Leeds Institute of Health Sciences

FACULTY OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

The Thesis Manual

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Doctor of Clinical Psychology Training Programme

2020/21

Table of Contents

Preface

This guide will give you a brief overview of the research components of the Programme and how they are managed. It will cover the research thesis in detail, giving you important information about every step of the research process. It is supplemented by several other documents:

- Guide to your research budget (located on Minerva in the Research folder)
- Guide to research governance (located on Minerva in the Research folder)
- Publication guide (located on Minerva in the Research folder)
- Systematic Case Study (SCS) Manual
- Service Evaluation Project (SEP) Manual

Research can be extremely exciting and extremely frustrating. Most researchers would tell you that it is the former that makes the latter bearable. If you're new to research you may need some convincing that research can be a positive – even enjoyable - experience, but the truth is that many have discovered just that during the course of training. It can also, of course, be very tough, and there is no denying that completing the research components of the Programme in three years is a demanding task. Our aim, however, is not just to get you through this. We train you so that you are able to carry on conducting research after you qualify. More importantly, perhaps, we aim to train you so that you *want* to carry on with research after you qualify.

Research is, of course, an extremely important part of the profession of clinical psychology and there are at least three good reasons why a clinical psychologist should gain experience and expertise in research during training.

First, the practice of clinical psychology is founded on research, derived initially from traditional academic psychology but more recently from work within clinical psychology itself. As practitioners, you must be knowledgeable about this research base, and able to demonstrate your understanding. You should also be a part of it - having had the opportunity to gain direct experience of undertaking research during training. This will enable you to read the literature with a critical eye, helping you to interpret studies and decide on the merits of new interventions and models. It will also encourage you to use these skills to evaluate your own practice. There is a tendency to take such critical skills for granted, which is a mistake since this ability to think flexibly and critically about our work is the lynchpin of our profession.

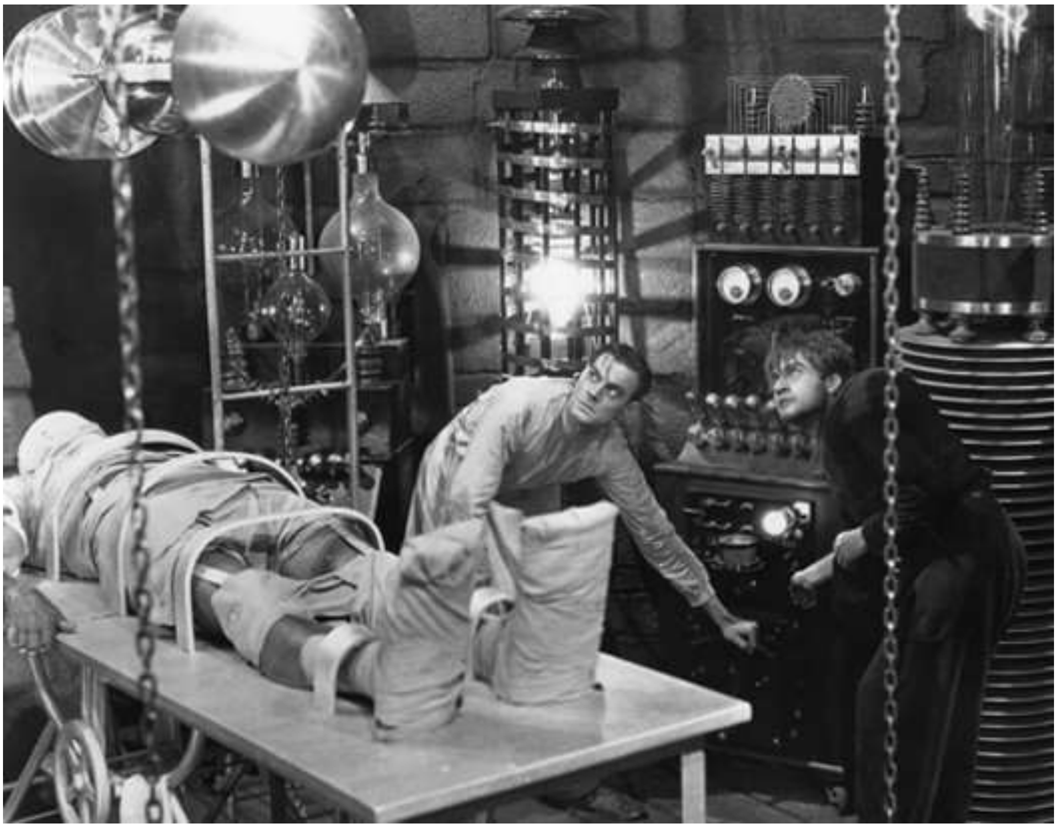
Second, clinical psychologists are the major source for the diffusion of complex psychological ideas into the Health Service. This is not a small responsibility. Well-trained psychologists should be able to demonstrate their ability to communicate complex ideas and relevant data to many different audiences.

Third, practising psychologists are frequently asked to undertake, collaborate and advise in research proposals. They are widely seen as a profession within the health service with expertise in research. Conducting, reading, and learning about research are a necessary preparation for this role.

It is clear, then, that an ability to understand and conduct research is much more than a hurdle to be jumped before being allowed to practice – it forms a foundation for our practice and is what sets us apart as a profession.

As a broad aim the Leeds Programme endeavours to give you a positive research experience in which you are encouraged to learn about issues in research. You will also be given the opportunity to apply new methods in a setting in which you are provided with good supervisory support and technical facilities, such as computing, databases, statistical packages, and libraries. We will also be providing teaching on various aspects of the research process throughout training.

We'll help you to prepare for what's to come, and to get the best out of it.



An Introduction to Research on the Programme

The research components of the programme

There are three main research components required by the regulations governing the award of the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and by the HCPC which accredits the Programme. These are:

- The Research Thesis
- The Systematic Case Study (SCS)
- The Service Evaluation Project (SEP)

The research thesis is the major undertaking and is covered in detail here.

The SCS is undertaken as a case report from one of your placements. It differs from other case reports in that you are asked to apply your research skills to your practice and evaluate some aspect of the therapeutic or assessment process. This covers a wide range of possible topics, including, for example, a qualitative study of the processes of therapy or a quantitative study tracing changes in symptoms during treatment.

The SEP is a service evaluation or an audit project, usually commissioned by a local service. You are asked to apply your research skills within an applied setting, with the overall aim of providing information that departments need and which may well be acted upon to improve services. You are expected to produce a report for the host department, and usually a presentation. You are also asked to submit a report of your SEP to the Programme and produce a poster for the SEP conference at the beginning of your third year.

The Research Sub-Committee (RSC)

The management of the research parts of the Programme is the responsibility of the Research Subcommittee (RSC) of the Programme Management Committee (PMC). Its purpose is to oversee the management of the research parts of the course, and also has a strategic role, supporting the programme in responding to local and national changes impacting on trainee research, such as developments in NHS ethics, and overseeing general policy. Finally, the RSC also has a role in monitoring the overall quality of research theses.

Membership comprises representatives of the academic staff of the University, local clinical supervisors with research experience, and a service user. Three trainee representatives - one from each year - are elected to the committee on a yearly basis. The RSC is appointed by the PMC annually. The RSC is chaired by the Research Director, who writes a brief report on the activities of the RSC for each PMC. Members of the RSC are recruited to the research panels held around September of year 1. The RSC is also expected to relate its own work to the observations of the external examiner, the CTCP (Committee for Training in Clinical Psychology) accreditation team and other courses for guidance.

The thesis time-table

At the beginning of each year you will get a single page of dates and deadlines for the year. The main sequence is outlined below, but there is much more detail later in this manual.

Year 1

- In year 1 you should begin to think about possible research topics. Throughout year 1 you will have study time allocated - usually a half day a week. There is also additional study time identified between placements.

- November - March: Trainees are encouraged to explore possible research ideas – talk to the course team, possible supervisors, and read around topics. In January there is a teaching session on developing your research project, which also offers an opportunity to discuss ideas. The course will circulate details of supervisors eligible to supervise DClin projects that are available this year[1]. This will normally be a member of staff in the Institute of Health Sciences (often a member of the course team) or from the School of Psychology. We also tell you details of any larger projects currently underway in the Institute where there is the possibility of a DClin project that may be worked alongside the main project.

- End of March: you need to make sure that you have a signed research contract – i.e. that you have confirmed supervision arrangements. You'll find a blank form on Minerva (the VLE), and in the appendix to this document. You can do this at any time, but it has to be completed by the end of March.

[1] You need an academic supervisor from the University of Leeds for your research, regardless of whether you have a local clinician onboard as field supervisor. Many local supervisors are active in research and make excellent collaborators, but in order to undertake the thesis you need an academic willing to take responsibility for University supervision and eligible to supervise (having completed a three-year probationary period at Leeds), otherwise they will need a second supervisor.

- Beginning of May: Thesis Statement of Intent submitted; this is very brief and outlines the topic and proposed method. You'll find an online excel file on Minerva (the VLE).

- Early September: research proposal is submitted. This document contains a brief literature review and outlines your proposed research, with draft method, timetable and any potential ethical issues. You also need to submit a training plan (available in GRAD) at the same time, though this may well change later as the method is developed. You need to indicate what training you anticipate you will need to complete the research. GRAD is a customised area of the University computing system (called Graduate Record of Achievement and Development). It can be accessed via Minerva. At the same time, you need to complete the First Formal Progress Report which is available in GRAD. A user guide on how to complete it is available (under the title of FFPR)

- Week 3-4, September: Research panels review your proposal. The research panels are normally made up of an independent academic member of staff and (one of) your supervisor(s), and sometimes an expert by experience. They review the proposal to ensure that it is likely to meet the standards required for the DClin. It's not a formal assessment – instead, they will offer constructive feedback on possible improvements.

