

Supervision of Research Students in Department of Economics

Introduction

Supervision of research students can be a rewarding task, one that allows you to explore new areas of possible research, support a young academic at the beginning of their career and possibly to build life long partnerships in research and authoring. In addition to the many positive benefits there are definite costs to taking on a research student.

The Supervisor plays a key role in steering the student through three to four years of research, writing up and completion. Students rely on their Supervisor to give them feedback and effective criticism to help them shape their research, set realistic goals and ultimately to successfully get to the point of submission. The Supervisor would also provide recommendation letters to support the student into the job market.

This document is a comprehensive guide to life as a PhD Supervisor and sets out clearly the minimum expectations of Supervisors in economics, to help ensure that all of our students receive at least a minimum standard of support.

Key Contacts for Research Student Administration (2019/20)

Director MRes/PhD Economics: *Manuel Bagues*

Deputy Director MRes/PhD Economics: *Pablo Beker*

Programme Manager (PGR): *Maryanne Heafey*

Postgraduate Coordinator (Research): *Natalie Deven*

Doctoral College [web pages](#)

Supervision Arrangements in Economics

In the department of Economics, supervision is the responsibility of a PhD committee ideally made up of three advisors. It is possible for a committee to comprise of less than three supervisors, but no more. The committee will comprise of the main Supervisor (or advisor) plus two co-supervisors. The assumption is that students will remain with the MRes dissertation supervisor as they move into the PhD, although it is possible to change main Supervisor at this point (with the agreement of the Director MRes/PhD). The student and main Supervisor would together decide which colleagues would be good candidates for the co-supervisor roles. All PhD students will move to this model by autumn 2020.

The lead Supervisor should agree with the co-supervisors and the student, the responsibilities and roles of the different supervisors and how to maintain good communications across the committee throughout the student's time in the PhD. The split in workload will be agreed between members of the committee and communicated to the HoD, to be included in the workload model.

Initial Matching

Before agreeing to supervise a student, Supervisors should satisfy themselves that:

- they have the necessary knowledge and expertise to supervise the project which the student wishes to undertake;
- the project is appropriate for the degree concerned and can reasonably be undertaken with the resources available and in the required timescale; and
- they are confident, as far as is possible, that the student has the capacity to undertake the project successfully.

University and Departmental Regulations

Supervisors need to be aware of University and departmental regulations regarding research students. The main University regulations are contained in [Regulation 38. Research Degrees](#). These cover among other things, the requirements of a thesis to be submitted for a research degree, as well as requirements for the examination of research degrees at Warwick. The preferred model in economics is a thesis with two or three significant pieces of work, one of which would be designated the 'job market paper.' The third chapter may be less developed than the other two, e.g. some limited exploration of a third idea. Co-authoring of aspects of the overall package is not ruled out, but the student must clearly state their contribution to any co-authored work, at the beginning of the thesis.

Further guidance on regulations for Postgraduate Research (PGR) students can be sought from the Programme Manager (PGR). Departmental requirements for research students are contained in the [MRes/PhD Student Handbook](#) .

Funding for MRes/ PhD Students in Economics

All MRes students receive a departmental stipend and a fee waiver. Students have the opportunity to boost their income by undertaking marking and invigilation duties in year one and undertaking teaching duties from year two. In year two of the MRes, students are able to apply for external scholarships such as from the [ESRC](#), or the (Warwick) [Chancellors International](#) Scholarship. Each year, a small number of Economics students move on to one of these external scholarships. If one of your supervised students is funded by the ESRC, please ensure you are familiar with the requirements set out in the section below. The majority of PhD students in economics are on the departmental scholarship, which includes a stipend and fee waiver.

MRes/PhD students are also given additional departmental financial support to attend conferences (in 2019/20 this amounted to £1,200 over the course of the MRes/PhD). The MRes/PhD conference and research costs policy is available [here](#). There is some flexibility as to how the £1,200 allowance is used and students have been allowed to use part of their allowance for fieldwork or data costs. Each request to the conference and research costs fund must have the support of the student's supervisor before it can be considered by the Directors of the MRes/PhD.

