

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 It is the responsibility of York St John University (YSJU) School Postgraduate Research Leads (SPGRs) to recommend suitable supervisory teams for postgraduate researchers (PGRs) within Schools to the YSJU Research Degrees Committee (RDC).
- 1.2 The criteria set out below apply to the research degree supervision of Level 8 doctoral and Level 7 masters by research programmes.
- 1.3 Research degree supervision of PGRs on Level 7 MRes programmes may be carried out by any member of staff on an academic contract who has the appropriate experience and expertise (as determined by academic schools).

## **2 Supervisory Teams**

- 2.1 Each supervisory team must satisfy the requirements of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Research degrees (November 2018). RDC must be satisfied that the School (or Schools in the case of cross-School supervision) can provide an appropriate research environment and that the proposed supervisory team can ensure an appropriate level of support and guidance for the candidate before accepting the candidature and appointing the supervisory team. In order for a supervisory team to be appointed, RDC must be satisfied that:
  - i. The candidate will have reasonable access to the proposed supervisors; and
  - ii. within the team there are supervisors who have the appropriate skills, subject knowledge and research expertise, aligned with the PGR's topic and/or methodology, to support, encourage and monitor PGRs effectively; and
  - iii. there is a designated main supervisor and at least one YSJU co-supervisor, (though more may be appointed if appropriate); and
  - iv. at least one of the supervisors is involved in excellent research (i.e. is able to evidence nationally or internationally recognised research outputs); and
  - v. that there is adequate depth of staffing in the subject area to provide a supervisory team, supervision cover should any of the supervisory team leave YSJU and an internal examiner independent of the supervision team; and
  - vi. that there is sufficient research activity within the subject area and cognate subject areas for the candidate to be able to feel part of a research community.

## **3 Supervisors**

- 3.1 RDC requires YSJU staff who supervise PGR students to meet the following criteria.
  - i. They would normally<sup>1</sup> hold a doctoral level qualification; and
  - ii. not be registered for a research degree themselves (either at YSJU or any other institution); and
  - iii. a member of academic staff who holds a minimum 0.2 FTE permanent appointment at York St John University or a minimum 0.2 fixed term contract with an expiry date at least six months after the submission deadline for the PGR's thesis; and
  - iv. have a contemporary record of high-quality published research or professional or creative practice in a cognate discipline; and
  - v. have completed mandatory training on research student supervision in the past three years or are supervising with such regularity to maintain understanding of

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<sup>1</sup> For each supervisory team at least one member of the team should have a doctorate

relevant regulations and policies (no breaks in supervision that exceed three years); and

- vi. be able to evidence a commitment to continual professional development to support their own supervisory practice and research student success.

- 3.2 Assessment of this criteria is via formal application to RDC and, if successful, YSJU supervisors are registered on the list of approved supervisors maintained by the PGR School.

## 4 Main Supervisors

- 4.1 Main supervisor's areas of research expertise should have a particularly close alignment with the candidate's research interest and topic. They have particular responsibilities, for example signing off training plans and ensuring the maintenance of supervision logs. However, it is not necessarily the case that the main supervisor will be the most senior or experienced member of the team of supervisors.
- 4.2 Responsibilities of supervisors are set out in more detail in the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#).

## 5 Co-Supervisors

- 5.1 While most staff appointed as co-supervisors will meet the criteria set out in paragraph 3 above, there may be occasions when others can make a useful contribution to supervisory teams. Although not eligible to be registered on the list of approved supervisors, or to act as main supervisors, some other categories of staff may act as an adviser with the supervisory team which fulfils the criteria set out in paragraph 3 (above):
  - i. Research Fellows and Visiting Professors;
  - ii. Members of staff who have retired or resigned from YSJU and those who hold research, honorary or fixed term University posts
  - iii. Members of staff who do not hold a doctoral degree.

## 6 Collaborative/External Supervision

- 6.1 YSJU works closely with external partners in academic and industry settings as part of wider research collaboration and offering PGRs expertise and opportunities they otherwise would not have.
- 6.2 Collaborative/external co-supervisors are appointed after consideration by RDC provided that:
  - i. the proposed external supervisor demonstrates they are conversant with the level and nature of the research necessary for the degree concerned;
  - ii. there is both a YSJU main supervisor and YSJU co-supervisor who meet the criteria in section 3 above.
- 6.3 Collaborative/external main supervisors need to meet equivalent criteria to that listed above in section 3.1. Individuals will complete a formal application and once approved by RDC they will need to complete the mandatory course on research degree supervision. In the case of collaborative/external main supervision, as per 2.1. at least one YSJU co-supervisor is required. A list of approved collaborative/external supervisors is maintained by the PGR School.

## 7 Becoming an Eligible PGR Supervisor

- 7.1 Eligibility to supervise PGR students is obtained via application to join the YSJU PGR Supervisor Register.
- 7.2 As part of the application, staff are required to provide evidence that they meet all criteria in Section 3.

- 7.3 Applications are reviewed by a subgroup of Research Degrees Committee with reference to the criteria only. Final approval is provided by Research Degrees Committee. Applicants are notified within two weeks of applying.
- 7.4 Staff can appeal a decision of the subcommittee within three weeks of receiving a decision on three grounds: (1) based on the information the applicant has already submitted (i.e., misunderstanding or misinterpretation of existing evidence), (2) based on new information that is now available but not available at the time of application, (3) a procedural irregularity.
- 7.5 Appeals are considered by the chair of RDC with a decision provided within two weeks.

## 8 Continuing Eligibility

- 8.1 The PGR School will maintain the register of YSJU approved supervisors and the list of collaborative/external supervisors. Research Degrees Committee will maintain oversight of both lists. Where a supervisor no longer meets the criteria for approval as a supervisor (e.g., change in contractual status; non-attendance at required training sessions), the supervisor may be removed from the register following consultation with the SPGR and the Head of School.
- 8.2 Staff can request to be removed from the register with approval of the Head of School. A supervisor with responsibilities for a current (or prospective) PGR will not be removed from the register until alternative arrangements have been considered and approved for the PGR in question.
- 8.3 Where staff are removed from the register, this will be drawn to the attention of Research Degrees Committee, alongside information regarding the mitigation of any related risks for current or prospective PGRs. Any other matters regarding the application of these criteria will also be drawn to the attention of Research Degrees Committee.

## 9 Declaration of Personal Interest

- 9.1 All members of staff are required to declare any personal relationship (whether personal, family, financial, or otherwise) with any PGR they are asked to supervise, or are already supervising.
- 9.2 A supervisor who declares a personal relationship prior to appointment as supervisor to the PGR in question shall not be permitted to undertake supervision of that PGR, whether as main or co-supervisor.
- 9.3 A supervisor who declares a personal relationship (refer to the [University Personal Relationship Policy](#)) after having been appointed as main or co-supervisor for the PGR in question shall no longer continue as main or co-supervisor. In such instances, the role of main supervisor shall pass to the co-supervisor or other supervisor nominated by the School. The role of co-supervisor shall pass to another supervisor nominated by the School.

### Associated links:

Code of Practice for Research Degrees <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/research/research-degrees/>  
 Personal Relationship Policy <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/personal-relationships-at-work/>

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Section:	Changes made	Date approved by RDC / QSC	Notes
1.3	Statement added on requirements for supervision on the MRes programmes	RDC 15/5/24	
2 & 4	Addition of collaborative partner approved supervisor status	QSC 16/9/24	