Year 2

- In year 2 you develop your research, apply for NHS or University ethics (and complete NHS R & D requirements if needed) then pass the University transfer viva which leads to registration for the doctorate. After this you work on data collection for the rest of the year. In year 2, you will usually have one day a week as a research and study day. Additional study time is identified between placements.

- October- January: Develop the research project and finalise method.

- February: Prepare to obtain ethical approval for the research. This might be through the School of Medicine ethics committee, or through NHS research ethics.

- Mid-February: Submit transfer document (and academic integrity form). This is a long document containing an extended literature review and a summary of your research method. It should also contain details of ethical approval, and an updated timetable. You also need to complete the online Transfer Progress Report on GRAD system.

- Late February/Early March: Transfer viva is held. In the viva, a small panel of two university staff review your transfer document and ask you questions about your progress. This process is to ensure that you are on schedule and to endorse the official recommendation for registration for a doctoral degree with the University.

- April - September: this is normally when the bulk of your data collection takes place.

- End of year 2: you need to discuss plans for thesis submission with your supervisors, and tell us when you are aiming to submit. The earlier the submission, the more likely that you will be able to make all of the required changes after the viva and complete all components of the programme by the end of September.

Year 3

- The thesis is written in year 3, with a final recommended date for submission of end May/beginning June. Oral examinations of the theses (the viva) will normally take place in late June/July, but are held later in the summer if the thesis is delayed. In year 3 you will have two days a week as research days until mid-May, and additional time in October.

- October-January: you will be completing data collection and carrying out analyses during this time, but from early in the third year you also need to start writing the thesis.

- February-May: by this time the data collection and analysis should be completed, and you should be writing the thesis ready for submission.

- Mid May: the recommended deadline for submission of the thesis.

- Late June - July: the vivas normally take place, in which you will be examined on your thesis by an external and internal examiner.

- At the end of June/beginning of July there is the three-course thesis conference where you are expected to present your thesis research at a conference with third year trainees from the three Yorkshire courses (Leeds, Sheffield and Hull).

- August-September: for those examined in July, your focus is normally on making any changes to your thesis requested by the examiners, and writing up academic papers based on your research. For early summer submissions, the viva will be arranged for this date.

- By end of summer: you are expected to complete plans with your supervisors for dissemination of your thesis; for those examined early in the summer, you should aim to have a draft paper by the end of September.

Summary

Table 1 Important deadlines in the thesis timetable

	Study days	Deadlines
Year 1	½ day per week until July, then 1 day a week	*End of March* Research Supervision Contract *Beginning May* Statement of intent *September, Week 1* Research proposal First Formal Progress Report Training plan *September, Week 3-4* Research panels
Year 2	1 day per week until July, then 2 days a week	*February* Begin gaining ethical clearance for research *Mid February:* Transfer document & academic integrity form Formal Progress Report (Transfer Stage) *Late February/Early March* Transfer viva
Year 3	2 days per week until Mid-May. After that you have 1 day a week over the summer to focus on the presentation and writing a paper. You also get 4 flexible study days to take for writing up, subject to negotiation with your placement supervisor.	*Mid May:* Recommended deadline for thesis submission *June-July:* Three course thesis conference Viva for late spring submission (oral examination of thesis) Vivas take place; these may carry on until September for later submissions

The research process

The research thesis is the single largest piece of work you are expected to complete during the Programme. As a result, it can be seen as dominating your training. This is not the intention, and though there will be times when it demands much of your attention, it should complement your professional and personal development during the programme.

What follows is a step-by-step guide to the thesis. Keep this handy as you go through the programme and remember to consult it. It may help to ease the stress!

The aims of the Doctoral thesis

The thesis is to be an empirical investigation of an important issue in the field of clinical psychology. It will introduce you to some of the realities of conducting research in the NHS – research which is time-limited, has limited resources and set in a clinical situation.

There are two crucial requirements: It is expected to contain original work and be of a publishable standard. It should be of the same quality as a PhD, but not the same quantity (PhDs are much longer pieces of work).

During the process of completing the D.Clin.Psychol, you will need to:

- *identify an appropriate clinical topic;*
- *formulate appropriate questions relevant to the present state of the literature;*
- *devise a method which enables you to answer the questions posed in an efficient and reliable way;*
- *prepare a research proposal and later a transfer document which fulfils the requirements of the University which validates your qualification;*
- *carry out the project with appropriate regard to ethical practice and time and resource management;*
- *communicate your findings effectively in the thesis and in the viva.*

This may sound like a lot of work, and it is. It is also achievable, and the Programme will do everything it can to help you to achieve it.

Reasonable adjustments

The university is experienced in supporting students with a declared disability through the various stages of the research process, particularly the transfer viva and final viva. This is always done on a case by case basis, but you can find out more information here. Most adjustments are very straightforward, and often a matter of good examination practice that should always be followed – for example:

- examiners using succinct and focussed questions and avoiding the use of multi-part questions
- Thinking time before answering questions
- Asking for a question to be repeated/re-phrased or requesting clarification
- Being able to consult your own copy of the thesis/submission
- Breaks during the viva

Others are more specific, such as an advance briefing for the Panel/Examiners on the particular nature of the disability or use of a British Sign Language interpreter.

Other adjustments may require further discussion with us, so as with all aspects of the course, do talk to us about what supports you may need.

What resources are there to help?

The staff

The staff are the most important resource the Programme has. You'll find we all have different interests and different experiences, and we are all extremely approachable. Don't hesitate to approach us with ideas, problems or queries. If you have a specific question about the research process, contact Gary (he is at the Worsley Building most days, and checks his University e-mail during the week) or your academic tutor.

Teaching

Throughout the Programme you will have teaching on evaluation and research methods. This covers a variety of topics, from strategies for assessing change in your patients, reviews of psychotherapy outcome research, qualitative and quantitative research methods and statistics. In addition, there are a number of sessions giving advice on practical issues such as choosing a research question, obtaining ethical approval, writing up and surviving the viva. Although we can't hope to cover every skill that you will need, we hope that you will find much that is useful.

Guides and documents

There are three types of document that you will find useful: University publications and manuals, Institute materials, and documents produced by the Programme. The latest versions are always available on Minerva (the VLE). Look out for many other resources on there too.

University publications:

- Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidates
- Research Degrees Ordinances and Regulations, University of Leeds

Institute materials:

- Institute Personal Safety Guidance

Programme Manuals:

- This Manual
- The Systematic Case Study Manual
- The Service Evaluation Project Manual

Other programme guides (located on Minerva in the Research folder)

- Researchers' Guide to the NHS Research Governance Framework
- A Guide to Financial Procedures and the Research Grant
- Publication guide
- Research Interview Safety Protocol
- Thesis Template

The research grant and the Max Hamilton Fund

The good news is that the programme provides you with a research budget of £800 (£400 available in each of the 2nd and 3rd years). One of the aims of the research is for you to learn to manage the budget efficiently and effectively. For details of the budget and what it may be spent on, please see the separate document on financial procedures available on Minerva (the VLE).

If you are in need of further finances for research costs, *and have spent/committed all your research budget* there is the possibility of applying for a small grant from the Max Hamilton Memorial Research Fund. You may for example perhaps want to apply for extra funds to enable you to travel to consult with a specialist in your chosen field or to purchase test equipment. For further information see the Max Hamilton Fund information[2] on the Academic Unit web pages, ensuring you pay attention to the question specific advice.

[2] Max Hamilton Fund information


ALICIA HULL

Year One – Getting an idea, a supervisor, and the research panels

Developing the research idea

During the first year, you have to think about possible research topics, make approaches to potential University (and field) supervisors, and develop a proposal.

Finding a good research question is sometimes the most difficult part of the research process, and the part least discussed in the literature. It invariably involves a lot of background reading and literature surveys, but it may also involve thinking about issues that have interested you during placement or from previous experiences. Perhaps the most useful strategy, however, is to talk to colleagues and potential supervisors. There is no better way to develop an idea. Remember, though, that getting a university supervisor eligible to supervise is essential, so make this a priority.

The Programme has a policy of trying to maximise its research activity by concentrating on a few areas where there is expertise and interest in available academic supervisors. It may well be possible for you to build upon work completed previously and achieve more than you would if you were to develop a new topic yourself. We'll circulate a list of possible projects. Working on one of these is strongly recommended. We'll give you a list of who is available.

Selecting a topic

You have a wide range of areas from which to select a possible topic. The topic should be clinically relevant, but this is fairly flexible. The most important restriction is a very practical one: The University demands that a member of staff supervises each doctorate, and research must therefore fall within one of their areas of expertise. A glance at the current list of possible supervisors and at past theses will give you an idea of the range of areas available.

In general, a wide variety of methods are available to you, from group to single cases, from experimental studies to structured surveys. Service oriented, experimental or theoretical topics are all suitable.

Whichever area you choose to study and whatever your chosen design, you must make sure that your chosen topic is theoretically grounded. Put simply, without an adequate theoretical foundation, interpretation of results is difficult, and there is a danger that any conclusions you may reach have little practical use.

It is important, too, to pitch your research question at the right level. There is a chance that you might select a trivial question, but it is far more likely that you will attempt to answer a question far greater than you are able to answer. Global topics don't tend to succeed. Instead, you need to remember that it's useful to consider big issues but only attempt to study small aspects, to ask questions that it is possible to answer with the time and resources available to you.
A useful phrase:

"Look at the big picture, ask a small question."

Asking questions and formulating hypotheses can take time, but can make a huge difference to the quality of your study. In general, specific questions and hypotheses are more likely to produce a satisfying project than a broad exploratory study.

