Code of Practice for PhD Supervisors within the CRUK Convergence Science Centre

1. Overview

The Cancer Research UK (CRUK) Convergence Science Centre was established as a strategic partnership between the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) and Imperial College London. Its mission is to bring together engineering, natural sciences, physical sciences, life sciences and medicine to develop innovative ways to address challenges in cancer research to benefit patients. This is achieved through multidisciplinary collaborations that integrate otherwise distinct approaches to co-create new tools, technologies and methodologies. The bringing together of two of the UK's leading academic research institutions create a unique opportunity to train the next generation of convergence scientists in cancer research. Cross-institutional research teams with supervisors from distinct disciplines will equip our PhD students with cutting-edge skills and remove disciplinary language barriers that would normally restrict progress.

The Convergence Science Centre PhD cohort is unique in that their education is administered through a tailored governance specifically designed to underpin recruitment, training, finances and access to both institutions. This guide outlines the programme governance and a code of practice for supervisors who are strongly encouraged to read the guide in full to ensure that they are aware of what is expected of them.

2. The Convergence Science Centre PhD Programme

2.1 Governance

The programme is overseen by the Training Subcommittee of the CRUK Convergence Science Centre. The Committee is jointly chaired by a representative from each of the two partner organisations, currently Iain McNeish (Imperial) and Gail ter Haar (ICR). In keeping with this, both partner organisations have equal representation in membership. The membership of the Committee reflects the convergence science expertise required to oversee the programme and it will meet as often as is necessary to select PhD projects for funding, oversee student recruitment and to develop and periodically review the PhD training programme.

2.2 Project call and selection

Each year a call for PhD proposals will be launched usually in May and circulated widely across both institutions. Specific guidelines will accompany the call; however, the general expectation is that students will be exposed to scientific research across different disciplines. Therefore, proposals must clearly articulate how the learnings from one discipline will inform experimental strategies in the partner discipline and vice versa, and how the student will be trained in the relevant experimental techniques. Further, applications must have cross-institutional joint supervisory partners. This means that both the ICR and Imperial supervisors will have equal responsibility for the studentship, as such we do not anticipate that the conventional primary and secondary supervisor approach will apply. Submitted proposals will be seen by the CRUK Convergence Science Centre Operations Team who will collate them for review by the Training Subcommittee who will make recommendations for funding. The decisions of the Training Subcommittee will be ratified by the Executive Management Committee, which is comprised of senior academics from both institutions and the Scientific Director of the CRUK Convergence Science Centre.

2.3 Institutional supervisor requirements

Both institutions have guidelines around the eligibility of individuals to supervise research degrees. Supervisors applying to the CRUK Convergence Science Centre for PhD funding are expected to meet local institutional requirements. A check will be carried out by the Operations Team for supervisor eligibility prior to the award of any funding.

ICR guidelines

In addition to the lead supervisor, ICR has mandated a "Secondary Supervisor" who will oversee the studentship in the event that the lead supervisor is no longer able to fulfil their duties. The Primary Supervisor must have tenure for the duration of the studentship and both Primary and Secondary must be an Institute Recognised Supervisor (IRS). When a Primary Supervisor is not an IRS, the team must include an IRS Partner. For further guidance on the ICR's requirements for the supervisory team, please see the ICR's Code of Practice for MPhil/PhD.

Imperial College guidelines

Imperial College guidelines states that an associate or secondary supervisor is also required in addition to the lead supervisor. In addition, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that they adhere to the College's code of practice for the supervision of research degrees.

This includes pastoral care, skills development, safety in the workplace and guidelines for proper research conduct. Additional requirements are as follows:

1. *All supervisors must have attended a training course on Supervising PhD Students at Imperial delivered by the Education Development Unit. This one-day workshop offers practical guidance on recruitment, handling the student/supervisor relationship effectively and methods to help students toward completion and emergence as an independent researcher in their discipline.*
2. *Inexperienced supervisors [those that have not had a student who has successfully completed their research degree] must have an experienced co-supervisor to support and mentor them.*
3. *Supervisors may be academic or honorary staff with tenure for the duration of the studentship*
4. *Supervisors must seek the approval of their Department or Divisional Heads before applying for funding.*

2.4 Joint supervision

ICR and Imperial College has entered into a formal education agreement for the training of convergence scientists through joint supervision. Students under this agreement are expected to share their time equally working across both institutions and it is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the student does this. This includes access to laboratories, access to desk space, inclusion in group activities and regular catch-up meetings. Supervisors will be asked to complete a time-share form outlining how student will split their time across the partner institutions for submission to the CRUK Convergence Science Centre. This is for HESA return purposes and supervisors are expected to do so in a timely manner when requested by the Operations Team.

