

INSTITUTE of GRADUATE STUDIES



DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SUPERVISOR

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CONTENTS

EDITORS	i
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Selection of Supervisors	1
2.1 Nomination of Supervisor/s.....	1
2.2 Changing Supervisors	6
3.0 Responsibilities of a Supervisor.....	6
3.1 Supervision in the First Year of Candidature	6
3.2 On-going Supervision	7
3.3 End of Semester Reporting.....	8
3.4 Prior to Submission of the Thesis/Dissertation.....	9
3.5 After Submission of the Thesis	10
GLOSSARY	11
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	12



UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA Institute Of Graduate Studies

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SUPERVISOR

1.0 Introduction

The function of a graduate research degree supervisor is to assist and advise the student in the design, development and completion of a research degree programme within the stipulated time. The creation and enhancement of an effective supervisory relationship is crucial to the function of a supervisor and, in many ways, this relationship should to be a smart partnership premised on a win-win orientation. From the start, both parties must negotiate and mutually agree on how they will work together.

2.0 Selection of Supervisors

2.1 Nomination of Supervisor/s

The University is obliged to allocate a minimum of one supervisor to each research degree student. The Supervisor's role is to guide and aid the research student to conduct his/her research until completion, and to document the research work carried out in the form of a thesis based on established conventions.

Procedures for the nomination of supervisors for a research degree student are as follows:

- i. All nominations of supervisors must be tabled and agreed upon by the Faculty's Graduate Academic Committee (FGAC) with prior consent in writing from the nominated supervisor.
- ii. The Faculty will submit the nomination to the Institute of Graduate Studies (IGS) to be presented in the Graduate Academic Board (GAB) meeting. GAB reserves the right to accept /reject/retract any/all nominations.
- iii. Appointment letters are sent by IGS within the first semester after the GAB's approval. In the event that there is a delay in issuing the letter of appointment by IGS, faculties are advised to issue conditional letters of appointment to the proposed supervisors.

A PhD student should be allocated a Main Supervisor and at least one Co-Supervisor (up to a maximum of three). A Master's student need not be allocated a Co-Supervisor. However, if there is a need, a maximum of two Co-Supervisors can be appointed.

Where there is a dearth of supervisors, Faculties are encouraged to set up Supervisory Committee with a Principal Supervisor to lead the group, assisted by others who are suitably qualified and who have expert knowledge of the discipline in question.

If there is no available expertise in the Faculty to be the Main Supervisor, the Faculty may nominate qualified names from other faculties in UiTM or outside institutions to the IGS for approval from GAB.

Criteria for the nomination of Main Supervisor for a research degree student:

Doctoral Degree

- i. The Main Supervisor must be an academic member of the University and of the faculty where the student is registered.
- ii. The main supervisor for a Doctoral student should have a Doctoral degree or equivalent academic and/or professional credentials/expertise/experience in the discipline or area of the student's research.
- iii. The main supervisor must agree to carry out the responsibilities of a supervisor.
- iv. The main supervisor shall not be an intimate friend or relative of the student or of any of the other supervisors, to avoid questions of ethical issues being raised and to ensure impartiality and independent judgement.
- v. The main supervisor should not be currently registered as a postgraduate student at the University or elsewhere

Masters

- i. The main supervisor must be an academic member of the University and of the faculty where the student is registered.
- ii. The main supervisor for a Master's student need not have a Doctorate, but must have at least a Master's degree or equivalent academic and/or professional credentials and expertise in the discipline or area of the student's research.
- iii. The main supervisor must agree to carry out the responsibilities of a supervisor.
- iv. The main supervisor shall not be an intimate friend or relative of the student or of any of the other supervisors,

to avoid questions of ethical issues being raised and to ensure impartiality and independent judgement.

- v. The main supervisor should not be currently registered as a postgraduate student at the University or elsewhere.

