
Core Code of Practice for PGT Research Governance and Dissertation Framework

1. Introduction
 - 1.1 This *Core Code* sets out the policy of King's College London on good practice in all matters concerning postgraduate taught dissertations. A copy of the *Core Code* will be made available to all postgraduate students and supervisors on an annual basis. It will be reviewed annually by the College Education Committee.
 - 1.2 The *Core Code* should be read in conjunction with the guidelines set out in the appropriate Faculty (Institute/School) and Departmental¹ or student handbook², the relevant '*Academic regulations*³, *T Regulations concerning students and General regulations*' of King's College London, procedures for quality assurance of taught programmes published under the authority of the Academic Board of the College and programme specifications.
 - 1.3 The term 'research' in the *Core Code* has been interpreted in its broadest sense and may encompass a range of data-collection methods. The different types of dissertation adopted by the College and covered in this *Code* can be found in Appendix 1.
 - 1.4 Supervision of postgraduate taught students is influenced by many factors including the individuals involved, the type of work, the discipline, the size of the department and the environment in which students and supervisors work. Some variation across an institution as large and complex as the College is therefore inevitable. Faculty (Institute/School) practice may therefore strengthen and build upon the *Core Code*, which should be seen as laying down the minimum standards expected.
2. Purpose of the *Core Code*
 - 2.1 The purpose of this *Core Code* is to provide a framework for the effective management and implementation of good practice in all matters relating to postgraduate taught research activities at King's College London.
 - 2.2 It aims to ensure that all students are effectively supported and supervised so that:
 - A research dissertation/project appropriate to study at level 7 study is made available/agreed with the student
 - The potential of the student as a researcher may be developed.
 - The dissertation/project⁴ is submitted within the timeframe laid down by the programme

¹ The word "department" is used throughout the *Core Code* to refer to departments, divisions, research group or other units within a Faculty/School/Institute that are responsible for postgraduate taught students

² Some faculties may have module dissertation handbooks

³ <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/policyhub/academicregulations/kings-academic-manual>

⁴ The word dissertation and project are used interchangeably throughout this document

- 2.3 It should be noted that it is the student's responsibility to ensure that their work is submitted on time and of a satisfactory standard to achieve at least a pass.
- 2.4 The roles and responsibilities of those involved in postgraduate taught research activities are provided in Appendix 3.
- 2.5 The *Core Code* sets out the minimum threshold expectations; Faculties (Institutes/School) may seek approval from the Quality, Standards and Enhancement (QSE) office to supplement and build upon the *Core Code*.
3. The format of a master's research dissertation
- 3.1 The research project is a core requirement for a taught Master's degree⁵ at King's and is the key element distinguishing the Master's degree from a professional certificate or postgraduate diploma programme.
- 3.2 The structure of a taught master's programme in the College varies and may differ from the traditional format that it is taken over 1 calendar year Full Time or 2 years Part Time⁶.
- 3.3 This normally comprises a workload over 45-46 weeks plus holidays, to average 40 hours per week. This equates to a total of 180 credits at 'M' level, of which the taught master's research dissertation forms a significant component, usually 60 credits (as described in Appendix 1).
- 3.4 Details of the structure and format of the taught Master's research project should be documented in a student/dissertation handbook.
- 3.5 Word count limits would normally include footnotes and endnotes. It does not include bibliography, references, or appendices unless otherwise specified in student handbooks.
4. Supervision
- 4.1 Normally each student pursuing a dissertation will be allocated a research supervisor. Some programmes utilise a research practice project model; students on these programmes will have their work on this project overseen by a module convenor⁷ rather than a supervisor (further details can be found in Appendix 3).
- 4.2 Supervisors and module convenors should consult the College *Core Code* (and where appropriate their Faculty (Institute/School) for guidance on policy, regulation and good practice relating to the supervision of students.
- 4.3 Supervisors and module convenors should hold regular⁸ supervision meetings with their students, on an individual or a collective basis dependent upon the dissertation model (Appendix 1), and where deemed necessary should keep a record of those meetings. Supervisors may require students to provide this formal record.

