Interdisciplinary PGR checklist

Document type	Guidance
Scope (applies to)	Academic staff
Applicability date	30/04/2024
Review / Expiry date	31/07/2027
Approved date	22/05/2024
Approver	Proctor's Office
Document owner	Deputy Head of Education Policy and Quality
School / unit	Education and Student Experience
Document status	Published
Information classification	Public
EDI review/Equality impact assessment	None
Key terms	Academic policies/Learning and teaching/Supervision
Purpose	This document sets out a list of issues to consider in arranging an interdisciplinary PGR project

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	New guidance	Approved	Emmy Feamster, Deputy Head of Education Policy and Quality	14 May 2024

Interdisciplinary PGR Checklist

This document covers a range of issues which may need consideration and agreement in the course of an interdisciplinary postgraduate research project. The relevance of some items will vary based on how interdisciplinary the project is. For example, if a School is only contributing 10% of the supervision for an interdisciplinary PGR project, it may not be necessary for the secondary School to review the application. The considerations listed below will primarily be the responsibility of the principal supervisor and the supervisory team, although some issues may need to be discussed with the Director of Postgraduate Research (DoPGR) or actioned by the School administrative team.

Admission and matriculation
1. Have all Schools involved reviewed the application?
2. Is the student eligible for scholarships or funding in multiple Schools? Is representation from all Schools needed on scholarship selection panels?
3. When will the student start?
4. Ensure that the student is added to the PGR student email lists in relevant Schools.
5. Ensure the student is invited to orientation events for all relevant Schools.
6. Ensure the student has been given swipe access to the building. Grant swipe access to the rest of the supervisory team as well, if they are likely to be invited to supervision meetings in the building.
7. Where will the student have desk/office/lab space? Will they have access to workspaces in multiple Schools?

Supervision and training
1. How will the supervision responsibilities be divided?
    a. Discuss and agree supervision allocation percentage for each supervisor.
    b. Discuss arrangements for supervisions, e.g. frequency of joint meetings, division of responsibilities for specific elements of supervision.
    c. Discuss the reading/provision of feedback on the student's work. Will all supervisors read all the student's work? If not, how will this be divided?
2. Who will be the lead primary supervisor? Which will be the designated home School for administrative purposes?
    a. Will the home School be responsible for all administrative tasks, or is some other arrangement preferable to support the PhD?
3. Discuss and agree how the supervisory team will:
    a. communicate/share information with each other.
    b. ensure that the student is appropriately engaged with all aspects of their studies.
    c. facilitate the regular keeping, sharing, required uploading/storage etc. of supervisory records (and in which School formats).
4. How will interdisciplinarity be ensured? Discuss methodologies, techniques, and opportunities/requirements to disseminate the PhD work, e.g. attendance and or presentations at School research events or/and relevant conferences.

Administrative aspects
1. Discuss a travel and research budget. Will the student have access to funding across relevant Schools, or will a shared amount be agreed?
2. Will the student be offered opportunities to teach in multiple Schools? Discuss and agree what training will be required (eg, is School-level training required for each School they teach in?), and how management of the overall teaching load will be monitored.
3. Will the project require fieldwork or a placement? If so, compare School guidelines for risks assessments, ethics approval, and change of location approval and align any differences in School processes that could be beneficial/detrimental to the student.

    a. Discuss expectations for how long the fieldwork or placement will last, and in which year(s) of the candidature it will take place.

    b. Discuss how the outcomes of fieldwork trips will be reported.

Research skills training and career support

1. Discuss and agree what essential research skills training, taught courses, or other co-curricular activities the student should engage in and complete. Discuss how any additional research training needs can be met without doubling the load for the student.
2. Agree how and by whom the student's training needs will be assessed.
3. Discuss what support the student may need in applying to conferences or external funding opportunities. Consider how the supervisory team will review the proposals and who will write supporting references.
4. Who will be responsible for providing careers advice?

Assessment

1. Discuss and agree annual progress review arrangements and the 'home' School to lead on them.
   a. What will be required at each annual review?
   b. How will reviews be conducted, who will arrange, and who will make up the review panels?
   c. How will interdisciplinarity be assessed at the annual reviews?
2. Discuss and agree the necessary word length, contents, format and reference systems of the thesis within University guidelines, e.g. whether publications are the equivalent of 'chapters', what sections will be required (e.g. methodology, discussion, etc) and how and where they should appear in the thesis.
3. Discuss and agree, in principle, viva arrangements.
   a. How will the panel be comprised? Is it likely to require two external examiners? Will an internal examiner act as convenor, or will a separate convenor be needed to ensure compliance with University regulations?
   b. How will interdisciplinarity be assessed in the viva?
   c. Who will pay for the examiners and any necessary travel? Will the same School handle the administrative aspects of arranging travel, accommodation, and hospitality for the external(s)?
   d. Discuss viva formats, whether there is a particular need to have an in-person viva, and how to ensure a positive student experience, especially if the viva takes place online.
   e. How will interdisciplinarity be assessed in the viva?

Trouble-Shooting

1. Discuss how any changes to the specialist supervisorial team will be addressed, e.g. the move of a St Andrews supervisor to a different institution; an extended supervisory absence; institutional research leave arrangements.
2. Discuss how any issues affecting the student's abilities to progress their studies/meet the required standards will be handled. Who takes responsibility for referring the student to Student Services, for ensuring appropriate leave of absence, suspension of studies, visa compliance, return to studies etc.? How will all relevant parties be kept informed, e.g. via relevant DoPGRs or others?
3. In the case of a major issue affecting the viability of the project or its successful completion (by the student; through supervisor team changes) how will participating Schools expedite the process, including notifications to funders?

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