# Thesis Contract and Action Plan

This initial action plan and contract is to be completed at a meeting between the trainee, field supervisor(s) and research/course supervisor. This meeting should take place as near to the start of the project as possible and be submitted before the research supervisor reviews the ethics application. All parties are to retain a copy of this document. However, the contents can be re-negotiated at any point, with the agreement of all parties.

When the contract has been agreed the trainee should email a copy to the research coordinator, copying in all supervisors to indicate their agreement.

This document provides a clear action plan for all parties that covers the issues of roles and responsibilities, expectations concerning submission of the Thesis research for publication, and expectations concerning authorship.

To help provide some guidance on what to put in each section, some suggested text has been included. Please adapt this to meet the requirements of your project.

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| **Name** | **Contact Details** |
| Trainee name:  Date: | Address: Clinical Psychology, Div. Of Health Research, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YG  Phone: 01524 592754  Email: |
| Research/programme supervisor name:  Date: | Address: Clinical Psychology, Health Innovation One, Div. Of Health Research, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YG  Phone:  Email: |
| Field supervisor name:  Date: | Address:  Phone:  Email: |

# Roles, Responsibilities & Planned Activities

Please summarise the roles and responsibilities of each party relating to each step of the research process, and include target dates/deadlines for planned activities where appropriate.

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| **Generating a research idea** |
| **Trainee:**  Familiarise myself with relevant literature, identify gaps in the current literature and evidence base, identify areas of interest, and agree to undertake a focused research project in collaboration with my supervisor(s).  **Research/course supervisor:**  To offer support and guidance in relation to the trainee’s ideas, within the scope of a DClinPsy thesis, relevant to clinical psychology.  **Field supervisor:** |

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| **Gaining ethics committee approval** |
| **Trainee:**  Draft a high quality, accurate and appropriate research protocol, ethics application and supporting documentation. Agree drafting dates with my supervisor(s) in advance, allowing a two-week turnaround period for draft reads and feedback. Incorporate feedback and submit forms and supporting documents to the appropriate ethics committee. Make further amendments if required by ethics committee.  **Research/course supervisor:**  Review the research protocol, ethics application form and supporting documents, with feedback for amendments.  **Field supervisor:** |

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| **Gaining access to participants** |
| **Trainee:**  Develop an engaging, tailored and project specific recruitment strategy, with support from supervisor(s). Reach out to possible gatekeepers and discuss pathways for recruitment with suitable individuals/organisations. Prepare an inviting participant information pack and be available as primary contact for potential participants. Advertise the study through suitable platforms and communicate with participants as planned in recruitment strategy. Consider options for participant care, signposting, and third-party support.  **Research/course supervisor:**  Advise on recruitment strategies, support recruitment through existing networks, where possible and appropriate, and offer guidance on materials developed by trainee.  **Field supervisor:** |

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| **Collecting data** |
| **Trainee:**  Gain appropriate consent from participants. Gather XX data through XX. Ensure data is stored securely, in line with the research protocol and data management plan. Use supervision regularly throughout data collection to reflect on the process. Where relevant, provide regular updates to project partners/supporting organisations. Specific challenges for participant care in relation to my project are likely to be… Therefore, an advisory distress protocol will be developed to… I will raise any concerns that arise during data collection with my supervisor immediately.  **Research/course supervisor:**  Discuss the process with the trainee during supervision meetings to review progress and provide advice. Review an interview recording/transcript [if appropriate]. Provide timely and responsive advice on arising matters. Advise on official reporting of incidents as required.  **Field supervisor:** |

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| **Analysing and interpreting data**  *N.B. Please consider for whom it is appropriate to have access to the raw data, up to the point of writing up the project. In most cases this will be trainee and DClinPsy programme supervisor, in others it may be an external/field supervisor.* |
| **Trainee:**  Anonymise participant information. Provide access to raw anonymised data to my course supervisor/all supervisors (using university approved OneDrive). Analyse data according to the research protocol to formulate a high-quality analysis. Prepare draft submissions to deadlines agreed with supervisor(s).  **Research/course supervisor:**  Discuss plans and emerging findings during supervision to support the formulation of the analysis and reporting. Provide feedback on two drafts of each thesis paper prior to thesis submission.  **Field supervisor:** |

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| **Writing the literature review (including giving feedback)**  *N.B. The trainee can expect a total of two draft reads across the supervisory team if they are submitted according to agreed deadlines. These should be within reasonable expected word limits.* | |
| **Trainee:**  Decide on a topic for systematic literature review. Agree title with supervisor(s). Draw upon resources to learn how to do a SLR, including DClinPsy teaching, LU library resources, and wider reading. Arrange one to one meeting(s) with a specialist librarian to formulate the search strategy. Register review on PROSPERO. Develop final search strategy, inclusion and exclusion criteria, screening methods, with support from my supervisor(s). Follow PRISMA guidance. Complete synthesis of research. Submit high-quality drafts within reasonable expected word limits to supervisor on time, according to agreed deadlines. Incorporate feedback into final submission. Use supervision meetings for support throughout the review process.  **Research/course supervisor:**  Offer advice and guidance throughout the process, specifically in relation to common challenges and possible solutions. Provide timely feedback on two drafts, following agreed draft dates.  **Field supervisor:** | |
| **Draft deadlines**  *It is suggested that draft 1 is written and draft read in sections and that draft 2 is written and read as a complete draft.* | **Date (MM/YY)** |
| Draft 1 |  |
| *Introduction and method* |  |
| *Results* |  |
| *Discussion* |  |
| Draft 2 |  |