⁵ MRes degrees have different requirements as shown in Appendix 1

⁶ Professional programmes such as those in the Dental Institute, Physiotherapy and Medical Engineering may run over 2-4 years in accordance with professional body requirements. 1+3 programmes such as the MPhil Stud in Philosophy

⁷ This may occur in the Dickson Poon School of Law

⁸ Happening over a period of time to establish a pattern, though not necessarily a strict one

- 4.4 For programmes delivered online similar arrangements will need to be made electronically.
- 4.5 When a student's supervisor is unable to perform their required supervisory duties for more than one month, s/he should inform the student and appropriate authority within the Faculty (Institute/School) and make appropriate arrangements for cover. The Head of Department/Division should ensure that appropriate cover is provided.
- 4.6 Heads of Department or a delegated named representative are responsible for making appropriate arrangements in the case of students changing or wishing to change, their supervisor, where it is deemed necessary.
- 4.7 Heads of Department or a delegated named representative are responsible for ensuring that students are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the Health and Safety at Work Act, occupational health clearance, CRB checks and visa requirements where appropriate.
- 4.8 Students are responsible for the submission of their dissertation and are permitted to submit their work in the absence of approval from the supervisor. Programmes that require dissertations to be 'signed-off' by the supervisor must provide details of this process in the module handbook.
- 4.9 It is the student's responsibility to make sure the research dissertation is submitted on time (Appendix 3)
5. Ethical approval and statutory requirements
- 5.1 Supervisors and module convenors should notify students of their obligation to obtain ethical approval. Ethical approval is required for all research that involves human participants. This is sometimes applicable to the use of data derived from humans. Studies, requiring ethical review, must not begin without full approval. Students should be aware that this is a mandatory requirement of the College and that conducting research without such approval constitutes misconduct.
- 5.2 Students may sometimes require ethical approval for the re-use of secondary data. This is appropriate if the data is sensitive or identifies individuals. Some research work can be socially or environmentally sensitive. This may also require approval. The College webpages provide more information about further analysis of pre-existing data.
- <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/research/support/ethics/about/index.aspx>
- 5.3 Some research studies are subject to external ethical review. This is due to legal or other governance requirements. Such studies do not usually require approval from the College. For example, the NHS has its own research ethics committees (NHS RECs). In such cases supervisors have responsibility for ensuring that students have ethical approval and that other statutory requirements such as for GM work and animal work are in place.
- 5.4 Research which does not fall under the remit of the NHS should be submitted to one of the review bodies accountable to the College Research Ethics Committee (where the project involves human participation in some form, or in certain cases use of data derived from humans).
- <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/support>

This page will direct you to the correct review procedure for your Faculty (Institute/School).

6. Extensions

6.1 *Overview*

6.1.1 An extension is when a student's submission is extended beyond the original deadline as set out by the academic regulations. The following provides details of the requirements and circumstances for seeking extensions of postgraduate taught research dissertation submission deadlines and advice when considering such requests.

6.1.2 Any request for an extension to a dissertation submission deadline must be made as soon as the student is aware that they will be unable to meet the original published deadline due to acceptable circumstances.

6.2 Applications for extension requests for submission deadlines must be approved at Programme/Departmental level. In order for an extension to a dissertation submission deadline to be approved, a Mitigating Circumstances Form⁹ must be submitted. Details for applying for an extension can be found at: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/how-to-apply/policies-and-guidance/mitigating-circumstances>

If at all possible, the student should continue to work towards the original published deadline until the outcome of the extension request is known.

6.3 It is expected that the Programme/Department will reach a decision on the student's request as soon as is reasonably possible.

6.4 Supervisors and/or the programme team should encourage students to discuss difficulties in meeting the deadline at the earliest opportunity. It is important that students on distance-learning programmes are aware of the regulations governing extensions and have easy access to the appropriate forms.

6.5 A request close to the original published deadline may not be considered until after the deadline has passed. In that situation the student should submit their work as soon as is reasonably possible after the deadline, even if they have not been notified of the outcome of their extension request.

The student should be aware that in such instances, if their reasons for requesting an extension are deemed unacceptable, their work will receive a mark dependent on the time that has passed since the original submission date.

6.6 Absences for relevant training or time spent in industry should not lead to an extension or change to the submission date.

⁹ An Mitigating Circumstances Form can be found at: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/how-to-apply/policies-and-guidance/mitigating-circumstances>