Criteria for the nomination of Co-Supervisor for a research degree student:

Except for the first criterion, all of the above criteria for nomination of Main Supervisor also apply to the Co-supervisor. Other criteria include:

Doctoral Degree

- i. The Co-supervisor for a Doctoral student should have a Doctoral degree or equivalent academic and/or professional credentials/expertise/experience in the discipline or area of the student's research.
- ii. A Co-supervisor may also be appointed from among other members of academic staff internal or external to the university, chosen for the role because of expert knowledge or scholarship in the designated area of research and approved by the Faculty's GAC.
- iii. Where an off-shore research degree programme/student has been approved, co-supervisors can be appointed from the twinning institution. (Arrangements should also be made as early as possible.)
- iv. In cases of interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary topics, it is advisable that the supervisors nominated cover the various disciplines involved.
- v. Where a student is working with the industry or an organisation, it is advisable to appoint a Co-supervisor from that industry or organisation, but preferably someone with strong academic credentials.
- vi. The Co-supervisor must agree to carry out the

responsibilities of a supervisor.

- vii. A Co-supervisor must be involved from the outset in the development of the student's research plan.
- viii. The Co-supervisor shall not be an intimate friend or relative of the student or of any of the other supervisors to avoid questions of ethical issues being raised and to ensure impartiality and independent judgement.
- ix. The Co-supervisor should not be currently registered as a postgraduate student at the University or elsewhere.

Masters Degree

- i. The Co-supervisor for a Masters student should have at least a Masters degree or equivalent academic and/or professional credentials/expertise/experience in the discipline or area of the student's research.
- ii. A Co-supervisor may also be appointed from among other members of academic staff internal or external to the university, chosen for the role because of expert knowledge or scholarship in the designated area of research and approved by the Faculty's GAC.
- iii. Where an off-shore research degree programme/student has been approved, Co-supervisors can be appointed from the twinning institution. (Arrangements should also be made as early as possible.)
- iv. In cases of interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary topics, it is advisable that the supervisors nominated cover the various disciplines involved.
- v. Where a student is working with the industry or an organisation, it is advisable to appoint a Co-supervisor from that industry or organisation, but preferably someone with strong academic credentials.
- vi. The Co-supervisor must agree to carry out the responsibilities of a supervisor.
- vii. A Co-supervisor must be involved from the outset in the

- development of the student's research plan.
- viii. The Co-supervisor shall not be an intimate friend or relative of the student or of any of the other supervisors to avoid questions of ethical issues being raised and to ensure impartiality and independent judgement.
 - ix. The Co-supervisor should not be currently registered as a postgraduate student at the University or elsewhere.

2.2 Changing Supervisors

Change of supervisor is not encouraged. However, it is allowed if:

- the present supervisor is no longer in a position to continue with supervision duties
- the present supervisor joins another institution
- the present supervisor retires
- it is upon request by the student (subject to GAC's approval)
- the present supervisor withdraws (subject to GAC's approval)

The Faculty's GAC should identify and nominate a new supervisor with the appropriate academic background and supervisory experience. The Faculty will submit the nominations to the IGS for GAB's approval. IGS will issue an appointment letter to the new supervisor.

3.0 Responsibilities of a Supervisor

3.1 Supervision in the First Year of Candidature

- i. Discuss the research area with the student.
- ii. Ensure that the student understands and adheres to the rules and regulations of the University's graduate programmes.

- iii. Propose Co-Supervisors' names to the Faculty Head of Graduate Studies (FHGS), if there is a need.
- iv. Arrange a meeting between the supervisory team and the student, preferably in the first week of semester. It is essential that, at the outset, a professional relationship is established between the Main Supervisor, Co-Supervisor(s) and the student.
- v. Reach an agreement with the student on supervisory arrangements with the other member(s) of the supervisory team, including regular contact of a minimum of 10 hours per month.
- vi. Assist the student in the planning and implementation of a research programme that should be completed within the stipulated time.
- vii. Ensure that the student audits or attends selected courses relevant to the research area.
- viii. Encourage the student to participate in scholarly activities such as conferences, seminars, colloquiums and workshops.
- ix. Request the Faculty to provide the resources required for the research project.

