



Off-site Supervision of Research Students Policy

1. Context

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, hereinafter referred to as Trinity, is a research-led institution with strategic goals to increase international engagement and enhance global recognition of the University's strengths, capacity and reputation in research.

Normally graduate students on the research register must attend College or one of its associated institutions full-time¹. In certain circumstances, however, a student may be required to conduct elements of their research programme away from Trinity².

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the application process for an off-site supervision arrangement that permits a student to undertake a portion of their research away from Trinity for a period of more than three months and less than six months; the process for monitoring and reporting on the arrangement; and to highlight specific regulations pertaining to research students supervised off-site.

3. Benefits

- 3.1 The policy provides a formal process to facilitate informed decision-making for requests for off-site supervision arrangements, which are considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.2. Potential difficulties and risks faced by students are addressed prior to entering an off-site supervision arrangement and managed proactively.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy considers off-site supervision arrangements (for more than three months and less than six months) as they relate to Trinity students on the research register.
- 4.2 This policy does not consider off-site supervision arrangements relating to dual/joint programmes. Off-site supervision as relevant to partnerships will be organised separately and within the specific agreements³.
- 4.3 This policy does not consider off-site supervision arrangements in relation to students registered on the [Non-Resident PhD](#) pathway.

¹ Calendar Part III 2024/25, Section II, Attendance (section 27)

²Or a supervisor may be required to be off-site for a period of time (e.g. on sabbatical).

³ e.g. limited international training placements with collaborating institution partners arising from funded research grants.

- 4.4 Students who wish to work off-site for *ad misericordiam*, caring or other reasons should apply to the Dean of Graduate Studies for permission to do so.

5. Principles

- 5.1 Trinity is committed to maintaining a consistently high standard of supervision for all its research students.
- 5.2 Requests for off-site supervision arrangements (for more than three months and less than six months) will be considered, in certain circumstances.

6. Definitions

Definitions related to this Policy can be found in the [Curriculum Glossary](#).

7. Policy

7.1 Eligibility

Eligibility for an off-site supervision arrangement is considered on a case-by-case basis⁴.

7.2 Approval process

Prior to the submission of any off-site supervision application, a Thesis Committee must be established, as outlined on the Graduate Studies website (see [Thesis Committees](#)). To apply for permission to supervise a PhD student off-site, the proposed supervisor will, in consultation with the student, submit (1) an off-site supervision application form and (2) an off-site supervision plan to the Director of Teaching and Learning PG (DTLPG) and the relevant Head of School. The Head of School may delegate approval for the off-site supervision application and plan to the DTLPG. All current regulations with respect to “Eligibility to Supervise” (see Calendar Part III and [Graduate Studies website](#)) must be adhered to. A co-supervisor may be nominated and other categories of supervisors, as appropriate. If the student is conducting research in another university, a “local advisor” may be appointed by the supervisor in conjunction with the DTLPG.

In some circumstances, for example if a student is carrying out field work or undertaking laboratory experiments in another institution and/or in another jurisdiction, the application may include a statement that a risk assessment has been completed (to include consideration of insurance coverage) and local health and safety standards have been met (relevant College Policies may also apply, for example the [Lone Working Policy](#)).

7.3 [Off-site Research Application Form and Plan](#)

A detailed off-site supervision plan will form part of the application from a potential supervisor to the Dean of Graduate Studies to permit off-site supervision. The plan should be signed by the student, supervisor, co-supervisor (where applicable), the Head

⁴For students on non-EU visas who have residency requirements as part of that visa, this will need to be considered in any application for an off-site research period.

of Discipline (where applicable), and approved by the DTLPG (who may consult with the thesis committee) and the Head of School prior to submission to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Head of School may delegate responsibility for approval of an off-site supervision arrangement to the DTLPG. This off-site supervision plan must be finalised and approved before the research takes place. The plan may include, amongst others, the following:

- Details of when, and for how long, the prospective student and/or supervisor will not be on-site at Trinity.
- Plan of how the student will complete, if they have not already done so, the structured elements of the PhD.
- Demonstration (by student and/or supervisor where applicable) that the off-site location where the proposed research will be carried out is suitable and that resources required to carry out the research are in place. This may include a risk assessment, health and safety assessment, and consideration of insurance coverage.
- Schedule of meetings/interactions (minimum of 1 per month – e.g. Zoom, MS Teams, in addition to emails/phone calls).
- Schedule of visits to be undertaken by supervisor and/or co-supervisor to off-site location, where applicable.
- Ethical approval(s), where applicable.
- Statement regarding access to data; and Intellectual property considerations.
- Statement regarding the secure transfer and storage of student data (ref 7.6.3)

Following approval by the DTLPG and Head of School, the complete off-site supervision application and plan should be sent to the Dean of Graduate Studies for final approval. The decision of the Dean of Graduate Studies is final. If rejected, the decision cannot be appealed.

Permission for remote supervision is normally granted for a period of more than three months and less than six months and is subject to review by the DTLPG. In all circumstances, students will be required to be based at Trinity to successfully complete the structured and other (including Health and Safety) elements of the Doctoral programme, based on the requirements of individual Schools. Regardless of arrangements for off-site supervision, the student must attend annually for completion of the annual review of progress, and the confirmation process. Where a non-EU student is completing research outside Ireland under an off-site supervision arrangement, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that any visa and travel documents are in order to enable them to attend the mandatory on-site components, including *viva voce* examinations, and to return to Ireland after the off-site period has ceased.

7.4 Reporting/Monitoring of an off-site supervision plan

The off-site supervision plan should be reviewed as part of the annual review process and may be amended, if appropriate, at this point or at any other stage on request of the student or the supervisor. Where difficulties arise in the off-site supervision arrangement, the steps outlined in the [*Advice for Resolving Conflicts between Supervisors and Research Students*](#) may be applied.

7.5 Access to services

When students are attending Trinity and resident in Ireland, they will have access to all services normally available to Trinity registered research students. However, when a student is conducting part of their research at an off-site location, levels of access may be necessarily different. Students who are already engaged with Trinity services may need to clarify whether the same level of service can be maintained when they are not based on-campus.

7.6 Regulations

7.6.1 Students working off-site are subject to all regulations pertaining to research students as per The [University of Dublin Calendar](#) Parts I, II and III. Financial arrangements (including project costs) must be worked out with the School. All students that are being supervised off-site are required to attend for their *viva voce* examination in Dublin (at a location organised by the DTLPG). Travel and other costs will be borne by the student, unless there is a prior agreement with the School. Students working off-site will only be eligible to receive tax-free stipend payments if they have a PPS number and meet residency requirements (under Irish tax regulations).

7.6.2 Intellectual property associated with the project complies with Trinity regulations unless a prior agreement between Trinity and the Institution where the off-site supervision is taking place has been set up.

7.6.3 Student data associated with the project (i.e., personal information, research reports, copies of thesis) is subject to data protection legislation, specifically the Data Protection Act 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), notwithstanding the physical location of the student/supervisor/assessor.

8. Responsibility

The responsibility for this policy lies with the Dean of Graduate Studies.

9. Related Documents

[Postgraduate Research Supervision Policy](#)

[Postgraduate Research Student Handbook](#)

[Trinity Policy on Good Research Practice](#)

[Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes](#)

10. Document Control

10.1 Date originally approved by Council: 8th June 2016

10.2 Date revisions to the Policy approved by Council: October 2019, November 2023, February 2025

10.3 Date of next review: Academic Year 2027/28