The value of continuing a topic of research in which you have previously been engaged is acknowledged if supervision is available. However, it is felt that for the purposes of the Postgraduate Programme in Clinical Psychology, if you choose this option there should be some theoretical and methodological advancement of the work so that you widen your experience.

Selecting a method

Choice of method again depends upon the expertise available for supervision. In Leeds we are lucky to have many skilled supervisors available and past theses have adopted several different qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including Grounded Theory, Personal Construct Theory, single case series, small group designs, and surveys. The method you choose must be appropriate to the topic and clinical context. Above all, it must be able to answer the research question. Different methodologies are obviously suited to different types of research question. It is wise to remember, however, that if you choose to research an area that is totally unfamiliar to you it may not be in your best interest to also decide to use an unfamiliar method.

You may well need advice on choice of method, and on the many various problems that are bound to surface and need addressing (e.g. possible sampling bias, identifying real versus random change, controlling general versus specific variables and identifying alternative competing hypotheses). Your supervisor has responsibility for helping you with these issues.

Clearly a number of practical constraints may also affect your choice of method, including access to participants, previous work in your chosen area, and financial issues such as possible payments and travel expenses to subjects.

It is important to note, even at this early stage, the practical implications of adopting your chosen method, and plan for this. Tests and questionnaires need to be ordered or designed in good time, and equipment may have to be purchased. Those embarking on qualitative studies that involve transcription of interviews need to be aware of the financial or time implications of transcribing many audio files.

Finally, be aware of the resources around which should help make life easier. In particular, you have excellent access to databases, internet resources and literature searches. There is also software appropriate for most types of method, including SPSS for quantitative studies and NVivo for qualitative studies. You also have free access to Online Surveys[3], which allows you to design and create good quality web-based surveys. 'Forms' is another easy to use survey tool available through your University Office365 account. Other software may also make your life easier, including reference managers, graphics packages, presentation and word processing software, and data management programmes (available through Desktop Anywhere). Regular tutorials and training sessions are available on many of these packages in the University. Look on the Organisational Development & Professional Learning website[4] for details of courses on offer to postgraduates, or ask Clare or Anita.

Selecting a title

Postgraduate Research and Operations (PRO) has issued the following points for good practice, which should be followed when devising your thesis title:

- The need to ensure that each student has a clearly defined and unique thesis title
- The use of short titles which clearly reflect the work being undertaken
- The avoidance of unnecessary words such as "an introduction to, an evaluation of, an investigation into"
- The use of titles which are relatively narrowly focussed to reflect the restricted length of the period of study
- The use of titles which locate the work in the relevant discipline or disciplines
- The use of grammatically correct language
- The use of a title, where possible, which can indicate clearly the area of research, even to those outside the discipline.

Review your title annually with your supervisor(s) to ensure that it is still an appropriate description of the work being carried out. If you need to make a change to the title that Postgraduate Research and Operations has on record for you, for example because your title no longer adequately reflects your research, this can be done when you complete your annual registration document, or when you complete your entry for exam form in year 3 (there is a space on this form where your supervisor would need to pen a sentence of explanation). Clare (Research Coordinator) will write to PRO of changes made at any other times. The Chair of the Board of Examinations Group has to approve all title changes. Changes should not normally occur after the Examinations Group has approved your entry for exam form in year 3.

What do you need to do?

[3] University Guide to Online Surveys

[4] Organisational Development & Professional Learning website

You need to begin thinking about possible research topics in the first months of your first year. It is important to talk over your ideas with supervisors, peers, clinicians in the area, and anyone with sensible advice and experience. We recommend approaching possible supervisors early. You may, in fact, have several ideas at the start of the year. Once you have a supervisor the method may still vary quite a bit. You are not committed to a final proposal until the submission to the research panels. You will also need to think about access to participants. It is often a good idea to enlist the help of a field supervisor – normally a clinical psychologist from around the region – many of whom have excellent research skills. They can obviously play a major role in developing the research question.

The teaching on research methods should help you to plan your research, but do suggest changes through the Research Sub-Committee if you think of ways that it can be improved. Also, don't hesitate to talk to the programme staff – especially Gary - if you have any queries or concerns. It's much better to do this sooner rather than later. Remember, too, that it is important even at this early stage to consider the restrictions of time and resources under which you are working.

By March of year one you need to have identified a research topic and a supervisor or supervisors. You then need to work on:

- Finalising an appropriate method
- A clear understanding of the theoretical underpinning of your research
- Negotiating a field situation (if needed) in which to carry out the study
- Producing clear hypotheses or aims for your research
- Establishing a good understanding of the literature relevant to the topic

Supervision

Your supervisor(s) are extremely important to the success of your research: they are your main source of support and advice. The University stipulates that research must be supervised by an academic member of staff of the University, though it also offers the opportunity for local psychologists to attend a University Supervisor Training workshop. We tend to use supervisors from the Leeds Institute of Health Sciences and School of Psychology. We have information on most, or you can examine their details on the web pages. Each trainee will have at least one supervisor with additional supervisors as appropriate. In all cases, trainees should have an identified single point of contact which will normally will be the main supervisor.

Supervisors will not usually agree to supervise in areas in which they have no expertise. This is to ensure that you are provided with appropriate support and advice during the research process. As a result, occasionally compromises may have to be made to ensure that the proposed research can be adequately supervised by the available supervisors. In addition, you might also find it useful to have a field supervisor – usually a clinical psychologist working in the region with an interest in your research topic who may be able to help you in developing your ideas and assist in negotiating access to participants. Field supervisors are often experienced researchers, and though they would be expected to be co-author on any publication from the research, in University terms they have no formal responsibility for your work and supervision remains the primary responsibility of the academic supervisor. Sometimes it may be possible for you to undertake a research project which has already been part developed by a member of staff, perhaps linking with a larger research project already underway.

When you are first developing your ideas, you might talk to many members of staff. It is your responsibility to obtain a supervisor for your project from the very many available. This will involve you being proactive, and meeting with them several times. When it becomes clear that they will be your supervisor, you both need to sign the research supervision contract that you will find in appendix 1 of this document. The contract ensures that you are both aware of the responsibilities involved. If you decide that you are not going to pursue a project with a supervisor that you have had discussions with previously it is polite to let them know that this is the case. The research supervision contract needs to be completed by March at the latest.

By the time the statement of intent is submitted in May you will have formed good links with a supervisor and have had several meetings. The academic supervisor's responsibilities (outlined in detail in appendix 2) are to help you to meet the requirements for the thesis outlined in this manual. They will not dictate the nature and scope of the thesis and they will not write any of it, though they will give you feedback on what you have written. A general overview of what you can expect from a supervisor is that they will:

- *Assist in defining the problem which is to be tackled in the course of the research. It is vital that this should be given sufficient scope for investigation appropriate to the degree but not be so large a topic that it cannot be mastered within the normal period of candidature.*
- *Assist in clarifying the hypotheses upon which the proposed research is based and establishing the proposed details of the research programme, such as resources required and experimental design.*
- *Approve a timetable of work and endeavouring to see that it is followed.*
- *Arrange regular meetings with the trainee and consult with any field supervisor where necessary.*
- *Comment on written work submitted by the trainee within a reasonable time.*
- *Make written reports on the trainee's progress*
- *Advise generally on the research process and preparation of the thesis.*
- *Continue meeting with the trainee after thesis hand-in to work on publication (for those who want help with publishing), and provide mentoring upon receipt of referee feedback and help with preparing for resubmission.*

It is essential that regular meetings be arranged with your supervisor throughout the research process. University guidelines recommend that there should be a minimum of **twelve** meetings per year, and although the frequency may vary with the stage of research, gaps between sessions should be no more than 8 weeks.

University guidelines insist that notes are kept of the meetings. Normally, this is done by the trainee, who should write up notes of each meeting soon afterwards. Your record should always cover:

(a) Date
(b) People present
(c) Agenda
(d) Comments
(e) Action and future targets
(f) Date of next meeting

Supervision minutes need to be kept online using GRAD, accessed via the Minerva Portal.

There will be access for each trainee's academic research supervisor(s) to the trainee's notes. Supervisors should sign them off to say they're ok, or make comments. This can be done by alerting the primary supervisor and the supervisor then responding by logging in to GRAD and adding a comment.

What do you need to do?

The golden rule is to be active in obtaining an appropriate supervisor, and then to stay in close contact with them. Make sure that you let them see everything that you submit to the Programme, giving enough time for feedback to be incorporated. Your supervisor is likely to be an invaluable source of information and support during the programme.

You also need to use GRAD as soon as your supervision team is in place, and to ensure you use it to keep a record of every supervision.

One last point: as stated earlier, the most important restriction on choice of research topic is the availability of a supervisor with expertise in that area. With luck, you will find someone with whom you share an interest. It may be, however, that you need to make some compromises in developing your research topic in order to match the interests of a possible supervisor. If this happens, we hope that you might use this as an opportunity to widen your experience.

Dissatisfaction with supervision

In the first instance you should pursue informal channels. Talk with the supervisor involved, but if you are uncomfortable talking with the supervisor, or if you have talked over the problem but it has not been resolved, then arrange a meeting with Gary to talk things over. If Gary is your supervisor then arrange to talk to one of the other academic members of staff, such as your tutor, or Jan Hughes.

If you do not get satisfactory resolution through the above informal channels, or if the problem is sufficiently serious to go directly through formal channels, then write to Gary Latchford as joint programme director. He would need to meet you to discuss your concerns within five days of receipt of complaint, and then seek to resolve the complaint and report back to you within a further ten days. If Gary Latchford is the subject of your complaint address your letter to Jan Hughes as the other joint programme director. If you need to raise a formal complaint at University level, see the procedure outlined in The Research Students Handbook[5]. You should seek advice from the University Union Student Advice Centre before following this course.