3.2 On-going Supervision

- i. Maintain regular contact with the student. This may be through e-mail, telephone and face to-face contact (to be documented in Student Logbook).
- ii. Ensure that the administrative procedures related to the student's plan of study are adhered to.
- iii. Constantly remind the student to focus on the research and other important issues such as plagiarism.
- iv. Assist the student to plan the research work and revise the plan when necessary.
- v. Ensure the student has access to the resources needed to conduct research.

- vi. Strongly encourage the student to present his/her on-going work at local or international seminars or conferences.
- vii. Strongly encourage the student to publish his/her work in reputable journals.
- viii. Assist the student in planning the structure of the thesis.
- ix. Read and review drafts of the thesis and give constructive criticisms promptly.
- x. Co-supervisors may provide students with different perspectives on the chosen topic and assist in the methodological and statistical input in the research, especially if it is of an interdisciplinary nature.
- xi. Co-supervisors are to ensure the continuity of the supervisory process. In the likelihood that the Main Supervisor is unavailable for a period of time, they may be required to undertake some of the duties and responsibilities.
- xii. Co-supervisor has to work closely with the Main Supervisor in ensuring that the student is offered advice and assistance that is consistent and in accordance with mutually agreed arrangements.

3.3 End of Semester Reporting

- i. At the end of every semester, the Main Supervisor reports on their students' progress by completing a Research Progress Report and submits it to the FHGS for endorsement at the GAC. The reports will then be forwarded to IGS.
- ii. The Supervisor reviews the student's progress on a semester basis. If the student's progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory, then the necessary reasons for this have to be determined, such as (among others) lack of:
 - a. consultations with supervisors
 - b. appropriate knowledge in the content domain

- c. research skills
 - d. intellectual initiative
 - e. appreciation of supporting literature
 - f. appropriate resources (equipment, facilities, etc.)
 - g. urgency and time commitment
 - h. language and general communication skills
 - i. academic writing skills
- iii. A student is permitted to register for the following semester if his/her progress is satisfactory. If the progress is not satisfactory, the supervisory team should discuss the problems with the student, so that remedial action can be taken. The Supervisor should give a justification when AM1, AM2 or AM3 is given to students. However, if the student's performance in the following semester fails to improve, the student will be subjected to the IGS Academic Rules and Regulations.

3.4 Prior to Submission of the Thesis/Dissertation

- i. Must ensure that the thesis/dissertation prepared adheres to the format stipulated by the IGS.
- ii. Present a list together with the curriculum vitae of potential examiners to the FHGS upon the student's submission of the Notice of Intention to Submit Thesis/Dissertation to IGS.
- iii. Provide constructive comments on the final draft of the thesis and ensure that it adheres to the prescribed format (refer to the IGS Guidelines on Thesis/Dissertation Format).
- iv. Ensure thesis/dissertation has been checked through IGS recognised plagiarism software before the following stages:
 - a. Defence of Research Proposal
 - b. Notice of Intention to Submit Thesis/Dissertation
 - c. Submission of Final Thesis

- v. Ensure that thesis/dissertation has been edited and corrected for technical errors such as in the format, grammar and language used.
- vi. Read and review the drafts of the thesis/dissertation as they are prepared and provide constructive feedback within one month or less.
- vii. Ensure that the student understands the nature and process of the examination of the thesis/dissertation.

3.5 After Submission of the Thesis

- i. Attend the student's oral examination as an observer.
- ii. Ensure and certify that the necessary corrections are made to the thesis/dissertation as determined by the examiners and that it is resubmitted to IGS.
- iii. Certify that the final thesis has been successfully completed, and that it fulfills all the requirements as stipulated by IGS.

GLOSSARY

IGS	:	Institute of Graduate Studies
FHGS	:	Faculty Head of Graduate Studies
FGAC/GAC	:	Faculty Graduate Academic Committee
GAB	:	Graduate Academic Board
DRP	:	Defence of Research Proposal

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