Although the student will share their time between the two institutions, they can only be formally registered in one institution with affiliate status at the other. The registering institution will confer the degree at the graduation. The Training Subcommittee will make recommendations on where the student will be registered taking into account the supervisory experience of the partners, the number of students in the different groups and tenure of the supervisors.

2.5 Student recruitment

Recruitment will normally commence in November and supervisors selected for funding will be instructed by Convergence Science Centre Training Manager to draft a synopsis (500 words) of their project for advertising on internal and external platforms to prospective candidates. Applicants will submit their interest online via the ICR Student Recruitment System, which has been specifically developed for a joint recruitment approach. The Centre Operations and ICR Registry teams will review all applications for eligibly and the ICR Registry will instruct supervisors on the use of the System wherein they can jointly review and shortlist candidates after they application deadline. Supervisors are expected to submit their choice of four preferred candidates and two reserves for interviews to the Operations Team within an indicated timeframe. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a recruitment day by the Operations Team, usually in January. Furthermore, supervisors are expected to adhere to the format of the recruitment process as mandated by the Training Subcommittee, this will include the structure of the interview and the feedback process. At the recruitment day, the interview panel will comprise the joint lead supervisors and a member of the Training Subcommittee who will ensure that quality assurance standards are adhered to.

2.6 Candidate offers

The offer process can be divided into two parts, informal and formal offers.

Informal offers

Following the recruitment day, supervisors are expected to agree on a preferred candidate and make an informal offer within 48 hours. When communicating informal offers, supervisors should notify the Operations Team of their decision and of the outcome. In the event that the candidate declines the offer, an offer should be made to a reserve candidate within 24 hours. If there are no reserve candidates, the project could be re-advertised, or supervisors may choose to interview other candidates from the wider pool of applicants on the Recruitment System subject to the Training Subcommittee approval. The interviews must follow as closely as possible the format of the recruitment day and the Operations Team can provide guidance on this. Following the acceptance of an informal offer, it is the responsibility of the supervisors to provide feedback to the unsuccessful candidates and include the Centre Operations in all such communications.

Formal offers

The Operations Team will write to the successful candidates to formally confirm funding for their studentship and the associated terms. In addition, the Operations Team will notify the

relevant Registry or Department Education Teams at the ICR and Imperial College of the successful candidates.

ICR

The ICR Registry will formally write to the candidate with the terms and conditions of enrolment, instructions for registration, payment of stipend and proof right to work and study in the UK and proof of qualifications [section 2.7]. The ICR Registry will also require a supervisor form, signed by the supervisory team and the Head of Division.

Imperial College

Departmental Postgraduate Education Teams will instruct candidates to apply to the College online; the application process will include the submission of all relevant qualifications and proof or right to work and study in the UK. The application will be received by Registry who will disseminate it to the relevant Imperial faculty/department for further processing [section 2.7]. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that candidates complete the application procedure in a timely manner to ensure admission at the indicated start date – usually 1st October.

2.7 Student admission

ICR and Imperial College differ in their admission and registration process, the procedure for each institution are as follows.

ICR

The ICR's policy and procedure for recruitment and admissions can be found within the ICR's Admissions Policy and Procedure document, which is available here.

All ICR registered students will be expected to attend the research degree induction days, the first of which usually takes place on the first Monday of October. This will also be their start date. The day will include registration (including sight of passport and original degree certificates), as well as an IT and Health and Safety induction, all of which are mandatory. If the Registry has received an electronic photograph from the student, their ID access card will also be available for collection.

The Operations Team will ensure that Imperial supervisors are aware that their ICR registered student is expected to attend these dates. Imperial registered student will also be invited to this event as it provides an overview of the resources available at the ICR.

