

Graduate School Induction for new Supervisors

Nigel Topham and Mary Cryan



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Agenda – Part I

- Aims of today's session
- Overview of Informatics Graduate School (IGS)
- Roles and responsibilities
- Postgraduate research programmes
- Fees and stipends
- Funding and studentships
- Recruitment, selection, and admissions
- Students' working spaces



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Aims of today's session

- Explain the structure and purpose of the Graduate School
- Give an overview of our research degrees and their structure
- Explain how we can help you fund research students
- Outline the environment the School provides for your research students
- Explain how you can recruit research students
- Explain responsibilities of a PhD supervisor, and support for your role.
- Explain how we monitor student progress, and your role in that
- Explain the structures in place to help students cope
- Things to do **straight away!**

NB. These slides contain important links to IGS web pages, please retain and use



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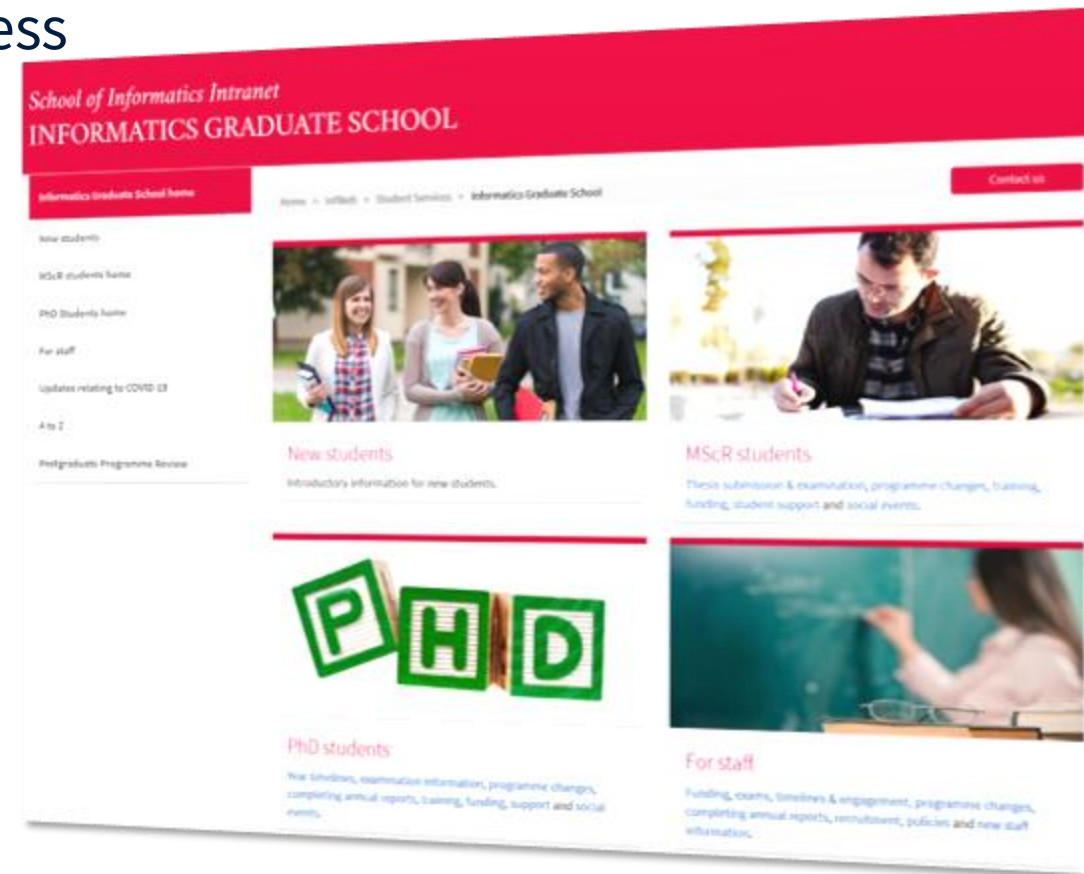
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Overview of IGS

- Responsible for: research degrees, postgraduate research student admissions, funding, progress monitoring, transferrable skills training, supervision guidance and policies, ...
- Large cohort of research students
- Degrees: MScR, MPhil, PhD
- Academic and administrative staff
- Key online information sources

[Main IGS landing page](#)

[Information for new staff](#)



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Overview of current student cohort

