

Imperial College
London



Institute of Clinical Sciences
including the MRC Laboratory of Medical Sciences and
Departments of Imaging Sciences and Molecular Sciences
Faculty of Medicine
Imperial College

Postgraduate Research Handbook

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

LMS	MRC Laboratory of Medical Sciences (an MRC Institute)
ICS	The Institute of Clinical Sciences (part of the Imperial College Faculty of Medicine, comprising the LMS and the Imaging Sciences and Molecular Sciences Departments)
PTAG	The ICS Postgraduate Training Advisory Group
DPS	Directors of Postgraduate Studies (currently Dr Enrique "Fadri" Martinez-Perez and Alexis Barr)
PTC	Postgraduate Training Coordinator (currently Claire Marsh)

The Graduate School
Welcome from Professor Xiao Yun Xu, Director of the Graduate School



Academic Departments, the Graduate School and the Graduate Students' Union work closely together to ensure opportunity is provided for an excellent and internationally renowned research experience.

As part of this commitment to you, the Graduate School has developed a programme of professional skills courses, covering a broad range of themes, for example, personal effectiveness, writing skills, presentation skills, project management and leadership skills, all of which have been tailored to suit the different stages of your research degree. The skills developed during these courses are highly valued in the job market.

Graduate School courses are free of charge to Imperial research students and I would encourage you to take as many as you can to supplement your academic training. The Graduate School works closely with the Graduate Students' Union (GSU) and is keen to respond to student needs so if there is an area of skills training, or an activity that you would like us to offer, but which is not currently provided, please do get in touch (graduate.school@imperial.ac.uk). You should regularly check the Graduate School's website and e-Newsletters to keep up to date with all the events and training courses available to you. The current programme can be viewed at: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/professional-skills/doctoral/>

The Graduate School also runs a number of exciting social events throughout the year which are an opportunity to broaden your knowledge as well as to meet other students and have fun. Particular highlights include the Ig Nobel Awards Tour Show, the Chemistry Show, the 3 minute thesis competition as well as the PhD Summer Showcase. I would encourage you to take part in these activities – there are times when it can feel lonely as a research student and these events are an opportunity to be part of the wider research student community. In addition, many of the advances in science, engineering, medicine and business occur at the boundaries between disciplines and meeting students from other Departments and Faculties offers opportunity to enrich your research.

Finally, I hope that you enjoy your studies here at Imperial, and I wish you well.

Xiao Yun Xu



Introduction

The main aim of this document is to give students and supervisors:

- an overview of research training in the Institute of Clinical Sciences and how it is organised and managed
- detailed information about the various procedures that they will encounter during their postgraduate study
- Academic, administrative and welfare resources to help them successfully complete their studentships

The LMS, together with the Department of Imaging Sciences, comprises the Institute of Clinical Sciences (ICS) within the Faculty of Medicine, Imperial College London (see diagram below).

The procedures set out in this handbook apply to all students working in ICS Research Groups, unless they are registered through another department or division.

About the Laboratory of Medical Sciences

LMS aims to be at the forefront of innovative biomedical research and in partnership with Imperial College London and others, to promote the translation of its research for maximal benefit. The institute trains and mentors the next generation of clinical and non-clinical scientists and strives to enhance the public's interest, understanding and trust in science.

At Hammersmith Campus, LMS is based on a site which contains two major teaching hospitals. It is therefore ideally placed to work with on-site partners to facilitate translational pull-through of its work. LMS scientists also exploit multidisciplinary opportunities with colleagues from Imperial College London combining biological sciences with other disciplines, in particular engineering, physics, mathematics and computer science.

At full strength, LMS comprises over 30 research groups organised into the three research sections Epigenetics, Integrative Biology, Genes and Metabolism. The research groups are also part of the Institute of Clinical Sciences (ICS), which is a Department in the Imperial College London Faculty of Medicine with the two divisions Imaging Sciences and Molecular Sciences.

Options for postgraduate training

The ICS provides a range of options for postgraduate training:

- a three-and-a-half year full-time MRC-funded PhD programme for students with a Masters degree and/or previous laboratory experience
- a three year full-time PhD intercalated within the Faculty of Medicine MBBS undergraduate degree (MB/PhD)
- a part-time PhD training programme for ICS staff with appropriate qualifications or experience

A high quality environment for students

The ICS provides a high quality environment in which students' research careers can flourish. Our aim is to ensure that each student receives the best possible training, supervision and personal support required for the successful completion of his or her studies.

Imperial College London will:

Provide a world-class research programme

- focused on performing cutting-edge research that makes a significant contribution to the knowledge base
- throughout which internationally-acclaimed academics support, inspire and challenge you as you develop into an independent researcher
- in a vibrant and diverse community united by the aims of advancing the frontiers of science, technology, medicine and business, and addressing key economic and societal challenges

Provide innovative and effective professional development

- equipping you with skills to increase your research and personal effectiveness
- that gives you an insight into a wide range of career opportunities
- helping to ensure that you have the necessary attributes to excel in your chosen career

Deliver outstanding networking opportunities

- providing access to the elite international research community
- that arise from our extensive engagement with industry and business
- by organising a wide range of interdisciplinary meetings and social events within the College

Offer life-long membership of the Imperial community

- supporting you as a student and afterwards as an alumna/us
- enabling you to share your professional advice and experience with future students

Imperial College Principles

The guiding principles of the Imperial community were developed by academic and support staff in partnership with undergraduate and postgraduate students.

These principles are defined below and further expanded here:

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/student-support/our-principles/>

Imperial will provide through its staff:

- A world class education embedded in a research environment
- Advice, guidance and support
- The opportunity for students to contribute to the evaluation and development of programmes and services

Imperial will provide students with:

- Clear programme information and assessment criteria
- Clear and fair academic regulations, policies and procedures
- Details of full course costs and financial support
- An appropriate and inclusive framework for study, learning and research

Imperial students should:

- Take responsibility for managing their own learning
- Engage with the College to review and enhance provisions
- Respect, and contribute to, the Imperial community

The Imperial College Students' Union will:

- Support all students through the provision of independent academic and welfare assistance
- Encourage student participation in all aspects of the College
- Provide a range of clubs, societies, student-led projects and social activities throughout the year
- Represent the interests of students at local, national and international level

Group Heads, supervisors and students are expected to be familiar with the MRC document '*Good Research Practice*' as it applies to students, and to ensure that they fulfil their roles appropriately. The document is included in the student induction pack and copies may also be downloaded at:

<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/news-events/publications/good-research-practice-principles-and-guidelines/>

Postgraduate Training Advisory Group (PTAG)

Research training in the ICS is overseen by the Directors of Postgraduate Studies (DPS), Dr Enrique "Fadri" Martinez-Perez and Alexis Barr. The DPS chairs the Postgraduate Training Advisory Group (PTAG), which is advisory to the DPS and Director of LMS (Wiebke Artl). Meetings are held three times per year.

Membership 2023-24

Dr Enrique "Fadri" Martinez-Perez (Chair & DPS)

Dr Alexis Barr (DPS)

Reps: Christian Speck, Boris Lenhard, Helena Cocheme, Dave Carling, Elaine Irvine & Andre Brown
(*Christian Speck is the lead PG Tutor*)

Students may select up to three representatives to attend meetings, but they may be required to withdraw for discussion of any confidential matters.

Terms of reference

- To oversee and keep under review all aspects of research training and student welfare and recruitment in the ICS and to advise the Director on research training policies and procedures
- Ensuring that the ICS's procedures are aligned with Imperial College procedures for registration, and with the MRC and College procedures for progress and submission
- To act as Postgraduate Tutors and Mentors. Each student is assigned a member of PTAG, although they may approach another member of PTAG if they wish. In addition to offering pastoral care and support, PTAG members are available for mentoring (e.g., career advice).

Contact information for PTAG members can be found in Appendix A: Useful Contacts.

Imperial College Graduate School

The Graduate School is an important initiative in linking basic and clinical science and encouraging and facilitating an interdisciplinary approach to postgraduate training and research. All ICS-registered students are members of the Graduate School and are strongly encouraged to participate in and support its activities.

Professional Skills Development Programme

Students are given a hand-out detailing the Graduate School's Professional Skills Development Programme and other activities at their induction. More information is available in the [Professional Skills Development section](#) of this Handbook.

Graduate School Events

All postgraduate students at Imperial, whether following taught or research programmes, belong to the Graduate School. Membership means they immediately become part of a wider postgraduate community, broadening and enriching their academic and social experience whilst at Imperial. The Graduate School provides a focus for opportunities to meet each other and exchange ideas across disciplines through attendance at guest lectures and other similar academic (combined with social) activities.

Attending the different activities and events gives students the opportunity to meet other postgraduates in their field and from other parts of the College, and share knowledge and experience. Receptions after events, provide an opportunity for students to meet with the speaker(s) and presenter(s) and with each other, and make rewarding contacts outside of their laboratories or departments.

There are a number of social and academic events throughout the year, including distinguished guest lectures, given by top national and international speakers. Other regular events include the extremely popular Ig Nobel Awards Tour Show in March and the exhibition chemistry show in May. The Graduate School Research Symposium in July includes a poster session presented by research students across the College, a keynote lecture and reception.

