Queen's University Belfast

Further Guidance on the Composition of Supervisory Teams

This table should be read in conjunction with the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes (6.1 Supervision).

Every member of the supervisory team must meet the criteria for appointment set out in regulation 6.1.3. A team must comprise two supervisors: a principal supervisor and a second or co-supervisor.

Eligibility for **principal supervisor** is set out in regulation 6.1.6. All students must have a named principal supervisor, even if they have a co-supervisor.

Eligibility for **second or co-supervisors** is set out in regulation 6.1.7. The second or co-supervisor may, if appropriate, be from a different School (or external institution, for recognised supervisors) to the one in which the student is carrying out the research.

A **third, external** supervisor may be appointed where a student's research is interdisciplinary, to provide a link between the disciplines; or to facilitate international engagement.

Students should not have more than three supervisors at any one time.

The Head of School (or nominee) is responsible for staff within the School and will normally appoint the supervisory team to a particular student upon their acceptance of a place on the RDP. The School will consider and appoint the most appropriate supervisory team to supervise the research project.

Table 1: Composition of Supervisory Teams

Supervisor 1	Supervisor 2	Supervisor 3
Principal Supervisor	Second Supervisor	
Principal Supervisor	Co-Supervisor	
Principal Supervisor (on probation)	Second or co-supervisor (senior academic (at senior lecturer level or above) with experience of successfully supervising at least two doctoral students through to completion as principal supervisor)	
Principal Supervisor	Second Supervisor	Third, internal supervisor (only permitted as a safeguarding appointment where the Principal and Second Supervisor are partners)
Principal Supervisor	Honorary Title holder	
Principal Supervisor	Recognised Supervisor under an approved collaborative research degree agreement	
Principal Supervisor	Second Supervisor or Co-Supervisor	External Supervisor
Principal Supervisor (on probation)	Second or co-supervisor (senior academic (at senior lecturer level or above) with experience of successfully supervising at least two doctoral students through to completion as principal supervisor)	Recognised Supervisor under an approved collaborative research degree agreement

Internal member of QUB staff

Persons external to QUB

Second Supervisors External to Queen's

As per Table 1, persons external to Queen's may only be appointed as a second supervisor if:

- They are an [Honorary Title holder](#), or;
- They are a [Recognised Supervisor](#) under an approved collaborative research degree (i.e. a formal arrangement of joint supervision, at PhD level, by a Queen's academic and a member of staff from another partner organisation).

Any other persons external to Queen's may be considered for appointment as a third, external supervisor, providing they meet the criteria for appointment set out in [regulation 6.1.3](#).

Guidance on the Appointment of External Supervisors

A third, external supervisor may be appointed to support interdisciplinary research and/or to facilitate external collaborations and international engagement.

The appointment of external supervisors is managed at School-level. They may be approved by the Head of School or the SPRC, providing they meet the criteria for appointment ([regulation 6.1.3](#)).

The following steps are advised once an external supervisor is appointed:

- A formal communication should be sent to the external supervisor to confirm the appointment, provide an overview of their anticipated role in the project (will vary) and a link to the University's regulations and any relevant School documentation.
- External supervisors should be attached to the student's record on the RSL. To do this, they should be added to the Additional Persons Database (APD) as an External Researcher. Qsis Support should be advised of the external supervisor's ID number from the APD to add them to the Qsis database. Once they have been added to Qsis, the School can attach the external supervisor to the student's record.

- External supervisors may also complete University's training course for supervisors. The School should email the Graduate School to let them know if training is required.