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 to make a record of meetings between students and supervisors so as to provide evidence of these discussions taking place.**

Academic Development

As your supervisor, I will:

- Work with you to develop an appropriate project for you and ensure that you have clear strategic aims and objectives, and an initial plan of work.
- Ensure you have adequate space and resources in which to carry out your research.
- Ensure you receive appropriate research and technical skills training, relevant to your research.
- Provide you with guidance on how to critically review original literature and other sources of information.
- Provide you with guidance on record keeping, including research data management, where appropriate.

As your student, I will:

- Display initiative and drive my project forward.
- Attend any technical or research skillstraining required to progress my research.
- Develop critical thinking skills, keep up to date with relevant literature in the field and take responsibility for my thesis.
- Keep accurate records and notes of my research and progress.

- Provide you with appropriate guidance about the nature of research, standard expected for each milestone and help you to plan your research so that you can submit your thesis on time.
- Provide you with timely and regular constructive feedback on your oral presentations, written work and your thesis. I will let you know if the standard of your work is below that which is expected by the College.
- Ensure you receive an appropriate induction and Health and Safety training, relevant to your research.
- Draw your attention to the College's Guidelines for Proper Scientific Conduct in Research and the Policy and Procedures for Investigation of Allegations of Scientific Misconduct
- **For students starting on or after 24 September 2019 only**, - interpret your Turnitin originality report for both the ESA and the thesis.
- Comply with the College's [Academic and Examination Regulations](#) and other College 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.
- Discuss and agree with you how and when I can expect to receive feedback on my oral presentations and written work.
- Comply with the College's Health and Safety requirements.
- Act in accordance with the Guidelines for Proper Scientific Conduct in Research and the Policy and Procedures for Investigation of Allegations of Scientific Misconduct
- **For students starting on or after 24 September 2019 only**, submit copies of both my ESA and thesis to Turnitin for an originality check, and be prepared to discuss the Turnitin originality report as part of the PhD Viva.

Managing our Partnership

As your supervisor, I will:

- Be available to you, normally for at least one hour per week (on average), this may take the form of individual meetings (tutorials), group meetings or lab meetings, email or Skype.

As your student, I will:

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

- Ensure you receive appropriate supervision for the duration of your research degree.
- Introduce you to other staff who will be involved with your supervision, such as your co-supervisor, making it clear what their role is and what support you can expect from each person.
- 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.
- Celebrate your achievements and encourage you to get involved with the wider College community, including the Graduate School, Graduate Students' Union and the Imperial College Union.
- Recognise that your primary role is not to dictate but rather to advise, guide and oversee my research.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues in my lab or office.
- Understand that I may be expected to teach undergraduate and/or master's students and help other colleagues in the lab or office.
- Take steps to share the findings of my research with the wider College community and develop my own networks.

Supporting Good Health and Wellbeing

As your supervisor, I will:

- Encourage you to maintain a healthy work-life balance and good wellbeing.
- Encourage you to take holiday leave, when appropriate to do so. 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.
- Appreciate that there may be times when you are unwell and during those times, I will be supportive of you taking appropriate action to get your needs met. I will make suitable reasonable adjustments according to your difficulties and will point you in the direction of further help and support to suit nature of your illness or personal circumstance.

As your student, I will:

- Do my best to look after myself and maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- Take holiday leave. 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.
- Inform you if I am unable to attend College due to illness or other personal circumstance and will inform the Department's PG Tutor if I am away from College for more than three days. I understand that I will need to provide a medical certificate if the illness extends beyond seven days.

- Be respectful and supportive to you both academically and personally in your role as a student.
- Understand that if I am concerned about our partnership, I can raise this with you, the Department's PG Tutor or with the Director of Postgraduate Studies.

Professional Development

As your supervisor, I will:

- Provide you with regular opportunity to talk about your research to other staff and students and to have practice in oral presentations.
- Provide you with the opportunity to present at conferences and other external development activities.
- Encourage you to publish your work, where appropriate.
- Support your professional development by discussing with you your attendance at Graduate School courses, including completion of the compulsory online plagiarism awareness course.

As your student, I will:

- Take the opportunity to share the findings of my research with the wider College community.
- Take the opportunity to share the findings of my research externally.
- Understand that I would normally be expected to write papers during the course of my research.
- Discuss my professional development with you and complete the required number of [Graduate School Professional Skills courses](#) and compulsory [online plagiarism awareness course](#). I understand that the thesis must be all my own work and that all quotations from other sources, whether published or unpublished, must be properly acknowledged.