In addition to the many events which are now well established in the Graduate School calendar, students are encouraged to contact the Graduate School with suggestions for popular speakers, issues for debates and ideas for other interdisciplinary events.

See the website for the events programme www.imperial.ac.uk/graduateschool/events

Registration and induction arrangements

For students who are new to the ICS and who are commencing PhD studies in October, the start of term is **the first Monday of October**.

Registration

All new students starting in October must register with Imperial College Registry at South Kensington by their first week. Usually registration is carried out online using instructions emailed to students by Imperial College Registry.

Part-time students or those starting out-of-season must register no later than three months after the start date of their studies. Imperial College will not normally backdate registration more than 3 months.

The ICS Postgraduate Training Coordinator (PTC) is the first point of contact for anyone who experiences difficulty in registering.

Induction

Students starting in October will receive an induction as a group. Postgraduate students who begin their studies at other times of year will have an induction session with the PTC during their first two weeks.

A series of induction events are planned for the month of October beginning the first Monday of the month. Some of these are organised by the ICS, others by Imperial College. A list of social events organised by the Student Union is available on the Union website:

<http://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on/>

The timetable for October induction will be given to students as a hand-out on their first day.

Occupational Health Services

The Imperial College Occupational Health Service provides health screening and support for all students and staff who work with:

- pathogens, GMOs or unfixed human tissue
- laboratory animals
- patients in a clinical environment

They also provide health clearance for travel, and emergency assessment and treatment of laboratory accidents.

IMPORTANT: All students and supervisors should read the Occupational Health handout provided on the first day of induction or available from the PTC, and ensure that students working in these areas are registered with Imperial College Occupational Health as soon as possible.

Imperial College London Doctoral Academic Communication Requirement

Postgraduate research students who are not native speakers of English must fulfil the **Doctoral Academic Communication Requirement** in addition to meeting the English entry requirements. The aim of the requirement is to help, remind and encourage you to work on your English language skills and to ensure that you receive the necessary writing support throughout your research studies. The first step is to take the Initial English Test, which is called the DACR Assessment 1, as soon as possible after registering for your research programme.

Further details about the Academic Communication Requirement can be found here:

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/academic-english/current-students/doctoral/academic-communication-requirement/>

Students can also contact Centre for Academic English via email at english@imperial.ac.uk or by visiting the office situated on the 3rd floor of the Sherfield Building, South Kensington Campus.

Staff registration for postgraduate degrees

Research Support Staff

Members of the research support staff may register for a higher degree on a full-time or part-time basis, if their registration is approved by their supervisor, the DPS or LMS Director, Imperial College and an ICS interview panel. On successful completion of a PhD, members of staff are expected to move on to new posts outside the ICS in order to further their scientific career.

The possibility of registering for a higher degree should not be offered as an incentive when recruiting or attempting to retain research support staff.

Clinical Scientific Staff

Clinical scientific staff who wish to register for a higher degree must be approved in the same way as research support staff. These students will include staff that hold Chain-Florey Clinical Training Fellowships, other clinical fellowships from MRC, the Wellcome Trust, or another external sponsor. In addition to the two academic assessors and PTAG mentor assigned to the student, a designated clinical mentor will be arranged to advise them on their clinical career.

Staff Panel Interviews

Staff panel interviews require submission of a research plan to the panel beforehand, and a short (15 – 20 minute) presentation on the proposed project. The panel will be 3-4 senior scientists who are knowledgeable in the candidate's field, but not directly involved in the proposed project.

Full-time vs. Part-time staff deadlines

Imperial College employees undertaking postgraduate study are formally registered part-time, because they are expected to spend part of their time studying and part of it working. If they register as spending $\geq 80\%$ of their time on their project then they will have the same deadlines as full-time students (48 months to submit a PhD thesis). If they register as spending $< 80\%$ of their time on their project they will have part-time deadlines (72 months to submit a PhD thesis).

General Information

Programme Timeline

	Timescale	Activity	Month (for Oct starters)
			Late September/early October
	Before starting/week 1	Register with IC online	
	Month 1	Induction and Lecture Series	October
Year 1	7/8 months	Early Stage Assessment	May/June
Year 2	20/21 months	Late Stage Assessment	Jul/August
Year 3	36 months	Progress Review	September
	37 months	3rd Year Symposium	October
	4 months before thesis submission	Submit Exam Entry Forms	
Year 4	48 months	Absolute Deadline for submission of thesis	

Most clinical students (including MB-PhD and Chain Florey students) will need to submit by 36 months before returning to their clinical training programmes.

Part-time student timeline

- 18 months after registration – Early Stage Assessment
- 30-36 months after registration – Late Stage Assessment
- 48 months after registration – normal minimum registration before submission
- 60 months after registration – all part-time students should aim to submit thesis
- 68 months after registration – deadline to enter for examinations
- 72 months after registration – absolute deadline to submit thesis

The role of the Mentor

All ICS students are allocated a mentor within the institute. This will be a member of PTAG assigned to you for additional guidance and support if needed. A student should feel confident in reaching out to their assigned mentor when needed at any stage of their PhD.

Many students find their own mentor, sometimes someone in their research group, or a fellow student further along their PhD. Whilst informal mentorship is helpful to many, we also feel it is important to have someone assigned to this role. These assigned mentors may be helpful for academic purposes, or any other issues or advice a student may need. It is up to the student how often they would like contact with their assigned mentor, but all are advised to reach out to introduce themselves at the start of their PhD journey so they are more confident in approaching at a later date if required.

Mandatory activities for students

These complement the role of the supervisor to provide a full training programme and ensure that all MRC and Imperial College requirements are met.

Imperial guidelines on student and supervisor responsibilities are outlined here:

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/quality-assurance/phd-students-and-supervisors/>

Lecture Courses

In October the ICS puts on a series of induction lectures presented by professionals throughout the Institute. All new students are expected to attend, to gain an understanding of the work going on at the Institute. The Induction also includes Health & Safety training, facilities talks, and a journal club.

Seminars

LMS Seminars

All students should attend the LMS seminars advertised by LMS Events.

Section/group seminars and Work-in-progress meetings

Students are expected to participate fully in any relevant group or LMS Section meetings. WIP seminars currently take place from 2-3pm every Friday in the Seminar Room.

Student seminars

All students are required to present their work annually in the student seminar series and to attend all student seminars.

Professional Skills Development

The Graduate School offers a comprehensive training programme to enhance students' research, professional and personal development skills. Workshops run throughout the year and are designed to support students throughout their studies. There are attendance requirements depending on when students registered for their postgraduate course, and these are monitored by the ICS PTC and the Graduate School.

Presentation Skills

The ICS organises its own Presentation Skills course annually, which usually falls at the start of the calendar year. The ICS recommends that students attend this external course rather than the Graduate Schools course, because it is very high quality, and is scheduled just prior to Early Stage presentations, for maximum benefit.

Attendance requirements

Students are required to complete 2 courses from different domains in the early stage (Underpinning) zone or the RSD course, as well as completing the mandatory online Plagiarism Awareness course, by the 9 months (ESA) milestone.

They must then complete 2 further courses by the 18 month (LSR) milestone.

Credit for prior learning

If students have attended a course that may be equivalent to a Graduate School workshop, or have significant work experience, they should discuss this with the PTC or DPS. They can make an application to the Graduate School on the student's behalf, to recognise this previous training. Normally a maximum of two courses can be claimed as equivalent, to encourage all students to engage with the programme during

their time at Imperial. There are also a number of courses offered in Departments that are already recognised as equivalent to the Graduate School programme.

MRC Learning and Development Courses

Courses are also available from the MRC through the Learning and Development; a course list can be found on RCUK Oracle, under the RCUK Learning Self Service link. These courses do not count towards the PSD attendance requirement, although credit can be requested from the Graduate School.

Absence through illness

Students should keep their supervisors informed if they become unwell. Supervisors must inform the PTC or DPS within one week of any student absence through illness, or for personal reasons other than planned holidays. **Absences of more than two weeks must be reported to Imperial College Registry through the PTC.**

Extenuating Circumstances

Students who experience extenuating/mitigating circumstances (e.g. personal accident or illness, family illness or bereavement, victim of crime) which impact their ability to work at any stage of their degree, should contact the PTC or DPS to discuss what accommodations can be made.

All conversations will be treated in strictest confidence and not discussed with the supervisor or other members of LMS or the College without the student's permission. It is the policy of ICS to ensure that extenuating circumstances do not prevent our students from successfully completing their degrees.

Students should expect to produce some evidence of their circumstances before accommodations can be made, such as a doctor's note or police report.

Interruption of Studies

Students wishing to apply for interruption of studies should inform the supervisor and either the PTC or DPS before applying via MyImperial using the Interruption of Studies tile. Interruptions are taken for maternity leave, periods of long illness, and other personal reasons. Please note that evidence may be requested for certain reasons (i.e. MATB1 form for Maternity/paternity, sick note from doctor for illness, etc). The full application request, with supporting documents must be submitted before the IoS can commence as it must be approved by multiple departments. Overseas students who currently hold a Visa should discuss any IoS request with the International Team beforehand.