6.7 *Illness*

- 6.7.1 If a student experiences ongoing medical/health problems throughout their studies but decides they do not wish to interrupt their studies, information must be kept on record in case an extension to their dissertation submission deadline is required nearer the time.
- 6.7.2 Short periods of absence through illness during the research period should be brought to the attention of the supervisor by the student and recorded by the programme team/supervisor and/or brought directly to the attention of the Chair of the Assessment Sub-board as this may eventually have an impact on a student's dissertation submission deadline, and without a record of such periods it will be difficult to grant an extension.
- 6.7.3 In all cases of medical/health problems medical certificates/doctors notes/counsellors' reports must be provided by the student, noted by the research supervisor/programme team and kept on the student file for future reference if and when required by the Chair of the Assessment Sub-board. Without supporting documentation, an extension may not be granted.
- 6.7.4 Students learning by distance should be permitted to provide original medical documents/certificates and other supporting evidence electronically
- 6.7.5 If an accident/unexplained illness that affects a student during or in the lead up to the submission of the dissertation the student must submit a mitigating circumstances form¹⁰. The form can be submitted no later than 7 calendar days after the date of a missed deadline.
- 6.7.6 In cases of illness or injury that involve absences of more than two weeks, the student should inform the supervisor and/or programme team/ department and medical certificates should be requested. Where a student is or is expected to be absent for more than two months, whether consequently or cumulatively then the appropriate administrative unit should be informed, and arrangements put in place to interrupt the programme of study where appropriate.

6.8 *Other*

- 6.8.1 For maternity leave, up to nine month's interruption can be approved automatically and the date of research dissertation submission extended. Students can also apply for up to three further months, and again the date of submission would be extended. For paternity leave, students can take up to 10 days automatically (which will not affect the date of submission); students may also take up to 13 weeks within 12 months of birth or whatever is permitted by government legislation. If the additional time is taken, the date of submission will be extended by the appropriate period.
- 6.8.2 Where a student has experienced difficulties with their supervisor it is the responsibility of the Head of Department/Division or designated representative to deal with/rectify this as quickly as possible. Therefore, such circumstances, unless in extreme cases, should not be the sole grounds for seeking an extension.

7. *Marking and formative feedback to students*

¹⁰ Mitigating Circumstances form can be found at: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/how-to-apply/policies-and-guidance/mitigating-circumstances>

- 7.1 All dissertations are to be double marked according to the College's Marking Framework. External examiners shall have sight of both markers feedback and marks, along with a note of how the final mark has been agreed.
- 7.2 The marking can be independent of the supervisor or supervisor-led but there should be a standardized department approach to the marking.
- 7.3 All students should be provided with one opportunity for receiving formative feedback prior to the final submission of the dissertation. This formative feedback can either be feedback of one chapter or feedback of numerous chapters. The Department should agree what approach to be taken.
8. Student Feedback
- 8.1 All Programmes are expected to have procedures in place to collect feedback from students regarding the dissertation experience and support infrastructure as a whole even if comprised of more than one module.
- 8.2 The College participates in the national Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) which gives postgraduate taught students the particular opportunity to feedback their dissertation experience¹¹.
- 8.3 It is acknowledged that some students may not have started on their dissertations by the time PTES closes and that its value as a conduit for feedback in these cases may be limited.
- 8.4 However, where possible it is expected within this code of practice that note is made and action taken if necessary, by programme/department/ Faculty (Institutes/School) in response to feedback from students about their research experience.
9. Complaints and appeals
- 9.1 Students should refer to the [Student complaints procedures](#) if they are dissatisfied with any aspect of their studies.
- 9.2 Students whose registration is terminated for failure to make sufficient academic progress may appeal under the [Academic Progress Regulations](#).

¹¹<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/reports-publications-and-resources/postgraduate-taught-experience-survey-ptes>

Appendix 1: College Postgraduate Taught Dissertation Framework

Rationale

It is a College commitment that as a research-intensive university the development of an understanding of research methodology, design and practice should lie at the core of all masters' programmes. In order to instigate greater clarity whilst ensuring probity and rigour across the College and in order to ensure that the research process is embedded within programmes in a fair and transparent manner the following types of dissertation should be adopted. Programmes will select the most appropriate type for their programmes with the overall aim of enabling students to demonstrate specialised understanding and independent critical evaluation.

In accordance with the [QAA Masters Characteristics](#) all Masters programmes must include an element of research as a core component of the programme as described by the following models¹².

Programmes included in the framework

Master of Science (MSc); Master of Arts (MA); Master Public Health (MPH); Master Teaching and Learning (MTL); Master of Laws (LLM); Master Business Administration (MBA); Master Clinical Dentistry (MClinDent), Master of Nursing (MNurs), and Master Music (MMus)

Programmes must provide students with details of the specific dissertation(s) models that they intend to apply.

Word count limits would normally include footnotes and endnotes. It does not include bibliography, references, or appendices unless otherwise specified in student handbooks.

Model 1 - Original/empirical research dissertation

This model applies to those research projects undertaken in a laboratory as well as in clinical settings or elsewhere in the field and involves the collection and analysis of original data. This model also applies to the theoretical analysis of a mathematical problem involving original mathematical investigations, computer experiments such as particle phenomenology and or atomistic simulation. Ethical approval may be required for certain topics.

