

Who to go to for what!

This can be confusing! Imperial College is a large and complex organisation.

PhD registration and arrangements

- Your Imperial College (not Trust) Departmental *Research Degrees Manager* is your first point of contact for anything related to your PhD (registration, supervisors, exams, tuition fees or pastoral issues).
- Be sure to use the College Departmental *Research Degree Handbook* at the link below which includes details about Sections/Divisions and their contacts, milestones and examples of completed milestones, the role of supervisors, expectations for PhD students and supervisors, Student Reps, what to do if you have a problem, the Graduate School and the compulsory professional skills programme, and interruptions of study.

<https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/pages/view-page.action?title=Research+Student+Online+Handbook&spaceKey=medresstudents>

- **Note:** Individuals returning to clinical medicine (usually after 3 years PhD) are encouraged to submit their research degree thesis just before/at/ immediately after 3 years registration. Experience shows that research degree submission is unlikely to occur once an individual has returned to clinical medicine. In other words plan to submit at the time you finish the PhD/MD period and NOT after.

PhD Supervision

Your *academic supervisor* is your contact for research questions, and if they are a clinician can usually help with issues relating to your ongoing clinical academic career.

Clinical Training

Your clinical *Training Programme Director* can answer questions about your future clinical posts, clinical training needs during research, date of CCT, ongoing clinical training needs etc.

Clinical Academic Training and career development

- Questions about developing your clinical academic career, future fellowships, future research, can often be answered by your academic supervisor or the Lead Clinical Academic for your specialty (listed on the CATO web pages), or you can approach the CATO team who can direct you appropriately.
- The College *PostDoc and Fellows Development Centre (PFDC)* can help if you are in your final PhD year and need support with applications for intermediate fellowships/ clinician scientists schemes etc.

Personal support

Occasionally PhD Fellows may have issues or concerns that are outside the role and expertise of their supervisor or mentor. Under these circumstances, you might consider making use of the various support services provided by the College, such as advice and counselling, Occupational Health and support and guidance for dealing with workplace stress or harassment. See the [CATO website](#) for details. Or you can talk to your Clinical Training Programme Director, or to the CATO Director. You should not at any stage feel that there is no-one you can talk to.



Expectations

Your supervisors expect you to:

- **Take responsibility** for your thesis – in the end it is your work and your supervisors are here to help you accomplish your research objectives, but not to do the thinking for you!
- **Work hard** – PhDs cannot be accomplished with only a 9-5 effort. Imperial College is a top ranked University and we expect that students will strive to accomplish good work
- **Display initiative** – ultimately, the person who drives the process and strives to understand the research area is you. We expect you to be curious about your work and to think about how other ideas/work have an impact on the research you are doing. In light of this, it is a requirement for you to attend all lab meetings, work in progress etc. and other seminars. To be a Scientist you should be curious about science!
- **Write papers** (this is dependent on field of study) before you have submitted your thesis. The process of writing enables you to develop skills which are useful when writing up your thesis, and the fact that you have had papers refereed/accepted by International journals satisfies the external examiner that you have what it takes!
- **Be self-critical** of your own work and results, and use these skills in being sceptical of results in the literature
- **Help colleagues** (especially less experienced ones) in the laboratory to learn through discussions and demonstrations
- **Keep up with the literature** in your field
- **Write progress reports** every 6 months detailing your results – to this end, you should be conscientious about keeping a laboratory notebook and regularly recording all your data
- **Be aware of safety** at all times and follow safety procedures, especially if you are working in a laboratory
- **Develop your skills** and learn new ones by attending the transferable skills courses and seminars and lectures provided by the Graduate School, PFDC, CATO, your own and other College departments/divisions/faculties and by any other external providers.



In return, as a PhD student you can expect your supervisor to:

- **Be supportive** of you both intellectually and personally
- **Set up a viable project** and ensure that you have a clear idea of aims and objectives and an initial work-plan
- Provide an **adequate work space** for you
- **Be available** (or provide an identified substitute) to talk about research problems at relatively short notice although you may need to give a few days notice
- **Help and guide you** extensively in your first year; help you in your second year; and be a sounding board in your third year. The help is tapered as you develop confidence in your own abilities and research skills, to enable you to learn to work more on your own and to make more of your own decisions
- **Help develop your skills** in technical writing, oral presentations, problem definition, statistical data analysis and critical literature reviews
- Help **enable you to attend** at least one conference to present a paper
- **Provide adequate funds** and/or facilities for your research project
- **Read your thesis thoroughly** and make constructive comments on both style and intellectual content.

Further details about codes of practice/mutual expectations for supervisors/supervisees are on the [Graduate School website](#)

Notes:

- this guidance has been prepared with Doctors in mind, however many of the principles would also apply to Healthcare Professionals undertaking PhDs
- Clinical staff based in the Imperial College AHSC but not registered for PhDs at Imperial College London should seek guidance from the equivalent departments at the HEI where they are registered.
- AHSC staff registered at other HEIs are welcome to use services provided by the CATO team, but are not eligible to use other Imperial College services such as the Graduate School and PostDoc and Fellows Development Centre