Sick Pay

All MRC LMS PhD students are entitled to up to 13 weeks of 'sick pay' where their stipend will continue despite time away from studies. This can only be authorised once approved by the DPS, having seen a doctor's note stating the student's inability to continue with studies for a period of time. If the student requires longer than 13 weeks away, they are entitled to take this time, but will stop receiving stipend payments until they return to college.

Study Leave

Students wishing to carry out research away from the College for a period of time can apply for study leave. They should discuss this with their supervisor(s) and obtain permission in advance by completing an IC/D Form (available from PTC or online from the Registry website:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/researchdegrees/studyleave>) – this should be sent to PTC for transmission to Student Records.

Annual Leave

You can, with the prior agreement of your supervisor(s), take up to 30 days paid holiday plus 10.5 days public and privilege holidays in each year. This is not the same as employee leave entitlement, i.e. you will not be paid for unused days at the end of your studentship. You should request holiday using whatever local system your research group has in place.

Maternity/Paternity Leave

Full time students are entitled to MRC maternity support which includes up to 6 months leave with full stipend payments. If the student decides to take longer, they are permitted to take a further 6 months leave without pay.

Keeping in touch days are intended to facilitate a smooth return to studies for a student returning from maternity leave. If the MRC and the Student agree, the student may attend meetings, or any activity undertaken for the purposes of keeping in touch with their studies for up to a maximum of 10 paid Keeping -In-Touch days, without bringing their maternity leave to an end (Please speak with your Postgraduate Coordinator for further details on this scheme).

Full time students are entitled to MRC paternity support which includes up to two weeks leave with full stipend payments.

When taking maternity/paternity leave students should also submit an Interruption of Studies request (see above).

Studentship extensions

Students and supervisors will work together to ensure that laboratory work is completed and the thesis written up within the period for which the studentship is funded. Any foreseen problems with completion should be raised for consideration four months before the end of the studentship. **It is an absolute requirement of both Imperial College and the MRC that all full-time students must submit their PhD thesis within 48 months of starting their PhD studies.**

Where extensions beyond the agreed funded years are required, the supervisor must complete the Studentship Extension Request Form, available from the PTC (Claire Marsh). All extension requests require the formal approval of the DPS and Administrative Director of the LMS. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, research groups are expected to meet the full cost of extensions from their own resources.

Updating student details

If students change their home address, bank account or emergency contact details, they should let the PTC know immediately so that their student records can be updated, and change their details on RCUK Oracle.

If students change their home address or write-up/lab location or phone number, they should update this by logging into the Student Self-Service page and updating their details, and also notify the PTC. This allows members of the College to contact them, and packages to be delivered.

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/studenteservice>. Most students are automatically assigned to a default address, and their details will need to be updated when they start.

Student jobs

There are about 7 jobs available at the ICS to supplement students' training. These require a few hours of work per week, and generally involve maintaining general use equipment and public areas. A stipend top-

up is given to students carrying out these jobs. Every effort is made to allocate the jobs fairly, however it should be noted that there are not enough jobs available for all students, and preference for some jobs is given to students who work with the equipment/area already as part of their studies. Inadequate performance as assessed by the appropriate line manager may result in the loss of the job.

Jobs are normally reassigned in the spring with students approaching the end of their PhD handing over the role to a newer student. More information is available from the PTC.

Plagiarism

It is important that students learn about how to properly attribute and acknowledge the work, data and ideas of others. Plagiarism is scientific misconduct, and students whose thesis can be shown to contain plagiarism are subject to penalties as outlined in the College's Cheating Offences Policy and Procedures, which can be found here:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/policiesandprocedures/disciplinary>

However, in the case of PhD theses there are issues as to what should count as plagiarism. In particular, is a student permitted to re-use their own work (for example material from a previous publication that they have written)? There are considerable grey areas, that require academic judgement, but this document is intended to provide guidelines for students, supervisors and examiners.

In general it is acceptable academic practice for a PhD student to include in their thesis material that has been previously written and published by themselves (including figures and text): they should make it clear that they themselves have published this previously and reference appropriately. However, they must not include material written by others (including their supervisor) without proper attribution, even if they are authors on the publication.

Students should note that reproduction of published work may infringe copyright, as discussed in <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/learning-support/copyright-guidance/>

It is not acceptable to reproduce material that has been submitted for an examination at Imperial or another university (for example from the student's Master's thesis). It is acceptable for students to reproduce text and figures that they have previously written and submitted as part of their early or late stage assessment and/or other reports to funders or other bodies. Any documents that are publicly accessible should be appropriately referenced.

It must be remembered that a thesis is more than a collection of publications. There may be considerable similarity between sections of a thesis and a publication, however, the level of detail and the nature of the discussion in a thesis is different than that in a journal publication.

It is good practice to indicate that some parts of the thesis have been previously published, for example by including a statement like "Some of the work described in this thesis has been previously published in **** and ****."

There are some sections of a thesis that frequently show high similarity when put through TurnitinUK or similar programmes. For example, the Material and Methods of theses from the same discipline often show similarity. This may be because there are only a limited number of ways in which a particular method can be accurately described. While it is not good practice to simply cut and paste methods into a thesis, students should not contort their text simply to avoid similarity with another publication. Plagiarism is misappropriation of another person's original ideas, thoughts or data. While it is important to cite those that have developed the methodologies used in a thesis, similarity in describing those methodologies is usually acceptable.

TurnitinUK Plagiarism Detection Service at Imperial College

TurnitinUK is an online plagiarism detection service that enables plagiarism comparison.

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/ict/self-service/teaching-learning/elearning-services/turnitin/>

Plagiarism advice for postgraduate research students can be found on the Library website at

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/research-support/plagiarism-awareness-for-researchers/>

Assessment of Postgraduate students at the ICS

All students registered with the Institute of Clinical Sciences from 1 October 2016 are subject to the following assessment procedures. Assessment for students registered earlier is different and information is available in the previous versions of the Student Handbook, or from the PTC. The majority of assessment is carried out by Assessors, and information on the role of Assessors in assessment is available in the [Guidance for Assessors](#) section below.

All Assessment Forms are available on the LMS Intranet, or from your PTC.

PhD Assessments

Early Stage Assessment (7/8 months)

1. Students submit a short report to their Assessors of approximately 1500 words (~4 pages), indicating progress so far and with a plan of future work. Reports must be submitted to Assessors two weeks before students give their presentations. Failure to meet this deadline may affect the students' assessment. PhD students should note that **significant results are NOT EXPECTED at this stage**. This report should be run through 'TurnItIn' before sent to assessors.
2. The PTC organises a student seminar, where the students present their project. Their Assessors, supervisors, and all ICS students attend. It is the students' responsibility to invite their Assessors and supervisors to their presentations.
3. The student schedules a viva with their Assessors promptly after the presentation, where the Assessors assess the student's progress. Any relevant data obtained so far may be included, but assessment focuses on ensuring that the students clearly understand the general research field, the aims of the project and what is required to achieve these aims.
4. The student then discusses all feedback with their supervisor to ensure they are happy with what has been said. Student and Supervisor should also take this opportunity to discuss the Mutual Expectations document (if they have not already done so).

Guidelines for the report, presentation and viva are available in the [Report, Presentation and Viva Guidelines](#) section below.

4. At the viva the Assessors should sign the Early Stage Assessment Form and submit it to the PTC with a copy of the report immediately afterward (ideally within 9 months of registration). The Mutual Expectations Document is given to all students after their induction via email.

Issues arising at Early Stage Assessment

If the Assessors or the supervisors identify any issues prior to Early Stage assessment, they should inform the DPS who may wish to attend the viva as an observer or nominate the student's supervisor or another member of staff. If necessary, a reassessment may be offered 6 weeks later, to be decided by the DPS in consultation with the Assessors and supervisor(s). Underperformance at this stage may result in downgrading of registration to MPhil or a request for the student to leave the programme.

Late Stage Assessment (20 months)

1. Students submit a written report of about 6000 words to their Assessors, comprising a comprehensive literature review, data obtained to-date, and the plan of research to complete the thesis. This must be submitted two weeks before the student gives their presentation. Failure to meet this deadline may affect the students' assessment.
2. The PTC organises a student seminar, where the students present their project. Their Assessors, supervisors, and all ICS students attend. Students should present any results obtained to date and a clear plan of what is required to complete the work needed for a successful thesis. It is the students' responsibility to invite their Assessors and supervisors to their presentations.
3. The student schedules a viva with their Assessors promptly after the presentation, in which the work can be discussed in more detail. The aim of this procedure is to determine whether the student has made sufficient progress and reached a sufficient level of knowledge to complete a PhD.

Guidelines for the report, presentation and viva are available in the [Report, Presentation and Viva Guidelines section](#) below.

4. At the viva the Assessors should sign the Late Stage Assessment Form and submit it to the PTC immediately afterward (ideally within 19 months of registration).
5. This is an appropriate stage for students to discuss the possibility of attending a conference with their supervisor(s), if they have not done so already.