Service User Involvement[6]

The programme actively encourages the involvement of service users in research, and the key issue is that this involvement should be meaningful. In Leeds several theses have successfully incorporated service user involvement to good effect, and you are advised to consult some of these, for example the theses by Ann Lanham 2015[7], Kay Radcliffe 2014[8], Sheena Parmar 2014[9] and Mary Claxton 2013[10].

The programme considers it good practice for you to consult a service user in planning your research. It may be that you are able to do this through contact with a relevant charity of group, or through a service. If not, we would ask you to consult with the *Everybody's Voice* group (see below). You are encouraged to pay for any consultation from your research budget.

In addition, the Health Research Authority will ask about your plans for public involvement in the research if you apply for ethical review. This will form part of their assessment process and can help ensure your research is ethical, relevant and acceptable.

INVOLVE, the national advisory group whose role is to support and promote active public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research, has produced many publications on aspects of involving service users and carers. A good introduction can be found in their *Briefing notes for researchers; public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research* (2012)[11]. This briefing outlines three approaches to involving people in research:

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[5] Research Student Handbook

[6] Thanks to Everybody's Voice, particularly to Sue and Janet, and to DClin trainee Tom Matthews, for their collaboration on this section

[7] *"Evaluating the psychological predictors of long term weight loss following bariatric surgery."*

[8] *"A qualitative analysis of clients' experience of non-response to psychological therapy."*

[9] *"Parents' understanding of current and future treatments for cystic fibrosis and the implications for their child's future."*

[10] *"Education and employment: the beliefs, aspirations and experiences of young people with cystic fibrosis: a qualitative study."*

[11] INVOLVE , see the 'Briefing notes for researchers' on the 'resources' tab.

i. **Consultation** is a simple way to start with involvement and is a reasonable expectation for most DClin projects. It asks for people's views, for example on the project design, documentation or on any aspect of the research process. However, it may be frustrating for those who take part as there is no researcher commitment to act on their views. It also means people's responses are constrained by the researcher's agenda, and certain frequently targeted people may have 'consultation fatigue'. To attempt to avoid these pitfalls, please see the 'Everybody's Voice' example box on the next page.

ii. **Collaboration** may also be possible for DClin projects. It involves an active ongoing relationship with people who use services, for example through their membership of a project steering committee. This can help to ensure research is relevant to people who use services and help with access to research participants, but it may involve extra time and cost. It may also involve some 'handing over' of power for the researcher.

iii. **User-controlled research** wouldn't occur within a DClin thesis given that the thesis forms an assessed part of clinical training. It is briefly described here so that you are aware of the extent of approaches possible outside the DClin setting. User-controlled research lays the locus of power, initiative and subsequent decision making with service users, who may hold the role of peer researchers. It is preferred by some service user groups who have become disillusioned with (disempowering) mainstream research approaches. Sometimes the object is to liberate participants from the social stigma and marginalisation they experience ("emancipatory research").

Be sure to record the influence of service user and carer involvement on your research. In some theses this may form part of the thesis itself, perhaps as memos. In other theses it may form a part of a research diary, and consulted in the viva or when writing for publication.

The Leeds DClin Programme is fortunate to have *Everybody's Voice*, our Service User and Carer reference group, which is one path to incorporate the expertise of service users and carers into your research. *Everybody's Voice* is not the only option, for your particular topic there may be other organisations or individuals that have more specifically relevant personal expertise. Ask around, there may be a service user group in your area of placement, for example. The example of *Everybody's Voice* is given to show the type of engagement that can take place and to provide some transferrable good practice points.

The type of activities that EV may engage in include a) consulting on plans, or b) reviewing documents for participants, such as information sheets and interview schedules, or c) giving perspectives on personal experiences of receiving services or involvement work, especially of being a participant, or d) signposting trainees to contacts for whom the research falls within their own area of personal expertise.

When involving EV please consider:

- *It is best to approach the group with clear aims and goals.*
- *Involvement early on in the process is best, and not at the end.*
- *Be thoughtful about the opportunity presented.*
- *The format for working together may be 1:1 with a specific member or with the whole group at one of their pre-arranged meetings.*
- *It is ok to arrange for expert professionals to be at the meeting too and the project may benefit from their input.*
- *Work by EV may take place before or after the face-to-face meeting, for example reviewing documents outside the meeting.*
- *Working together works best when attention is given to the working relationship and getting to know the group, and when there is flexibility to work differently with different groups and people.*
- *EV members may choose to be named (in the final thesis) or remain anonymous.*
- *EV members may choose not to disclose personal information in giving their perspectives.*
- *If the group members feel they're not the best contact point for your project they may choose to withdraw and recommend someone else.*
- *Ask about communication preferences and offer to post printed copies of any documents rather than emailing them.*
- *Remember to offer a way for the group to hear about the research findings.*

You are asked to consider whether it would be useful to have an expert by experience on your research panel – more details later.

The statement of intent

At the beginning of May you are asked to submit electronically a Statement of Intent form (an Excel file available on Minerva: Portal and VLE). This is a very brief description of the proposed title and area of research, proposed method, supervisor(s), and progress to date. It is not marked, and is part of our internal processes for ensuing that the Programme is kept up-to-date with the plans of all trainees, and also functions as a deadline to ensure that no trainee falls behind schedule. Sometimes the research topic does change slightly after the Statement of Intent has been submitted, but it is usually a good indication of the final area of research.

What do you need to do?

Complete the online Excel form on time (in the thesis folder on Minerva: Portal and VLE), after consultations with your supervisor(s). Treat the statement of intent as a first deadline for yourself, and see it as the time when you should be focusing on a specific research topic.

The research proposal

At the beginning of September in Year 1 you need to submit a detailed research proposal. This should summarise background, topic, method, and estimated costing. It should be a **maximum of 4,000 words** (excluding appendices) and must be submitted for consideration by a Research Panel. This proposal should be similar in content and structure to those required by ethical or funding bodies. You need to submit one electronic copy. A suggested structure is:

- *Introduction.*
- *Literature review, including an outline of the models underlying your approach*
- *The research question and your research aims or hypotheses*
- *The proposed design, including thoughts about alternative strategies and a justification of your approach*
- *Possible problems (and, where possible solutions) including feasibility and cost*
- *Ethical aspects*
- *Service user involvement?*
- *Proposed timetable*
- *References*
- *Appendices (including measures to be used)*

It is useful to attach any measures you are planning to use (e.g. questionnaires or interview questions). Remember to look at the criteria that are used by the panels in assessing research proposals (they are given in full below). Be sure to give some thought to the theory underlying your approach; the feasibility of your study; potential obstacles; alternative ways of investigating the area, and any ethical issues raised by your research.

The training plan

At the same time as submitting the research proposal, you are also asked to submit a training plan. This asks you to consult your supervisors and write down any additional training that you will need to complete the research. Sometimes there may not be any further training identified; for others this might be quite specialised and expensive (for example, training in administering a structured psychiatric interview). The training plan is available in GRAD. Remember that you are on a training programme itself so at this stage you may not have identified any further needs.

What do you need to do?

You need to prepare a research proposal that conveys to the panel the current state of the literature in your chosen area, a justification for your research question and the methods you have chosen to investigate it, and a sense of what you might find. It's often helpful to explain what first got you interested in the topic. Your proposal will, occasionally, differ from the statement of intent that you will already have submitted, but this is not usually a cause for concern.

It is well worth having a look at the critical appraisal tools available on the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme website[12]. Although written from the point of view of appraising the quality of other people's research, the questions raised will be useful in thinking about your own research.

You must give a copy to your supervisor(s) prior to the panel. It is advisable to allow plenty of time so you can incorporate any feedback from them. A minimum of two weeks is advised.

The first formal progress report

At the same time as submitting the research proposal, you and your supervisor need to complete the online first formal progress report (FFPR) which is available on GRAD.

[12] Critical Appraisal Skills Programme website

The research panels

Around September of each year, we hold the research panels whose core function is to deal with the details of each research proposal. As many research panels are appointed as necessary in order to review the research submissions. They are normally held around the last two weeks of September.

Two – three people normally sit on each panel, one is a colleague from the School of Psychology or the Leeds Institute of Health Sciences at the University of Leeds, one is your academic supervisor (just one supervisor is needed for the panel but if you have more than one all are welcome to attend). You are also encouraged to consider having an expert by experience on your panel. There may be people you could approach in the particular area of your research, or you may approach our own *Everybody's voice*. Either way, you are able to use some of your second-year research budget to fund an expert by experience on your panel. Talk to Anita for more information.

The proposal (one electronic copy via Minerva: Portal and VLE) is submitted by the trainee to the Chair of the Research Sub-committee in the first week of September. This is then circulated to panel members before the meeting, together with the First Formal Progress Report (FFPR), an electronic form which is completed through GRAD. Panel members will normally make notes from this proposal, informed by background reading.

For each panel, the other academic member of staff acts as chair, responsible for convening the meeting and providing a written summary of the recommendations and comments from the panel about the research proposal. The Chair will email you with the feedback. The office will also send a written copy of this feedback to you. Normally, the panel will discuss their decision with you at the end of the meeting.

The panel will meet with yourself and your supervisor(s) to discuss the proposal. The timetable for the research panels allows for 60 minutes for each proposal, the time allocated as follows:

Table 2. The timing of the research panels

Timing	Action
15 minutes	Panel discusses proposal in private
35 minutes	Trainee joins panel to discuss proposal
10 minutes	Panel complete feedback form and make a recommendation

The first 15 minutes may be taken up by paperwork so do not worry if you aren't called in straight away.

The trainee and their academic and field supervisors are invited to attend**.** Remember, your supervisor is there to support you but it is your proposal, and the main responsibility for discussing it rests with you. Remember, too, that although the panel will want to ask you questions, they are there so that you may ask questions of them. If you need advice – for example in choosing a suitable questionnaire – ask them. The process really is meant to be collaborative.