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| **Writing the research paper (including giving feedback)**  *N.B. The trainee can expect a total of two draft reads across the supervisory team if they are submitted according to agreed deadlines* | |
| **Trainee:**  Use supervision meetings for support throughout the research process. Submit high-quality drafts within reasonable expected word limits to supervisor on time, according to agreed deadlines. Incorporate feedback into final submission.  **Research/course supervisor:**  Provide feedback on two drafts prior to submission, supported further through reflective conversations in supervision.  **Field supervisor:** | |
| **Draft deadlines**  *It is suggested that draft 1 is written and draft read in sections and that draft 2 is written and read as a complete draft.* | **Date (MM/YY)** |
| Draft 1 |  |
| *Introduction and method* |  |
| *Results* |  |
| *Discussion* |  |
| Draft 2 |  |

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| **Writing the critical appraisal, thesis abstract, appendices and other aspects of the thesis (including giving feedback)**  *N.B. The trainee can expect one draft read from a member of the supervisory team if it is submitted according to an agreed deadline. These should be within reasonable expected word limits.* | |
| **Trainee:**  Develop a thoughtful and reflective critical account of the research process. Send one high-quality draft to the supervisor(s), according to an agreed deadline. Incorporate feedback into final submission. Prepare thesis abstract and appendices in good time to allow for careful formatting.  **Research/course supervisor:**  Provide feedback on one draft prior to submission, supplemented by reflective conversations on the research process during the life course of the thesis.  **Field supervisor:** | |
| **Draft deadlines** | **Date (MM/YY)** |
| Critical appraisal draft |  |

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| **Identifying suitable external examiners**  *A suitably qualified and experienced external examiner will need to be appointed several months before the trainee submits their thesis. The choice of examiner rests with the programme, however, the trainee will be consulted about this. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to approach potential external examiners, the trainee should not do this.* | |
| **Names of examiners suggested** |  |
| **Date to be contacted** |  |

# Regularity of Supervisory Contact

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| Please use this section to indicate the expected regularity of contact between supervisors and trainee – specify the anticipated expected frequency and type of contacts, and an estimate of the total number of face-to-face contacts anticipated.  **Academic supervisor:**  The trainee will arrange to meet with their research tutor every month of their registration with the University.  **Field supervisor:** |

# Action Plan Summary

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| ACTIVITY | WHO | DATE |
| Submit ethics application | Trainee |  |
| Data collection | Trainee |  |
| Data analysis | Trainee |  |
| Approach potential external examiner(s) | Research supervisor |  |
| Literature review final draft complete | Trainee |  |
| Research paper final draft complete | Trainee |  |
| Submit thesis | Trainee |  |
| Submit literature review for publication | Trainee/research supervisor |  |
| Submit research paper for publication | Trainee/research supervisor |  |
| If accepted, submit final accepted manuscript to research coordinator |  |  |

# Submission for Publication and Authorship

This part of the contract concerns the initial expectations of all parties regarding submission of aspects of the thesis for publication, including contingencies if expectations laid down in this contract are not met. There are guidelines*[[1]](#footnote-1)* concerning the authorship of publications published in *The Psychologist.* Parties to the contract should agree expected authorship in consultation with these guidelines. It is expected that, in most circumstances, the trainee will be the first author and will take a lead in ensuring that any publishable research is worked up into an appropriate form and submitted as agreed. The following points are intended to guide this process and outline exceptional circumstances:

* Material is not to be submitted for publication without all authors sighting the final manuscript and agreeing to its submission.
* The anonymised dataset is understood to belong to all authors and may be accessed by all authors for the purpose of contributing to publication.
* In the event that potentially publishable material is not worked up to a manuscript within 12 months of the Thesis submission date, supervisors may take a lead in developing the manuscript and submitting it. In this instance, the author order will be changed to reflect the leading role taken by the supervisor(s) in developing the publication. In practice, unless otherwise agreed, this will take the following form:
  + The supervisor will work with supervisee to submit the thesis project/s for publication, with the supervisee as lead.
  + If, within 6 months, the supervisee has not submitted the manuscript for publication, the supervisor may submit on behalf of the project team, with the supervisee remaining as first author.
  + If any significant amendments have not been led and / or made by the supervisee after 6 months, the supervisor may continue with the process and act as lead author.
  + It may also be appropriate for the supervisor to lead a publication if the publication is developed from combining the undertakings and outputs of two or more thesis projects. All trainees involved in the original projects will be named as co-authors, upon agreement.

In the event that publishable findings emerge from this study, the following expectations are shared by the named parties:

# Publication plan

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| --- | --- |
| **LITERATURE REVIEW** | |
| Likely journal(s) for submission: |  |
| Authorship (including author order): | |
| *Author 1:* |  |
| *Author 2:* |  |
| *Author 3:* |  |
| *Any further authors:* |  |
| Target date by which submission will occur: |  |
| **RESEARCH PAPER:** | |
| Likely journal(s) for submission: |  |
| Authorship (including author order) | |
| *Author 1:* |  |
| *Author 2:* |  |
| *Author 3:* |  |
| *Any further authors:* |  |
| Target date by which submission will occur: |  |
| Responsibility for submission: |  |

# Confirmation of agreement

Research Supervisor confirmation of agreement with the content of this form:

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| Name: | Date: |
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Field Supervisor/Advisor confirmation of agreement with the content of this form:

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| --- | --- |
| Name: | Date: |
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The trainee confirms their agreement with the content of this contract through the action of submitting the document for storage and review.

1. Game, A.,& West, M. A. (2002). Principles of publishing. *The Psychologist,* *15*, 126-129. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)