Issues arising at Late Stage Assessment

If the Assessors or the supervisors identify any issues prior to Late Stage Assessment, they should inform the DPS who may wish to attend the viva as an observer or nominate the student's supervisor or another member of staff. Re-assessment may be offered 2 months later, to be decided by the DPS in consultation with the assessors and supervisor(s). Underperformance at this stage may result in the student being requested to submit an MPhil rather than a PhD thesis.

Student Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs)

All 2nd and 3rd year LMS PhD Students are given the opportunity to have a PDR meeting with their supervisor to discuss their progress so far and make plans for future work and development. Around May time students in their second or third year of study will be sent the PDR Form to be completed in advance of the meeting to be organised by the student and had with their supervisor. Once the meeting has been held the completed form should be sent to the PTC.

Year 3 (36 months) Progress Review

This review is for all PhD and MD(Res) students who are registered for more than 36 months. It will consist of a formal meeting with the Assessors, and submission of the Year 3 form signed by the student, supervisor(s) and Assessors, to the PTC by 36 months. Part-time students will be reviewed annually after this, if they continue for more than 4 years. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure students are on course to complete their degree, and to meet MRC requirements for annual assessment.

Unsatisfactory Progress

If it is decided by the DPS, in agreement with supervisors, and after consultation with PTAG and the Director, that a postgraduate student is unsuited to pursue PhD studies, the student may be encouraged to enter for an MPhil or to leave the programme.

Report, Presentation and Viva Guidelines

PhD Early Stage Report (7/8 months)

This should be a brief document outlining progress made towards obtaining experimental data for the thesis, as well as a plan on future work. The document should provide sufficient information to allow the Assessors to confirm that the student has the potential to produce a good PhD thesis.

The document should be approximately 1500 words (~4 pages). There should be an additional unnumbered **title page** containing: the full name of the student; the name of the student's research group; the name of the student's supervisor(s); the project title; the date of the report.

The Early Stage Report should demonstrate an understanding of the research to be undertaken. This should include a **plan of investigation**, including details of the **methods** to be used, and whether they are currently available or how they are to be provided. The **aims or purpose** of the proposed work should be clearly stated. If the project involves human subjects (patients or volunteers) and/or the use of human tissue and/or animals, clear statements must be included as to how and when the necessary regulatory approvals and licenses were or will be obtained. Any **results** obtained should be included along with an associated **discussion**.

The student and the supervisor must address the feasibility of the project within the available timescale, so students are encouraged to include a **timeline**. This may include suggested alternate avenues for study if the study is high-risk and/or subject to factors over which the student has limited control, e.g. patient recruitment or obtaining research materials from collaborators.

References should be given in the format of the journal 'Cell'. Citations in the text should be in the form (Author et al., 1999) and references listed at the end of the report with full titles. These are not included in the 4 page limit.

Once completed the report should be run through 'TurnItIn' before being sent to Assessors. Instructions can be found on the Imperial College website - <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/ict/self-service/teaching-learning/turnitin/turnitin-for-students/>

PhD Late Stage Report

The report must be written using accepted conventions e.g. for gene or biochemical names. Abbreviations should be written in full the first time they are used.

The report should normally be structured as follows, but may be varied to suit the project:

- **Title page** – containing the following information:

the full name of the student
the name of the research group
the name(s) of supervisor(s)
the project title
the date of the report
the word count

- **Abstract** – summarising the report in no more than 250 words
- **Introduction & Literature Review** – providing the background to the subject, and putting the project in its wider context (including its relationship to any other on-going student projects in the group)
- **Hypothesis** – what is the overall hypothesis being tested?
- **Objectives** – what are the specific objectives of the project?
- **Materials and methods** – describing the materials and explaining the methods used
- **Results** - original data obtained by the student to-date. Data from other sources should be acknowledged e.g. from other members of the research group
- **Discussion** - including an explanation of how the project will fulfil the requirement for either a PhD or MD(Res) thesis i.e. "will form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality shown by the discovery of new facts and/or the exercise of independent critical power"
- **An outline of planned future work** - required to complete the PhD or MD(Res) programme. This should explain any alternative approaches if the studies are high risk and/or subject to external influences outside the control of the student, such as patient recruitment
- **References** – these must include primary references as well as references to review articles. Reference lists should cover the background and work presented. References should appear in the text as (Author *et al.*, 1999), and be listed in alphabetical order at the end of the report with full titles
- **Tables and Figures** – these should be gathered at the end in order to conform to the usual style of journal submission. Legends to tables and figures must contain enough information to make them comprehensible without reference to the text. Table legends should appear above each table. Figure legends should be listed in order and precede the figures. A maximum of six Figures and three Tables is suggested: however if the Figures are the results (as is the case for some imaging projects, for example) then a larger number may be inserted.

In addition, the student should pay particular attention to the following:

- the length of the text (including the Abstract, but excluding the Title Page, References, Tables and Figures) should be around 6000 words for PhDs, 4000 words for MD(Res).
- the text should be professionally presented, double-spaced on numbered pages. The title page should not be numbered.

The student's supervisor should critically review the document in detail in draft form and should also approve the document before it is submitted by the student to the Assessors. In checking and approving

the document, the supervisor should confirm that all the above requirements have been met. This is also an appropriate time for students to discuss attending conferences with their supervisor, if they have not already done so.

The Assessors should evaluate the student's report according to the criteria given in the Guidance for Assessors section and are encouraged to be constructively critical. Any written comments by the Assessors should be 'open' so that they can be read by both students and supervisors.

Presentation Guidelines

Each PhD student is required to make a presentation once a year:

Early Stage Presentation (20 mins + 5 min for discussion)

Late Stage Presentation (25 mins + 5 min for discussion)

3rd Year Symposium Presentation (25 mins + 5 min for discussion)

All students, and the supervisors and Assessors of those students who are presenting are expected to attend; other research staff are also welcome.

The presentation should be suitable for a broad scientifically-literate audience, with sufficient introductory material to orient the listeners. Assessment is on the basis of clarity of presentation, appropriateness of visual aids and responses to questions.

Students are encouraged to take a course in effective presentation during their first year. There is a course organised on campus by the PTC and courses are also available through the Graduate School Professional Skills Development programme or the MRC.

Viva voce guidelines

The *viva voce* for Early Stage/Late Stage assessment should last for 30-45 minutes and be of sufficient depth to allow the Assessors to assess the student's understanding of their project in the context of current work, and to be confident that their future work is likely to yield a defensible thesis.

Examination Entry and Thesis Submission

Writing Up Status

Students are placed automatically in Writing Up Status when their full registration expires. There is a £200 fee for CRS, which is paid by the LMS for funded students. This allows continuation of full Imperial College registration for up to 1 year, **but without laboratory work**, and gives students full access to Imperial College facilities plus continued exemption from Council Tax, etc.

Examination entry forms

All candidates must enter for examination at least **four months** prior to thesis submission.

To enter for examination, candidates should refer to the Examination Entry milestone visible in the **Postgraduate Research Milestones** tile in [My Imperial](#), where you will be asked to provide details relating to your research topic, thesis title and expected date of submission.

Your main supervisor will be asked to nominate examiners for your thesis, in accordance with the College's [Procedure for Appointment of Examiners for Research Degrees](#).

The examination entry details and the examiner nominations will then be considered by the Director of Postgraduate Studies. Upon their approval, the examination entry will be processed by the Registry Assessment Records Team and you will receive written notification via email once your entry to examination is confirmed.

Please note that candidates must submit their thesis by the given deadline displayed via My Imperial, regardless of the status of the examination entry paperwork.

Step-by-step guidance for using My Imperial Postgraduate Research Milestones is available from the [PGR Milestones Manual - Students](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/registry/student-systems/student-records/student-journey/PGR-Manual---Students.pdf) (<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/registry/student-systems/student-records/student-journey/PGR-Manual---Students.pdf>)

Submission of the thesis

The student is personally responsible for submission of copies of the thesis to the Registry and seeing that appropriate regulations are followed. You will be told when your entry form has been processed and you are able to submit your thesis. You will not be able to submit a thesis without a valid examination entry. Please read the submission requirements carefully to ensure you submit in the correct format. When you submit your thesis you should make sure that you also email a copy of the Thesis Declaration Form directly to the Registry. Your thesis must be submitted electronically via the eThesis website www.ethesis.ac.uk. Further details can be found here:

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/student-records-and-data/for-current-students/research-degrees/examination-information/thesis-submission--vivas/>

Important Note: Students' theses MUST be submitted before the end of the 48th month of registration (or 72nd month of registration for students with part-time deadlines). It is the responsibility of both the student and the supervisor to ensure that this target is met. This is a requirement of Imperial College, the Research Councils and the British Government.

Requests for delayed thesis submission

In exceptional circumstances, and with the written approval of the DPS, a supervisor may apply on behalf of a student to make a delayed thesis submission. Such applications must be made as far in advance as possible, in writing to Imperial College Research Degrees, who will put them to a panel at the Graduate School.

These applications should be made if there are unavoidable academic delays to submission, or if the student has personal issues arise after they have completed their registration, but before they submit their thesis. If students are still registered, and Interruption of Studies can be made to compensate for delays due to personal issues. See [Interruption of Studies](#) entry above.

