

Monthly supervisor update – July 2023

Content at a glance

1. [New Doctoral School Manager](#)
2. [Supervisory team roles](#)
3. [Nomination of examiners and Independent Chair for your student's viva examination](#)
4. [Reviews or vivas impacted by the Marking and Assessment Boycott](#)
5. [Quick links](#)

1. New Doctoral School Manager

Congratulations to Nisha Patel, who has been appointed as the new Doctoral School Manager as of 1 August 2023. I am leaving Royal Holloway at the end of this month, and I just wanted to take the opportunity to thank you for the support many of you have shown me and my Doctoral School team during these first four years of the Doctoral School's creation.

2. Supervisory team roles

At the start of the new academic year, all new PGR students at Royal Holloway will be asked to complete a New Starters form in liaison with their supervisory team so that the Doctoral School can record their supervisory team information accurately - which can then be viewed on the Student Dashboard.

a) How many members should there be on an MPhil/PhD supervisory team?

Each MPhil/PhD supervisory team should consist of at least two members i.e., a principal supervisor plus at least either a second supervisor or an advisor. It is possible to have multiple second supervisors / advisors, as appropriate.

b) What is the difference between a second supervisor and an advisor?

- In brief, if an academic is providing support with the student's research, they should be recorded as a second supervisor.
- If their support is purely pastoral, they should be recorded as an advisor.
- Please note that academics in either of these roles are not eligible to be nominated as the student's examiner when it comes to the viva.
- If an academic is recorded as an advisor, their contribution to the supervisory team is not taken into account when it comes to promotion data.

c) Which roles require a percentage weighting?

- Principal supervisor and second supervisor roles require a percentage weighting to reflect the relative amount of time and responsibility each supervisor is allocating to the student.
- These percentage splits are used to help calculate the Student Load (i.e. the sharing out of tuition fee income between departments based on the amount of supervision they are doing) and for HESA return purposes.
- Where a student has an external supervisor, a percentage weighting needs to be recorded if you wish the collaboration to be recognised by HESA.

d) Where can I find more information about supervisory teams?

The following guides can be found on the [Quick Links webpage](#):

- [Supervisory team overview](#)
- [Guidance on recording percentage weighting within a supervisory team](#)
- [Roles and responsibilities within a supervisory team](#)
- [Amendments to the supervisory team](#)
- [Appointing an external supervisor or advisor](#)

e) How do I update the supervisory role details for continuing students?

Please email the [Doctoral School](#) with the new details (including percentage splits), copying in all academics affected by the update.

3. Nomination of examiners and Independent Chair for your student's viva examination

The Doctoral School has come across several instances recently where advisors have been nominated as internal examiners and staff members who have been involved in a student's reviews/upgrades have been nominated as the Independent Chair – so a reminder about who is eligible for nomination seems timely.

When considering potential examiners and independent chairs for your students' viva examination, please remember the following:

- If nominating a member of Royal Holloway staff as internal examiner – they should be a current member of staff, visiting lecturer, visiting professor or emeritus professor at the time of nomination or will have held such position within the last 3 years. They must be genuinely independent of the candidate's programme of study, i.e., they should not have been a member of the student's supervisory team (including advisor) and should not have played a part in a review or upgrade meeting during the student's studies.
- When selecting the Independent Chair, please bear in mind that they must be genuinely independent from the student's work, i.e., they cannot have been involved in the project in any way, including acting as independent member in the student's review or upgrade meeting.

Any queries around eligibility, please do not hesitate to contact the [Doctoral School](#) team.

4. Reviews or vivas impacted by the Marking and Assessment Boycott

A reminder to those of you who have a student whose review or viva is being impacted by the Marking Assessment Boycott to please let the [Doctoral School](#) know as soon as possible of the delay.

[Details of the PGR MAB mitigation currently in place](#)

5. Quick links

- [Quick link to PGR forms and guides](#)
- [A to Z of the Doctoral School microsite](#)
- [Turnaround times for Doctoral School processes](#)