DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
Supervision Policy for Postgraduate Research Degrees

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1. Introduction

Durban University of Technology (DUT), in its pursuit of excellence and quality in the enhancement in its postgraduate degrees, acknowledges the diversity of its disciplines, and that supervisory practices will have different forms across the University. However, there are essential principles for postgraduate supervision that must be adhered to across the University. The specific procedures involved in the application of these principles are contained in the DUT *Postgraduate Student Guide* and Postgraduate forms (available on student/staff portals through the link http://www.dut.ac.za/research/forms/). Procedures not in these and related documents and/or policies will be contained in an Addendum (attached), which will be updated regularly so as to keep them aligned with changing University procedures.

2. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that DUT maintains academic standards and integrity in the supervision process, appointment of postgraduate supervisors and in the management of the supervision process.

3. Applicability

This policy is applicable to:

3.1 Postgraduate supervisors/co-supervisors, both internal and external to the University;

3.2 University staff responsible for the administration and support of postgraduate research candidates;

4. Definitions

Department/programme	The terms "department" or "programme" refer to the academic department or programme that has responsibility for the enrolment of postgraduate students or candidates.
Postgraduate student/ candidate	The terms "postgraduate student" or "candidate" refer to any person admitted to and enrolled in a planned course of postgraduate research at the Durban University of Technology leading to a postgraduate degree.
Co-supervisor	A "co-supervisor" is an appropriately qualified person designated to assist in the academic co-supervision of a candidate's research and candidature. A co-supervisor works as part of the supervisory team with the main supervisor.
Advisory committee	This is a committee appointed by the HoD of the department/programme in which the candidate is enrolled to seek a second opinion on a matter of interest.
External supervisor	An "external supervisor" is an appropriately qualified person who is neither employed by the University nor

	holds an honorary appointment at the University, but who is <u>then appointed in a "supervisory capacity" by DUT to assist in the academic supervision of a candidate's research.</u>
Main supervisor	A "main supervisor" is an appropriately qualified person who takes primary responsibility for the academic supervision of a candidate's research and candidature. <u>Main supervisors are always internal staff of the University except in exceptional cases where there is no adequate internal capacity. Such cases must also be motivated for within the relevant Faculty Board.</u>
Supervisor	A "supervisor" is an appropriately qualified person who is responsible for the academic supervision of a candidate's research and candidature. <u>For the purposes of this policy supervisor categories can include: main internal supervisor/main supervisor, co-supervisors (internal/external to DUT).</u>
University	"University" refers to the Durban University of Technology (DUT).
Internal Supervisor	Supervisors who are part of the DUT staff establishment, Adjunct/Honorary appointees appointed to supervise candidates for postgraduate degrees.

5. General principles

The following general principles apply throughout the University:

5.1 Provision of supervision

Every postgraduate research student will be guided during his/her period of registered study by supervisors with suitable academic qualifications, acceptable level of supervision experience and appropriate expertise in the agreed area of the student's research topic.

5.2 Responsibility for providing supervision

Heads of Departments (HoDs) are responsible for ensuring admitted postgraduate research students in their department receive appropriate and continuous supervision during their period of registered study. A research student should be admitted only if the HoD is satisfied that:

5.2.1 There is a member of staff/supervisor suitably academically qualified for the task and who has the academic expertise and supervisory experience to supervise the student;

5.2.2 The member of staff/supervisor is willing to supervise the student and that the student is willing to accept him/her as supervisor;

5.2.3 The member of staff's/supervisor's other teaching and research commitments are taken into account when taking up additional supervisory roles;

5.2.4 The member of staff/supervisor is aware of the role and responsibilities of supervisors;

5.2.5 The member of staff/supervisor has received appropriate advice/training in supervision skills or has adequate experience.

5.3 Roles of supervisors and students

The roles of supervisors, co-supervisors and students should be made as clear as possible by the HoD and should preferably be arrived at through a process of mutual consensus between all parties involved in the supervisory process. All parties involved should be informed by the DUT *Postgraduate Student Guide*, which provides clear roles and responsibilities for Faculty administrative staff, HoDs, students and supervisors. The supervisory process should be documented so that there is evidence that supervision has taken place and documented indicators of the student's progress.

5.4 Eligibility of supervisors

All appointed supervisors must satisfy the following requirements. They must:

5.4.1 meet the eligibility criteria of this policy;

5.4.2 be appointed as supervisors in the Faculty in accordance with this policy;

5.4.3 adhere to and abide by all relevant policies and University regulations, including this policy and in particular, the policy on research ethics;

5.4.4 in the case of a doctorate, be qualified at doctoral level. Co-supervisors with equivalent professional experience[1] at doctoral level may be considered in cases where such experience is required;

5.4.5 in the case of a research masters, have a doctorate (i.e., a qualification one level above the qualification being supervised); [2]

5.4.6 in the case of a coursework masters, have a doctorate. A supervisor with a masters may be accepted in certain qualifications where the profession has not had a sufficient pool of supervisors with doctorates or equivalent. These cases though have to be clearly approved for by the Faculty and in such cases there should be a main supervisor with a doctorate.