Viva

Once you have submitted your thesis the registry will ensure that copies are provided to your examiners, in advance of your viva examination. Your supervisor, or another member of staff in your department, will be responsible for organising the viva and making all the necessary arrangements.

Student Resources

Students with Disabilities

(The following information from Imperial College Disability Advisory Service is intended for students with disabilities, specific learning difficulties or long-term health issues)

At Imperial College we recognise that studying at university can be a challenge, especially if you have a disability. We are keen that you have every opportunity to fulfil your potential and graduate with the degree you deserve. It is therefore important that you let us know about any disability, specific learning difficulty or health problem as soon as possible so that we can give expert advice and support to enable you to do this.

Some people never think of themselves as having a disability, but students who have experienced any of the below have found that a little extra help and support has made all the difference to their study experience.

- Specific learning needs (such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, AD[H]D)
- Autism and ASD (including Asperger's)
- Deafness or hearing needs
- Long term mental health needs (such as anxiety or depression)
- Medical conditions (such as epilepsy, arthritis, diabetes, Crohn's disease)
- Physical or mobility requirements
- Visual needs

Where to find help:

Your Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) Paul Seldon (p.seldon@imperial.ac.uk), is your first point of contact and is there to help you with arranging any support within the department that you need. The DLO is also the person who will apply for Special Examination arrangements on your behalf. You need to contact him without delay if you think that you may need extra time or other adjustments for your examinations. <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/exams/specialexamarrangements>

Disability Advisory Service: <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/disabilityadvisoryservice>

The Disability Advisory Service works with individual students no matter what their disability, to ensure that they have the support they need. We can also help if you think that you may have an unrecognised study problem such as dyslexia. Our service is both confidential (information about you is only passed on to other people in the university with your agreement) and individual in that any support is tailored to what you need.

Some of the sorts of things we can help with are:

- Being an advocate on your behalf with others in the College such as your departmental liaison officer, senior tutor or exams officer, the accommodation office or the estates department
- Checking that your evidence of disability is appropriate and up-to-date
- Arranging a diagnostic assessment for specific learning needs
- Help with applying to the College for the cost of an assessment
- Help with your application for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) see below
- Helping students not eligible for the Disabled Students Allowance in obtaining support from other sources
- Help with arranging extra Library support
- Supporting applications for continuing accommodation for your second or later years

Disabled Students Allowance: Students who pay home fees and who have a disability can apply for a grant called the Disabled Students Allowance which can pay any extra costs that are a direct result of disability. This fund is not means-tested and is also a grant not a loan so any home student with a disability can apply and will not be expected to pay it back. Remember students with unseen disabilities such as mental health difficulties, dyslexic type difficulties or long term health problems are also eligible for this fund. <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/disabilityadvisoryservice/supportatimperial/funding>

Resolving problems

Students who have queries or problems with their MD(Res) or PhD projects should endeavour to resolve these in the first instance with their supervisors. If this is not possible or not appropriate, the student may discuss the matter confidentially with either DPS (Fadri Martinez-Perez and Alexis Barr), their Assessors, or with any member of the Postgraduate Training Advisory Group (PTAG). Members of PTAG have agreed to act as additional independent advisors for the student body, and individual students may choose who they approach. Assessors and advisors will help the student to solve the problem, if necessary acting as an impartial mediator in discussions with the student's supervisor.

The PTC or the staff in the Imperial College Student Registry at South Kensington can help clarify procedural detail.

On personal matters, students may approach one of the Faculty Senior Tutors or seek out the welfare facilities offered by the College.

Contact details for people and organisations concerned with students' academic and personal welfare are in [Appendix A](#) of this Handbook.

[Appendix C](#) of this Handbook gives the results of a well-being survey initiated by the College in 2009, which students may find useful if they are struggling with some aspect of their studies.

Complaints procedure

If problems cannot be resolved using the methods above, ICS will follow the Imperial College student complaints procedures:

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/complaints-appeals-and-discipline/>

Anti-Bullying Procedure

Acts of bullying, harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct are not acceptable. If you are being bullied or harassed, or witness this behaviour, talk to someone you trust. Keep a record of any incidents including dates, times and any evidence you might need to use if you want to report your concerns. You can formally, or informally, report your concerns to the PTC or DPS in the first instance, or if you prefer you can report any incident directly to the college via their 'Report and Support' tool:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/equality/resources/report-and-support/>

Feedback Meetings

All ICS students are invited to meet the DPS as a group three times a year. This is an opportunity for the student body to make representations about general matters concerned with training.

Confidential Reports

The ICS operates an Imperial College-compliant system of six-monthly confidential reports for students to complete, which will not be seen by their supervisors. These will be requested by the PTC in January and July, and are for students to complete if they wish to. These reports are accessible throughout the year via the LMS Intranet at any time.

LMS Student Committee

LMS Students are encouraged to organise events for their fellow students, which can be advertised through the student mailing list held by the PTC, on the public calendar and on Facebook. Students are also encouraged to participate in LMS Postdoc Community events.

The Student Committee hold events such as the Christmas party and the annual Student Retreat, along with a monthly pub trip on the 2nd Friday of every month and monthly coffee mornings. The current Presidents are Will Weston (w.weston22@lms.mrc.ac.uk) and Isabel Liseth (i.liseth22@lms.mrc.ac.uk)

Hammersmith Student Community

The Hammersmith Students' Community is a group of postgraduate students eager to build a stronger community on the Hammersmith Campus. They aim to provide an informal support network for the 400+ Hammersmith postgraduate students by organising events on campus, and integrating with events at South Kensington. Events range from academic, such as careers talks, workshops and lectures, to relaxed trips to the pub, quizzes or bowling.

More information about the Hammersmith Student Community is available at:
<http://union.ic.ac.uk/medic/hammersmithstudents/>

Support for Clinicians

The [Clinical Academic Training Office](#) supports clinicians (Doctors, Nurses, Allied Health Professions, Healthcare Scientists, Pharmacy staff, Psychologists) at all stages of their academic research careers, including the PhD/MD(Res) stage (often referred to as Clinical Research Training Fellows, CRTF).

CATO supports CRTFs by:

- Delivering sessions targeted specifically at clinicians doing PhD/MD(Res) – eg 'Getting the most out of your PhD as a clinician'
- Providing access to the wider CATO programme of events; including research symposia, careers workshops and masterclasses - which include opportunities to network with other clinicians following clinical academic careers
- Sharing information about clinical academic opportunities and support – through regular newsletters and email updates

- Producing factsheets – to give advice and information to CRTFs about key career transition points and support/resources available – eg, navigating the OOP process, preparing to return to clinical training
- Conducting surveys – to gain feedback about the experience of CRTFs and develop new activities to address needs identified
- Liaising with other College Teams to develop and enable access to resources and support for PhD fellows – eg, arranging for final year clinical PhD fellows to access services provided by the PostDoc and Fellows Development Centre, eg, inputting into Faculty of Medicine projects working with PhD supervisors

All CATO activities are offered **in addition** to support and information provided by each academic department/research group and the Imperial College Graduate School. CRTFs should ensure that in the first instance they meet all relevant expectations in their Research Degree handbooks, attend local dept/group inductions/meetings and also that they complete mandatory training required by the Graduate School.

The CATO provision is independent of and complimentary to local and Graduate School activities for PhD/MD(Res) fellows. CRTFs are strongly encouraged to engage with the CATO programme and to attend as many CATO events as is possible.

Enquiries: cato@imperial.ac.uk **CATO Website:** [Events](#) [Factsheets](#)

Mums and Dads Scheme

The student body at the LMS is a group of connected and kind people. However, sometimes, people might feel a little isolated. This might be because they are the only PhD student in their own labs, because they started at a different time to the rest of their cohort, or because they're only based at the LMS some of the time. This is especially noticeable as time passes, and habits become a bit more set in.

Because of this, the Student Committee set up a scheme where older students can take the newer students 'under their wings' a little bit, just to make sure that from the get-go, everyone feels like they have a little more control of the social aspect of their PhDs.

All new students are allocated 1-2 'parents' when they first start. 'Parents' are asked to volunteer as they approach the end of their first and/or second year.

Guidance for Assessors

Role of Assessors

All students have two academic Assessors assigned throughout their studentship. The roles of the Assessors are as follows:

1. Meet new student informally in their first few months.
2. Attend student's annual seminars to monitor progress
3. Conduct the Early Stage Assessment (9 months) and Late Stage Review (18 months). Evaluate the document and seminar, and carry out a viva
4. Monitor progression to writing the thesis at the appropriate time. Complete Year 3 evaluation
5. Be available to provide support to the student throughout their time in the ICS

Each student will have two Assessors, one lead Assessor from their own section and one from another section (as far as is practical), usually appointed by the DPS. These will be Group Heads or senior scientists designated by their Group Head as appropriate. The role of the Assessors is to support and assist the student, and also to be responsible for monitoring their progress. Students are advised to arrange to meet with their Assessors at least once before the first milestone.

Care must be taken at all times not to undermine the student-supervisor relationship and confidentiality must be maintained.