Credit value: 60. Max word limit: normally 15,000

Model 2 - Retrospective/secondary data research dissertation

This model applies to those research projects that make use of publicly available electronic datasets or an existing dataset from previously undertaken local research. This model may also include the collection and analysis of retrospective clinical material or the theoretical analysis of a mathematical problem following the collection and analysis of data applied to existing mathematical models that are relevant for the problem itself. Ethical approval may be required for certain topics.

Credit value: 60. Max word limit: normally 15,000

¹² As agreed by College Education Committee May 2017, a programme that has taught elements made up of 5 and 10 credits must have a 30 credit research methods module and 60 credit dissertation

Model 3 - Practice/performance evaluation research dissertation

This model applies to the analysis of practice and includes clinical audit and policy analysis as well as the critical appraisal of service development or healthcare provision. This model can also apply to the evaluation of the performance of laboratory equipment or comparison of difference analytical techniques.

Credit value: 60. Max word limit: normally 15,000

Model 4 - Composition-based research dissertation

This model is only applicable in fields such as music and digital humanities and the main outcome of the research is presented in a practical format. For music, this may take the form of a composition and/or performance material. For digital humanities, the project may be comprised of 'software' (normally conceived as a prototype or model) that expresses a significant part of the intellectual work, (e.g. a database design that models a real-world phenomenon that is being investigated).

In either case the candidate should submit in addition a textual component that establishes the research questions that govern the submission as a whole.

Credit value: 60. Max word limit: normally 7,500 (textual element)

Model 5 - Information/library-based research dissertation

This model applies to those research projects that are library-based and will involve the systematic review and/or meta-analysis of a specific topic. This model may also include the analysis of legal and/or philosophical sources demonstrating advanced skills in legal and/or philosophical analysis or a systematic review using information technology of the state of the art in theoretical physics or mathematics. A candidate may be required to include text that describes the method used for the evaluation and/or analysis of the knowledge base.

Credit value: 60 Max word limit: normally 15,000

Model 6 - Artefact construction and analysis dissertation

This model applies to fields such as Informatics, where an artefact is constructed with a view to answering a particular research question. The artefact can take a variety of forms, such as one or more algorithms; a formal mathematical model; representation formalisms to encode data, information or knowledge; software applications; a robot with control software; a design or; a theoretical model of framework; etc. A candidate may be required to provide a demonstration of the artefact and material related to the artefact, such as source code, installation instructions, and user evaluations.

Credit value: 60 Max word limit: normally 15,000

(Excluding installation instructions and user evaluations)

Model 7 – Professional/practice dissertation

This model applies to those research projects, which aim at furthering the professional development of students by offering a practice project. This model will enable the application of research to professional

situations and would require the candidate to use a range of techniques and research methods applicable to professional activities. The practice-based research project can take different forms, such as the submission of a framework for documentation for clients/service users, or the critical evaluation of a practice-oriented case study.

Credit value: 40 or 45

Max word limit: normally 12,000

Credit value: 60

Max word limit: normally 15 000

Model 8 - Portfolio research dissertation of applied research learning and skills (King's Online)

This model applies to the development and demonstration of knowledge and skills in research design, analysis and reporting, and primarily targeting those undertaking a King's Online Managed Programme. This model will include modules to provide a set of core research-related knowledge and skills, that combine into a portfolio of applied learning. The portfolio-based research project may include the development of an application for human research ethics approval; critical appraisal of empirical literature; the development of a research methodology to examine research objectives and hypotheses; and the analysis of qualitative or quantitative data to meet research objectives or test a null hypothesis. Students may also be able to continue a single research topic across the four modules to build a portfolio.

Credit value: 60¹³

Max word limit:

normally

15,000

Model 9 – Blended learning dissertation

This model applies to the development and demonstration of discipline specific knowledge and skills in research design, analysis and reporting. A candidate may take up to two online modules that describes research methodology and analytical tools used for the evaluation and/or analysis of the knowledge base. The candidate will study using a mixture of online and campus-based modules linked to critical research methodology and practice.

Credit value: 60¹⁴

Max Word Limit: normally

15,000

Model 10 - Online Professional or Practice Masters Degrees

This model applies to professional/practice oriented online programmes which integrate core research skills within taught modules. This is done in order to foster the ability to apply research to professional situations, both practical and theoretical, as well as the ability to use a range of techniques and research methods applicable to professional activities. A richer suite of taught modules will be developed, resulting in demonstrated knowledge and skills that will be assessed and evidenced in both formative and summative assessments. A separate research methods online resource will normally be developed as a non-credit bearing element of the programme to support students.

