



Doctoral Degrees Supervisors' Policy

Scope: All research programmes leading to an award of City St George's, University of London.

Senate Regulations: Senate Regulation 24.

Summary: This Policy outlines the general criteria for supervisory criteria.

Date approved/re-approved: March 2026.

Date for review:

To be reviewed by the end of 2028/29 academic year, with allowance for minor updates, as required.

Effective from: 12th of March 2026.



Equality and Diversity Statement Freedom of Speech

City St George's, University of London, regards freedom of speech and academic freedom to be fundamental to delivering its mission as the University of business, practice and the professions. Its values in this respect are set out in a code of practice on freedom of speech and academic freedom, which explains how the University will uphold, secure, and promote freedom of speech within the law. See: <https://www.citystgeorges.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/code-of-practice-on-freedom-of-speech> . Nothing in this policy should be interpreted in any way that would be inconsistent with the code of practice and – in the event of any inconsistency – the provisions of the code will prevail.

City St Georges, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction. Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected group.

1. Scope and Purpose

The University is committed to ensuring that all doctoral researchers are provided with the appropriate academic and professional support to complete their doctoral studies in the requisite time. This policy ensures that doctoral researchers will be supervised by a team with the relevant knowledge and experience to support them successfully throughout their studies.

The University requires that all members of academic staff that undertake supervision of doctoral researchers have the appropriate qualifications, research expertise and experience.

2. General Principles

- All doctoral researchers, who are registered at the University, shall be allocated at least two internal supervisors. Doctoral researchers may be further allocated an external supervisor. One supervisor will be designated as the First Supervisor.
- All supervisors shall attend appropriate training to support excellent supervisory practice. Exceptional circumstances that might exempt staff from attending training will be considered by the Chair of the Doctoral College Board of Studies.

3. Definitions

First Supervisor

The First Supervisor is a member of academic staff who takes overall responsibility for the supervision of a doctoral researcher. This includes engagement with training and development, timely progression, responsibility for ensuring records of progress is up to date with the online system for managing doctoral researchers¹, and compliance with research governance and integrity.

Similarly, supervisors whose primary role is as clinicians with the NHS (also known as clinical supervisors) and either have a contractual relationship with the University, with an appointment of at least 20% FTE under the University's academic Terms and Conditions or have an honorary contract, can serve as first supervisors, provided their contract is for more than three years.

A staff member acting as First Supervisor must be research active and meet the criteria for a Category A supervisor, specified below, at the time of appointment as First Supervisor. Such criteria may need to be interpreted differently for Professional Doctorates due to the emphasis on applied practice.

Further, the First Supervisor will have oversight of the supervision undertaken by Category B supervisors and will be encouraged to mentor colleagues who are Category B supervisors such that they can apply for Category A status.

Second Supervisor

A member of academic staff who meets the Category A or Category B supervisor requirements.

Similarly, supervisors whose primary role is as clinicians with the NHS and have an honorary contract or a long-standing relationship with one of the University's Research Centres (also known as clinical supervisors), can serve as second supervisors, provided their contract is for more than three years.

Internal Supervisor

A member of staff with an academic contract where they are employed under City St

¹ Tooting supervisors are expected to familiarise themselves with the online doctoral research system once the alignment of student systems has been completed.

George's academic Terms and Conditions, and clinical supervisors. Academic and research staff affiliated with other Higher Education institutions, including those within the University of London, are classified as external supervisors.

Category A

Members of academic staff who are approved as Category A supervisors and clinical supervisors must meet the following criteria:

- have a contractual relationship with the University, with an appointment of at least 20% FTE under the University's academic Terms and Conditions have an honorary contract (provided that their contract is more than three years) if they fall into the clinical supervisors' category.
- have supervised at least one doctoral researcher to successful completion; and,
- have successfully completed supervision training at the University or another institution. The training provided at the University may include but is not limited to: relevant elements taken from the MA in Academic Practice or their equivalent; the University's doctoral degree regulations, policies and procedures; the [Framework for Good Practice in Research](#).

All supervisors are expected to use the online system to maintain records of supervision meetings and monitor doctoral researcher progress.

Category B

Members of the current academic staff who are approved as Category B supervisors and clinical supervisors must meet the following criteria:

- have a contractual relationship with the University, with an appointment of at least 20% FTE under the University's academic Terms and Conditions have an honorary contract (provided that their contract is more than three years) if they fall into the clinical supervisors' category.
- be overseen by the First Supervisor who has overall responsibility for the candidate's progress;
- have successfully completed supervision training at the University or another institution. The training provided at the University may include but is not limited to: relevant elements taken from the MA in Academic Practice or their equivalent; the University's doctoral degree regulations, policies and procedures; the [Framework for Good Practice in Research](#). All supervisors are expected to use the online system to maintain records of supervision meetings and monitor doctoral researcher progress although the First Supervisor has ultimate responsibility.