PhD Early Stage Assessment

Early Stage assessment should occur 8 months after registration. The aim is to satisfy the DPS on behalf of the ICS and Imperial College that the student is capable of completing a PhD within the prescribed period of three to four years.

The procedure comprises a **report** of approximately 1500 words written by the student, a **seminar** and a **viva**.

1. **The Early Stage report** should be submitted directly by the student to the Assessors, who are responsible for assessing this and feeding back to the student and supervisor.
2. **The Early Stage seminar** will be arranged by the PTC to coincide with the ESA deadline.

Assessors should consider these questions when evaluating the report:

- Is it clear and readable, and does it convince you that the student understands the subject of the project?
- Has the student undertaken experiments, providing evidence that the project is likely to be viable?
- Do you think that the supervisor has had the right amount of input?
- Is the length within the limits set and are the pages numbered?
- Does the student have a clear and realistic plan for future work?

Seminar:

- Did the student present a clear and accurate account of the work that was widely accessible?
- Were the visual aids relevant, clear and legible, and well explained?
- Did the student show that they understood the questions and were able to participate in discussion?

The Assessors should decide whether any written corrections or re-writing will be of benefit to the student's training. Any **serious concerns about the project should be discussed in private** with the supervisor and/or the ICS DPS and not with the student.

3. **The Early Stage viva** should be arranged as soon as is feasible after the presentation. The viva should be used as an opportunity to provide feedback to the student, discuss their future plans in some detail, and to evaluate their understanding and knowledge of the project. It should comprise constructive criticism and questioning, but also provide encouragement. The supervisor should not attend this viva.

4. Once all three steps have been completed, an **Early Stage Assessment Form** should be completed and signed by the Student, Supervisor and Assessors and returned to the PTC for review and approval by the DPS, together with a copy of the report and copies of any original Assessors' reports given to the student.

Further information is available in the [Assessment Section](#) above.

PhD Late Stage Assessment

Students' progress must be reviewed by their Assessors 20 months after registration. The aim is to satisfy the DPS on behalf of the ICS and Imperial College that the student is capable of completing a PhD within the prescribed period of three to four years.

Assessors should provide a written assessment to the student, copied to the supervisor, addressing the following questions in addition to the questions for Early Stage Review:

- Is the work needed to complete the thesis clearly stated and achievable in the timeframe allowed?
- Has the student obtained results that will be incorporated into the thesis?
- Is there evidence that the student has read the relevant background material and can set the project in its wider context?
- Is sufficient information about the project provided to show that the student is doing more than just following the instructions in kits?
- Where the student is working as part of a group, is there clear evidence that the project is the student's own work? While it is acceptable for the work of others to be mentioned where this impinges on the student's project, this must be clearly stated.
- Are accurate references in a consistent format (that of "Cell") provided?
- Do the figures have appropriately labelled axes and informative legends?

The review comprises a **report** written by the student, a **seminar** and a **viva**. The procedure is similar to that of the Early Stage assessment, although the report is much more substantial for PhD students and the viva may be longer and focus on (a) the results that the student has obtained and (b) the plan of what is needed to complete the work.

Further information is available in the [Assessment Section](#) above.

Year 3 Review (33-36 months)

All students will be reviewed by their Assessors between 33 and 36 months. Part-time students will be reviewed annually after this, if they continue for more than 4 years. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure students are on course to complete their degree, and to meet MRC requirements for annual assessment.

This review consists of a formal meeting between the student and Assessors, and submission of the Year 3 form signed by the student, supervisor(s) and Assessors, to the PTC by 37 months.

Guidance for Supervisors

Who may be a postgraduate supervisor?

ICS scientific staff may become postgraduate supervisors provided they meet the following criteria:

- they have an honorary academic appointment with Imperial College at Lecturer level (at least) or be of equivalent academic standing – staff of less than Lecturer level must co-supervise with a senior member, usually their Group Head; and
- that their Group Head has agreed that they may supervise postgraduate students; and

- that they are fully-funded and/or contracted at the ICS for the expected course of the studentship and there are no pre-existing plans for them to relocate
- that they have attended a PhD supervisors training course (see below)
- Group heads who have not previously supervised a PhD student through to completion may be required to have a co-supervisor.

Training for New Supervisors

First time supervisors are required to attend a training course before or very shortly after they start to supervise PhD students for the first time. Suitable courses are offered by the MRC Learning and Development Unit ("*Supervising PhD Students*" – 1 day) which can be booked on Oracle, or by the Imperial College Educational Development Unit ("*Introduction to Supervising Research Students*" – 1 day) – details available at

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/educational-development/workshops/introduction-to/supervising-phd-students/>

The guiding principles of the College community are available at

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/student-support/our-principles/> and give an overview of what is expected of students, supervisors, departments and the College.

Interviewing and Recruitment

In order to ensure that standards are maintained, all applicants for non-MRC core studentships must be interviewed by a recruitment panel before a firm offer is made. The panel will be 3-4 senior scientists who are knowledgeable in the candidate's field, but not directly involved in the proposed project. Exceptions may be made for students who have been awarded a competitive fellowship that involved an interview by a recognised funding body (e.g. Wellcome Trust, MRC)

Information on recruiting current staff members to PhD positions is available in the [Staff registration for postgraduate degrees](#) section above.

Absence through illness

Supervisors must inform the PTC or DPS within one week of any student absence through illness, or for personal reasons other than planned holidays.

Absences of more than two weeks must be reported to Imperial College Registry through the PTC.

Unexplained Absences

If any student has an unexplained absence, supervisors MUST let the PTC, DPS or Head of Human Resources know as soon as they become concerned. This is an absence where the student has not asked for holiday time or phoned in to report themselves sick, etc. The PTC would expect to hear about it within two or three days if supervisors are unable to contact a student.

Failure to report student absences could jeopardize Imperial College's UKBA license and our ability to sponsor international student visas.

Interruption of Studies

Interruptions of studies are taken for maternity leave, periods of long illness, and other personal reasons. Supervisors should inform the DPS or PTC as soon as they become aware that an Interruption may be necessary. A course of action can then be agreed and appropriate action taken.

International students in the UK on student visas may be required to leave the country if they take an interruption of studies. Supervisors should discuss individual cases with the PTC as soon as they arise.

Studentship extensions

Students and supervisors will work together to ensure that laboratory work is completed and the thesis written up within the period for which the studentship is funded. Any foreseen problems with completion should be raised for consideration six months before the end of the studentship. Extensions may be granted, but usually only for writing up. Sequential extensions are normally not permitted.

It is an absolute requirement of both Imperial College and the MRC that all full-time students must submit their PhD thesis within 48 months of starting their PhD studies.

Where extensions beyond the funded 3.5 years are required, the supervisor must complete the Studentship Extension Request Form, available from the ICS PTC. All extension requests require the formal approval of the DPS or Administrative Director of the LMS. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, research groups are expected to meet the full cost of extensions from their own resources.

Communicating with students

All staff are reminded of the need to be courteous at all times to students both orally and in correspondence. Staff should avoid being aggressive and rude not only because student queries should always be treated with respect but because aggression can be perceived as bullying and intimidation and thus potentially prejudicial to fair treatment by the Department, and by association the College. Staff should not, for example, actively or aggressively discourage students from submitting appeals in case such discouragement is perceived as threatening, in that staff could be seen to be prejudging a decision on appeal. Rather, where a student expresses dissatisfaction with a decision, it is good practice and in the interests of procedural fairness for staff to inform them of any relevant procedures and of their right to appeal.

Supervisors should keep copies of relevant emails both received from and sent to their students.

Referrals to the College Disability Advisory Service

Students presenting with (chronic or long-term) illness should promptly be referred by Departments to the College's Disability Advisory Service (DAS) to ensure that students' learning needs can be assessed and are thus appropriately and transparently addressed and that decisions about their studies are not taken in isolation and/or without adequate consultation from relevant professionals. This approach will ensure that the College (via the DAS) is able to demonstrate consideration of the relevant law and guidance applicable to students who disclose serious or long-term illness which actually or potentially affects their studies. It is of course ultimately the student's decision whether to take advice from the DAS but Departments should be seen to have directed them to this resource.

Relationships between Students and Supervisors

Where a student has a pre-existing relationship, or develops a relationship during the course of study, with a member of staff such that there is a potential conflict of interest, especially with regard to the student's assessment, the student and member of staff must declare this in confidence to the Head of Department at the start of the course of study or at the point at which the relationship has started if this is during the course.

Appendix A: Useful Contacts

Within the ICS

Please note that locations in our new building may be subject to changes.