Credit value: Integrated in a minimum of four taught modules

Max Word Limit: N/A (no specific piece of written work)

¹³ comprising 4 by 15 credit modules of learning

¹⁴ of which 2 x 15 credit modules are distance learning

Master of Research (MRes)

Background

It is a College commitment that as a research-intensive university the development of an understanding of research methodology, design and practice should lie at the core of all masters' programmes. In order to instigate greater clarity whilst ensuring probity and rigour across the College the following models are adopted and programmes must provide students with details of the specific model(s) that they intend to apply.

In accordance with the [QAA Masters Characteristics](#) all Master's programmes must include an element of research as a core component of the programme as described by the following models.

Word count limits would normally include footnotes and endnotes. It does not include bibliography, references, or appendices unless otherwise specified in student handbooks.

MRes Model 1 - Original/Empirical Research Dissertation

This model applies to those research projects undertaken in a laboratory as well as in clinical settings or elsewhere in the field and involves the collection and analysis of original data. This model may also apply to the theoretical analysis of a mathematical problem involving original mathematical investigations. Ethical approval may be required for certain topics

Credit value:	75.	Max word limit:	normally	18, 000
Credit value:	90.	Max word limit:	normally	25, 000
Credit value:	120	Max word limit:	normally	30, 000

MRes Model 2 - Information/Library-based Research Dissertation

This model applies to those research projects that are library-based and will involve the systematic review and/or meta-analysis of a specific topic. This model may also include the analysis of case law demonstrating advanced legal skills or a review of the state of the art in theoretical physics or mathematics. A candidate may be required to include text that describes the method used for the evaluation and/or analysis of the knowledge base.

Credit value:	75.	Max word limit:	normally	18, 000
Credit value:	90.	Max word limit:	normally	25, 000
Credit value:	120.	Max word limit:	normally	30, 000

MRes Model 3 - Retrospective/Secondary Data Research Dissertation

This model applies to those research projects that make use of publically available electronic datasets or an existing dataset from previously undertaken local research. This model may also include the collection and analysis of retrospective clinical material or the theoretical analysis of a mathematical problem following the collection and analysis of data applied to existing mathematical models that are relevant for the problem itself. Ethical approval may be required for certain topics.

Credit value:	75.	Max word limit:	normally	18, 000
Credit value:	90.	Max word limit:	normally	25, 000
Credit value:	120.	Max word limit:	normally	30, 000

MRes Model 4 - Laboratory Rotation Dissertation

This model applies to multiple research projects undertaken in different laboratories to acquire contemporary practical and theoretical knowledge and skills in distinct areas of relevance to the field of study, which cumulatively contribute the required proportion of credits to the whole programme. Projects may involve the collection and analysis of original data or review of a specific topic. Ethical approval may be required for certain topics.

Credit value: 45 Max word limit: normally 7,000

It is expected that student complete 2 or 3 such projects

Credit value: 60 Max word limit: normally 12,000

It is expected that students complete 2 such projects

MRes Model 5 - MRes embedded within a MRes-PhD programme

This model applies to multiple research projects undertaken in different laboratories to acquire contemporary practical and theoretical knowledge and skills in distinct areas of relevance to the field of study, which cumulatively contribute the required proportion of credits to the whole programme. Projects will involve the collection and/or analysis of original data. Ethical approval may be required for certain topics.

Credit value: 40 Max word limit: normally 7,000

It is expected that students complete 3 such projects

Appendix 2: What might be included in programme/module handbooks?

Section 1: A guide for Post Graduate Taught Programmes Research Supervision

1. Selection of project

The research project is a core requirement for a Master's degree at King's and is the key element distinguishing the Master's degree from a professional certificate or postgraduate diploma programme.

The process for selection of a research project should be outlined in the handbook and in all cases it is strongly recommended that supervisors ask students to attempt to develop a project outline, once the topic of study has been agreed, so that both parties are clear about what is being undertaken from the outset.

2. Approval of research topic

If there is an internal process of project suitability the student should be made aware of this and the consequences should a project be deemed unsuitable.

3. Research Integrity

It should be noted that it is a mandatory requirement of the College that 'all research involving human participants undertaken by staff and students of all levels must be ethically approved by an appropriate body'.

Further details on the circumstances where ethical approval is required and the application process for ethical approval at King's can be found on the Research Ethics Office website (see Appendix 4).