PhD students also receive departmental financial support to attend the Job Market each year. The majority of students will be funded to attend the European job market, while only selected students will receive departmental funding for the US job market. The selection of students will be undertaken by the Placement Director in discussion with the supervisor.

Funding Body Requirements

Students funded by the ESRC are required to follow additional [guidelines](#) set out by the ESRC. For example, it may be possible to extend the period of funding where a student needs to:

- acquire or develop a working ability with another language in order to carry out fieldwork;
- undertake an Overseas Institutional Visit (OIV); or
- take a period of Maternity Leave.

There are particular requirements around suspension of studies (or temporary withdrawal- TWD), in that ESRC students are allowed a maximum of 12 months TWD, during the lifetime of their award. Normally, PGR students are allowed up to two years of TWD during their registration (although one can only apply for a maximum of 12 months at a time).

Training for Supervisors

Newly recruited research active staff are required to undertake training in research supervision as part of their mandatory probationary training. There is also a Research Supervision Forum (new in October 2019), which meets termly and consists of a guest speaker presentation and opportunity to share experiences and challenge ideas with other supervisors. Further information on the Research Supervision Forum, can be found [here](#).

Students' Training Requirements

All Supervisors should formally discuss student training requirements with their students at the beginning of the PhD and (as a minimum) at the beginning of each stage of the student's project (or academic year). This review should be recorded on the training needs analysis form. However, supervisors should monitor the training needs of their students on a regular basis. The university's [Researcher Development Programme](#) (RDP) provides more general training opportunities for research students, which might complement the very specialist training economics students receive as part of their MRes degree. Training in transferable skills is available within the RDP (for example: presentation skills and project management skills).

Project Management Guidance

Supervisors should give detailed advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work, agreeing objectives for each stage, so that the thesis is submitted within the scheduled time period (which is a maximum of four years registration for completion of the thesis, while the job market paper should be ready by the start of year four). It is important that supervisors make clear to their students the expectation that they should complete their thesis within these timescales at the beginning of their research programme. Supervisors should in addition, discuss with students a likely submission date at the beginning of year four. Appendices 1-3 give further guidance on key milestones in the PhD.

Review of Written Work

The Supervisor is required to provide advice on writing up the work, request written work as appropriate and return such work with constructive criticism and within reasonable time. What is reasonable will depend on the size of the work being reviewed (for example a response within two weeks for a single paper or a response within 20 working days for a full thesis, would be considered reasonable) . The early submission of a piece of written work will help to identify any areas in which further training or development is needed, and Supervisors may wish to require the submission of a piece of written work within the first six months of registration. The Supervisor is also required to read a complete draft of the thesis and provide detailed comments to the student in good time to allow the student to revise the work before submission. *Please note the student must be examined on the thesis*

submitted to the University on the given due date. It is not permissible to send an updated version of the thesis to the examiners after the submission date and the University views this as cheating.

Student Support and Wellbeing

Supervisors should be accessible to students by arrangement to advise on academic or personal problems as required. The wellbeing of our MRes and PhD students is a priority for the department. We want students to be able to raise any concerns and issues and be confident that these will be treated in a confidential and sensitive manner and that any actions or learning will be undertaken by the Department where necessary. Where appropriate, Supervisors should refer students to the departmental officer for research student wellbeing (Wiji Arulampalam) or the Programme Manager (Maryanne Heafey) or other [University support services](#), as appropriate. If you are concerned for the welfare of a research student, please raise this with either the departmental contact (Wiji, Maryanne or Manuel as Director MRes/PhD) or seek further guidance [here](#).