- PGR¹ students are the largest constituency in the School
 - 574 research students across all research degrees
 - 67 different countries represented
 - 93% PhD, 7% MScR or MPhil
 - 23% female, 74% male, 3% undisclosed
- Approx 100-120 new students recruited per year
 - ~32% join a CDT
 - ~67% join an Institute PhD programme
 - Small number of MScR students join Institute programmes
- 1100+ applications received per year

1. PGR = post-graduate research, refers to all students registered on a research degree programme



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IGS Roles and Responsibilities - academic

- [Director](#) (Nigel Topham)
 - Recruitment, selection, funding & scholarships (chairs the Selectors Meetings)
 - Graduate School policy
 - College and University representation
- [Deputy Director](#) (Mary Cryan)
 - Advice and on course programme decision - interruptions, suspensions, extensions, annual reviews, research relationships, student experience
 - Oversight of Annual Reviews and progression
 - Networking events, transferable skills and research training courses
- [Personal Tutors](#) PGR (John Longley, Murray Cole)
 - Mentoring and pastoral advice, advice with supervisor challenges
- [PGR Selector](#) (one per Institute and CDT), [find your Selector here](#)
 - Coordinate PGR selection within their Institute or CDT, and provide recruitment guidance to supervisors
 - Ensure prompt processing of applications, and compliance with policies and regulations
 - Maintain expert knowledge of current UoE admissions policies, School selection processes, and PhD scholarships
 - Members of Selectors Group



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IGS administrative team

Office :	IF 3.42
Email :	igs@inf.ed.ac.uk
Web :	IGS contacts page

- Lindsey Fox - Graduate School Manager
 - Margaret Blake – Student Funding Administrator
 - Patrick Hudson – Senior Graduate School Co-ordinator
 - Jonathan McBride – Administrative Assistant
 - Agapi Stylianidou – Admissions and Recruitment Administrator
- IGS Responsibilities
 - Administration queries e.g., changes, requests
 - Programme regulations and policy advice – see also online [policy and regulations](#) page
 - Application and offer processing
 - Funding and stipend administration
 - Wellbeing and support, including community building activities and mental health support
- CDT Coordinators
 - Sally Galloway (Natural Language Processing CDT)
 - Isabelle Hanlon (Biomedical AI CDT, and Robotics and Autonomous Systems II CDT)
 - Sandra Nicol (Data Science CDT, Pervasive Parallelism CDT, and Robotics and Autonomous Systems I CDT)



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Research programmes

- Degree programmes:
 - [MScR](#) - 1 year FT or 2 years PT
 - [MPhil](#) – at least 2 years supervised research study (sometimes an "exit route" from PhD)
 - [PhD](#) – 3 years FT, 48-72 months PT
 - [PhD with integrated study](#) – 4 years FT or 8 years PT
- } +12 months writing-up time for PhD theses
- Programmes associated with Institute, CDT or research centres ([details available here](#))

Institute	Programmes
ANC	MScR, MPhil, PhD
AIAI	MScR, MPhil, PhD
ICSA	MScR, MPhil, PhD
IPAB	MScR, MPhil, PhD
LFCS	MScR, MPhil, PhD
ILCC	MScR, MPhil, PhD

CDT	Programmes
NLP	PhD with integrated study
BioMed	MScR, leading to PhD
RAS	MScR, leading to PhD
Centre	Programmes
CSPT	PhD
EPCC	PhD



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Fees

- Tuition fees depend on student's [fee status](#), which is confirmed after application is received
- Postgraduate fees status may be HOME or INTERNATIONAL
 - UK nationals living in UK or EU/EEA/Switzerland, normally HOME status
 - UK nationals living elsewhere, normally INTERNATIONAL, unless due to temporary employment (complex rules)
 - Overseas nationals living in UK with indefinite leave to remain, normally HOME status
 - Asylum seekers and refugees, HOME status
 - All other overseas nationals, INTERNATIONAL status
- Part-time fees reduced *pro rata*
- Fees rise annually, but are fixed for each student at time of entry
 - Probable increase of 6% - 7% for 2023/24

Degree	HOME	INTERNATIONAL
MScR	£9,700	£31,100
MPhil	£4,596	£28,000
PhD	£4,596	£28,000