Co-Director of Postgraduate Studies: Dr Enrique “Fadri” Martinez-Perez

LMS Building, Office 4.15A

Email: enrique.martinez-perez@lms.mrc.ac.uk

Co-Director of Postgraduate Studies: Dr Alexis Barr

LMS Building, Office 6.12B

Email: a.barr@lms.mrc.ac.uk

Clinical Deputy Director of Postgraduate Studies: Prof. Dominic Withers

LMS Building, Office 3.13C

Email: d.withers@lms.mrc.ac.uk

Postgraduate Training Coordinator: Claire Marsh

LMS Building, 2.01 (desk 69)

Email: claire.marsh@lms.mrc.ac.uk

Members of the Postgraduate Training Advisory Group

Christian Speck (DNA Replication)

LMS Building, Office 2.14B

Email: chris.speck@lms.mrc.ac.uk

Boris Lenhard (Computational Regulatory Genomics)

LMS Building, Office 6.12C

Email: boris.lenhard@lms.mrc.ac.uk

Helena Cocheme (Redox Metabolism)

LMS Building, Office 4.15E

Email: Helena.cocheme@lms.mrc.ac.uk

Andre Brown (Behavioural Phenomics)

LMS Building, Office 4.15C

Email: andre.brown@lms.mrc.ac.uk

Elaine Irvine (Metabolic Signalling)

LMS Building, Office 3.13C

Email: elaine.irvine@imperial.ac.uk

Dave Carling (Cellular Stress)

LMS Building, Office 2.14D

Email: david.carling@lms.mrc.ac.uk

Student Welfare Contacts

These were compiled specifically for ICS students. Imperial College website keeps an up-to-date list of resources for all Imperial College students

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/students/welfareandadvice>

Hammersmith Student Community

Student support network organises academic and social events for all students on Hammersmith campus. They arrange activities at South Kensington and throughout the city.

<http://union.ic.ac.uk/medic/hammersmithstudents/>

Faculty Senior Tutors

In addition to ICS support, all students also have confidential access – independent of department or division – to the Faculty Senior Tutor regarding academic issues, and all aspects of pastoral care within the College.

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/student-space/here-for-you/faculty-senior-tutors/>

Chaplaincy Multi-faith Centre

chaplaincy@imperial.ac.uk, +44 (0)20 7594 9600, 11 Prince's Gardens, London, SW7 1NA

A resource for people of faith on campus and home to a group of chaplains of different denominations.

Contact details for each are available on the website. <http://www.chaplaincy.imperial.ac.uk/>

The Imperial College Union website contains details of clubs & societies for specific faith groups.

Disabilities Advisory Service

disabilities@imperial.ac.uk, +44 (0) 20 7594 9755

Advises individual students no matter what their disability to ensure that they have the support they need.

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/disabilityadvisoryservice>

International Office

international@imperial.ac.uk, +44 (0)20 7594 8040, Room 164, Level 1 Sherfield Building, South Ken

Deals with all international issues, and all students from outside the UK. The office is located opposite the Nat West branch. Normal opening hours are:

Monday- Friday 10:00-17:00 except Wednesday 11:00-17:00

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/international/>

Hammersmith Centre for Health

+44(0)20 8893 0384, in Hammersmith Hospital next to the emergency unit

Urgent care walk-in clinic open from 8am-10pm 7 days a week. Also have GP services. Available to residents of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

<http://www.imperial.nhs.uk/services/centreforhealth/index.htm>

Health Centre

imperialcollege.hc@nhs.net, 40 Princes Gardens, London SW7 1LY

Reception +44 (0)20 7594 9375/6 External telephone number +44 (0)20 7584 6301

Doctors, nurses, psychotherapists, counsellors, psychiatrist, sports medicine specialist, physiotherapy, acupuncture, Alexander Technique, homeopathy, reflexology, aromatherapy.

Postcodes in catchment area: SW1, SW3, SW5, SW6, SW7, SW10, W1, W2, W4, W6, W8, W9, W10, W11, W14, WC1, WC2, NW1, NW3, NW5, NW8, N1, N5, N6, and N7. <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/healthcentre>

Imperial College Union

union@imperial.ac.uk, +44 (0)20 7594 8067, Beit Quad, South Ken

Confidential, impartial and independent advice on welfare and academic issues. For more information or to make an appointment contact Student Advisor Nigel Cooke at phone number above. The Union also represents the student body to College on academic, welfare, accommodation and student development issues.

<http://www.imperialcollegeunion.org>

London Nightline

listening@nightline.org.uk, +44 (0)20 7631 0101

A telephone helpline offering confidential listening, support and information to students in London. It is open every night of term from 18.00 to 08.00, and is run by students of affiliated higher education institutions in the London area.

<http://www.nightline.org.uk/>

Islamic Prayer Room

islam@imperial.ac.uk, 9 Prince's Gardens, South Ken

Organised by the Imperial College Islamic Society. As well as a place to wash yourself and pray your five daily prayers, it is a place to learn about Islam, eat a Halal lunch with friends, and find out about upcoming events.

www.theisoc.com

The Imperial College Union Student Handbook/website contains details of clubs & societies for specific faith groups.

Student Accommodation Centre

accommodation@imperial.ac.uk, +44(0)20 7594 9444, Level 3, Sheffield Building, South Ken

Assistance with housing arrangements. Be aware that university-run postgraduate housing is very limited at Imperial College.

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/accommodation/prospectivestudents/prospectivepostgraduatestudents>

Student Counselling Service

counselling@imperial.ac.uk, +44 (0)20 7594 9637, Room 2S7 Commonwealth Bldg, Hammersmith

Counselling is available to any student registered with the College, about any personal issue. Phone or email to arrange an appointment. A counsellor comes to Hammersmith on Wednesday afternoon, but students can make an appointment at any campus.

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/counselling>

Student Financial Support & Scholarships

student.funding@imperial.ac.uk, +44 (0)20 7594 8130 or

scholarships@imperial.ac.uk, +44(0)20 7594 8130

Level 3, Sheffield Building, South Ken

Student funding advice and administration (Access to Learning Fund, College Hardship Fund, etc).

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/studentfinance>

Academic and Administrative contacts

Centre for Academic English (CfAE)

english@imperial.ac.uk, +44 (0)20 7594 8748, Sheffield Building Level 3, Room 309 South Ken

Conduct the assessments for the Imperial College English Requirement and offer English courses, workshops and 1:1 consultations, free of charge for students.

www.imperial.ac.uk/academic-english/phd-students

Graduate School

graduate.school@imperial.ac.uk, +44 (0)20 7594 1383, Registry, Level 3, Sheffield Building, South Ken

The Graduate School runs the Professional Skills Development Programme and several collaboration-encouraging events throughout the year.

Twitter: follow @ImperialGradSch for news, events and highlights

Facebook: Imperial College Graduate School

www.imperial.ac.uk/graduateschool

Occupational Health

occhealth@imperial.ac.uk, 020 7594 9401, Level 4, Sheffield Building, South Ken

All students working in high-risk areas must register with Occupational Health as soon as possible after registering. Please read the induction handout available from the PTC for details.

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/OCCHEALTH>

Registry

Level 3 of the Sherfield Building, South Ken

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/>

Registry keeps all student records for Imperial College. They are divided into Admissions, Records, Research Degrees and Certificates teams. In most instances the ICS PTC will contact Registry on a student's behalf. If the PTC is not available for an urgent query, or if you would like to speak to Registry directly, contact details are shown below.

If you wish to speak to someone in person regarding any Registry-related matter, please come to the Student Hub counter on Level 3, Sherfield building, South Kensington.

Should you wish to send documentation to the Registry, the postal address is:

Appropriate Team

Registry

Imperial College London

Level 3 Sherfield Building

South Kensington Campus

London SW7 2AZ

Medicine Postgraduate Admissions

medicine.pg.admissions@imperial.ac.uk, +44 (0)20 7594 7259

The Admissions Teams are responsible for the receipt and processing of all applications to Imperial. If you have submitted an application, have received an offer, or are waiting for a decision on an application, and you have a specific question relating to this, you can contact Medicine Postgraduate Admissions.

Student Records

records@imperial.ac.uk, +44(0)207 594 7267

The Records team handles matters concerning current Imperial College students and alumni including registration, examinations and document requests.

The **Records Team** within the Registry is responsible for student visa issues. If you have any queries regarding attendance issues, please contact student.records@imperial.ac.uk

Research Degrees

research.degree@imperial.ac.uk, +44(0)20 7594 6087

The Research Degrees team looks after thesis submission and all other issues concerning the assessment and examination of research degrees.

Certificates

certificates@imperial.ac.uk, +44(0)20 7594 8037

The Certificates team can help you if you have not received your degree certificate, if you have misplaced your certificate, or if you require additional copies of your certificate.

International Student Support Team

The international Student Support team within the Registry is responsible for providing advice to students with regard to their immigration status and assisting students in applying for a new visa. Students or staff requiring information or advice should contact international@imperial.ac.uk

Student Placement Office

a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk, +44 (0)20 7594 8044, Room 324, Sherfield Building, South Ken
General advice and information for external credit-based placements, especially those abroad. This is also the organising office for UROP. The Assistant Registrar (Placements) Adrian Hawksworth is the contact person.

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/qualityassurance/placements>

Student Technical Support Contacts

Campus Library

library@imperial.ac.uk, ext 33246, 1st floor Commonwealth, Hammersmith

The Imperial College Libraries can help you find a range of resources for your project, and also offer many training courses in researching publications, organising references. Full details are available on the website.