All students who wish to undertake studies that will require ethical approval should be encouraged to try and make their research ethics applications as early as possible to allow time to obtain ethical approval. It should be noted that research must not commence in any form until full ethical approval has been granted, so supervisors must ensure that ethical approval is sought early on in the process of preparing for their research.

The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that ethical approval has been sought

4. The research process – what is expected of students

The research project provides the opportunity for a student to demonstrate specialised understanding of a particular literature, engagement with associated scholarly debates and the exercise of independent critical judgment.

The process of learning about research will also build other skills, notably extensive personal qualities of self-motivation, independence and creativity. The student should be made aware of the requirements of the module and be provided with written or electronic information to this end. Students should also be given contact details for their supervisor, some indication of their role and the time commitment given to the supervision process.

5. Assessment criteria and marking policy

The criteria for the assessment of the research dissertation should be made available and clearly explained to the student at the onset of the module.

A copy of the marking policy should be clearly documented in the handbook

6. Feedback

There are many ways in which a supervisor can give feedback to a student during the research process. This may happen naturally through general discourse in a tutorial or a group meeting.

Feedback can also take place more formally through the provision of formative feedback on draft chapters. It is important that a student is aware of the different ways in which feedback will be given and that some consistency is apparent across the programme /department/School.

Appendix 3: Roles and responsibilities

The following aims to provide an outline of the key roles and responsibilities for all those involved with postgraduate taught research projects. It should be noted that these are not exhaustive and must be read in conjunction with the main body of the College *Core Code of Practice for PGT research governance and dissertations framework (Core Code)*.

These may be added to from time to time and the most up-to-date version will be made available at:

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/policyhub/pgt-core-code-of-practice>

Section A

<i>Responsibilities of the Faculty (Institute/School) PGT Committee</i>
To familiarise themselves with the <i>Core Code of Practice</i> and other College documentation, including the <i>Academic regulations, T Regulations concerning PGT students</i>
To ensure Faculty (Institute/School) postgraduate taught handbooks pertinent to the dissertation are reviewed annually and kept up to date.
To devise mechanisms to enable open and constructive feedback to be provided by both students and supervisors on the dissertation experience and support infrastructure
To advise students and supervisors of their responsibilities in relation to the Health and Safety at Work Act, ethical approval procedures, intellectual property rights, plagiarism regulations and occupation health clearance where appropriate.

Responsibilities of the Department and the Programme Team
To ensure that research topics appropriate for master's level study have been agreed for each student and that an appropriate supervisor is appointed, where appropriate, within the time specified.
In the case of breakdown of relations between a supervisor and the student and in other circumstances where a change of supervisor is desirable, to give advice in strict confidence, to assist in resolving any difficulties and, where necessary, to arrange the appointment of a replacement supervisor.
Where a supervisor leaves the College's employment, ensure suitable arrangements are in place so that the student receives appropriate support and supervision.
In cases of absence or the departure of the supervisor, ensure that adequate arrangements are made for the student's continuing supervision.
Heads of Department/Programme Leader/Convenors should also be aware of the reporting responsibilities the College has in respect of overseas students on Tier 4 student visas. Guidance is provided at: https://self-service.kcl.ac.uk/category/?id=CAT-01006

Section B

Responsibilities of the Head of Department/Division/Programme Team
To exercise overall responsibility for the welfare and academic progress of the postgraduate taught students in the Department/Division.
To exercise responsibility for safety and provide appropriate training and information through the nominated safety officer (if appropriate).
To ensure that the requirements set out in the <i>Core Code of Practice</i> are followed and in particular to ensure that the procedures for effective supervision are adhered to.
To delegate, where appropriate, responsibility for the organisation of postgraduate taught research dissertation/projects study in the Department/Division to a nominated person and/or Department/Divisional committee.
To familiarise themselves with College documentation pertinent to PGT students including the <i>Academic regulations</i> , <i>T Regulations concerning students</i> , <i>General regulations</i> , and Faculty (Institutes/School) postgraduate taught handbooks.
To deal with issues which arise when students have problems and help to solve these problems. This may include requesting suspensions of regulations, authorising extension of submission deadlines, interruption of studies, changing supervisors or withdrawing the student's registration
To deal with the first stage of complaints raised by students or supervisors, working with the Faculty (Institute/School) PGT lead if necessary, who will pass unresolved complaints to the office of the Director of Students and Education.