Typical Informatics Annual PGR Tuition Fees – Students starting 2022/23



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Student stipends

- Self-funded students are expected to support themselves financially
- All students who receive a scholarship administered by the University receive a stipend
- Value of stipend is currently £17,668 (2022-23)
 - Value determined by UKRI standard minimum stipend, which increases annually (unlike their fees)
 - Stipend increased by 13.2% this year, due to high level of UK inflation
- Stipend is non-taxable, hence equivalent to ~£20,173 before tax
 - Note: Govt charges international students £470 p.a. for free NHS access (this cost is not covered by the School)
 - E.g., NHS surcharge cost for student with 4-year visa is £1,880
- 3 year funded PhD students get 3.5 years of stipend
- 4 year funded PhD students (MScR+PhD, or integrated 4-year PhD) get 4 years of stipend



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Recruitment

- Procedure is similar for all PGR applicants
- Supervisor, IGS team, and Institute/CDT Selector, all work together
- Can be a lengthy process:
 - Scholarships have applications deadlines
 - CDTs and Selectors Meeting have scheduled dates for making offers
 - ATAS and visa processing for international students can be very slow
 - Important for supervisor to maintain contact with applicant
- Three main phases: **Application, Selection, Conversion...**

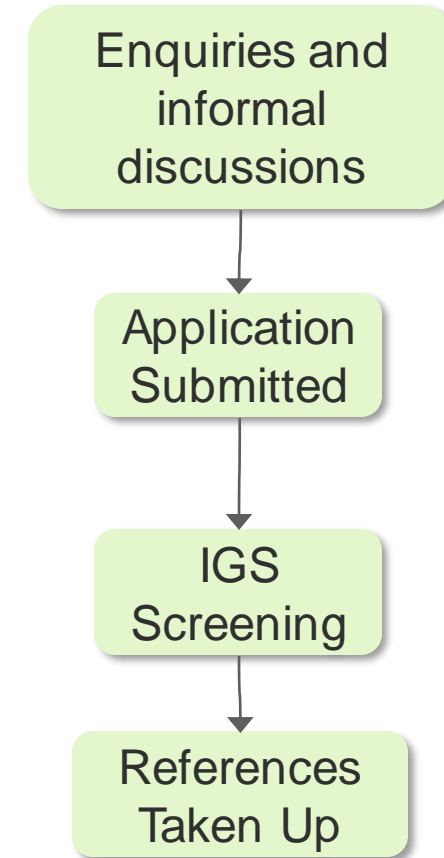


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Recruitment - Application phase

- Candidates typically contact prospective supervisors by email
- If there's interest on both sides, the candidate submits an application online
 - Some candidates submit applications without prior contact, but such speculative applications are less likely to lead to successful outcomes
- Nothing can proceed until a formal online application is made
- IGS screens the application
 - Application complete?
 - Meets minimum qualification requirements?
 - Adequate English language test certificate? (if required)
- Two academic referee letters are sought
- When application is complete and screened it is passed to the relevant Selector, and the selection phase begins...

