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SUPERVISION of STUDENT RESEARCH (L8 and L9) PROCEDURE

Section	Research		
Approval Date	11.07.2018	Approved by	Academic Board
Next Review	11.07.2021	Responsibility	Executive Director – Learning Innovation and Delivery
Last Reviewed	05.07.2018	Key Evaluation Question	4

PURPOSE

To provide postgraduate research students with effective supervision so they can complete their Research Project or Research Thesis.

SCOPE

All supervision of Level 8 and Level 9 student research projects of 30 credits or more as part of a Postgraduate Diploma and/or Master's degree programme delivered by NMIT either directly or through sub-contracted arrangements.

SUPERVISORY REQUIREMENTS FOR LEVEL 8 AND LEVEL 9 RESEARCH PROJECTS/THESES

- Students enrolled in a Level 8 or Level 9 research project should have an appointed primary supervisor/s and, where appropriate, a co-supervisor. Co-supervisors should usually be appointed for a Level 8 and Level 9 research thesis of 60 credits or more.
- Primary supervisors should be appointed from the Department offering the qualification. They are responsible for overseeing student progress in the research project from the time that they are appointed as supervisors to the point at which the student submits the final work.
- Co-supervisors should be chosen on the basis of specific knowledge or expertise and should also be able to broaden the advice and guidance received by the student. Co-supervisors should also be prepared to act as primary supervisors if and when primary supervisors are unable to perform this task.

APPOINTMENT OF SUPERVISORS

Because academic supervision is based upon the establishment and maintenance of a good working relationship between the parties, supervisors shall be appointed by the Head of Department after consultation with the student, the supervisor/s and the Programme Coordinator has taken place. This appointment must be done prior to the commencement of the student's research project/thesis. The appointment will be reported to and recorded at the relevant Academic Committee.

ROLE OF SUPERVISORS

- To provide guidance, advice and mentoring in the field of research inquiry undertaken by the student and to arrange the practical support necessary for the realisation of the research project/thesis.
- To ensure the student is aware of the academic expectations and responsibilities of Level 8 and Level 9 research students, as defined in NMIT's *Guidelines for Student Research at Level 8 and Level 9*.
- To advise on the definition of the aims and objectives of the examinable components of the research and to advise on methodological, conceptual and procedural matters relating to their production.
- To liaise with the candidate to arrange regular meetings with the candidate, and co-supervisors where appropriate, to discuss progress and to report on such meetings to the Programme Coordinator. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that there is appropriate communication between the candidate and supervisor whether the candidate is working on or off campus and/or within a work place.
- To ensure these meetings with a candidate and with all their co-supervisors where appropriate, should be at least once per term.
- To be accessible to the candidate at other appropriate times when he or she may need advice.
- To ensure that prompt responses are provided to submitted drafts.
- To meet with the Programme Coordinator at set times and provide them with written reports and/or feedback on the student's progress.
- To encourage candidates who have difficulty to discuss their work with other staff and peers for added feedback.
- To ensure that the student is made aware of inadequate progress; or if in the supervisor's opinion the student is unlikely to achieve the required standard to notify the Programme Coordinator and the student.
- To inform the Programme Coordinator about the student's pastoral care needs and/or to refer the student to the appropriate support services.

QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING OF SUPERVISORS

- Primary supervisors will have an academic qualification which is equal to, or higher than, the degree in question.
- All primary supervisors for a research thesis at Level 9 of 60 credits or more will have a PhD.
- All primary supervisors must be provided with adequate training and/or mentoring prior to undertaking research supervision (see knowledge and skill set for supervisors below).

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL SET OF SUPERVISORY TEAM

- Research methodology skills and/or research experience appropriate to the specific research project.
- Meta-cognitive skills for high-level problem solving and wider contextualisation of research project.
- Ability to communicate clearly and to listen to students.
- Advanced writing and analytical skills.
- Project management skills.
- Mentoring ability and feedback skills.

- Pastoral care sensitivity and awareness of student support services

PROBLEMS OR DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

Where problems, issues or disagreements occur between students and supervisors, the student should approach the supervisor concerned in the first instance. If the student regards this as inappropriate, or if the supervisor is unavailable, the student can approach the responsible Programme Coordinator who will review the situation with both parties.

The Head of Department will be informed of the issue or disagreement by the responsible Programme Coordinator, and the supervisor will be advised if there has been a request to review or change supervision arrangements.

