

Supervision of Advanced Artist Diploma students

This policy is based on the University of St Andrews document [Supervision of postgraduate research students](#) and has been amended only where necessary to take account of Royal Conservatoire personnel, structures and the practice-based nature of the Advanced Artist Diploma programme offered by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

1 Definitions and requirements

Supervision of AdvArtDip students must involve at least two people: a principal supervisor and at least one of the following:

- Secondary supervisor
- A mentor

At least one member of the supervisory team will be currently active in the relevant artistic discipline, so as to ensure that the direction and monitoring of the student's progress is informed by up-to-date expertise and artistic insights. Breadth of experience and knowledge across the supervisory team will mean that the student always has access to someone with experience of supporting research students through to successful completion of their programme.

AdvArtDip students will normally be supervised by a team of either two or three people:

- The Head of Department, acting as principal supervisor and instrumental/vocal specialist
- An academic tutor, acting as secondary supervisor

Or, where additional specialist subject expertise is necessary:

- The Head of Department, acting as principal supervisor
- An instrumental/vocal specialist, acting as secondary supervisor
- An academic tutor, acting as secondary supervisor

Principal supervisor

The main member of the academic staff of the Royal Conservatoire appointed to supervise a research degree student. They will act as the one clearly identified point of contact for the student. The principal supervisor will normally have relevant artistic expertise in the proposed study area. Principal supervisors are normally members of academic staff in the post of lecturer and above or, for other research or academic-related posts, where an expectation to supervise doctoral level students is included in the job description. Exceptional arrangements for other academic staff may be allowed by agreement with the Research Degrees Committee. Where more than one person has supervisory responsibilities for the student, there will still only be one principal supervisor.

Secondary supervisor

A secondary supervisor is an academic co- or joint supervisor appointed to support an AdvArtDip student. They may be appointed to provide appropriate specialist subject expertise in the artistic area or when the artistic expertise required to support the student spans two or more areas and therefore the supervision of the student is shared between two members of academic staff. The proportions of supervision are normally agreed at the start of the arrangement, 50:50, 70:30 etc.

A secondary supervisor may also provide continuity of support when the principal supervisor is absent and/or act as a mentor to the principal supervisor when the principal supervisor does not have the required experience of supporting a research degree student through to graduation.

Supervisors who are not contracted members of staff at the Royal Conservatoire, including supervisors from industry, may only usually be appointed as a secondary supervisor on completion of an agreement outlining relevant responsibilities and expectations. In such cases an additional secondary supervisor or mentor should be appointed from the Royal Conservatoire.

Mentor

A member of the academic staff who primarily acts as a mentor to the student. They will provide advice and support independent from the principal and secondary supervisors as necessary and may also provide pastoral support. They will not normally be involved in the direct supervision of the research project and would therefore be eligible to examine the final submission if there were no other perceived conflict of interest identified by the Head of Programme. They may be involved in the annual progress review process for their mentees.

In cases where a student's supervisory team does not include a mentor, they should approach the Head of Programme in the first instance if they would like advice from someone outside of their supervisory team.

2 Appointment of supervisors

Supervisors for AdvArtDip students are appointed by the Research Degrees Committee usually at the time an applicant for admission to study is formally accepted. Principal supervisors are normally contracted members of academic staff, although alternative arrangements may be allowed by agreement with the Research Degrees Committee.

The Royal Conservatoire cannot guarantee continuity with a particular supervisor throughout the duration of the degree. In exceptional circumstances, alternative supervisory arrangements may be necessary.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Programme to ensure that new supervisors are introduced to the content of this policy. New supervisors should be knowledgeable about supervisory procedures required by the Royal Conservatoire and any other related matters deemed appropriate by the Director of Research and Engagement. Experienced supervisors should be briefed about new policies and procedures in a timely and effective way.

The number of research students assigned to any one principal supervisor must be closely monitored by the Director of Research and Engagement, who must take into account the overall workload distribution of the supervisor. In cases where a supervisor has primary

responsibility for more than six full-time equivalent research students, the Director of Research and Engagement must be able to provide satisfactory assurance to the Research Degrees Committee that such supervision does not impose a level of responsibility upon the member of staff that may be detrimental to the progress of the research students concerned.