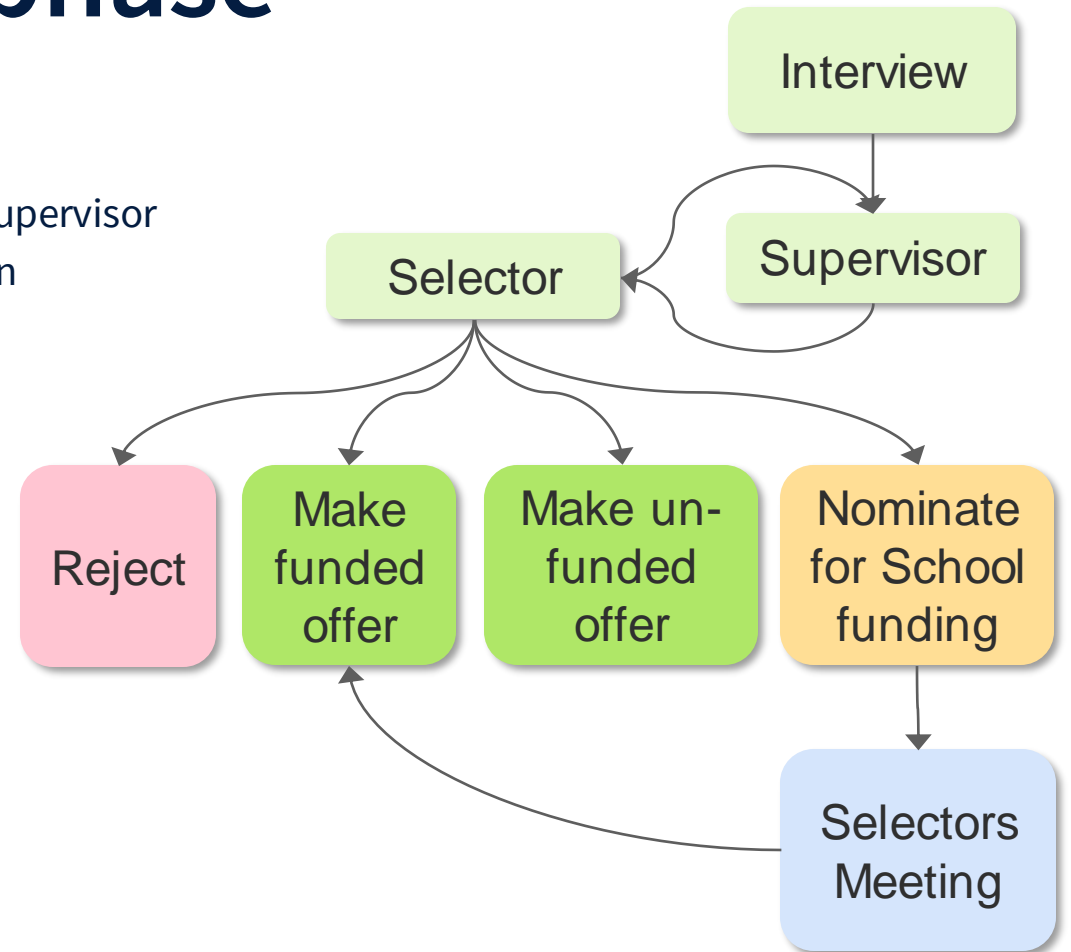


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Recruitment - Selection phase

- Candidates must be interviewed (can be online)
 - Two independent academics on the interview panel
 - E.g., Supervisor + Selector, or Supervisor + potential second supervisor
 - Interview assessment is reported to the Selector, with decision
- Selector Decision form submitted to IGS
 - Reject
 - Hold gathered (for later consideration along with others)
 - Nominate for internal scholarship competition
 - Request for IGS to make **un-funded** offer
 - Request for IGS to make **funded** offer (e.g., Pump-priming or grant funded)
- Selectors Meeting allocates School scholarships
 - Meets ~monthly during peak period (Jan-Mar)
 - Nominees are assessed and ranked
 - Funded offers are made to highest-ranked nominees
 - Unsuccessful nominees may self-fund, withdraw, or be rejected
 - Candidates with offer requests move to the conversion phase...



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Recruitment - Conversion phase

Timeline (weeks)	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer processing (IGS)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IGS seeks funding approval from budget holder (for funded offer)• Starting date is determined (Sept, Oct, Jan or May)• Director IGS approves offer
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Candidate must accept or decline offer within 2 weeks
	12+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ATAS certification – students from certain countries<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supervisor provides brief summary of research project• Student submits ATAS application to FCDO online• ATAS approval required before student applies for visa• It is illegal for University to begin any research with the student (even remotely) before ATAS approval has been obtained
	6+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tier 4 student visa<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Required by all international students studying in the UK• Start date may need revising if ATAS or visa is delayed

Does
not need
ATAS

UK,
EU/EEA,
Australia,
Canada,
Japan,
New Zealand,
Singapore,
South Korea,
Switzerland,
USA

Needs
ATAS

All other nationalities



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Studentships and sources of funding

- Sources are many and varied, with differing eligibility rules, updated annually [online](#)

