



University of
St Andrews

Guidance on post-docs as secondary supervisors

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Purpose	To provide a set of criteria to be followed when assigning postdoctoral researchers as secondary supervisors of postgraduate research students.

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1.0	New guidance		Professor Frank Lorenz Müller, Dean of Arts and Divinity, Principal's Office	29/5/2019

Guidance on post-docs as secondary supervisors

Post-docs, including Post-Doctoral Research Fellows, Research Fellows, Early Career Research Fellows and similar posts, are permitted to serve as secondary supervisors where the arrangement is in the interest of the post-doc (who will broaden and strengthen their professional record) and of the PGR student (who will benefit from an additional supervisory resource).

As a common template, the following conditions must be met:

1. Post-docs cannot act as principal supervisors; their contribution to any supervisory project must not exceed a 30% share. The total contribution of post-docs to any individual PGR student's supervision must not exceed 50%;
2. Post-docs should not act as secondary supervisors for more than three PGRs;
3. The PGR student in question must have confirmed their agreement to have a post-doc serve on their supervisory team and must have been informed about the likelihood that the post-doc will not be available for the whole duration of the doctoral programme;
4. There must be no impediment from the PGR student's funding provision to having a post-doc serve in a supervisory capacity;
5. The PGR student's principal supervisor must have agreed to the addition of the post-doc to the supervisory team;
6. The post-doc's principal investigator (PI), or other line-manager, must have confirmed their agreement for the post-doc to take on the supervisory role, indicating that this additional duty will be compatible with the post-doc's other duties; the PI must also ensure that the post-doc has been advised that taking on additional and competing responsibilities can have an impact on the post-doc's ability to focus on their primary research tasks;
7. There must be no impediment from the post-doc's funding package or contract preventing the post-doc from taking on this additional duty;
8. Any post-doc taking on supervisory duties must have completed the relevant courses provided by the University (CEED) and must attend refresher classes, where appropriate;
9. The DoPGR, in consultation with the Head of School if necessary, must approve the proposed supervisory arrangement.
10. The PI, or other line-manager, and the post-doc must have agreed that the supervisory work will count as part of their contractual duties and will not attract additional remuneration.
11. The post-doc should not be expected to take on aspects of the secondary supervisor role that are only appropriate for full members of academic staff, such as acting as mediator in case of problems arising in the relationship between the student and principal supervisor.

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