On occasions the mentoring role of the second supervisor may raise the prospect of dealing with difficulties in the student's relationship with the principal supervisor. If there are any circumstances that might make it awkward for the student to discuss such difficulties with the second supervisor, the Head of Programme should ensure that the student is put in touch with the Doctoral Degrees Coordinator who can fulfil this pastoral role.

3 Frequency of supervision

AdvArtDip students are entitled to supervision as follows:

- Opera – 33 hours
- All other disciplines – 22 hours

The proportion of hours to be allocated to each member of the supervisory team will be discussed and agreed early in each year of study and noted in Student Outcomes.

Given the nature of instrumental/vocal disciplines, supervisory contact will usually be in person. Electronic contact is possible where appropriate, but international students studying on a student visa must adhere to the in-person attendance and engagement requirements stipulated by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) under the terms of their visa. Supervisory contact with students will be tracked and monitored through their Asimut timetable.

Supervisors should give particular attention to overseas students in the early stages. Students whose first language is not English may be required to attend, prior to matriculation, a specified English language course accessed through the University of St Andrews. It is the responsibility of the Head of Programme, in consultation with the supervisor, to monitor that the student attends this course and that the student's knowledge of English and use of academic English is sufficient to enable the research to proceed satisfactorily. If a student requires further language support, the student should be referred to English Language Support, ideally as early as possible in their studies.

4 Responsibilities of supervisors

All supervisors are expected to attend some form of supervisory training at least once every five years, or more frequently if required by funding bodies. Particular funders may require additional training sessions, and these requirements must also be met.

Principal supervisors should support a culture of research integrity through the following actions:

- Establish mutually agreed means of communication and contact with the student. Supervisors are expected to be accessible to students at appropriate times when advice may be needed.

- Ensure that students with a disability are afforded reasonable adjustments as set out in the document [Academic Adjustments Guidance: Inclusive Learning and Teaching in a Doctoral Setting](#), and, as necessary, signpost to [Disability Support](#).
- Give written as well as oral feedback on any submitted work within a reasonable period of time after submission. This written feedback should contain constructive criticism so that students are aware of potential problems.
- Ensure that the student has obtained Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) clearance and ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, as appropriate, prior to research commencing (see also student responsibilities).
- Ensure that the student has received the appropriate ethical clearance, training and/or licencing prior to research commencing with animals.
- In cases where a student is pursuing an artistic project, research or fieldwork outwith the Royal Conservatoire, ensure that a risk assessment is undertaken, as appropriate, and that the student is fully aware of the risks and precautions that apply to the conduct of such research. Risk assessments also need to account for disabilities, where relevant.
- Work with the student to ensure that they are taking an appropriate course of research skills training.
- Ensure that students have adequate space where they can work.
- Inform the Head of Programme if they intend to be absent for any length of time so that alternative supervision may be arranged.

Principal supervisors are responsible for providing guidance about:

- Defining a suitable programme of study that can be completed in a timely fashion.
- The nature and techniques of artistic work at this level.
- The standard expected for the degree.
- The requirement that students must ensure their own activity embodies a culture of artistic integrity, according to the principles of good artistic practice, and with knowledge of the definition of research misconduct. To this end, supervisors should direct their students to, and discuss with them, relevant professional and institutional guidelines, policies, processes and training opportunities.
- The planning of the programme of study.
- Literature and sources.
- Required attendance at taught classes.
- Copyright implications of working on certain subject areas.
- Presenting work at appropriate conferences, and publishing papers and patents.
- External professional performance opportunities and competitions.
- Opportunities to take part in departmental or programme activities, such as performance classes.
- Career intentions, and assist them (as appropriate) to acquire skills relevant to their intended career development, and make referrals to the St Andrews [Careers Centre](#), [International Education and Lifelong Learning Institute](#) (IELLI), or programmes offered by professional societies as appropriate.

The Head of Programme is responsible for ensuring progress reviews take place and that reports are uploaded to Student Outcomes.