Scholarship type	Stipend?	Fees?	Number	Holder	Fees status eligibility	Other conditions
Pump priming	3.5 yrs	Waived	Contract defined	Supervisor	No restrictions	Limited shelf-life
EPSRC DTP	3.5 yrs	HOME paid	10 per year ¹	IGS	≤ 30% INT.	-
CDT (UKRI/EPSRC)	4 yrs	HOME paid	Varies per CDT	Dir. CDT	≤ 30% INT.	-
CDT (School)	4 yrs	Waived	Varies per CDT	Dir. CDT	No restrictions	-
CASE conversion	3.5 yrs	HOME paid	≤ 1 per year	College ²	HOME	Industry partner, +30% top-up
IGPS	3.5 yrs	Waived	1 or 2 per year	IGS	No restrictions	-
EDCS	3.5 yrs	Waived	1 per year	IGS	No restrictions	Not already holding a PhD
DeepMind	4 yrs	INT. paid	TBD (1 this year)	IGS	No restrictions	AI/ML and from minority group ³
Carnegie	3 yrs	HOME paid	Rarely awarded	Carnegie ⁴	No restrictions	u/g 1 st from Scottish Univ.
Industry grants	3.5 yrs	Paid in full (no waivers!)	Depends on grant	PI	Fee availability	Grant dependent
CSC	Sponsor	Waived (special case)	Depends on CSC	Student	INT (by definition)	Chinese students only

1. EPSRC DTPs depend on School's total EPSRC grant portfolio value – apply for EPSRC grants to boost this number!
2. ~4 DTPs set aside annually for CASE conversion by College. Requires industry partner to give +30% of studentship value to project, and requires a nominated student.
3. Resident of country/region underrepresented in AI; identify as women and/or identify as Black or other minority ethnicity; PhD topic is in ML or AI.
4. Up to 4 Carnegie nominations from the College per year, so School nominations are demand-managed by College



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Application deadlines – 2023 entry

- Competitive funding sources all have application deadlines
- Tell your PhD candidates that deadlines and procedures are available here:
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/informatics/postgraduate/apply/planning-submission-pgr-application>
- CDT scholarships are awarded by CDTs, each to their own timescales...

CDT Programmes	UK-eligible	International
Biomedical AI (CDT)	13 Jan 2023	
NLP (CDT)	25 Jan 2023	25 Nov 2022
Robotics & Autonomous Systems	16 Jan 2023	9 Dec 2022

- Scholarships awarded by the Selectors Meeting are allocated in two rounds:

PhD scholarships (IGPS, EPSRC DTP)	All applicants
Round 1 applications	25 Nov 2022
Round 2 applications	27 Jan 2023

- Declined offers return their funding to the pool, may be cascaded to next candidate



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Setting up industry-funded studentships

- Typically arise through informal industry contacts
- Supervisor & contact agree the research project
- Business Development Executive (BDE) for your institute arranges all contractual aspects
- University and company sign an agreement
- Advertise the project, including [Informatics Grant-funded PhD projects](#) page (contact IGS)
 - You can set your own application deadlines
 - Recruitment still aligns with standard PhD starting dates (Oct, Jan, May)
- Select applicants in consultation with your Institute PhD Selector
 - Interviews are still required, even though the studentship is in the supervisor's gift
- Applicant typically assigns IP to the University and may be required to sign company NDA
 - Offer letters indicate whether IP assignation will be required, but this should be explained to the applicant before the offer is issued
 - University's revenue sharing rules then apply in case of IP exploitation (your BDE can explain the details)



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Student working spaces & facilities

- Informatics has a [published policy](#) on desk allocation for PGR students
- IGS responsible for managing PGR space allocations – cannot be adjusted by student or supervisor
- Approx. 1.5 students per available desk (no fixed allocation of students to desk)
- All incoming PGR students allocated a PGR shared office
 - Lab-based students expected to use lab as primary desk space
 - Facilities for locked storage of personal belongings in each office
- Incoming PGR students receive loan of laptop or desktop (for home use)
- Exceptionally, a fixed desk may be allocated:
 - Student has an SDS adjustment schedule or formal occupational health report, which specifically states a certain learning environment or workstation set up/equipment is required
 - Student needs to house significant, specialist research equipment. In this instance, such requests (by either supervisors or students) must be submitted to the IGS in advance of the purchase of the equipment (by Computing Support), as approval of fixed desk is required from the Director of IGS.
- Hot-desking areas:
 - Only facility available to visiting PGR students
 - Can also be used by PhD students who are no longer entitled to an allocated shared office



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Agenda – Part II

- Responsibilities academic
- Responsibilities pastoral
- Responsibilities Tier 4!
- IAD courses
- Annual reviews
- Internships, absences, interruptions and extensions

(Some of this content comes from our ["new supervisors" guide](#))