Imperial College

Imperial College is a multi-faculty university with over 30 departments and institutes, although a Central Registry is responsible for the receipt and processing of all admissions. The admissions team is divided according to the four Faculties which are; Business, Engineering, Medicine and Natural Sciences. Each Faculty is divided into several departments and each department has education administrators who are responsible for overseeing admission in a departmental specific manner. The key admission contacts for each Faculty are as follows:

Faculty	Email	Telephone
Business School	business.registry@imperial.ac.uk	0207 594 7258
Faculty of Engineering	engineering.admissions@imperial.ac.uk	0207 594 7243
Faculty of Medicine	medicine.pg.admissions@imperial.ac.uk	0207 594 7259
Faculty of Natural Sciences	ns.admissions@imperial.ac.uk	0207 594 7260

After accepting an offer, the supervisor should direct the candidate to apply to Imperial College using the following procedure:

1. *The student should apply to the College via Imperial Gateway, first by creating an account.*
2. *When creating an account, the student must select "Doctoral" under "select course type"*
3. *Under "academic programme" the student must select the department, institute or Doctoral Training Centre associated with their funding/supervisor; it is the supervisor's responsibility to provide this information to the student.*
4. *After the creation of an account, instructions will be provided on how to apply online.*
5. *The student should apply to Imperial via the online application system, which will notify Registry of their intention to study at Imperial. Registry will follow-up by outlining the terms and conditions for undertaking doctoral study at Imperial. In addition, a College Identifier Number (CID) will be generated which is required for registration and obtaining an ID card.*
6. *The student must register online according to the instructions provided here*
7. *During and/or after the registration process, the student should upload a recent photograph (conforming to Passport standards) for their College identity card; this card will be required access to the Department and other College facilities. If the student*

cannot upload a photo or do not have a suitable one, they should go to the ID Card Office (Security) on level 1 of the Sherfield Building, South Kensington Campus to have their photograph taken. Please bear in mind that the ID Card Office will have long wait times during the first week of term.

8. *Before ID card gets issued the student must complete their departments safety induction. It is the responsibility of the supervisor or relevant lab manager to arrange this.*

9. *The supervisor must instruct their department education administrators to complete a bursary form for the student to ensure their stipend are paid. [move to finance section]*

2.8 Affiliate studentship status

An affiliate student (known as a visiting/ occasional student within Imperial) is a student who is registered at another higher education institution who studies at another institution for one or more terms. The CRUK Convergence Science Centre will provide funding for 6 studentships per annum. Approximately 50% of recruited students will be registered at the ICR and 50% at Imperial College. The Training Subcommittee will make recommendations for the registration of students. ICR registered students will receive a qualification from the University of London only and will be given full rights and access to Imperial College as a visiting/occasional student. Imperial College registered students will receive a qualification from Imperial only and will have full rights and access to the ICR as an affiliate student.

Affiliate student registration at the ICR

Affiliate student status will only be granted following the successful registration of the student at their home institution. The Operations Team will notify the ICR Registry with the names of students who have successfully registered at Imperial College. ICR Registry will then make all the necessary arrangements – supervisors are expected to comply with all requests in a timely manner to ensure students are registered, including ensuring these students are able to attend the inductions days as above

Affiliate student registration at Imperial College

The ICR Registry will notify the Operations Team with the names of ICR registered students. The Operations Team will then instruct the students to apply for affiliate (visiting/occasional) status using Imperial Gateway.

Studentships usually commence in October and supervisors should ensure that all students complete the registration process to meet the start date.

3. Milestones and progression

Each institution has specific PhD progression milestones and the Training Subcommittee has consulted widely on a joint progression pathway for the Convergence Science Centre Cohort. ICR Research Degrees Committee and Imperial Quality Assurance Teams agreed on the following joint progression pathway for a 4-year convergence science PhD. For ease, the red text shows where both institutions are aligned and the black text shows where each institution will follow their established internal process.

