**PhD Supervision Policies and Guidelines in the School of Computing Science**

1. **Introduction**

This policy outlines the supervision structure and responsibilities for PGR students within the School of Computing Science. It is intended to clarify the roles of the first (primary) and second (secondary) supervisors, ensuring that both students and supervisors are aware of their responsibilities. This policy complements the University of Glasgow **PGR Code of Practice** which can be found here: <https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/ourresearchenvironment/prs/pgrcodeofpractice/>.

1. **Supervision split**

The allocation of supervisory responsibilities is structured to ensure that every student has access to adequate academic guidance and support. For PGR students admitted after the release of this policy, the following supervision split guidelines apply:

* **80:20 or 50:50 split**: By default, supervisory arrangements will follow an 80:20 (primary to secondary supervisor) or 50:50 ratio. The specific ratio will be determined by the supervisory team in consultation with the student, based on the nature and requirements of the research project.
* **Approval for Deviations**: Any deviations from these standard ratios must be approved by the Research Students Committee (RSC) by the PGR director or their delegate. Examples of this include having three supervisors, or additional supervisors from other schools who would have a lower percentage.

1. **Supervision load**

To ensure high-quality supervision and avoid overburdening supervisors, the following limits apply:

* **Early Career Researcher (ECR) supervisors**: The maximum supervision load for ECRs is 4.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) students. Hypothetical examples of ECR supervisors at the limit include an ECR supervisor with 8 PhD students at 0.5 FTE each, or an ECR supervisor with 5 PhD students at 0.8 each.
* **Non-ECR supervisors**: The supervision load limit is 8.0 FTE. Hypothetical examples of non-ECR supervisors at the limit include a supervisor with 16 PhD students at 0.5 FTE each, or 10 PhD students at 0.8 FTE each.

If a supervisor proposes admitting a new PhD student that exceeds their supervision limit, the RSC will discuss alternative arrangements, such as appointing a different primary supervisor while the original supervisor takes on a secondary role. Exceptions may be made subject to the RSC’s approval, for example for supervisors with near-completion students. Supervisors should carefully consider their workload to ensure the quality of supervision is maintained.

**4. Role of the Primary and Secondary Supervisors**

As quoted from the PGR code of practice “*The* ***primary supervisor*** *will have primary responsibility for supervision of the student. Even in cases where supervision is shared equally, one supervisor should be designated as the primary supervisor, and this should be made clear to the student. [..]. The* ***secondary supervisor*** *may provide independent advice and support, bring subject expertise to the team, provide support if the primary supervisor is absent for a period and may in some cases provide pastoral support. Secondary supervisors may also be referred to as joint supervisors or co-supervisors. Postdoctoral researchers may also be added as additional secondary supervisors.*”

In addition to point **5.6 “Responsibilities of the supervisory team”** of the PGR code of practice, the RSC provides the following as guidance for PhD supervisors and to make PhD students aware of the expectations towards their supervisors:

1. **Assignment of the Secondary Supervisor**: The primary supervisor nominates a secondary supervisor to the RSC after obtaining their consent. We encourage supervision teams that combine diverse expertise, both in supervisory experience and subject areas (e.g., across different research sections). Postdocs and external secondary supervisors (i.e., from outside the University of Glasgow) are allowed as additional secondary supervisors alongside two academic supervisors from within the University of Glasgow (at least one of them from the School of Computing Science). We encourage primary supervisors to involve PhD students in selecting the secondary supervisor and transparently discuss the specific expertise and value the secondary supervisor will contribute to the team.
2. **Ensuring Cohesive Guidance and Collaboration**: Both supervisors are expected to work collaboratively and ensure the student is not left with conflicting guidance, with the primary supervisor taking a lead in resolving discrepancies.
3. **Organisation of Meetings**: While it is the PhD student’s responsibility to arrange regular meetings, it is the primary supervisor’s duty to ensure that meetings involving the secondary supervisor are also scheduled when appropriate. See point 5 on frequency of meetings.
4. **Time Allocation for PhD Supervision**: In the School of Computing Science (SoCS) Workload Allocation Model ([link](https://moodle.gla.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=31146&section=17)), PhD supervision is allocated 120xFTE hours per student. These hours are shared between the primary and secondary supervisors according to their supervision ratio, collectively amounting to two hours per week. This total is split between the supervisors based on their assigned ratio for each student. For example, in 50:50 supervision arrangements, each supervisor is expected to spend an hour on PhD supervision activities e.g., meeting the student, reviewing their progress reports, paper drafts, etc.
5. **Frequency of Meetings**: The primary supervisor is expected to meet their PhD students once a week. In 50:50 supervision arrangements, both supervisors should meet with the student weekly. In 80:20 splits, the primary supervisor meets weekly, and the secondary supervisor meets at least once a month. Supervisors should coordinate their advice to ensure consistent guidance and avoid leaving the student uncertain or with conflicting guidance.
6. **Nomination of assessors for the Annual Progression Review (APR) meeting**: The primary supervisor will be asked by the RSC to nominate two assessors who will evaluate the student during the first, second, and third APRs. In cases where a secondary supervisor is minimally involved (i.e., meeting the student less than once a month or having a supervision ratio that is less than 10%), they may be named as an assessor. The RSC will appoint the convenor for the APR.
7. **Preparation for Thesis Submission and Viva Panel Nomination:** Three months before the end of the research period, as the "Thesis Pending" stage begins, the student will be contacted by the RSC to complete the "Intention to Submit" form. At this point, the supervisory team should start planning viva panel nominations, following the relevant guidance in the most recent PGR Code of Practice. Please note that the Graduate School generally rejects nominations where prior collaborations exist between the external examiner(s) and either the supervisors or the student. More information here: <https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/ourresearchenvironment/prs/pgrcodeofpractice/examinationguidanceandforms/>

### **Document History**

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