Time Away from Warwick

If you are planning to be away from Warwick for more than two weeks, you should let your PhD students know, so that they can plan accordingly. If you are planning to be away for more than a month, you should make arrangements for supervision of your PhD students to continue. If you are away on a period of study leave, you can continue to supervise your students but if this is not possible, you must put other arrangements in place for their research supervision in your absence. Some meetings might take place over skype or where a student is working with more than one Supervisor, arrangements should be made for the other Supervisor to meet with the student in your absence. Similarly, if the student is planning to be away for more than one month, supervision meetings should continue as normal so that progress can be monitored, but meetings might take place via skype or telephone.

Research students planning to travel overseas either for the purposes of research work or conference are required to complete a risk assessment. Students are informed of this requirement in the MRes/ PhD Student Handbook; their completed form however, needs to be signed by the Supervisor. You can view the form and procedures for the required risk assessment [here](#).

Ethical Approval

Although the student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that they follow ethical approval guidance and seek approval where necessary for their research, the Supervisor has a key role in flagging up ethical approval requirements to the student in early discussion of their research topic and ideas. Guidance on ethical approval is included in the Student Handbook and available on the University [Research and Impact Services](#) web pages.

Student Attendance at Seminar Series

Research students are required to attend at least one external speaker seminar series and one work in progress workshop series, each year and to present at least once a year in their chosen workshop series. There is an expectation of regular attendance by the student at their chosen seminar series. Students are required to declare at the start of the academic year, which series they will follow and to keep a record of the seminars they attend. Students are also required to align with the relevant research group in the department. Supervisors should discuss with their student, which seminar series they might attend, given their research interests.

Monitoring of Student Progress

The University expects students to devote a minimum of 1,800 hours per year to their research. This figure should be borne in mind when allocating teaching or research assistant duties to PhD students, to ensure that students progress as expected. The supervisor has the responsibility for monitoring the progress of their student, in the following ways:

i. Monthly Supervisor: Student Meetings

Supervisors are required to meet with their students, either individually or in a group, on at least a monthly basis. More frequent meetings may take place according to the preferences of student and Supervisor and the stage of the work, but monthly meetings should be seen as a minimum requirement. There are benefits from group meetings for both the student and the Supervisor: in terms of hearing about the difficulties experienced by other students in their research work and the way in which problems have been solved, as well as the positive experiences of other students on their research journey.

Students are required to upload a short report to their Tabula page after each monthly meeting with their Supervisor. The idea is to provide a record of the meeting i.e.: what was discussed, what guidance was offered and what the student is required to achieve before the next meeting. Supervisors must approve these meeting reports (via Tabula) as an accurate record. Please remind your students to complete and upload a report as soon as possible after your meeting. Supervisors should approve (or not) the report within 5 days. Once a report has been approved it serves as a monitoring point for the student. The prime purpose of the meeting reports is to provide a record of your supervisory guidance to the student and you are therefore advised to consider the content carefully before signing off as approved. *A student appeal based on lack of supervisory support, would refer to these meeting reports as a key source of evidence.*

ii. Six Monthly Progress Reports

PhD students are required to submit a six-monthly progress report to the Director PhD in May and November each year (first year PhD students do not submit a November report). The report aims to establish:

1. What work has been completed so far?
2. What work remains to be done?
3. Whether the student is on track to submit the thesis by the given submission date?

The 6-month report is uploaded by the student to their Tabula page and the Supervisor is required to approve the report as an accurate record of the student's progress. The Director PhD and Director MRes/PhD review these reports and follow up with Supervisor and student as required.

iii. Annual PhD Forum

From year two onwards, PhD students are required to present an overview of their research at the annual PhD Forum, which takes place in the first week of autumn term. Students who have just completed year one (of the PhD), are *strongly encouraged* but not required to provide a written paper to the forum. Students provide a 15-minute presentation on the work completed over the preceding year, followed by a five-minute discussion led by a named discussant (a nominated student, working in the same broad field, who is able to lead a short discussion on your work) and 10 minutes of questions.

