



Guidelines for Schools who have students commencing their research programme from a distance due to Covid-19

While the impacts of Covid-19 continue to evolve, there will be a number of students that may need to commence their Ph.D. or Masters by Research programme from a distance on a temporary basis. Dean's approval is required in all such instances. In requesting such approval, Schools should give consideration to the points below to ensure students receive a quality teaching and learning experience in their programme of study and to lessen the risk of limited student engagement.

Responsibilities of the School

1. Ensuring there is technology and administrative support within the School to support students who are commencing their studies from a distance.
2. Provision of appropriate advanced notice to a student if on-campus attendance is required for any activities associated with the programme of study.
3. Ensuring a Thesis Committee is in place within the first few months of study to facilitate progression.

Student-Supervisor Agreement or Supervision Plan

Where learning is to commence from a distance, a formal agreement between the student and supervisor that outlines the expectations and requirements for the programme of study may help to avoid later difficulties. While there is no standard template for such agreements, supervisors should ensure that all agreements have the approval of the DTLP.

As part of this agreement it may be helpful to consider the following:

- Discuss whether they have access to sufficient technology to engage in learning from a distance – this includes a laptop with video and mic and internet connectivity. These resources will be key and if there are issues here it is best to discover them early on, so arrangements can be made or the student can defer their start date if necessary.
- Discuss with the student whether or not they have previously engaged in distance learning and what challenges they think they will face. What will best help them overcome these challenges?
- Agree how often you will meet virtually and what platform will be used – ideally this should be no less than once every 4 weeks. The agreement should give an indicative schedule of meeting times to ensure these meetings take place.
- Discuss what materials they should access early on and encourage them to access them locally in their place or residence or via the Library. Please see [this page](#) for information on TCD Library facilities available at present.
- Encourage the student to attend any University-wide and School-based webinars and Zoom conferences with other students. This will include available Orientation seminars. Social engagement, even if virtual, may support a sense of belonging and promote retention of students.

- Encourage students to work on taught elements of their Ph.D. that are available online such as CA7000 Research Integrity in an Era of Open Scholarship, the Graduate Teaching Assistant module, and any modules offered by the School that will be available online.

Stipend Payments

If a student is to receive a stipend as part of their programme they will need to have a PPS Number and SEPA-compliant bank account in order to receive payment. Information on obtaining a PPS number while outside of Ireland can be found [here](#).