It is important that your main supervisor, at least, attends your panel meeting with you. If they unexpectedly cannot attend last minute, for example due to illness, your panel will ask you if you want to go ahead with the panel there and then or rearrange. Only if both you and the independent academic panel member are happy to proceed without your supervisor will the panel go ahead. Otherwise it will be rearranged for a later date.

Although it is recognised that the panel can be seen as being quite stressful, the intention is for the feedback from the panel to be knowledgeable, sometimes critical, but **always constructive**. It is important that the panel share any reservations they may have about a proposal, but it is equally important that the supportive aspect of the panels is stressed. In practice, many panel members offer to help trainees develop ideas or locate references after the panels have met. It is hoped that the trainee will see the research panel as a reciprocal event and will bring questions to it and use the collective experience of the Panel to help them advance their ideas. The main function of the panels is to provide a resource and guide to trainees on the conduct of their research theses. Remember, too, that it is highly unlikely that panel members will be experts in your particular research topic. They may well need to ask questions to clarify your ideas and how it relates to previously published work, and this is not necessarily criticism. Each proposal will have an academic supervisor involved in the development of the research, and the panel will make sure that the trainee is receiving adequate supervision.

The research panel, because it is an independent and impartial assessment of the potential of a research project, is the Programme's - and the trainees' - most important safeguard against research being undertaken which fails to meet the expected standard for a Doctorate. It is certainly not infallible, but it is a vital part of the management arrangements.

What the panel look for

This is pretty obvious, and mostly comes down to whether the research proposal is feasible (will the trainee get it done in time), ethical (might an ethical issue delay or prevent it from taking place) and suitable (is it of sufficient academic quality to be doctoral research). The panel considers each research proposal on the following grounds:

1. **Coherence**
   - *Is the proposal written in a clear and coherent way?*

2. **Literature review**
   - *Is the literature review reasonably comprehensive and contemporary, or are there obvious gaps?*

3. **The presence of a clear psychological focus for the research**
   - *Does the research question have a clear clinical psychological focus?*
   - *Does the research question have a clear theoretical foundation in the psychological literature?*
   - *Is the research question likely to yield results that would be of publishable quality?*

4. **Appropriate research design.**
   - *Is the method chosen appropriate for the questions being asked?*
   - *Does the writer have a clear understanding of the chosen method?*
   - *Will they need specialised training?*
   - *Have alternative strategies been considered?*
   - *Has enough thought been given to reliability and validity?*

5. **Feasibility**
   - *Are there clear participant recruitment plans and is there likely to be an adequate number of participants for the chosen method (taking into account possible drop out rates).*
   - *Is there a thorough risk analysis, with a well thought out plan B?*
   - *Will access to participants be problematic?*
   - *Is the time-scale sufficient for the project to be completed?*
   - *Will co-operation be given from other professionals?*
   - *Is the project dependent upon someone or something outside of the trainee's control (e.g. technology; obtaining test materials; recruitment by a colleague; a larger research project)?*
   - *Will there be adequate finances to meet the costs of the project?*

6. **The presence of a planned fallback strategy (plan b).**
   - *Is there an alternative research plan should the main project be unable to proceed?*

7. **Ethical acceptability and service user and carer involvement**
   - *Is there a good reason for carrying out this study?*
   - *Has consideration been given to service user and carer involvement?*
   - *Are there any risks to the patients (including psychological distress)?*
   - *Will the patients be deprived of any services they would otherwise be entitled to?*
   - *Are there plans to submit the research to a suitable ethics panel?*

After discussing the proposal with you, the panel will offer you feedback on overall suitability and will suggest changes or modifications that may improve it. They may suggest that a proposal is fine or needs to be revised. On rare occasions they may suggest that the proposal as it stands is not suitable for a DClin project. Their advice is intended to help avoid the possibility of a research project – for whatever reason - failing to meet the criteria for a doctorate when it is submitted. This process is not a formal part of the programme assessments, though the recommendations of the panel are made available to those conducting the Transfer Viva in year 2.

Each research panel is asked to express an opinion on overall suitability and can make one of three recommendations:

Supported. *This proposal is developing well and the panel expressed no major reservations about its suitability. There may be some suggestions and advice for consideration, or changes recommended that are minor in nature.*

Supported with major changes recommended. *The panel feel that either there are significant areas for development or important changes needed to the proposal and strongly recommend that they are made before the Transfer process. A resubmission is not required but the recommendations of the panel will be made available to those conducting the Transfer Viva.*

Not supported. *The trainee is recommended to re-submit a different proposal, to be reviewed in another meeting by a panel.*

The only time you would be advised to resubmit to a panel is if the proposal is not supported. This is uncommon, and in the event the panel make this recommendation it is often useful for the trainee and supervisor to receive further support and guidance from the research director.

Remember, the recommendation of the panel is only advisory and you do not have to follow it, though it is often extremely useful and you would be wise to take their advice.

Normally, the chair will summarise the key points of the discussion and indicate the panel's likely recommendation at the end of the meeting, but the final feedback is decided by the members of the panel in the ten minutes allocated directly after the meeting.

The execution of the research is subsequently monitored by the trainee's academic research supervisor. Any major changes in the research after the panel has been held should normally be brought to the attention of Gary as chair of Research Sub Committee.

What do you need to do?

Before your panel, read your proposal thoroughly. Bring other background information with you to the meeting. It is important that if you have made any changes to your proposal in between handing it in and attending the panel, they are only minor changes. You cannot expect the panel members to spend time reading an out of date proposal. If major changes have been made to your proposal since handing in, you may automatically be asked to resubmit the proposal.

Remember, you may have some doubts about aspects of your proposal. Be honest about this. Read the literature and present any dilemmas you have to the panel. Although they do have an important gate-keeping role, panels work best when they are a collaboration to refine the research proposal into a workable project.

If you should have to revise your proposal after the panel, remember that it is much less trouble to do that now than a few months before your viva!

On to the second year

The research panels mark the end of the first year in terms of the research timetable, and if your project has come together well you are in an excellent position to maintain progress throughout year 2, where the bulk of your data collection will take place. In the middle of year 2, however, there is one final hurdle to overcome – the transfer viva. More on that in the next chapter.

Year Two - The Transfer Viva

Orientation to year 2

Year 2 will usually be the busiest year in terms of your thesis research. The beginning is marked by two tasks – gain ethical approval for the research, and prepare a transfer document for the transfer viva. The second half of the year will then normally be the time when you carry out most of your data collection.

Ethical approval

You may need to make changes to your research following the advice of the research panel, but following this your next task is to obtain ethical approval. This should be well underway (or sometimes even obtained) by the end of February in Year 2. Ethics is a consideration for all research conducted on the programme. All projects need some kind of research ethics approval, either NHS (for example if it involves NHS patients) or University (via the School ethics committee). We'll provide up to date information on this at the start of year 2, including an ethics flowchart telling you what to do and when.

If you are conducting research in the NHS you <u>must</u> meet the requirements of the NHS Research Governance Framework. This requires you to have ethical and research governance (R & D) approval for your research approved ***before*** you make a start on data collection. All other research must be approved by a University Ethics Committee, which for us is the School of Medicine Research Ethics Committee. The Research Governance Guide contains full details and up to date information, for both NHS and non-NHS research, and you are advised to read this guidance carefully.

The Transfer Document, Transfer progress report and the Transfer Viva

When you are admitted to the postgraduate clinical psychology programme at the University of Leeds you register as a generic postgraduate research student. This is the standard procedure for all prospective doctoral students (PhD and DClinPsychol). The confirmation of your registration on the DClinPsychol is dependent upon successfully completing a review process called the Transfer viva.

In the clinical psychology programme this occurs approximately halfway through the programme – March in year 2. At this point you will have completed two of the academic assessed essays, 3 supervised clinical placements and the SCS. You will also have begun work on your major research project and will have submitted the Statement of Intent and Research Proposal, and will have received feedback from the research panel. The feedback is to guide you in preparing your research to ensure that it is feasible, ethical and of appropriate intellectual and practical scope to meet the demands of a postgraduate research degree.

The formal process begins when you submit a progress report in the second term of year 2: The Transfer Document. At Leeds, after a year of study PhD students are required to have a Transfer Viva in which they write a progress report and are interviewed by two academic members of staff who then make a decision on whether the student can continue studying towards a PhD.

For Clinical Psychology trainees, we have a similar procedure in which you submit a Transfer Document and attend a viva, which together with the progress report from yourself and your supervisor, informs the decision on continued registration for the DClin. The Transfer Document will be seen by the Transfer viva panel, consisting of two independent members of academic staff from the Institute of Health Sciences or the School of Psychology, appointed by the Research Director.

You will be expected to attend a meeting with the panel to discuss your document. The viva itself is shorter than is usual for PhD upgrade vivas, usually no more than 30 minutes. The timetable for the research panels allows for 60 minutes for each proposal, the time allocated as follows:

Table 3 The timing of the Transfer panels

Timing	Action
10 minutes	Panel discusses transfer document in private. Academic research supervisor can raise any concerns at this point.
25 minutes	Upgrade viva takes place. The main discussion should normally begin with a two-minute summary of progress by the trainee.
5 minutes	The academic research supervisor is asked to leave so that the trainee can raise any supervision issues
5 minutes	Panel members ask trainee to leave whilst they discuss their decision; trainee is then verbally given recommendations of panel.
15 minutes	Panel complete transfer feedback form in private.

