

Research degree supervision: A code of practice (PhD/MPhil and other doctoral degrees)

1 Preamble

- 1.1 The Senate has agreed to the promulgation of this Code of Practice for research degree supervision. It sets out what the University regards as the responsibilities of Supervisors as well as of research degree students and provides a basic framework within which research degree candidatures will be pursued. The Code will be made available to all Supervisors as well as to all research degree students.
- 1.2 This document should be read in conjunction with the Regulations and Administrative Procedures for the Research Degrees.
- 1.3 A School may have its own Code provided it does not contravene the Code set out in this document.
- 1.4 The University attaches considerable importance to effective research degree supervision exemplified by regular meetings and close professional collaboration between a Supervisor and a research student.

2 Appointment of Supervisors

- 2.1 Full-time academic staff appointed at Assistant Professor level or above, or full-time academic staff at the Senior Lecturer level holding a PhD and having a proven track record of research, are eligible for appointment as Principal Research Supervisors. The University may also appoint non full-time staff of the University as Principal Research Supervisors.
- 2.2 Responsibility for the supervision of research students rests in the first instance with the Supervisor, who will be the formal point of contact between the student and the University.

3 Responsibilities of a Supervisor

The responsibilities of a Supervisor will include:

- 3.1 giving guidance to research students with respect to the nature of research and the standard expected, the planning of the research programme, literature and sources, attendance at taught classes, and requisite techniques which need to be acquired (including arranging instruction where necessary);
- 3.2 ensuring their students have obtained ethical and safety approval before data collection;
- 3.3 maintaining regular contact with the student at agreed intervals;
- 3.4 being accessible to the student at other appropriate and reasonable times for consultation and advice;
- 3.5 giving detailed advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the thesis may be completed within the scheduled time;
- 3.6 requesting written work as appropriate, and returning such work with constructive criticism and in reasonable time;
- 3.7 arranging, as appropriate, for the student to give graduate seminars or the like, and guiding the student in the preparation of oral examinations;

- 3.8 generally overseeing the student's progress; and
- 3.9 reporting annually in writing to the RDC through the School Research Degrees Committee (SRDC) on the student's work during the previous year, and recommending whether the student should be permitted to re-register. If at any time the Supervisor is of the opinion that the student is unlikely to achieve the degree for which he or she is registered, the Supervisor should report this through the SRDC to the RDC immediately, without waiting for the annual recommendation on re-registration.

4 Responsibilities of the Student

The responsibilities of the student will include:

- 4.1 discussing with the Supervisor the type of guidance he or she finds most helpful, and agreeing on a schedule of meeting;
- 4.2 taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties with the Supervisor;
- 4.3 maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with the stages agreed with the Supervisor, including in particular the presentation of written material, as required, in sufficient time to allow for comment and discussion before proceeding to the next stage;
- 4.4 ensuring that prescribed coursework, if any, is satisfactorily completed;
- 4.5 providing annually a formal interim report to the RDC through the Supervisor; and
- 4.6 deciding when he or she wishes to present the thesis, taking due account of the opinion of the Supervisor.

5 Relationship between the Supervisor and the Student

- 5.1 The relationship between the Supervisor and the student will follow accepted norms conducive to academic and professional development as a result of each party fulfilling the responsibilities laid on him or her.
- 5.2 If an effective working relationship does not develop and the student and/or the Supervisor believes that, for this reason, the work is not proceeding satisfactorily, either person may make a representation to the Dean of School. The Dean should consider the matter carefully and, if appropriate, recommend a replacement to the RDC through the SRDC. Should the Dean determine not to proceed in this way, the situation should nonetheless be reported without delay to the RDC through the SRDC.

6 Publications

- 6.1 Care should be taken to ensure that the contribution of the student is recognized and properly acknowledged in any publication arising from the student's research work.

7 Written Material

- 7.1 At the time of presentation of the thesis, the student should certify that the thesis embodies the results of the study and research he or she has conducted and has been composed by the student. The Supervisor should ensure that the thesis presented is of an acceptable standard. The Supervisor will properly comment at regular intervals, as indicated in this Code, on the student's written submissions and offer advice and guidance on their improvement; but the Supervisor will operate within the general principle that the final written thesis must be the student's own work.