External Supervisor

External supervisors are appointed to add specialist expertise to the supervisory team. They are individuals who do not have an academic contract of employment with the University but will either have a defined relationship with the University, for example, as emeritus or honorary staff, or will sign an agreement to act as external supervisors.

- An external supervisor cannot act as a First Supervisor or second supervisor.
- An external supervisor must have appropriate professional experience when supervising doctoral researchers undertaking a professional doctorate.

Consultant

- Consultants are industrial collaborators or any other academic colleagues who do not have a contractual relationship with the University.
- A consultant is appointed to provide specialist advice on a particular area

of a candidate's research (e.g. assist with one publication) for a short period of time in area that is outside the expertise of the supervisory team. A consultant is not expected to be involved in the candidate's development or provide input/feedback long-term.

- A consultant must have appropriate professional experience when supervising doctoral researchers undertaking a professional doctorate.

4. Approval of Doctoral Supervisors Categories

The supervision category of new academic staff members shall be discussed on appointment. School Research Degrees Programme Committees or their equivalent shall retain a record of approved supervisors which shall be reviewed annually through the doctoral degree annual programme evaluation exercise.

The Doctoral College Board of Studies will approve the doctoral supervisors' categories upon recommendation of the Chair of the Research Degrees Programme Committee or their delegate.

5. Change in Supervision Arrangements

It may be necessary for a change of supervision arrangements to be considered for the following reasons:

- the First Supervisor is on sabbatical leave;
- the supervisor leaves the University;
- the supervisor is on long-term sick leave;
- a breakdown of the supervisee/supervisor relationship that has serious consequences for the completion of the project and the well-being of both parties involved.
- additional expertise required due to project changes

If a doctoral researcher is experiencing difficulties, they should consult with their supervisor(s) directly and/or the Senior Tutor/Director of Research within the department within which they are registered. A candidate may equally raise the issue with another senior member of staff within the School in the first instance.

Note that in instances where funding is attached to a particular research project, it may not be possible for a change in supervision arrangements to be approved. Doctoral researchers are advised to check the Terms and Conditions of their studentship, and whether it is possible to continue with the project following a change in supervision arrangements.

6. Procedure

Schools should use the form in Annex A for the appointment or change of supervisory status for Category A and B supervisors.

Appointment or Change of Supervisory Status: (Category A & B)

The form below has been converted into an IT ServiceNow form. To apply for your supervisory status, please complete the form available [here](#).

Please note that the School Research Degrees Programme Committees or their equivalent are responsible for the consideration, approval and review of category A and B supervisor status and for the amendments of staff records using ServiceNow. The Chair of the Research Degrees Programme Committee or their delegate are expected to report changes in supervisory status to the Doctoral College Board of Studies for approval.

Name	
School	
Department	
Contractual Relationship with City St George's, University of London	
Details of supervising a doctoral student to successful completion (applicable for Category A applications)	
Indicate relevant training already undertaken including date of completion	

Declaration that that you have read and engage with the policies/processes below:

Senate Regulations 23, 24, 25 available here	Date of completion:
Doctoral Researcher policies available	Date of Completion:
Framework for Good Practice in Research available here	Date of Completion:

To be completed by the Committee Secretary

Date of approval	
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Policy Title	
Doctoral Degree Supervisors' Policy	
Policy Enabling Owner and Department	Responsible for Implementation and Department
Doctoral College Board of Studies	Doctoral College Board of Studies School Research Degree Programme Committees
Approving Body	Date of Approval
Senate upon the recommendation of the Doctoral College Board of Studies	11 th of March 2026 10 th of December 2025 9 th of July 2025 22/04/2009 (APPSC) 06/05/2015 (Senate) 23/02/2023 (CDC BoS) 22/03/2023 (Senate) 08/11/2023 (CDC BoS) 13/12/2023 (Senate)
Last Reviewed & Version	Review Due Date
December 2025	July 2028
Publication of Policy (<i>tick as appropriate</i>)	
For public access online (internet)? ☒	For staff access only (intranet)? ☐
Website Link: https://www.citystgeorges.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/doctoral-researcher-policies/	Intranet Link:
Storage of Policy (<i>Previous versions of the policy must be stored in the drive by the author</i>)	
Drive Address: CUoL – Doctoral College Documents	
Queries about this policy should be referred to	
Doctoral College doctoralcollege@citystgeorges.ac.uk	