You will be asked to submit one electronic copy via Minerva (the VLE). You will additionally need to upload your Transfer document to the GRAD system and complete the online Statement of Academic Integrity, Safeguarding Data and Ethical Requirements. You also need to submit the Formal Progress report form in GRAD (Transfer Stage), this contains some questions about ethical approval and data storage. This will also need to be done for a resubmission.

The transfer document must be typed double-spaced and be **no longer than 10,000 words** in length.

The transfer document is normally subdivided into the following sections:

1. Aims (this should be brief - not more than 200 words)

2. Review of the literature - this should form the bulk of the document (between 4000-7000 words). It should contain a critical appraisal of the literature which forms the background to the project. The research should be firmly grounded in appropriate theory, and should seek to extend this in some way. This section should normally represent an extension of the review included in the research proposal, and may later form the basis of the literature review in the thesis.

3. Method (1000 – 3000 words). This should include a critical appraisal of the chosen method, demonstrating a clear understanding of theoretical and practical aspects, together with details of progress to date. Trainees should describe any measures they propose to use, and progress made in obtaining them. There needs to be details of the recruitment strategy for participants, and progress made in planning this. Details also need to be given of the proposed analysis, with power calculations where appropriate.

4. Ethics application. Trainees should have obtained appropriate ethical approval and must include a copy of the authorisation letter. If this stage has not been reached, at the very least a completed draft ethics application form should be supplied.

5. Pilot study. If a pilot study has been carried out, trainees should present the results along with any subsequent modifications to the design.

6. Current research timetable. Rather than a simple list of dates and tasks, this should give detailed information on when and how tasks - milestones - will be met. For each milestone (which needs to be a discrete task) the trainee needs to describe any dependencies (i.e. people or resources on which achieving this milestone is dependent, and alternatives should this fail), how successful completion will be measured (an objective demonstrable outcome), the planned duration (start and end dates) and the planned completion date. Where necessary, there should also be a more general discussion of anticipated obstacles and possible solutions. An example is given below:

#	Milestone	Dependencies	Measurement	Duration	Completion
1	*Obtain 'Stress in Trainees Questionnaire' from US publisher*	*Colleague in US university has promised to send details.*	*I'll have a copy of the measure and manual.*	*I'll be e-mailing etc. Dec-Jan.*	*I hope to have this by end of January.*

7. Appendix containing samples of each questionnaire and/or interview questions to be used.

Also, a check will be made by Clare Dowzer (research coordinator) that there is a complete set of supervision notes on GRAD.

The criteria used

The panel are tasked with reading through the Transfer Document. The panel should use the time allocated in the Transfer Viva with the trainee to clarify answers to any questions arising from the reports, to ask the trainee about their research, and to reach a decision about the continuation of the candidate towards the DClinPsychol.

The criteria used by them are:

1. That the project is likely to lead to the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, either through the proposed research project or by a scholarly review of the literature, and that the project is likely to result in publishable work after peer review.

2. That the trainee has demonstrated that they:

   Can acquire and understand a substantial corpus of knowledge at the forefront of the academic and professional discipline of clinical psychology.

   Are able to plan a project that takes this knowledge into account and consider likely problems and outcomes.

   Possess a detailed understanding of the techniques of data acquisition and analysis necessary to conduct the project.

It should be emphasised that unlike the research panels, which provide formative feedback, the transfer panels have an important decision-making role within the university – they decide on registration for the doctorate.

Each panel is required to complete a transfer feedback form after the viva, and this will be completed in private. The options open to the panel are:

1. Transfer to Doctorate and register for the DClinPsychol.

2. Defer decision for specified short period (normally 8 weeks, in any event no more than 6 months from date of viva) and request a resubmission (reasons are given on the form). The resubmission may be examined in a second viva, if required by the panel, after which a recommendation to transfer to the doctorate or withdraw from the programme will be made. If a second viva is

needed, a Postgraduate Research Tutor will normally be in attendance along with the original panel members.

3. Student required to withdraw from the programme. This is an unusual occurrence, and would normally follow one opportunity to resubmit following a deferment of the decision.

It is expected that most trainees will have completed work of a suitable standard to continue on towards a DClinPsychol. Panels may provide some suggestions to help the trainee in their future progress with the research, but this is not their primary role.

After the panel the Chair will email you and your supervisor(s) with the panel's decision together with feedback on any areas that the panel feel requires further development. The panel will complete a Joint Report of the Transfer Assessment Panel and this will be uploaded to GRAD within 10 workings days of the panel. The report form contains sections for the panel to give feedback on aspects of your report, and your performance in the viva. These sections are actually very similar to the ones used in your viva at the end of the programme, so this is good experience. The sections cover the following:

- Comment on the potential for originality within the investigation (you may wish to comment on whether any aspects may be publishable)
- Comment on whether the student has demonstrated independent critical ability
- Comment on the written style and overall presentation of the student's written submission
- Comment on the performance of the student in the oral examination (including language/ communication skills)
- Comment on the student's understanding of the area of study (including an awareness of the field of literature)
- Comment on the student's knowledge of research methods/techniques
- Comment on whether the planned schedule of work is considered to be achievable by the student within the standard period of study
- Feedback from the Transfer Panel/General Comments (please include a brief assessment of the student's progress)

In situations where the panel does not feel that it is able to recommend continued registration for the D.Clin.Psychol at the present time and recommends resubmission, it is asked to provide detailed feedback and guidance on what improvements need to be made.

If you disagree with a decision, you may appeal this. The procedure as described in the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures will then apply.

Support

During the course of conducting your research project you will be supported by at least one academic supervisor (many students will also have an additional field supervisor). Supervisors will provide guidance in the preparation of the Transfer Document, and will also provide support and guidance should you be required to resubmit material, but the overall responsibility for the work is yours.

What do you need to do?

This can clearly be a stressful time, but it is also an important landmark representing official confirmation of your entry for the DClin examination. It is also your last chance to get an impartial opinion on the research – and advice on improving it - before submission. Once again, the best advice is to keep in close contact with your supervisor. Give them a draft before the deadline for submission and allow time to incorporate their suggestions.

The conduct of the research

As the research moves from planning to reality things can and do go wrong:

- Recruitment becomes difficult
- Ethics holds up progress
- Equipment fails
- The method needs to be changed

Sometimes these difficulties are minor; occasionally they cause delays. Now is the time that all the planning you had to do for the submission to the research panel should prove helpful. Again, regular contact with your supervisor should help you to problem-solve. It is essential to keep your supervisor (and others helping you with your research) aware of progress so that speedy and effective action can be taken if things go wrong. A little positive reinforcement can also help even if all seems quite under control.

Whilst the research is in progress it is important to set and adhere to targets for completing sub-components of the project such as writing-up the literature review and method (as much as possible) and data analysis. You should develop a timetable with your supervisor and try to keep to this as much as possible.

What do you need to do?

As always, keep in close touch with your supervisor. If a problem surfaces, don't ignore it, but devise a plan for tackling it. Talk to Gary if you are worried. Also, ask around those who have done this before – you may find that your problems are pretty common. Lastly, remember to allocate time for yourself, your friends, and your family. This can be quite tricky at times, but it is important to look after yourself.

Planning your submission

At the end of year 2 you are asked to discuss your likely submission date with your supervisors. On the programme, we recommend a submission around mid-May to enable plenty of time to be examined, make any required changes, and graduate as an HCPC registered clinical psychologist at the end of the academic year. This deadline is not a university one – doctoral students are normally allowed four years to complete – but it is one that's designed in your best interest. If, however, you have hit unavoidable delays, your thesis may not be ready to submit in May. In this case, we recommend that you aim for an early summer submission, mid- June to end-July.

Whatever your plans, we need to know about them as your start the third year so we can arrange the viva examination of your thesis in good time and avoid any delays.

What do you need to do?

At the end of year 2 discuss your submission plans with your supervisors, then tell the research team organising examinations: Gary, Clare and Debby. For late spring submissions we'll try to arrange the viva examination for June/July; for early spring submissions we'll try to arrange the viva examination for August/September. Be sure too to tell Debby when you may be unavailable

And also – most important – keep us up to date on your plans and any changes to likely submission dates.

Year Three - Writing up and the Viva

Writing up the thesis

This is the culmination of the whole research process, and is an important part of what you will learn during the programme. It is best to try to begin writing early on, perhaps in quiet periods during data collection. You should certainly be outlining chapters early in Year 3. You will already have drafts of the literature review. It is also useful to begin with the method chapter -it is often considered the most straightforward part to write as it is a description of what you did. Have a look at past theses for examples. There are copies in the library and many supervisors will also have their own copies.

As the research develops supervisors should see and comment upon the write-up from the earliest stages. It is essential to give them time to make relevant comments allowing time for amendment.

The standard format

The form and presentation of the thesis will give you the opportunity to demonstrate your capacity for thinking psychologically and communicating complicated information in a professional manner.

Your thesis should normally follow this arrangement:

- *Title page*
- *Acknowledgements*
- *Abstract*
- *Table of contents and list of tables*
- *Introduction*
- *Method*
- *Results*
- *Discussion*
- *References*
- *Appendix*

A good starting point is to download the 'Thesis template' from Minerva: Portal and VLE. This has been pre-formatted into the required layout and also contains advice on using Word and following BPS guidelines on referencing.

Precise details concerning layout, format and word length are published by the University and can be found on the Postgraduate Research and Operations website. The University takes this very seriously and will not accept variations, so make sure you follow the guidelines.

The University regulations stipulate that the maximum length of a thesis presented for the DClinPsychol degree should be 40,000 words and 135 pages. This length includes the necessary preliminary pages (index, acknowledgements), text, tables, figure legends, and appendices (though bibliography/references aren't included in the word or page count). It is expected that most theses will meet these requirements. If you need more space or more words, you must ask your supervisor to request an extension in advance. They need to e-mail rp_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk explaining briefly the reason for the extension and how much (extra pages or words) are requested.