5 Responsibilities of students

The primary responsibility of AdvArtDip students is to pursue their research with integrity, diligence and according to the highest standards of their artistic discipline, taking due account of the advice and criticism offered by their supervisors and other artists and scholars in their field(s). Students should:

- Live in accordance with the policy on 'Location of Studies'.
- Agree a schedule for obtaining research skills training in the areas identified by the supervisor. It is the responsibility of students to adhere to this schedule for training, and they should inform the principal supervisor without delay regarding any difficulties in doing so.
- Establish mutually agreed means of communication and contact with the supervisor. Students who intend to be absent, on fieldwork, or pursuing artistic projects furth of Scotland, or who are not resident have a particular obligation to inform and maintain contact with their supervisor.
- Students with a disability may need reasonable adjustments as set out in the document [Academic Adjustments Guidance: Inclusive Learning and Teaching in a Doctoral Setting](#), and should engage with [Disability Support](#) at the earliest opportunity.
- Be responsible for keeping appointments punctually and are expected to be diligent in meeting deadlines for submitted work or the advancement of their projects.
- Be responsible for adhering to health, safety and security guidelines operative within their place of study or research. If working away from the Royal Conservatoire, students must take due precautions appropriate to their place of study or research.
- Ensure that their activity embodies a culture of artistic integrity, according to the principles of good practice, and with knowledge of the definition of research misconduct. To fulfil this responsibility, students must appraise themselves of, and discuss with their supervisors, relevant professional and institutional guidelines, policies, processes and training opportunities.
- Obtain any necessary ethics approval for their research, when this involves animals, human participants or human tissue.
- Take note of and respond to criticism of submitted work and all advice concerning the progress of their work made by supervisors.
- Discuss with their supervisors opportunities for presenting their work within and outwith the university in order to obtain feedback from a wide range of artists and scholars and in order to gain experience of sharing their work.
- Submit the student self-assessment report and research plan in accordance with the policy on 'Progress Reviews and Termination of Studies'.
- Have ultimate responsibility for the form and content of their submission.
- Have ultimate responsibility for deciding the appropriate time for submission, having taken due account of the principal supervisor's opinion and regulations governing duration of study.

Students are entitled to reasonable periods of absence and holiday, provided that these are properly agreed in advance with the principal supervisor and conform to the stipulations of the funding body (if applicable).

6 Change of supervisor

Occasionally, a student or a supervisor may request from the Research Degrees Committee a change of supervisor. If the Research Degrees Committee agrees to or proposes a change of supervisor, whether permanently or temporarily, a Change of Supervisor form must be completed and sent to the Head of Programme.

7 Problems with supervision

One of the most important functions of the supervisor is to provide constructive criticism of the student's work. Students also should not hesitate to make known their concerns to supervisors. Open and frank discussion between supervisor and research student from the outset is encouraged in order to avert potential future difficulties or growing misunderstandings.

Occasionally the relationship between a student and the principal supervisor will break down. If the second supervisor is unable to resolve problems, then the student and/or supervisor should report difficulties in writing to the Head of Programme in the first instance, who may refer the matter, if necessary, or if they are themselves a supervisor, to the Convener of Research Degrees Committee. Prompt action must be taken to resolve the conflict. Where necessary, a student or a supervisor may request from the Research Degrees Committee a change of supervisor.

If a student falls ill for an extended period of time, they (or the supervisor where the student is incapable of acting on their own behalf) should submit relevant documentation to the Research Degrees Committee requesting a Leave of Absence.

On occasion, it may be necessary to engage an additional external supervisor for an extended time. This is for cases where no other alternative is possible (for example, departure of a supervisor prior to completion of a student's degree). The principal supervisor should propose the name of an external supervisor to the Programme Committee after consultation with the student.

The Head of Programme must authorise payment of any necessary expenses for supervisors or students. The level of fee for an external supervisor should be calculated on a range related to external examiner fees.

If serious problems regarding a student's progress are identified, it may prove necessary to discontinue the student's studies (see policy on 'Progress review and termination of studies').