

Research Supervisor Job Description

The Institute for Optimum Nutrition

Job Description

Job title: Research Supervisor	Remuneration: £24.23 per hour of supervision/consultation with student Marking charged separately at its own rate (see assessment remuneration at the end)
Responsible to: Research Project Module Coordinator	Hours: Self-employed contract, hours as per schedule
Department: Academic Faculty	Last updated: July 2026

Introduction

The Institute for Optimum Nutrition is one of the UK's longest established and most respected higher education institution, a thought-leader in nutritional therapy.

At ION we aim to create a stimulating, challenging and rewarding learning experience, through sharing a unique fusion of education, research and professional practice and inspiring our students and staff to enrich our communities. Our skilled and creative workforce is comprised of individuals drawn from a broad cross section of the globe, and who reflect a variety of backgrounds, talents, perspectives and experiences to build our learning community.

This job description sets out the flexibility of the role and the responsibilities expected of the job holder.

The job description will be reviewed and amended as the needs of the Institute change and to provide appropriate development opportunities. Members of staff are expected to participate fully in discussions about changing requirements. The Institute reserves the right to require changes to the job description after consultation with the individual concerned.

The Institute for Optimum Nutrition (ION) is committed to and champions equality and diversity in all aspects of employment. All staff are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity Policy in the course of their work.

Overall purpose of the role

The purpose of this role is to support ION students through their undergraduate research journey. Specifically, undertaking their research project and writing up their dissertation. The research supervisor acts as a mentor, source of information and facilitator to students as they progress through their research journey.

Each project will be unique and students are able to self-select a research topic with guidance from ION staff. Projects cover the following designs: literature reviews, surveys, interviews, content analysis, and nutritional analysis. Supervisors are paired with students based on their expertise and research interests, in so far as possible.

The Research Supervisor will be available to help students in a range of areas such as:

- Refining their research area and question
- Deciding what research methods to use
- Ensuring they meet deadlines
- Evaluating the results of their research
- Ensuring their work meets the required academic, regulatory, and ethical standards

Context

1. The post-holder reports to the Head of Undergraduate Programme, or designated line manager.
2. The post-holder is a self-employed member of the Faculty of Nutrition and will work closely with members of that faculty, the wider organisation, visiting lecturers and students.
3. There is no staff management responsibility
4. There is no budgetary responsibility

Key tasks and accountabilities

Key tasks and accountabilities are intended to be a guide to the range and level of work expected. This is not an exhaustive list of all the tasks that may fall to the post-holder and staff are expected to carry out such other reasonable duties as may be required.

Main duties

- Be familiar with the content of the two research modules: Research Skills and Research Project
- Provide one-to-one tailored online supervisor sessions for students
- Provide feedback on draft dissertation sections
- First-mark student dissertations and participate in relevant marking meetings
- Send messages to students via email as needed (e.g. arranging supervision sessions)
- Ensure students remain within the ethical and regulatory bounds of their approved project
- Be aware of ION institutional policies and policies relevant to your area of work (e.g. ION Research Ethics Policy)
- Work within the ION quality assurance framework

- Liaise with module co-ordinator as needed
- Maintain confidentiality of resources, student and ION information
- Attend supervision induction and training and keep up to date with online training such as GDPR

Estimated workload

Supervisors are expected to take a minimum of three students per semester. Supervisors may elect to take up to eight students per semester, though the actual number of students each supervisor takes is determined by student numbers; this is typically around four students per semester. ION has two semesters per year (autumn/winter and spring/summer).

Each student is allocated 10 hr of supervisor time (5 hr for supervision sessions and 5 hr for emails and reading drafts). Supervisors also mark their students' dissertations, so the total supervisor time per student is 14.5 hr. In addition, supervisors are required to attend team meetings and undertake training which are around 3 hr per semester. So, the average workload for a supervisor taking four students per semester would be around 61 hrs. Note that this figure is provided as a guide only, and not a guarantee of working hours.

Person Specification

All criteria should be considered to be essential unless otherwise stated.

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Competency	Essential criteria
Attainments/qualifications	• MSc or PhD in a nutrition-related subject (e.g. nutritional therapy, nutritional science, dietetics, food science) <i>or</i> PhD in a related subject (e.g. medicine, nursing, sports science, psychology, biostatistics, sleep science) • Note, if your PhD is in a related subject, any knowledge or experience of nutrition will be an advantage
Skills and understanding	• Ability to manage a variable schedule of work • Ability to read and evaluate research critiques and literature reviews • Ability to critically appraise students' work and to provide positive effective feedback • Flexibility to adapt to the changing needs of the organisation • Ability to build effective team relationships with academic and administration staff • Ability to follow guidance on regulations relating to Research Ethics • Ability to work within a quality assurance framework • Attention to detail • Excellent written and verbal communication skills
Prior experience	• Previous experience supervising research projects
Behavioural characteristics	• A commitment to excellence

	• Ability to cope with tight deadlines and to work well under pressure • Flexibility in approach
Other Requirements	• To undertake training as required • Remote attendance at Research Supervisor training