Through the annual forum we are encouraging students to start writing early, as students often underestimate how long it can take to get a good draft. At the end of year two (PhD), students are expected to submit their first complete paper to the forum and provide a presentation (as above). If work is well enough advanced on the second paper, they can present this if preferred. At the end of year three, the students should be presenting their job market paper to the forum. **Further information on expectations around student progress over the course of the four years of registration are included in the appendix to this handbook.**

The annual PhD Forum, along with the information provided in the six-monthly progress report and the monthly record of supervisor meetings, allows the Director MRes/PhD to identify any student who is not progressing as expected, taking into account the year of their registration. After discussions with the Supervisor, a follow up meeting will take place between the student and the Director (and Programme Manager) to explore the reasons for the slower than expected progress. Students are signposted to additional support, where appropriate and further arrangements put in place to keep progress under review.

Extension to Registration Period

Given that economics students now complete the two-year MRes prior to the PhD, applications for extension to the submission deadline are expected to be close to zero. Any request for extension requires departmental support and will only be granted when supported by severe mitigating circumstances - normally relating to the health of the student or a close relative for whom they have caring responsibilities. Delays caused by difficulties in obtaining data or solving a model are not accepted as valid reasons for granting extension, as these can be avoided by careful monitoring of student progress and regular Supervisor support. (Text to be added in relation to Covid19- students delayed as a result of Covid will be considered for extension support).

Recommend Examiners

The Supervisor is required to recommend examiners for the student's thesis, to the department in good time, normally at least one month before submission of the thesis. The proposed examiners have to be approved at the departmental level before being submitted to the University. The normal requirement is for one internal examiner and one external examiner. Where there is no available internal examiner with expertise in the area of the thesis, it is possible to nominate two external examiners, in which case an Examinations Advisor will be required. The Programme Manager (PGR) can advise on which members of faculty would be eligible to approach for the role of Examinations Advisor but this is usually a colleague who has experience of the research examination process at Warwick. Supervisors should check with the student that the proposed examiners have not had significant input into the student's project or a significant personal or financial relationship with the student. The Supervisor (not the student) is responsible for contacting the proposed examiner (or Examinations Advisor) and obtaining their agreement to examine, prior to submission of any details to the University. In cases where a thesis is referred for resubmission, if the candidate wishes, the Supervisor can advise on the necessary revisions in consultation with the internal examiner or examination advisor. Further information on the research examination process can be found [here](#).

Appendix 1

Progression Targets and Expectations for PhD Students in Economics

Stage	Expectation
PhD Year 1 (August)	At the end of your first year in the PhD you should ideally have an initial draft of your first paper or as a minimum: a <i>very clear</i> idea of the first substantial chapter. What is “very clear” will depend upon the area and we provide further guidelines in Appendix 2. Many students will build on work developed during the MRes dissertation, using this as the basis for work that will develop into a chapter of the PhD. (<i>Please note you cannot present the exact same piece of work for both degrees.</i>)
PhD Year 2 (October)	In October of your second year in the PhD, you will make your first presentation to the PhD annual forum. At the end of year 1, students are <i>strongly encouraged</i> but not required to provide a written paper to the forum and instead presentation slides may suffice. These should however, be detailed enough to allow your chosen discussant to lead a five minute discussion on your work. You are encouraged to start writing early, as students often underestimate how long it can take to get a good draft.
PhD Year 3 (October)	One substantial paper finished; and work well under way on the second paper. At the annual PhD forum in October of your second year, you will be expected to present a draft of your second paper.
PhD Year 3 (January)	You are required to attend job market talks taking place in the department. A detailed Job Market timeline is available in Appendix 3.
PhD Year 3 (May/June)	Your draft job market paper should be ready. You will discuss job market prospects and intentions with your supervisor(s) and present your draft job market paper to the Placement Officer.
PhD Year 3 (August)	Students to meet with their supervisor(s) to confirm job market prospects and intentions regarding the job market. Supervisors are required to assess their students and to indicate whether their student is likely to succeed on the job market or should be steered towards another employment opening.
PhD Year 3, September	Dependant on the field, your job market paper should be ready from early September. Job market photographs will be organised by the department and you will create your job market website and set up an account on Econjobmarket.org and JOE (aeaweb.org).
PhD Year 4, October	Supervisors to email confirmation to the Placement Officer that their student is ready for the job market and faculty will meet to discuss/ assess all candidates.
PhD year 4, December	All job market candidates will attend the European job market meeting.
PhD year 4, January	Selected job market candidates will be funded to attend the US job market meeting.
PhD year 4, by 30 th September.	Submit your PhD Thesis. You can submit your thesis any time in your fourth year (prior to your submission deadline) but we need to seek permission from the Doctoral College, for an early submission. This is a formality.