The regulations also make provision for the addition of extended appendices up to a maximum length of 20,000 words. This should be used in exceptional circumstances where you consider that it is important for examiners to have access to supporting material. The extended appendices should not be used for material that is essential reading for the examiner in order for them to reach a considered evaluation of your work. It is envisaged that extended appendices will be mostly used by candidates who have used qualitative methodologies in their research. In such cases the extended appendices should not be used to reproduce interview transcripts in full. Instead, it may be used to provide (i) elaborated transcripts that illustrate the coding of textual data; (ii) more details of the development of the final categories reported in the results section; or (iii) extended examples of the coding scheme. If you choose, you may include a CD-ROM providing you complete this section in GRAD when you submit your entry for examination form. The University will generally accept this, but your thesis must be intelligible and stand-alone without reference to the contents of the CD-ROM.

The thesis must be typed in any clear, standard font size 11-12, double or 1 ½ spaced on A4 paper. Margins should be not less than 40mm at the binding edge, and other margins not less than 20mm. The style (units, referencing, tables, figures etc.) should follow the publications guidelines of the British Psychological Society. The BPS Style Guide is available online from the BPS.

What do you need to do?

There are three main points:

- Don't put off starting
- Keep to the University guidelines
- Get advice – talk to your supervisor and come to the writing up teaching in year 3.

Getting started on writing up can be a tricky business, but computers make it fairly easy. You will already have accumulated many pieces of text written for the Transfer Document, ethics committee applications and so on. A good rule is that whenever you sit down to write, always write something down before you finish. Also, remember that you are likely to get very fatigued writing for a long stretch, so take breaks. Something that seems amazing at half past one in the morning often seems less so the next day.

Make sure you read what you have written very carefully, and get it read by your supervisor. Also, see if you can persuade someone else to read it – preferably a non-psychologist who can comment on readability. Remember, you are writing your thesis to guide someone else – the reader – through your research. The reader may know something about the field, but they are not likely to be an expert in it.

A good way to think about this is to imagine another D.Clin.Psychol student trying to replicate your study in the future, and thinking about all the information that they would need to know to understand: why you did your research; how you did it; what you found; and how significant your results were.

An important tip: backup everything onto your personal drive at the university. Remember that discs and USB drives can become corrupted or get lost, and computer hard drives tend to crash at the most inconvenient times.

Finally, having to write 40,000 words or so may sound difficult, but the truth is that for most the real difficulty will come in trying to cut down what you've written.

Submission

The recommended deadline for submission of the thesis is mid-May. As described above, it is important to try to keep to this date because unless you've made all the required changes to your thesis before you start your first job, you won't have HCPC registration and won't be able to be employed as a qualified psychologist, with a qualified salary. If you opt for an early summer submission we will do our best to arrange a viva as early as possible afterwards, but this depends upon the availability of the examiners.

The latest guidance University guidance on the requirements for thesis submission is here. Two copies of the printed thesis must be submitted in person at the Student Services Centre Counter in the Ziff Building. A Thesis Submission Receipt will be provided at the counter at the time of submission, but can be downloaded and filled out in advance and brought along at the time of submission (available from the PGRO website). Theses don't have to be hard bound until after the viva but the University does stipulate the form that the temporary binding should take - ring binders are not suitable, for example, and it should have an appropriate green cover and titling. You'll find details in the University regulations. Keep an extra copy for yourself. Following the viva and approval of any corrections, PGRO requires one copy of the final hard bound thesis. You should ask your supervisor whether a second copy of the hard bound thesis is required, and if it is it should be deposited directly with the supervisor.

A copy of your thesis must be submitted through Turnitin at the time of submitting your soft bound copy. You only need to submit through Turnitin once, unless you are referred. Referrals must be put through the Turnitin system a second time. An exact pdf copy must also be uploaded to GRAD at the time of submission.

Please also remember to return to the DClin office any outstanding equipment that you have borrowed from the course, and any equipment, books or leftover materials purchased with your research budget, and to make sure these are marked off against your name when you return them. If you have any outstanding items at the time of the University Examinations Group in October, your name may be withheld from the pass list until they have been returned.

EThesis Scheme

From February 2010 the University began retaining and making successful doctoral theses available in digital form – through the White Rose open access repository.

Trainees on the Clinical Psychology Programme are required to submit their thesis for retention by the Library in both hard bound and electronic (PDF) form. Note that as these are publicly available on the web, you should not append any published tests or copyrighted material.

The requirements are that trainees submit to the PRO office:

- 2 copies of the soft bound thesis
- A pdf electronic copy of the thesis uploaded to GRAD
- 1 electronic copy submitted via Minerva (the VLE) in Word or pdf format which will be submitted to the plagiarism detection service.
- A completed Thesis Submission Receipt.

Following the viva and approval of any corrections by the Internal Examiner, they require:

- 1 hard bound copy of your thesis *within the allocated time of approval of any corrections* (check with your supervisor whether a second copy is required);
- 1 copy of your eThesis, in PDF format to be submitted via the online eThesis deposit process.
- 1 copy of your eThesis emailed to the DClin office (in Word or pdf format) which will be stored in your electronic folder. If your thesis is being re-submitted then it will be put through the plagiarism detection service again.

The eThesis must be a single file exactly replicating the content of the final, corrected printed/hard bound copy of the thesis. Candidates will be required to confirm this and to specify thesis retention and embargo arrangements when completing the online eThesis deposit process.

Please do not ask the admin team for assistance with any printing or saving of files.

Embargo options

It is recognised that there may be a need for the content of some theses not to be made immediately available. The Library Guidance on Copyright and Publication (link below) gives further advice on when it may be appropriate to consider placing a restriction on access to a thesis. In general terms, the advice at present is that where publication is likely to emerge from the thesis trainees should restrict access to their thesis (and any accompanying eThesis) for an appropriate period to allow alternative means of publication to be sought. The reasons for this restriction must be included when completing the online eThesis deposit process. Trainees must consult with the research supervisors to determine the extent to which your thesis may be suitable for publication. Even if you have no intention of publishing your findings, your research supervisor may want to so please discuss this. Options range from 1 to 20 years!

Research Degree Examination Documentation

The University produces a number of documents which describe the current rules relating to thesis submission and examination:

University's Guide to the thesis examination process (includes format and presentation regulations and eThesis preparation guidance):

Library Guidance on Copyright and Publication (includes advice on when a restriction on access might be appropriate and Creative Commons Licences):

There are a couple of local bookbinders that will do the appropriate temporary and permanent bindings for you. Their addresses are in the regulations. University rules say that you have to pay all costs of preparation and submission of the thesis, including photocopying and binding.

A summary of the thesis should be prepared around the time of submission and sent to those who have helped you to set up the research. You should also have offered to send a copy to participants. Often, it is a good idea to give a presentation to departments who have assisted you. A copy of this summary should also be sent to the ethical committee from whom approval for the research was originally sought.

A simple note of thanks to those who helped works wonders for the image of clinical psychology and future co-operation.

Late submission

If you do have to submit later than you have planned (and informed us about), as soon as it is clear that this is likely, trainee and supervisor need to agree on a realistic timescale and contact us immediately. If it disrupts viva arrangements, the office will need to make arrangements - trainees **must not** contact examiners themselves.

It should be noted that continuing with a planned viva following a late submission is at the discretion of the examiners. If they are unable or unwilling to accept a late submission, this will have implications for the date of examination and graduation.

What do you need to do?

The most important points here are to get the thesis in on time and follow the University guidelines on presentation. If you have any problems with either let Gary know as soon as possible. Problems do occur at times, and he is used to last minute crises!

The Content of the Thesis

Every thesis is different, but there are some rules about how it is written that you need to follow. In general, you need to make sure that your thesis is well written and presentable. Use linking sentences so that sections and paragraphs flow and are easy to read. Use headings and sub-headings in a logical fashion to break up the text. All sources in the text should be listed in the references. The examiner will do a spot check to make sure that they are. Check for typing and spelling errors – even the ones that spellcheckers miss. If you are using Word, take advantage of the useful features such as outline which will produce an automatic contents page for you.

Here is a brief guide to what should be put into each part:

Introduction
The introduction should set the scene for the reader. It should contain a clear, logical flow of ideas and a comprehensive and coherent review of the relevant literature. It should tell a story, and should do so well enough so that by the end of the introduction the reader should clearly be able to see what problem you chose to address in your research, why you chose it, and what you thought you might find. Writing clearly about what problems you were addressing can be tricky. If you don't manage this it can be very confusing for the reader, who may have trouble working out exactly what questions you were asking. It's important, therefore, to take some time to get this right. It's a good idea to summarise the research questions and hypotheses in bullet points at the end of the chapter. This is an important point as poorly written hypotheses are a frequent comment of external examiners. It's also important that the reader is able to see where the questions came from – that they are a logical consequence of the literature review presented earlier.

Method
The method obviously varies enormously depending upon the topic of the research. You need to explain why you chose the method used, and give a justification for particular elements such as choice of measures. You need to cite the reliability of any questionnaires that you used, for example, and make clear the reasons that you chose them over others that are available.

Justification is the key theme in this chapter: you need to justify all the elements in your design: for example, choice of methods, choice of participants, and choice of times of intervention. In particular, you need to spend time describing your participants and addressing potential concerns such as representativeness.

In general, though, this chapter is usually considered an easy one to write since most of it consists of a description of what you actually did.

Results
Most are very wary about writing this chapter. Again, it might look very different depending upon whether the method was quantitative or qualitative, but some general rules apply. The most important is again justification, this time presenting a justification of any techniques for data analysis that you have used.

You need to see this chapter as continuing the story of your research. In this instalment, you describe the data that you obtained and the detective work that went in to understanding it.

