



## POLICY

### STUDENT-SUPERVISOR RELATIONSHIP

#### Introduction

The Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) is committed to the ideal of distinguished scholarship and the provision of credible and innovative research findings that carry international recognition as well as national credibility and legitimacy. Central to the realisation of this vision lies the quality of the research produced as the institution leads, challenges and explores knowledge.

The relationship between supervisor and student is an integral part of the holistic research experience as the student develops and is guided towards mastery of the research process, the research discipline and the field of specialisation. The main focus of this Policy is the student-supervisor relationship and not the general relationship between FPD and the student or FPD and the supervisor.

#### Policy purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Outline the rights and obligations of all Postgraduate Diploma, Honours, Master's, and Doctoral postgraduate students enrolled at FPD, as well as those of supervisors and co-supervisors.
- Provide a clear and concise outline of what each party to the student-supervisor relationship may expect from the other, thereby promoting the development and maintenance of a sound and productive relationship between the two parties.
- Serve as a point of departure in the resolution of any disputes that might arise between postgraduate students and their supervisors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the general rules governing the enrolment of students and/or the conditions of employment academic employees and/or researchers as applicable.

#### Scope

The Policy applies to:

- All academic and/or research employees in their role as supervisors of Postgraduate Diplomas, Honours, Master's and Doctoral students;
- All students registered for Postgraduate Diplomas, Honours, Master's and Doctoral qualifications across all schools;

The policy extends and does not replace any other agreements between FPD and its students or employees. For the remainder of the document co-supervisors will also be referred to as supervisors, since their essential responsibilities are the same with respect to their interaction with the student. Where minor

difference may exist, the supervisor and co-supervisor(s) will clarify these between themselves and communicate them to the student.

### **The Appointment of Supervisors <sup>1</sup>**

Supervisors of candidates doing Master's dissertations must hold at least an equivalent (Master's) qualification, but preferably a Doctorate, and must have a research record that is deemed acceptable by FPD for the appointment. In exceptional circumstances, the Academic Executive may approve the appointment of a supervisor with specific expertise but who does not have the stipulated academic qualification or research record. In the case of inexperienced or new supervisors, it will be required of the supervisor to complete the FPD short learning programme on Postgraduate Research Supervision or a similar programme, and joint supervision is advisable.

After registration has been finalised, the candidate and their supervisor sign a Code of Conduct of Academic Research, which sets out their respective roles regarding the proposed research. Please refer to [Policy A12: Research](#) for the Code of Conduct.

In order to increase supervision capacity, supervisors external to FPD may be appointed. Their remuneration and conditions of employment are determined by the relevant HR structures.

The following criteria are taken into account when appointing external supervisors: academic qualification, expertise in the field, and supervisory experience at the level of the qualification required to supervise.

A co-supervisor or panel of supervisors may be appointed. Co-supervisors or panel members should be experts in an aspect of the field of the proposed dissertation. They provide academic support and expertise in co-operation with the supervisor.

In exceptional circumstances a supervisor or candidate may address a duly motivated request to the Academic Executive for the appointment of a co-supervisor, or for the replacement of the supervisor by another supervisor.

### **The student-supervisor relationship**

#### **Student responsibilities and legitimate Supervisor expectations:**

The student is responsible for exercising the following responsibilities diligently and sincerely, and where appropriate to consult with their supervisor/s in order to give effect to such responsibilities. Conversely, the supervisor/s may legitimately expect students to exercise these responsibilities at all times.

1. Plan and implement the agreed research programme or project;
2. Submit a schedule for the submission;
3. Submit monthly progress reports;
4. Successfully complete all the academic outputs required by the study programme;
5. Find/source appropriate literature and obtain information from literature;
6. Write the research proposal within the time stipulated;
7. Prepare all documents required for obtaining ethics clearance, if applicable;
8. Assist in a limited manner in the drafting of funding applications;
9. Plan work schedules;

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<sup>1</sup> Council on Higher Education. 2004. Criteria for Programme Accreditation. Available at: [http://nr-online.che.ac.za/html\\_documents/CHE\\_accreditation\\_criteria\\_Nov2004.pdf](http://nr-online.che.ac.za/html_documents/CHE_accreditation_criteria_Nov2004.pdf)