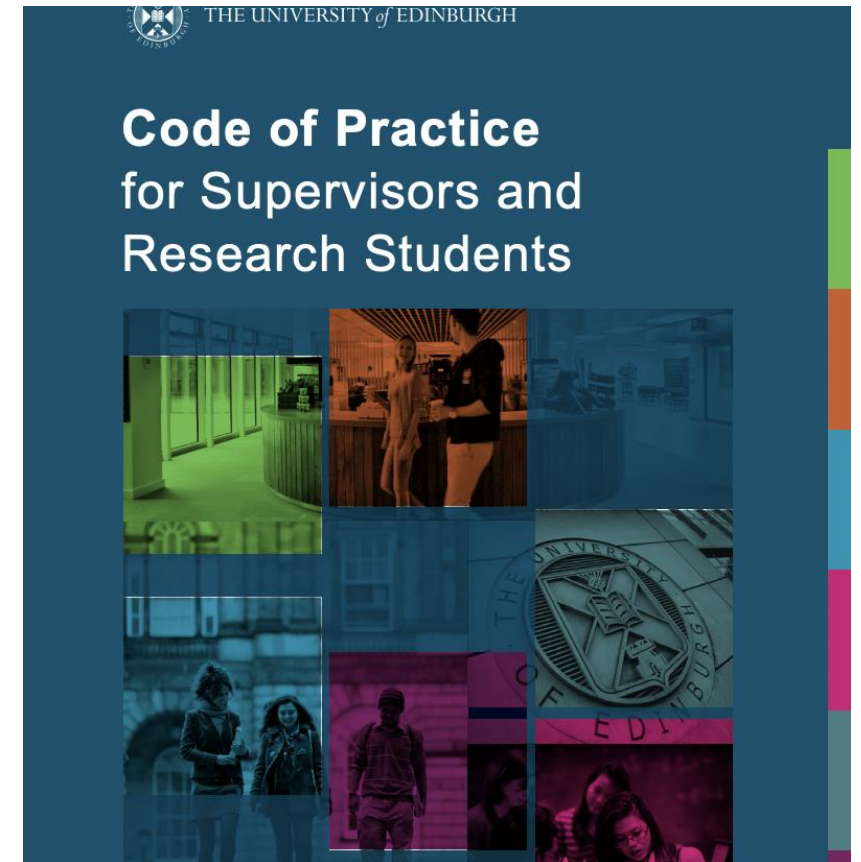


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Responsibilities - academic

- Many of our PhD programmes (including all Institute programmes) are "straight to research", without any Quals, with Lead supervisor decided before entry ... and committed to supervision in a stronger way than in a US PhD. *Please be careful during the selection process, and only recruit applicants if you are confident of their aptitude for research.*
- When progress is inadequate in the early years, you may end up needing to continue supervision for a lesser degree such as MPhil and MSc Res.
- Be clear about goal-setting and "expectations" with your PhD students. The University has an "[Expectations Questionnaire](#)" which we ask faculty to use for discussion in the 1st meeting with a PhD student - both student and supervisor fill this independently, then compare.
- You should provide 1-1 meetings (not just group), and offer timely feedback on the student's written work (not only conference submissions!).
- If the student has some deficiencies in programming, or in English language, search for training to improve.
- "[Code of Practice](#)" a must-read!



Responsibilities - pastoral

- You have the right to expect students to work consistently but they have the right to a life!, and to holidays. Please do not encourage overworking.
- Research students are allowed to have up to 8 weeks Annual Leave each year. Please be "reasonable" (definition [here](#)) in accommodating this.
- As the main point of contact for your students, please be alert to Mental Health issues. There are many [sources of support](#) available to refer the student to. Or there is also the option to refer the student to the [postgraduate research tutors](#).
- If you are struggling with a difficult supervision, please discuss with a senior academic or contact the Deputy Director (Mary).



Responsibilities – Tier 4

- Many of our research students come from abroad and will have a "Tier 4" (now often called "Student Route") visa.
- To maintain their visa status, the University is required to document regular "engagement points" on the Euclid record. It's important, if we want to protect the student's visa status.
- We will require at least one (in-person) meeting to be documented each month, and in the first two weeks of the month. Full details of how to add the point is available on [this IGS webpage](#).
- There will be reminders from the IGS admin teams to prompt you to add the engagement point each month. Please be responsive and polite!

IAD courses

The [Institute for Academic Development \(IAD\)](#) within the University offers research training and "Soft skills" training for research students (and academics!)