Section C

Responsibilities of the Faculty, School, Institute PGT Lead
These PGT leads have delegated responsibility from the Executive Dean of the Faculty (Institute/School) to represent and further the interests of postgraduate taught students within their Faculty (Institute/School) and oversee matters relating to educational experience.
<i>Quality assurance and enhancement</i>
These leads advise the Faculty (Institute/School) Education Committee on enhancements to the <i>Core Code</i> , who in turn report to College Education Committee
These leads will ensure that supervisors, module convenors and Heads of Department/Division in the Faculty (Institute/School) are made aware of the policies of the Faculty (Institute/School) and College, as represented by the College Regulations, <i>Core Code of practice</i> and specific Faculty/School/Institute provision/handbooks.
These leads will ensure that Heads of Department/Division and individual supervisors conform to College and Faculty (Institute/School) requirements and recommendations.
These leads will help to disseminate good practice identified with regard to PGT research within and outside the College.
<i>Problem solving and complaints</i>
Normally issues which arise when students have problems will be dealt with at programme and/or departmental level. The PGT lead will be expected to help when issues are unsolved. This may include requesting suspensions of regulations, authorising extension of submission deadlines, interruption of studies, changing supervisors or withdrawing the student's registration.
Faculty (Institute/School) PGT leads or a delegated named representative deal with unresolved first stage of complaints raised by students, passing unsettled complaints to the office of the Director of Students and Education.

Section D

Responsibilities of the supervisor/module convenors
Each student will be allocated a research supervisor at an appropriate point in the programme. Module convenors will assume this role for Programmes that operate a practice-based research project model in place of a dissertation.
A suitable dissertation topic will be agreed. There are several mechanisms in place to achieve this goal in Faculties (Institutes/School). Some programmes produce lists and award projects on a first-come, first-served basis, others allocate the supervisor first and then the student and supervisor arrive at the dissertation project. The process should be made clear to the student in the programme handbook and particularly for online distance-learners.
Supervisors / module convenors are required to assess the feasibility of the project (if necessary) to ensure that it can be completed within the prescribed time frame.
It is the supervisor's / module convenors responsibility to make available advice on a project which can be completed successfully and on time.
Supervisors / module convenors should notify students of their obligation to obtain ethical approval.
Supervisors / module convenors should also confirm that all equipment, facilities and technical support, where appropriate, needed for the timely completion of the dissertation will be in place when the student needs them.
Early guidance on project
At the start of a student's research dissertation, supervisors / module convenors should where appropriate give guidance about the nature and planning of the project and the standard expected, about literature and sources, about requisite techniques (and access to training where appropriate) and about the legal, ethical and professional norms of research (including requirements for formal approach such as ethical review of research with human participants).
Contact with students
Supervisors should be available for students throughout the dissertation period or nominate an academic colleague who is responsible and contactable when absent. Ideally contact should be maintained by the supervisor (or academic nominee) through regular, individual, or group meetings to be scheduled after discussion with the student(s) concerned.
Details of contact information should be shared where possible at the start of the dissertation process. This is particularly important if the student or the supervisor is based off-site.
Where physical presence at the College is not necessarily appropriate, contact may be maintained via telephone, email contact, Skype or other appropriate medium.
Supervisors have the right to require a student's presence on campus (in London) in line with programme regulations

Supervisors need to ensure that regular contact is maintained with students who are undertaking a period of “off-campus” study and that a named individual is in place “off- campus” for support as needed.

Distance Learners and students “off-campus” and conducting research in another organisation (overseas, in industrial settings or in clinical settings etc.) should know who to contact in an emergency

Supervisors should be contactable during the summer months and should notify students of intended holiday periods when contact would not be possible.

Supervisors are reminded to take particular care with regard to overseas students who, in the early stages, may need very frequent contact and advice.

Supervisors should provide guidance as to where to get help with language problems and advice about language training where necessary.

King’s Foundation can provide additional support for students with academic writing as well as language skills. Details can be found at: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/international-foundation>

Section E

Responsibilities of the student
<i>Understanding of regulations</i>
Students are required to familiarise themselves with the <i>Core Code</i> and other College documentation including the <i>Regulations for taught programmes</i> , <i>T Regulations concerning students</i> and <i>General regulations</i> and any Faculty (Institutes/School) postgraduate handbooks.
Students should be aware of their responsibilities in relation to the Health and Safety at Work Act, ethical approval procedures, intellectual property rights, plagiarism regulations and occupational health clearance where appropriate.
<i>Contact with supervisor</i>
Students should discuss with their supervisors the type of guidance required and must maintain regular contact with their supervisor throughout the dissertation.
Normally contact should be maintained through regular meetings to be scheduled after discussion with the supervisor. However, where physical presence at the College is not necessary or appropriate, contact may be maintained via telephone, email, Skype or other appropriate medium.
Students should notify their supervisors of intended holiday periods when contact would not be possible.
A timetable of meetings should may be arranged at the start of the dissertation period.
Students may be asked to keep a record of when supervisory meetings take place and the agreed action points for the student and supervisor that arose from the meeting.
Students must ensure that contact is maintained with their supervisor. This is particularly important for distance-learners and during any periods of “off-campus” study.
It is the responsibility of the student to keep the supervisor informed of any changes in personal or other circumstances that might affect the progress of work.
Students should take the initiative in raising problems which have arisen in the work.
<i>Change of circumstances</i>
Students are required to inform supervisors and the Programme Team/ Department/Division, as well as the appropriate administrative unit of any change of address, email and other contact details.
Any changes to circumstance that may affect a student’s progress must also be reported as early as possible.