5.4.7 have a manageable number of postgraduate students being supervised at any given time, ideally, not more than ten full-time doctoral students with exceptions in cases where the supervisors are full-time researchers with limited undergraduate teaching responsibilities;

5.4.8 complete at least one supervisory and ethics capacity training workshop if a first time supervisor or be part of a supervisory team as co-supervisor. Supervisors are advised to undertake refresher supervisory training every five years.

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[1] In this case "professional experience" means experience, in a relevant Industry, of a complexity and depth equivalent to a doctorate in that discipline. The professional experience of one supervisor is then complemented by the requisite qualification/s of the other supervisor/s.

[2] In exceptional cases, co-supervisors with a masters may be considered as long as they are part of a supervisory team which has a supervisor with a doctorate as the main supervisor.

5.5 Factors to be taken into account when supervisors are allocated

When supervisors are allocated, the following factors should be taken into account:

5.5.1 departmental/programme and faculty workload models;

5.5.2 workload balance between teaching and learning, administrative and research, innovation and engagement commitments;

5.5.3 completion rates of the supervisor's previous students;

5.5.4 consideration for exceptions based on discipline-specific issues and evidence that there is a supervisory team with co-supervisors;

5.5.5 consideration for supervisors appointed in purely research and innovation positions with limited teaching commitments;

5.5.6 consideration for adjunct/honorary appointments as part of supervisory team in cases where there is insufficient internal capacity.

5.6 Internal main supervisor

The main supervisor must take full responsibility for the overall progress and direction of the student's research. This includes administrative issues relating to the student's registration, attendance, supervisor-student agreement, research ethics compliance and progress reports. Where two staff members are both actively involved in the supervision, a requirement to appoint one of them as main supervisor still stands, while the equal academic contributions that they each bring to the team should be acknowledged.

Internal main supervisors must be academic/research staff members of the University in a permanent or continuing fixed-term role who are either:

5.6.1 classified as research/innovation focused or academic specialists;

5.6.2 staff members with an active participation in original research, innovation and active publishers or researchers as determined relevant by the University;

5.6.3 honorary/adjunct fellows who have active participation in original research, innovation and are actively publishing; or

5.6.4 clinical honorary fellows who are active and participating in original research and innovation.

5.7 Internal co-supervisor

The co-supervisor is usually appointed to contribute his/her specific expertise in assisting the main supervisor throughout the development of the student's research. The co-supervisor is also expected to provide continuity of supervision when the main supervisor is absent from the University.

Internal co-supervisors must be either:

5.7.1 any person eligible as determined by the policy;

5.7.2 academic staff members in a continuing or fixed-term contract for the period of the registered degree being supervised;

5.7.3 research and innovation focused staff appointed as postdoctoral fellows and/or research associates who are actively involved in original research;

5.7.4 adjunct and emeritus professors who have an active continuing participation in research and innovation.

5.8 External main supervisors and co-supervisors

External main supervisors and co-supervisors must be:

5.8.1 appropriately qualified with sufficient experience to assist in supervision, as approved by the Faculty;

5.8.2 prepared to adhere to DUT University rules and regulations;

5.8.3 aware that conditions of employment will differ from employees in permanent employment;

5.8.4 aware that payment of remuneration is subject to deductions in accordance with statutory requirements. Tax (PAYE and SITE) will be deducted where applicable;

5.8.5 aware that the contract may be terminated before the end of the term or any renewal period for misconduct, incapacity, and operational requirements;

5.8.6 aware that the handling of challenges experienced in relation to student performance, must follow relevant protocol, that is, through the relevant academic Department and Faculty;

5.8.7 aware that changes of supervisors (or addition thereof) are done in consultation with the Head of Department/Programme..

5.9 Clinical/industrial/technical supervisor

In certain research and innovation areas of study, it may be necessary to appoint a clinical/industrial/technical supervisor to cover the clinical, industrial or technical aspects of the research degree, or where students are pursuing research and innovation which involves collaboration with an external body. The duties of such supervisors should focus on providing critical commentary on planned research and the programme of work completed. These supervisors may also enable access to equipment or data resources otherwise inaccessible to the student. A supervisor of this nature should be appointed only if the arrangement is covered by a formal agreement.

Documents contributing to this policy:

University of Melbourne Supervision Policy and Guidelines. 2009. Available: (https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1322 (Accessed 11 November 2017).

DUT Postgraduate (PG) Forms. 2017. Available: http://www.dut.ac.za/research/forms/ (Accessed 31 October 2017).

DUT Postgraduate Student Guide. 2017. Available: http://www.dut.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/POSTGRADUATE-STUDENT-GUIDE-OCTOBER-2017.pdf (Accessed 31 October 2017).

Rhodes University policy on postgraduate supervisory practice. 2001. Available: https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/institutionalplanning/documents/Postgraduate%20Supervision%20Policy.pdf) (Accessed 11 November 2017).

University of Manchester Supervision Policy for Postgraduate Research Degrees. 2016. Available: http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=615 (Accessed 11 November 2017).

