

## **FH outline of postgraduate policy for appointment of assessors and supervision code of practice with Faculty operational reinforcements**

### **1. Selection, Admission and Registration**

- 1.1. At the departmental level during the selection and admission of first entering students, the prospective student's Supervisor allocated by the Departmental Selection Committee (DSC) at the time of admission shall ensure that the candidate's qualifications are suitable for study in the chosen area of research and, with the department concerned, ensure that the applicant satisfies ALL minimum admission requirements.
- 1.2. The Supervisor shall ensure that new Master's and Doctoral students are presented with the file "Record of Understanding for Masters and Doctoral students" with all the relevant information, and that the student has familiarised himself/herself with the contents of the file.
- 1.3. The Supervisor should ensure that all new Master's and Doctoral students sign an MoU and a contract with the former at the start of supervision. The MoU and a detailed Research Plan agreed upon by the student and the Supervisor shall be signed and implemented forthwith.
- 1.4. Supervision shall start within 24 hours of each individual student's registration, and shall not wait until other students supervised by the same Supervisor are registered.
- 1.5. The student should agree with the Supervisor on the amount of time which should be devoted to research work and the timing and length of holiday periods. The Supervisor must grant written permission for holidays or leave of absence, as well as advise the student to initiate the process of Interruption of Studies where necessary. After ECS has approved the student's Interruption of Studies, the Faculty Research and Postgraduate Office shall provide the student with written approval of the Interruption of Studies.
- 1.6. The Supervisor shall assist the student to draft a proposal according to the prescribed format and standard and ensure that it is submitted to the relevant structures for approval, as well as ensure that the student obtains TREC ethical clearance within six (6) months of first registration in a programme.

## **2. Supervision, Appointment of Assessors and Progress reporting**

- 2.1. Supervision shall be by an academic staff member active in research and with a research interest related to that of the student, supported by the Supervisor's articulating academic qualifications as well as experience and competence.
- 2.2 The Head of Department and DSC shall ensure that no member of staff has a supervision workload of above 1:5 at any given time.
- 2.3 Should any Supervisor wish to go beyond the prescribed postgraduate allocations, a written request shall be made to the Director of the School for discussion and approval at FEC.
- 2.4 Supervision workload is a segment of academic workload whereby other commitments include undergraduate teaching, committee leadership and committee membership.
- 2.5 The Supervisor shall ensure that any corrections and improvements suggested by various Research & Ethics Committees (RECs) are effected by the student. Where there are sound academic reasons for the Supervisor to disagree with the said inputs, a parallel appeal process should be pursued without delaying revisions by the student.
- 2.6. Should the appeal results nullify some of the REC review inputs, the affected student may exclude the specific disputed revisions as approved during the appeal process.
- 2.7. The Supervisor shall monitor the student's attendance at taught classes (where required), and in conjunction with the Department of Research Development and Administration (DRDA) monitor the student's attendance of the Research Induction Programme and applicable sessions of the PGRTSP offered by the DRDA.
- 2.8. The Supervisor shall conduct sufficient checks to prevent and ensure no plagiarism is committed by the student.
- 2.9. The Supervisor shall coach and guide a student to make professional presentations of his/her work at seminars, conferences, etc.
- 2.10. Candidates should be made aware of the advantages of participating in well-established research niche areas of the departments they are registered with, as opposed to pursuing their own research interests outside these.
- 2.11. The student shall make oral presentations on the research to the departmental staff and other postgraduate students. The faculty is to determine the nature and frequency of the presentations.

- 2.12. The Supervisor shall arrange, as appropriate, for the student to present his/her work in writing and/or at seminars/conferences within the University and elsewhere. The presented/written work should invariably be followed by constructive feedback by the Supervisor within a reasonable period to allow the student to incorporate such useful comments in his/her future research plans. Also, the student should be warned timeously, preferably in writing, of inadequate progress or of any unsatisfactory standard of the work. In such instances, a copy of the presented/written work should be lodged with the Faculty.
- 2.13. It is important that the student's progress be monitored formally, with Supervisors submitting progress reports to the Heads of Department in the third (3rd) and eighth (8th) months of the student's first registration in a programme. For returning students, progress reports shall be submitted by Supervisors in March and August of each year of study.
- 2.14. Such progress reporting shall lead to a recommendation by the Supervisor as to whether the student should be terminated or allowed to continue with registration in the next semester or next academic year. Warning letters shall at all times precede the issuing of termination letters, as laid down in the Faculty Postgraduate Manual.
- 2.15. Any subsequent change of the study title should be agreed on between the supervisor and the student. If the proposal was ratified by the FHDC then any subsequent change in title, objectives and methodology shall be approved by Senate and if any changes impact on the ethical clearance which was granted then the ethical committees must approve of such changes.
- 2.16. Changes of study title after a TREC certificate has already been issued shall be approved by the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC), before the School Director may process the study title change administratively with the Faculty Research and Postgraduate office.
- 2.17. 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 student, the Head of Department, the Director of the School and the Executive Dean should be informed and appropriate steps taken to terminate the student's studies. Such a termination should preferably take place early in the student's proposal writing stages.