This approach to the responsible Head of Department may be initiated by either the student or the supervisor.

If the problems or disagreements are not resolved at this stage then the Head of Department may appoint a new supervisor or co-supervisor.

The change of supervisor or co-supervisor will be reported to and recorded by the Department's responsible Academic Committee.

The NMIT Student Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure may be used where/if appropriate.

SUPERVISION MEETINGS, REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING

The frequency of supervision meetings may vary depending upon students, supervisors, schools and whether programmes are on-campus or via online study. These should be held frequently enough, however, to ensure that good dialogue and research progress are maintained. Regular evaluation of student feedback should be sought and acted upon.

It is required that supervisors keep a record (written notes, e-mail messages, etc.) of the supervision process including dates of meetings, both as a record of what has occurred and as a means of easily preparing a mid-course report.

Supervisors are required to produce a mid-course report, which details student progress and which highlights any concerns that they may have in relation to the research process. Students are required to sign off on the report adding any comments if they wish. These reports should be received by the responsible school Programme Coordinator and a summary passed on to the Head of Department, or delegate to maintain progress reports.

For audit purposes mid-course reports are retained for one year after completion of the qualification.

An opportunity for feedback on the supervision process is provided to candidates by completing an exit questionnaire after completion of the qualification (see Appendix 1).

In cases where insufficient progress is identified supervisors should seek guidance from the [Student Academic Support and Progression Policy](#).

ASSESSMENT

Supervisors and co-supervisors have no role in assessing research projects/theses that they have supervised. This is the role of the examiner(s).

In the case of a research thesis of at least 60 credits the examination is the responsibility of an examiner external to NMIT.

The Head of Department will appoint the internal and external examiners where these are required unless the Head of Department is themselves acting as a supervisor or co-supervisor, in which case the Programme Coordinator will appoint the examiner.

The appointment of examiners must follow NMIT approved procedures.

Assessment of Level 8 and Level 9 research must follow NMIT approved procedures.

GUIDANCE FOR ETHICS AND EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

Students will be provided with the document '*Guidelines for Research at Level 8*' before the commencement of their studies at level 8.

Students will be provided with the document '*Guidelines for Research at Level 9*' before the commencement of their studies at level 9.

Supervisors, Programme Coordinators and Head of Departments will adhere to the guidelines for procedures regarding for seeking and securing research ethics approval, for examination, and for re-examination, should the latter eventuate.

REFERENCES

INTERNAL

- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Approval and Publication of Research Policy](#)
- [Code of Ethical Conduct – Animal Welfare](#)
- [Code of Ethical Conduct for Research](#)
- Guidelines for Student Research at Level 8 – available on Moodle, NMIT online
- Guidelines for Student Research at Level 9 – available on Moodle, NMIT online
- [Intellectual Property Policy](#)
- [NMIT Academic Statute - Section 3 Academic Regulations](#)
- [Student Academic Appeals Procedure](#)
- [Student Academic Support and Progression Procedure](#)
- [Supervision of Student Research \(L8 and L9\) Policy](#)

EXTERNAL

- Education Act 1989
- Otago Polytechnic Supervision of Research Policy

APPENDICES

[Level 8 and Level 9 Research Students' 'Exit' Questionnaire](#)

Level 8 and Level 9 Research Students' 'Exit' Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire is to gather information about supervision (both positive and negative aspects) which may be of assistance in developing better supervisory practices and resources for postgraduate students within the Department and the wider institute.

Please fill out this questionnaire now that you have completed your qualification and return it to the Department Secretary in the Freepost envelope provided. The questionnaire will be sent to your Head of Department.

Completion of this questionnaire is voluntary. The information you provide is intended to remain confidential to the Head of Department.

Programme of Study: _____

Department: _____

Please comment on the following aspects (be as specific as you can) of your supervision

1. Describe your supervision arrangements

2. Which elements of supervision contributed most to the successful completion of your Postgraduate Diploma or Master's degree?

3. What aspects were the greatest obstacle/s to the successful completion of your Postgraduate Diploma or Master's degree?

4. In what ways could your supervision have been improved?

5. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of your supervision?

6. What resources were available to you from NMIT that supported you to complete your work?

7. Could these have been improved and if so how?

8. Please add any other comments. Please expand as necessary on additional pages.

Name _____

Signed _____

Date _____