Please ensure your students take the ["Informatics –specific" IAD courses](#), which are taught by our own faculty:

- "How to do an Informatics PhD", 1st year (autumn and spring offerings)
- "Preparing for your 1st year Annual Review", 1st year (late autumn and early summer)
- "Writing an Informatics Research Paper", 2nd year (late autumn)
- "Writing your Informatics PhD thesis" (early spring)
- "Preparing for the Viva" (late autumn and early summer)

IAD also delivers lots more generic research training, presentation and writing training.

Annual Reviews

We track progress via the Annual Reviews process, carried out each year between months 9-12. Documented on Euclid.

- We will monitor completion strictly starting January 2023
- There are details of [expectations for different years](#) here (under review). Further differences between "integrated" CDT PhD programmes, versus the standard Institute PhDs.
- Details of the process for completing the templates are also [hosted on the IGS pages](#). Student goes first! (remind them well in advance of the "clock date" deadline of 12, 24, 36 months).

All reviews ▾

Date	Year	Status	Review
01/Oct/2022 Open Review Delete	2022/3	Student completing form	<div><div>Student completing form</div><div>Principal supervisor to complete form</div><div>Additional supervisor(s) to sign off review</div><div>Student to sign off review</div><div>Postgraduate director to sign off review</div></div>

Annual Reviews cont'd.

- After the student submits template+report, the next stage is the "Review panel" with 1st and 2nd supervisor, and an extra "independent faculty member" of the panel.
- Student must be offered a 1-1 chat with this Independent member of the panel, to air any concerns.
- Interruptions "stop the clock"
- If progress is not "satisfactory" or better, you should be setting up a 3-month "Repeat Review", with clear deliverables for the student. Please let the IGS know!
- Repeated slow/unsatisfactory progress may warrant "re-routing" onto an MSc Res or MPhil.

Time away from the University

Students will sometimes spend time away from the University, when ill, or working away.

Leave of Absence: when the student is working on their research topic at another organisation/location. In this case a [Leave of Absence form](#) needs to be submitted (in advance) to the IGS for approval.

Interruption: when the student has paused work on the thesis to focus on other matters ... perhaps applied work with a Tech firm, or maybe illness, or personal matters, or maternity/paternity leave. There is an [Interruption form](#) to have approved by IGS (in advance!)

Tier 4 students must discuss Interruptions/LoAs with "[Student Immigration](#)" in advance. They can only interrupt for 8 weeks through their program.

Sick Pay: available for students on UKRI, University and Industrial funding packages (but not for self-funded students). It is limited to 3 months per year, with strict conditions: see [here for details and another form](#)!

"All the forms"

- [Interruption of Studies form](#) (and context)
- [Leave of Absence form](#) (and associated "checklist" form)
- [Sick Pay form](#)
- [Maternity and Paternity Leave](#) details
- [Extension form](#), to extend the "Max End date", when a student has had circumstances hampering progress. Requires approval by us at IGS ... and that requires evidence of recent progress, as well as the difficult circs.
- ["Change of Programme" form](#), when a student is changing from PhD to MPhil or MSc Res.
- "Change of Programme" form also used to change from Full-time to Part-time (we don't support repeated switch between these modes)
- "Leave of Absence" form for extended Annual leave over 30 days.
- ["Nomination of Examiners" form](#), when the student's viva is being arranged.
- [Withdrawal form](#), for a student choosing this option.



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Part 3 - Things to do straight away.

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Things to do straight away!

- Introduce yourself to the "PhD selector" for your institute (Selectors listed [here](#))
- Check whether your research could align with one of our CDT programmes, which are [Biomed AI](#), [NLP](#), and [RAS](#). If you are a "fit" for any CDT, contact the CDT Director.
- You may complete supervisor-training **either** by taking the online Learn course "Fundamentals of PhD supervision" **or** by attending the Main supervisor training in February 2023.
- Ask your PhD selector if you can sit-in on some "applicant interview panels" for practice
- Ask senior figures in your research group (or in cognate areas) whether you can be added as an Assistant supervisor for an incoming PhD student (for practice and experience of Annual Reviews),.
- You will have received login details for the University's Student System "Euclid", accessible via [MyEd login](#) (the Research and Teaching tab). Please log-in and familiarise yourself, maybe search for a student you know within your Institute as practice.

(This comes from the first section of our ["New supervisors" pages](#) on IGS site. Check these out!)



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Q&A

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Thank you!

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