University of Nottingham Appointment of Supervisors Manual. n.d. Available: https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/academicservices/qualitymanual/researchdegreeprogrammes/appointment-of-supervisor.aspx (Accessed 8 November 2017).

National Qualifications Framework Act (67/2008): Publication of the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework and Higher Education Qualifications of the National Qualifications Framework, page 3, Gazette no. 36797

(http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/pol/2013/gfetqs_heqsf.pdf) (Accessed 4 March 2019)

ADDENDUM A: OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

A.1 Appointment of supervisors

Appointment of supervisors must be approved by the relevant FRC and noted by the Higher Degrees Committee (HDC). All first-time supervisors must complete supervisory training, or be part of a supervision team, or be appointed in a co-supervision role to gain the relevant experience.

A.2 Record of appointment of supervisors

The Faculty Office and Departments with the support of the Faculty Research Coordinator/Officer must maintain the record of appointment of supervisors in their faculty with their full contact details.

A.3 Continuation of appointment of University staff as main/co-supervisors

The appointment as main/co-supervisor of University staff continues until one of the following conditions applies:

A.3.1 They cease employment with the University;

A.3.2 They are no longer actively participating in original research; or

A.3.3 They have their supervisory role terminated, as set out in A.6.

A.4 Continuation of appointment of honorary/clinical honorary fellows as main/co-supervisors

The registration of adjunct/honorary fellows and clinical honorary fellows continues until one of the following conditions applies:

A.4.1 They cease their honorary appointment with the University;

A.4.2 They are no longer actively participating in original research; or

A.4.3 They have their supervisory role terminated, as set out in A.7.

A.5 Reappointment of staff who have left the University

A supervisor whose appointment comes to an end at the University may apply to the relevant Faculty for reappointment to continue as external supervisor for the current candidates.

A.6 Termination of supervisory role of University staff members:

Matters related to supervisor appointment, load and performance should be managed within the department and discussed with the relevant line manager and/or HoD. The following procedures should be carried out if termination of the supervisory role is considered:

A.6.2 The supervisor's line manager discusses any concerns with the supervisor, and, where required, agrees to a remedial plan and gives the supervisor a reasonable length of time to rectify any problems;

A.6.3 If, after having agreed on a <u>remedial</u> plan and having given the supervisor time to rectify any problems, the line manager believes the supervisor's appointment should be terminated, he/she then sends a recommendation to the relevant Faculty Executive Dean that the supervisor contract be terminated and that the supervisor be removed from the Faculty supervision list.

A.6.4 <u>The Faculty Executive Dean must table this recommendation at the relevant Faculty Board for noting</u>.

A.7 Termination of supervisory role of honorary/clinical honorary fellows:

The following procedures should be carried out if termination of the supervisory role is considered:

A.7.1 In the first instance, the Executive Dean/faculty designated person must discuss any concerns with the supervisor;

A.7.2 If the Executive Dean/faculty designated person determines that <u>remedial action is required</u>, he/she must consult with the supervisor and give the supervisor a reasonable amount of time to rectify any problems;

A.7.3 If, after the supervisor has been given sufficient time to rectify any problems, the HoD believes the supervisor's appointment must be terminated, he/she should recommend to the Executive Dean that the supervisor's contract be terminated. <u>The Executive Dean must table the item with the relevant Faculty Board to not the recommendation</u>.

A.8 Termination of supervisor appointment

On making a decision to terminate a supervisor's appointment, the Executive Dean, <u>in consultation with the FRC</u>, may consider whether:

A.8.1 A supervisor no longer has continued active participation in original research;

A.8.2 There is a record of students failing and/or not completing owing to poor supervision, as substantiated by the HoD;

A.8.3 There is evidence of multiple student requests to change a supervisor and the standard of supervision is a common factor in the change requests;

A.8.4 There is evidence of a pattern of non-compliance with research ethics policies, procedures and guidelines, which has been substantiated after investigation.

A.9 Retention of supervisor appointment for remaining candidates

A supervisor whose contract for one student has been terminated may, with the approval of the relevant Executive Dean and FRC, retain supervision of the remaining candidates where:

A.9.1 a supervisory plan has been agreed by the supervisor and the HoDs of the postgraduate candidates.

A.10 Appeals against termination of supervisor appointment

At the request of the supervisor, the Chair of the FRC (or a nominated FRC member, if the Chair is the Dean), should facilitate a meeting between the supervisor, their HoD and the relevant Executive Dean in order to appeal the termination of the supervisor appointment. The supervisor is entitled to have a support person present at the meeting. At this meeting the Chair of the FRC (or nominated FRC member) should:

A.10.1 consider whether the principles of procedural fairness have been applied, and whether the decision to terminate the appointment was justified; and

A.10.2 make suggestions as to how the appeal might be resolved.

If a decision is made to effect the termination of the supervisory role, in spite of the appeal process described above, and the staff member wishes to appeal this decision, he/she may do so by appealing through the relevant Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC).

A supervisor whose supervisor appointment has been terminated may apply to be re-appointed by outlining how the conditions leading to the termination have been dealt with and getting an endorsement from the relevant HoD and Executive Dean. The application must then be submitted to the FRC for approval.