Time	ICR	Time	Imperial
6 months	**Action** Student and Primary Supervisor upload progression notes to iProgress. Student "chat" with Senior Tutor		
9 months	**Action** Submit upgrade report by 12 months to progress from MPhil to PhD. *Transfer viva held within 2 months of submission. Chat with members of the Training Subcommittee to monitor progress	9 months	**Action** Early Stage Review – comprising a written report, an oral assessment, 2 professional skills courses and completion of the online plagiarism course. Viva held within 2 months of submission. Chat with members of the Training Subcommittee to monitor progress
	Action By 24 months: Students complete		**Action** Late Stage Review – comprising a research plan and timeframe for

24-32 months	Research Integrity Course At 30 months: Students submit Second Report. This includes a plan for the final 12 months of experimentation, before writing up stage. At 32 months: Students present their work at the ICR Conference.	18-24 months	completing the PhD. Students are also required to complete a further 2 professional skills courses offered by the Graduate School. This is department specific [for example the Department of Life Sciences will require submission at 18 months. Whereas the Department of Chemistry will require submission at 24 months] At 32 months: Students present their work at the ICR Conference.
36-48 months	**Action** Chat with Senior Tutor every 3 months. Attend Preparing to Submit Your Thesis Workshop and submit entry exam forms. Chat with members of the Training Subcommittee to monitor progress	36-48 months	**Action** Submit thesis exam entry forms. Chat with members of the Training Subcommittee to monitor progress
End of 48 months	**Action** Submit thesis	End of 48 months	**Action** Submit thesis
Within 2 months	Final viva examination		Final viva examination

Supervisors are expected to submit a short outline of their plans to enable the student to become conversant in the convergence language and a timeline for completing the project as part of the transfer viva upgrade.

NB: Imperial postgraduate administrators will continually monitor and record the progress of students. Supervisors are expected to liaise with them as required. The red texts shows alignment between both institutions.

3.1 The upgrade reports

The upgrade reports refer to the formal institutional required progress monitoring of PhD students prior to the final viva exam. At the ICR these are known as the transfer and second report. At Imperial they are known as the early and late stage reports, please refer to the above table for additional information. The Convergence Science Centre Training Committee has mandated the following:

- *Students must demonstrate an understanding of both disciplines at the early stage review.*
- *For the early and second stage reviews a workplan by both supervisors should be submitted. This will show an agreed worklist and will ensure that the student works effectively with both supervisors.*
- *Both supervisors must be involved in the reviews and not just the supervisor of the registering institution.*
- *The Training Committee should receive a report from the reviews to provide feedback where necessary.*

3.2 The final examination

ICR
Students and supervisors should refer to the MPhil/PhD Code of Practice and iProgress milestones regarding examination entry.

Imperial College

No later than 4 months before submission of the thesis, supervisors should work with students to ensure the submission of nomination for examiners and exam entry form must be completed. This should be emailed to the department's education office, who will arrange the necessary approvals. Further information can be found here. Given the unique nature of this programme the Training Subcommittee has **mandated that examiners should have multi-disciplinary research expertise and supervisors are expected to inform the Operations Team of their choice for examiner before submission to the education office**. The Convergence Science Centre Training Committee must ratify the choices of examiners before

they are finalised. The supervisor is responsible for arranging the viva, including contacting the examiners.

The PhD must be completed within 48 months for full-time students and 72 months for part-time students. The four-year submission limit is independent of your registration status – i.e. a student may submit even if their registration has expired, so long as it is within the 4-year deadline. The department must make special cases on behalf of students for any thesis submissions after the 48- month deadline. These are considered by a College panel and may be rejected. Supervisors should inform the Operations Team of any late submissions and the decision of a College panel. Please note that we are unable to provide funding (expenses/student stipend) after 48 months.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to discuss with the student whether the thesis should be embargoed after a successful viva, and to guide them in ticking the appropriate box on the thesis declaration form. For information on open access to research degree theses and on how to apply for an embargo, visit the Library and Scholarly Communication webpages.

4. Funding and reporting

Funding decisions made by the Training Subcommittee will be approved by the Executive Management Committee. Once funding has been approved, the Operations Team will inform the ICR Finance Team (Piril Armaoglu) so that the relevant budget codes can be generated. The Operations Team will then draft award letters for the joint supervisors. Copies of the award letters will be sent to Piril Armaoglu (ICR) and Julie Williams (Imperial). This will prompt Imperial to setup a sub-project, the details of which will be sent to the Imperial supervisor. Supervisors are expected to agree on how research expenses will be shared across both institutions and the Finance Teams will ensure a financial model as per the agreement of the supervisors.