Appendix 4: Research Ethics

All research carried out within the College should be conducted with integrity and in line with generally accepted ethical principles. This applies to research conducted by all staff and students. It is a mandatory requirement of the College that all research involving human participants, and in some cases their data or tissue, is subject to an appropriate ethical review. This is to protect the participants and the researchers. For further advice on good research conduct and research integrity visit:

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/support/rgei/research-ethics>.

Additionally, there is a widening body of professional, regulatory and legal requirements which touch upon the ethical conduct of research with human participants. The ethics application process is designed to assist staff and students in identifying what these issues might be and how best they might be addressed.

College Review

All research which involves human participants, and in some cases their data or tissue, but does not fall under the remit of the HRA should be submitted via one of the approval processes accountable to the College Research Ethics Committee. For further information on the procedure that you should follow please visit <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/support/rgei/research-ethics>

HRA Review

If the research falls under the review requirements of the HRA then ethical review will be required from one of the Research Ethics Committees that falls within it, namely NHS REC, Ministry of Defence REC (MoDREC) or Social Care REC. To find out more about the HRA and its associated RECs visit <https://www.hra.nhs.uk/about-us/committees-and-services/harp/>

If you apply to any of the above mentioned RECs you do not need to apply for College approval as well although you may be asked to provide evidence of your ethical approval.

Review by other Institutions

All research which is sponsored and led by the College will be expected to have been subjected to one of the above review processes.

It is possible that in cases where research is conducted in collaboration with another institution, in the UK or overseas, this Institution may request that local ethical approval is sought. The College will endeavour, where possible, to accept the approvals of other Institutions without further review by the College. Acceptance of external approvals will be at the discretion of the College Research Ethics Committee and advice in such cases should be sought directly from the Research Ethics Office rec@kcl.ac.uk

Advice, guidance and training available

It is expected that the induction and training provided for research students will include the legal and ethical contexts of the research. It is also important that any students who may choose to conduct research with human participants are aware of the need to get ethical approval and are provided with the information and training they need should they decide to do so.

Training on research ethics, governance and integrity is outlined in the Graduate School training programme and will be provided on a faculty specific basis, upon request. For further details on training for your faculty please contact your faculty of office or the Research Ethics Office rec@kcl.ac.uk. More information can be found in the Training & Advice section of the Research Ethics web pages: <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/research/support/ethics/training/index.aspx> Training is available for students, supervisors, staff researchers, research administrators.

Responsibilities

Under the College ethical review system the student is the named 'Researcher' and the Supervisor must then authorise any application form. Under the HRA system, doctoral students are the 'Chief Investigator', whereas for all other students the Supervisor takes this role. Regardless of this, it is expected that the Supervisor retains oversight of the student's plans and does not authorise the application for submission until he/she is satisfied that it meets the standards required by the review body.

Other reasons why ethical review might be needed

There are some instances where research is not carried out directly with human participants but may still have social or environmental implications which warrant ethical review. An example of this would be the excavation of a burial site. If it is likely that planned research may present other ethical issues the student and supervisor should contact the Research Ethics Office (rec@kcl.ac.uk) to discuss this.

Marice Lunny

Head of Policy and Ethics

Appendix 5: Key resources and contacts

Students may seek help from Library Services at any time, including when they are preparing to conduct a literature review.

Help is available in every Library at the Enquiry Desks, See <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/library/contact/index.aspx> or email libraryservices@kcl.ac.uk

Specialist training sessions are run throughout the year, including literature searching, key resources in your subject, reference management (including Endnote and Refworks), systematic reviews and critical appraisal. Check the Library Services webpages for details of upcoming training: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/researchsupport>

There is a detailed guide for every subject that highlights key resources, training opportunities and contacts for support:

<http://libguides.kcl.ac.uk/>

Other specific study skills can be sought from here: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/library/further-support/student>