Progression Rules for PhD Students and the PhD Forum

Introduction

We provide some information below about some targets that you should keep in mind during your tenure in the department as a Ph.D. student. These are prepared under the constraint that the university will NOT allow any extension beyond 4 years, except under very exceptional circumstances (normally medical or personal reasons). We strongly advise students to target the end of year 3 as the deadline. This will ensure that unplanned delays do not cause anyone to miss the 4-year cut-off. With this in mind, these targets are set out by working backwards. The dates below refer to years 1-4 of your PhD registration (in terms of the MRes/PhD programme, they refer to years 3-6 of the MRes/ PhD programme).

Year 4: Submit your final dissertation no later than your final date of registration (usually September 30th of your fourth year). The department will not support an extension beyond this date, unless there are exceptional circumstances. You can submit your dissertation any time in year 4. Most students will submit after the job market business is complete, so that their examination can be completed and the degree awarded before they begin their placement.

Year 4: You should be ready to go on the job market in autumn of your fourth year of PhD.

Year 3: By September of your third year your job market paper should be ready.

Year 3: By June of your third year we expect you to have completed three very good draft papers which will constitute your thesis.

Year 2: one substantial paper finished; and work well under way on the second paper.

Year 1: At the end of year 1 you should ideally have an initial draft of your first paper or as a minimum: a *very clear* idea of the first substantial chapter. What is “very clear” will depend upon the area. We provide below some guidelines.

- (i) Theoretical Model: in either Microeconomics or Macroeconomics: the student should know why the proposed topic is different from the existing literature, some idea of the proposed model, a worked out example backing up the expected set of results.
- (ii) Field Experiments: the proposed experimental design, some idea of where the funding is going to come from; perhaps an application to some funding agency.
- (iii) Laboratory Experiments: given a well-thought out theoretical model, planning design and programming the software needed for the experiment; running a pilot experiment. Students wanting to run experiments are strongly advised to audit initial lectures in EC984 unless they have had some prior exposure to experimental methods.
- (iv) Empirics: the student should have assembled the main data set for the thesis (in case of archival work, primary and secondary sources located, photographed and at least partly digitized, so that regression can be run; in case of use of administrative data sources which can only be accessed in data centre: data access cleared and data in active research use);

rich set of descriptive statistics and/or maps showing regional patterns; first regressions run; much thought given to identification.

Annual PhD Forum

All students are required to give a presentation describing their progress, at the annual PhD Forum meeting (which takes place in the first week of the autumn term) and to provide a paper. At the end of year 1, students are ***strongly encouraged*** but not required to provide a written paper to the forum and instead presentation slides may suffice but these should be detailed enough to allow your chosen discussant to lead a five minute discussion on your work. We encourage you to start writing early, as students often underestimate how long it can take to get a good draft. At the end of year 2, you should submit your complete paper to the forum and provide a presentation. If your work is well enough advanced on your second paper, you can present this if you prefer (but please seek guidance from your Supervisor). At the end of year 3, you will present your job market paper to the forum.

Professors Bhaskar Dutta/ Manuel Bagues

Directors MRes/PhD

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Appendix 3

Job market Timeline and Key Milestones