Thus, you'll need to begin with describing what you found. To do this properly you need to find out about you options. If you have quantitative data, get familiar with the use of bar charts, pie charts (not usually a good idea), frequency histograms and other more modern graphic displays. If you have qualitative data, explore the use of graphic displays of data using pullout tables, perhaps showing a hierarchy of concepts.

If you are using statistics, make sure you present the results in a standard format and cite values correctly (e.g. $F(2,25) = 3.5$, $p = .04$ etc.). More importantly, remember what the statistics are for – carefully consider your options and use the most appropriate test. Think about what you were looking for – for example, were you looking for differences in frequencies or associations, or for differences in central tendency.

A good way to write the results section in quantitative research is to go back to the hypotheses and answer each one in a separate sub-section, explicitly relating your statistical analysis to each question in turn. Having another look at the original hypotheses should help enormously if you start to feel swamped by data, and provides a good structure for your writing. Remember that you are not just dealing with numbers – they represent the things you are interested in, and you may be able to learn a number of surprising things by looking at them. After you've described the answers to the original hypotheses, you may have generated further questions to ask of the data, and you can then describe this analysis.

Lastly, it's important that you know why you are using each test – the external examiner may well ask you about it. They may also ask you whether you considered alternative ways to approach your data, so you really do need to have thought about this. There are always alternatives, even if you're pretty sure you've chosen the right one.

Discussion

This is your chance to pull everything together. A good place to start is to summarise the main findings from the results section, perhaps using bullet points. But this chapter isn't just about restating the results. You then need to move on to try to integrate them with the problems you raised in the introduction. Think about what the results actually mean in the context of your research questions and the wider literature. Try, too, to think of alternative explanations for why you obtained the results you did. In particular, give a lot of thought to possible reasons for any noteworthy, unpredicted results. You need to acknowledge any problems and methodological difficulties in your research that may have a bearing on how reliable and generalisable your results are. You should make clear how significant you feel your results are for the subject area, and for clinical psychology. Link your findings to theories or models discussed in the introduction. It's possible to make two mistakes here – to claim something as significant when it is not, or not to claim a finding as significant when it is actually very important.

Remember also to include a section on methodological limitations (and also mention the strengths) and clinical implications.

What do you need to do?

Write it and read it, and get others to read it too, especially your supervisor. Remember that you are conveying a great deal of complicated information, but that you also need to make it readable. Try to write about what you did with interest and enthusiasm, since this always shows!

The viva

Nominations for external examiners are made by your supervisor(s). Nominations will be made at the start of your final year. Some examiners are asked to examine more than one thesis. They will normally have a senior appointment within a British University, and will usually be familiar with the D.Clin.Psychol degree. An internal examiner will also be appointed from within the academic staff of the Leeds Institute of Health Sciences or the School of Psychology.

Each candidate will attend for an oral examination (viva) with the external and internal examiners over the summer of the third year. **The examiners are asked to accept a timescale of 3 months from receiving the thesis to complete the viva examination**. This exam lasts on average around an hour, though there is quite a lot of variability. Your supervisor does not attend although they need to be contactable. The oral exam consists of you being asked questions about your thesis by the examiners. In examining the thesis, the examiners will have the following options:

- *Award D.Clin.Psychol*
- *Award D.Clin.Psychol subject to minor editorial or presentational corrections (usually typographic errors etc.)*
- *Award D.Clin.Psychol subject to correction of minor deficiencies (usually some small sections will need re-writing)*
- *Refer with major amendments and re-examine for the degree of DClinPsychol.*
- *Fail.*

Any of the first three recommendations are fine. For minor editorial corrections you are given 4 weeks, and stated minor deficiencies 12 weeks to complete. You will be given details on what you must do and this really doesn't usually present too much of a problem. Your changes are only seen by the internal examiner, who approves them. Any other result will obviously be a disappointment. More details will be provided in teaching nearer the time.

Should you wish to appeal against the examiner's decision, you may do so in accordance with University regulations.

What do you need to do?

Keep the likely dates for the viva clear in your diary, and don't take holidays around that time. Remember, too, that if you need to make some changes afterwards you will need to do this in the weeks immediately following the viva, so don't plan any holidays for the following few weeks.

In the run up to the viva, read your thesis! Several times. Also, make notes on it, and take these in with you. If you have data or results from analyses that were not used, take these in too. If you spot mistakes, note them down so that if the external examiner mentions them, you can show that you have already dealt with them.

Vivas make everyone anxious. It's true that if you perform badly you can make an unfavourable impression, but in truth the opposite is much more often the case. Either way, the examiners should give you every opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of your research. Most manage to convey a sense of enthusiasm and personal commitment that comes easily when you have devoted such a great deal of your life to something!

Publication and the Three Course Thesis Conference

Once the viva is over you will need to start thinking about publishing your research. Even if you feel that you never want to look at your thesis again, there are many good reasons to publish, and you are expected to work with your supervisor to achieve this. The vast majority of theses completed in Leeds result in material worthy of publication. Your supervisor is likely to be an invaluable resource in helping with this. The Programme has produced a publication guide, which includes various tips, and you will also receive teaching on publication shortly before the vivas. You have study time following the viva to work on your publication.

It is a conventional and reasonable assumption in a situation where you have been actively supervised that such publications appear under the joint authorship of student, University supervisor and field supervisor. It is expected that your own name will come first.

The other task is to prepare a presentation at the Three Course thesis conference, which is held in July. Preparing a short talk is an excellent way to begin thinking about how to cut our thesis down to the important elements, which of course is exactly what you need to do in preparing a paper for publication. A template PowerPoint presentation is available if you wish to use it.

...And Finally

That’s it. With a lot of effort and a little luck, you will hopefully end up with a new title to put on your bank account.

As mentioned earlier, don’t forget to feedback your findings to all those who helped you. This is, of course, important for those following you, who will have to begin the process you have just finished! It is also a requirement of the Research Governance Framework and we will be checking to ensure that it has been carried out.

Lastly, you may think at various points in the Programme that as soon as you finish you will never attempt to do anything that slightly involves research ever again. You may develop a pathological aversion to the word viva and avoid Mexican holidays.

With luck, though, this won’t last. After a few weeks admiring your new title and settling in to your job you might just start thinking about a clinical area that has grabbed your interest, and you might start to think about a research project which really would throw new light on the situation. We hope so.

Appendices: for use during training

1 Research supervision contract
2 Roles and responsibilities of supervisors
3 Informat

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Doctor of Clinical Psychology Programme

Research Supervision Contract

This initial contract is to be completed at a meeting between the trainee and research supervisor(s) as near to the start of the project as possible. It covers the issues of roles and responsibilities, expectations concerning submission of the thesis research for publication, and expectations concerning authorship. All parties are to retain a copy. This contract can be re-negotiated at any point, with the agreement of all parties.

All research projects need a university supervisor and this is often shared (normally an equal split in terms of % supervision offered). In the case of an equal supervision split, please indicate who will sign off the GRAD paperwork. Some projects may also utilise an academic expert either in the university or another institution, recruited for their specialist knowledge of the research area or method. Finally, local clinicians often act as field supervisors for research projects. Their contributions can often be significant, though their responsibilities are not specified by the university.

Table 4 The research contract to be completed

	Name & affiliation (Signature & date)	% academic supervision	Publicatio n author *(& order)*
Trainee			
Main Academic Supervisor (1)			
Main Academic Supervisor (2)			
Main Academic Supervisor (3)			
Expert academic consultant (Leeds)			
Field supervisor (1) (Clinician)			
Field supervisor (2) (Clinician)			

Please submit via TurnItIn by the deadline. If you have difficulties with this, please email it to Sarah Snowden instead (as TurnItIn will not accept scanned pdf files).

Roles and Responsibilities of Supervisors

This is a brief overview. The University post graduate research student handbook has more detailed information and should be taken as the authoritative source.

Supervisor:

- To have a minimum of **twelve** meetings per year, gaps between meetings should be no more than 8 weeks. To assist in defining the problem to be tackled in the course of the research.
- To assist in clarifying the research questions upon which the proposed research is based and establishing the proposed details of the research programme, such as resources required and experimental design.
- To approve a timetable of work and endeavouring to see that it is followed.
- To comment on written work submitted by the trainee within a reasonable time.
- To make written reports on the trainee's progress
- To advise generally on the research process and preparation of the thesis

Trainee:

- To have a **minimum** of twelve meetings per year, gaps between sessions should be no more than 8 weeks.
- To always attend meetings arranged with the supervisor(s)
- To give written work to be checked by the supervisor a minimum of two weeks before the date for feedback.
- To write up minutes of supervision sessions and post on GRAD within a week of the meeting. All parties need to sign a copy of this. To take responsibility with liaising between more than one supervisor, if applicable.
- To take primary responsibility for design and execution of the research.
- To take responsibility for obtaining ethical approval, and conducting the research according to ethical principles.

Publications

It is expected that the trainee will take a lead in writing up publications arising from the research, that they will be first author, and that they will begin writing within 12 months of completion of the programme. All those listed in the front sheet of the supervision contract would normally be authors, in the order listed on this form.

If the trainee is unable or unwilling to take the lead, the academic supervisor(s) may do so, and take first authorship. The trainee will remain on the list of authors.

Guidance on completing the training plan

The training plan is a record of the training needs identified by you and your supervisor(s). It is an opportunity for you to consider what training – in addition to that provided on the programme – will be necessary for you to complete your research. Starting this process now ensures that it is considered in terms of your budget, and that you can negotiate the time needed to undertake it.

If there are no additional training needs, this can be left blank, but all students need to compete the training needs form on GRAD. A user guide on completing the training plan is available.

The training plan needs to be competed at the same time as you complete your research proposal.