10. Engage in any required fieldwork or data gathering, laboratory experimentation, data processing and statistical analyses;
11. Write and proofread their research report, dissertation or thesis, including, but not limited to, obtaining professional assistance with the language editing of the dissertation or thesis;
12. Attend to any amendments or revisions of the research report, dissertation or thesis as required by the supervisor/s or internal or external assessors, and assume responsibility for the production of the final electronic and bound hard copies;
13. Make regular appointments with the supervisor/s and inform them in time if any administrative or academic difficulties are experienced in the study programme for the supervisor/s to advise timely corrective action;
14. Participate in research projects and programmes as determined by the supervisors, including attendance of symposia, seminars and conferences;
15. If necessary, purchase items that may be required to complete the production of the dissertation or thesis;
16. In the case of post-graduate research students, produce at least one manuscript of a research paper in an prescribed format ready for submission to an accredited research journal when the Assessment Sub-Committee considers the assessment results;
17. Adhere at all times to all general academic ethics with regard to academic integrity and plagiarism, and ethics requirements relating to the research work; and
18. Renew their annual registration with FPD at the stipulated times.

### **Supervisor responsibilities and legitimate Student expectations:**

All supervisors are responsible for exercising the following responsibilities diligently and sincerely. The student may legitimately expect the supervisors to exercise such responsibilities at all times.

1. Clarify the respective roles of the supervisor and co-supervisor(s) (if appointed), and communicate these clearly to the student;
2. Administer and manage matters associated with the student's studies in accordance with the regulations of FPD;
3. Cooperate with each other and with the Head of School and/or Academic Executive or other responsible FPD official, to ensure as far as reasonably possible that the student is provided with the basic infrastructure and necessary resources to undertake the research. Co-operate with each other and with the Head of School and/or Academic Executive, to assist with the arrangements for symposia or seminars which the student may present;
4. Ensure that the Programme Coordinator and relevant committees are furnished with all relevant documentation at the relevant time;
5. Provide academic guidance to the student to ensure the development of research skills, mastery of the research discipline and the field of specialisation, ensuring that these competencies are demonstrated in the relevant dissertation or thesis;
6. Facilitate the student's access to necessary research resources, such as the library, laboratories and equipment, or access to chemicals and consumables, while not diminishing the student's duty to take responsibility for their own research, including purchasing items that may be required to complete the production of the dissertation or thesis;
7. Introduce the student to the School in order to, where possible and practicable, involve them in academic activities appropriate to the field of expertise;
8. Meet with the student regularly to provide guidance, monitor progress and agreed upon timeframes, and recommend corrective measures if necessary;
9. Give feedback to the student within 4 calendar weeks regarding work submitted;
10. Keep a written record of progress and output, and provide timely feedback, but also bear in mind their other formal FPD responsibilities;

11. Provide progress reports as required by the FPD and its research and/or postgraduate study structures, or by external agencies where required;
12. Assess the research report, dissertation or thesis (if appointed as an assessor), and oversee any changes recommended by the assessors and those which have been stipulated by the appropriate Faculty or FPD structure;
13. Liaise regularly on an ongoing basis with each other in order to clarify , roles and responsibilities with regard to academic supervision;
14. Adhere at all times to all general academic ethics with regard to academic integrity and plagiarism, and the ethics requirements of research work; and
15. Encourage the student to seek external financial support for their studies.

### **Head of School-specific responsibilities**

The Head of School manages the student-supervisor relationship in accordance with the provisions contained in this Policy, the Student Grievance Policy ([Policy SR3: Student and Academic Grievance](#)), The Student Support Policy ([Policy SR5: Student Support](#)), the Language Policy ([Policy SR2: Language](#)), the Student Disability Policy([Policy SR4: Student Disability](#)), the Student Selection, Admission and Enrolment Policy ([Policy SR1: Student Admission and Enrolment](#)) and School's rules and regulations as determined and approved by Academic Committee and contained in the Institution Rules and Regulations.

### **Accountabilities**

The Academic Committee is responsible for review and approval of this policy on an annual basis. The policy is to be distributed to staff via induction and distributed to students and FPD's community via the website and other publications.