### **3. Assessment**

- 3.1. The student shall ensure proper registration and payment of all fees for each year until the degree is awarded. The Supervisor shall galvanise the student towards such awareness.
- 3.2. A student may be registered, after the period of formal registration has ended, and provided all research work is concluded, as a 'writing up' student, on payment of a nominal fee, for up to nine months. If a student does not complete after the nine months, the faculty should decide what should happen.
- 3.3. After the period of formal registration has ended, a supervisor should normally be prepared to continue to provide advice during the period of the preparation of the dissertation or thesis. It is expected, however, that the supervised research will be completed during the prescribed registration period. In cases where a dissertation or thesis has been referred back for revision and resubmission, supervision shall be provided.
- 3.4. The student should, at the start of the final semester of the Master's or Doctoral registration, prepare a brief report on progress to date which should also indicate the expected submission date for the dissertation or thesis.
- 3.5. The appointment of Supervisors is the responsibility of the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) upon the recommendations of the schools.
- 3.6. First-time Supervisors shall receive training and should work with experienced Supervisors. Experienced supervisors provide fundamental training to first-time Supervisors by having the lion's share in supervision responsibilities and by mentoring first-time supervisors gradually towards independent supervision.
- 3.7. The student should submit a dissertation or thesis for assessment only when the Supervisor is satisfied that the work is ready for assessment. In making this decision, the student shall seek the approval of the Supervisor. It is incumbent upon the Supervisor to explain this to the student at the time of signing the MoU.
- 3.8. It is the responsibility of the Supervisor to initiate procedures for the appointment of assessors with the Head of Department.
- 3.9. In recommending assessors, the submission shall include the name, present post and curriculum vitae of each recommended assessor together with a brief motivation concerning the suitability for the appointment.

- 3.10. All (mini-) dissertations and theses to be submitted by Supervisors to Heads of Department shall be accompanied by a Supervisor's report. The Supervisor's report is not an assessor's report.
- 3.11. Submission of (mini-) dissertations and theses to the Faculty Research and Postgraduate Office shall be the responsibility of the School Director. The School Director shall receive the (mini-) dissertations and theses from the Head of Department at the same time as all the other documents required to accompany a request for the appointment of assessors for recommendation to the FEC.
- 3.12. In the event where a (mini-) dissertation or thesis is submitted against the advice or permission of the Supervisor, the candidate shall advance reasons for such a decision, and this shall be recorded in the minutes of the FEC. Such a submission shall be directed to the office of the Assistant Registrar as he/she is responsible for the FEC agenda.
- 3.13. Should FEC seek any correction of documents by schools, at the latest such corrections shall be submitted by the Head of Department to the School Director's office within five (5) working days after the FEC meeting that requested the correction. The School Director shall then pass the quality-assured corrections to FEC within two (2) working days of escalation by the Head of Department.
- 3.14. The assessors shall send their reports to the University Central Postgraduate Office only. The said Office shall then send the summary of assessors' reports to the Supervisor.
- 3.15. Upon receipt of the assessors' reports, the Supervisor shall oversee the corrections by the candidate and compile the summarised report.
- 3.16. The summarised report shall be submitted to the Faculty Research and Postgraduate Office within fourteen (14) working days of receipt of the summary report from the University Central Postgraduate Office. The summarised report shall be submitted specifically to the Executive Dean in the Faculty Research and Postgraduate Office, through the Head of Department and School Director.
- 3.17. Supervisors and candidates shall not directly contact the University Central Postgraduate Office in relation to the (mini-) dissertation or thesis being assessed, unless with the express permission of the Executive Dean of the Faculty concerned. Such permission shall be requested and given in writing.
- 3.18. Should the Supervisor encounter challenges with the summary report, he/she shall refer the matter to the Executive Dean within seven (7) working days of receipt from the University Central Postgraduate Office. Overall finalisation and submission of the summarised report to the Executive Dean in the Faculty Research and Postgraduate

Office shall still happen within fourteen (14 working days) of receipt of the summary report from the University Central Postgraduate Office.

3.19. The Executive Dean shall submit the summarised report to the Central Higher Degrees Committee for eventual approval by the Executive Committee of Senate.

3.20. The Supervisor shall ensure that all corrections and recommendations by the examiners of the dissertation or thesis are carried out under his/her supervision.

3.21. The student, supported by the department, is responsible for the safe-keeping and storing of all raw data, results and records of the research for 5 years. The Supervisor should guide the student accordingly and shall not be held accountable for loss or damage hereof.

3.22. The Supervisor shall encourage and assist with publication of the student's research work and discuss with the student the publication of papers arising from the research, in particular the question of authorship of such papers and acknowledgement of the work of contributors.

3.23. The student shall discuss with the supervisor the publication of papers arising from the research, and the question of acknowledgement of all those involved in the research. The supervisor should galvanise the student towards such awareness.

**Sources:**

1. *Code of Practice on the Admission, Supervision and Assessment of Masters and Doctoral Students (RDA-CPASA01 2013/03/20), 2013, University of Limpopo.*
2. *Senate-Approved Policy for the Appointment of Assessors and Assessment Process for Masters Degree Dissertations and Doctoral Degree Theses, 2015, University of Limpopo*

**N.B.** The only original parts of this document are interpretations of the University policy documents for operational implications. The motive was to establish a common interpretation among Faculty management, academic managers, supervisors and supervisees for effective productivity.

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