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/library/find>

Careers Advisory Service

careers@imperial.ac.uk, +44(0)20 7594 8024, The Careers Information Room, level 5 Sherfield Building
open Monday to Friday, 10:00 – 17:15

Provides a varied and comprehensive careers guidance, information and vacancy service for all students and alumni of Imperial College. Yasmina Mallam-Hassam is the Careers Consultant working with the Faculty of Medicine and the Departments of Bioengineering and Materials.

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/careers>

LMS Biomolecular Mass Spectrometry and Proteomics (BMSP) Facility

LMS 2 North (Main Office)

The facility is equipped with state-of-the-art mass spectrometry technology for the analysis of proteins and their post-translational modifications. Other biomolecules, such as nucleic acids and metabolites, can also be analysed. They aim to extract the maximum amount of information from your sample.

<http://lms.mrc.ac.uk/research-facility/biological-mass-spectrometry-and-proteomics-laboratory/>

LMS Computing

lms-help@lms.mrc.ac.uk, Room 7.01, LMS Building, Hammersmith

The facility provides all MRC LMS staff with email, network, data storage and backup capabilities supporting a range of operating systems (i.e. Windows, Linux, Unix & Mac), as well as a helpdesk and technical support. Queries can be logged directly on the website.

<http://lms.mrc.ac.uk/research-facility/computing-services/>

LMS Flow Cytometry Facility

james.elliott@lms.mrc.ac.uk, ext 38330/38291, ICTEM Building 233, Hammersmith

Dr James Elliott (Facility Head) and Dr Philip Hexley provide groups with support for the sorting, phenotypic and functional analysis of cells. The facility has state-of-the-art instrumentation and is continually expanding the diverse array of laser and filter configurations available, to be capable of most current flow cytometry protocols.

<http://lms.mrc.ac.uk/research-facility/flow-cytometry/>

LMS Genomics Laboratory

laurence.game@lms.mrc.ac.uk, ext 33788, ICTEM Building 233, Hammersmith

Headed by Dr Laurence Game, the facility offers a range of services for high throughput sequencing, microarray, conventional sequencing, genotyping and real time PCR, and bioinformatics support.

<http://lms.mrc.ac.uk/research-facility/genomics-laboratory/>

LMS Microscopy Laboratory

dirk.dormann@lms.mrc.ac.uk, ext 38528, Room 5.11 (Main Office) LMS Building, Hammersmith

Headed by Dr Dirk Dormann, the facility offers a large variety of systems ranging from basic stereo microscopes to the latest confocal workstations to assist LMS staff and students in their research. Staff provide user training and continuing support ranging from help with experimental design, image processing/visualisation and quantitative image analysis to direct collaboration on specific projects.
<http://lms.mrc.ac.uk/research-facility/microscopy-laboratory/>

LMS Grants, Engagement and Communications (GECO) Facility

geco@lms.mrc.ac.uk, ext 33774 Room 2.02 South Side LMS Building, Hammersmith

The Facility organises a diverse range of outreach and engagement projects to encourage public interest in science, helping LMS scientists to publicise their research. Supporting LMS researchers in print and digital media management, the Facility's work is tailored to the needs of multiple stakeholders and the team strives to enhance the Institute's reputation and promote LMS research to a broad audience. The Facility web-manager maintains the Institute website and produces news articles about LMS research. The Facility assists with photography, video, graphic design, 2D and 3D print requirements. A rolling internship programme supports the Biomedical Picture of the Day website and other outreach initiatives. Specialist software includes the Adobe Creative Suite and equipment includes Nikon digital SLR cameras, a Sony video camera, a 3D printer, and HP printers for posters and pamphlets.

<http://lms.mrc.ac.uk/research-facility/grants-engagement-communications/>

LMS Transgenics and ES Cell Facility

Offers a range of professional science services and expertise in the creation, maintenance and study of transgenic mice, including a complete targeting service, pronuclear injection of DNA, injection of embryonic stem (ES) cells into blastocysts using various strains of ES cells, aggregation and laser assisted IVF. Staff also train staff and students in the relevant techniques associated with transgenic technologies.

<http://lms.mrc.ac.uk/research-facility/transgenics-and-embryonic-stem-cell-laboratory/>

ICT Service Desk

Imperial contact for IT-related problems, installation requests and queries. It is advisable to contact LMS Computing initially, but you may need to contact ICT with some issues.

Office is open from 08.30 to 18.00, Monday to Friday (excluding College holidays). You can contact the Service Desk in the following ways:

- Telephone: 020 759 49000, Recommended for urgent requests
- Web Service Desk Online: <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/ict/serviceDesk>, Recommended for non-urgent requests - 24 hour logging and FAQ services
 - In Person: Room BS22 basement of Commonwealth Building, Opening times: 1pm - 2pm Monday – Friday, service.desk@imperial.ac.uk

Appendix B: Further reading and useful links

Copies of all the documents listed in the table below are available from the ICS PTC or on the web.

LMS web site	Basic information on LMS Research Groups and their programmes, as well as other useful information about the LMS www.lms.mrc.ac.uk
Good Research Practice	Booklet published by the MRC and providing general guidance on the proper conduct of research http://www.mrc.ac.uk/news-events/publications/good-research-practice-principles-and-guidelines/
Imperial College Postgraduate Prospectus	Provides general information about postgraduate studies at IC http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/pgprospectus
Imperial College Registry Research Degrees webpages	Information regarding Research Degree registration, enrolment, and examination http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/researchdegrees
Imperial College Student Handbook	Online as New Student webpages http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/students/newstudents/
Imperial College Guide for International Students	Online at http://www.imperial.ac.uk/international/
Imperial College Examination Entry Pack	Forms necessary for PhD examination and thesis submission are available at http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/exams/examentryforms
Imperial College Regulations for PhD and MD(Res) Degrees	Imperial College Academic Regulations available at: http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/regulations
Student e-Service	https://centsso.ad.ic.ac.uk/sso/pages/IClogin.jsp login using your email login details. Check course information such as milestone deadlines and supervisor names, update personal details
MRC Oracle	https://portal.ssc.rcuk.ac.uk/ Claim expenses and order supplies with MRC funding, check your payslips and bank details if your stipend is paid through MRC, sign up for MRC training courses
Imperial Oracle (ICIS):	http://icis.imperial.ac.uk/ Order supplies with Imperial College funding, check your payslips and bank details if your stipend is paid through Imperial
Graduate School Blackboard	http://learn.imperial.ac.uk sign up for Professional Skills Development courses

Appendix C: PhD Well-being Assessment Results

Imperial's PhD population were involved in a study regarding wellbeing. In addition to quantitative data, 229 free text comments were received. Statistical analysis has allowed researchers to rank the issues that have the greatest negative impact on researchers' well-being. The top ten are reported here, along with some questions that students might like to consider.

The well-being top ten most troublesome items:

1. Feeling frustrated / demotivated by your results and apparent lack of progress.
2. Experiencing high levels of stress because of your research.
3. Being unclear about the next stage of your career after your PhD.
4. Lacking confidence in your ability to conduct research to the necessary standard.
5. Being frustrated with the college's administration systems.
6. Having a high workload that impacts on your private life.
7. Making unreasonably high demands of yourself in the name of research.
8. Experiencing a persistent low mood because of your research.
9. Feeling constantly tired and run-down because of your workload.
10. Feeling disappointed in your own abilities as an academic researcher.

Questions to consider

About doing research

- Are your expectations for your rate of progress realistic? Are you aware that for most researchers progress is non-linear and there may be periods when you feel like you are getting nowhere?
- Are you receiving sufficient and useful feedback and guidance about your work? If not, let your supervisor(s) know.
- Is/are your relationship(s) with supervisor(s) sufficiently open to allow you to raise difficulties and doubts? It is usually better to address problems quickly, before they grow.
- Do you have sufficiently strong relationships with others in your group / department so that problems may be discussed?
- Are you taking up appropriate opportunities to speak about your work at seminars or conferences?
- Is your workload appropriate? Do you need to discuss it with your supervisor(s)?
- Do your research group activities include a social element? If not, consider starting something up – probably everyone else would appreciate it?

About stress and your health

- Are you aware of the support available within the department (postgraduate tutors) and beyond (College tutors), the counselling service and stress management workshops run by the graduate schools?
- Are you being proactive to manage your stress levels? Don't ignore the signs of stress or wait for problems to become serious.
- Are you taking suitable breaks, doing any physical exercise, eating well, etc?
- Is your work-life balance acceptable and healthy?
- Are you working late evenings and at weekends too often?
- Do you find some time for recreational activities?
- Are you aware of your holiday entitlements? Are you actually taking any holiday?

About your future plans

- Are you aware of the career management courses offered by the Graduate Schools and that you may freely consult the Careers Advisory Service (who offer services and events specifically for PhD students)?
- Have you talked to your supervisor and others in your department/division about your career plans?
- Are you starting to think about your next steps early on in your PhD? Career planning takes time, so don't leave it too late!

About other matters

- Do you regularly get together with other researchers for social as well as research related reasons?
- Is there clear guidance within your department/division about administration processes? If not, ask for it.

Further work

The graduate schools plan to carry out further analysis of the well-being data and may issue further reports from time to time. If you would like to comment upon this work, please email elaine.walsh@imperial.ac.uk