

# POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION AGREEMENT

# DEPARTMENT OF: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Preamble:**

The purpose of this document is to provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities of postgraduate supervisors and students at the Durban University of Technology.

These guidelines provide the basis for the postgraduate student supervisor contract.

These guidelines are in addition to the policies and regulations of the Durban University of Technology.

We gratefully acknowledge the Department of Biomedical and Clinical Technology, Faculty of Health Science for sharing their Postgraduate Supervision Guidelines document.

**Postgraduate Student Supervisor Contract**

On registration, the student and supervisor are required to complete the PG1 form, which outlines the following general responsibilities of both parties.

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| **STUDENT DECLARATION:**  I agree to:   * negotiate supervision agendas; * communicate about questions, challenges, problems (usually in short e-mails); * produce work at agreed intervals and work steadily; * send work at agreed intervals for supervisor input; * any further conditions as attached to this form (delete if not applicable); * other   **Signed: Date:**  Student  **SUPERVISOR DECLARATION:**  I agree to:   * negotiate supervision agendas; * advise on the research process; * respond to short questions at agreed intervals (e-mail); * read work submitted and comment, advise, determine agenda, action points; * any further conditions as attached to this form (delete if not applicable); * other |

Source: DUT- PG1- 2021 Notification of Proposed Research Topic and Supervisor

In addition to the above, the student/supervisor/co-supervisor relationship requires a clear functional working relationship. The contract has general guidelines that cover aspects such as communication, timelines, roles and responsibilities, ground rules etc. This is required to ensure that all parties are aware of their roles and agree to these at the outset.

**Student Supervisor Guidelines**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Student |  |
| Registration Number |  |
| Qualification |  |
| Contact number/s |  |
| Email address/es |  |
|  |  |
| Name of Supervisor |  |
| Contact Number/s |  |
| Email address/es |  |
|  |  |
| Name of Co supervisor |  |
| Contact Number |  |
| Email address |  |
|  |  |
| Name of Co supervisor |  |
| Contact Number |  |
| Email address |  |

The parties below have read and agree to the roles and responsibilities as outlined in the Student Supervisor Guidelines.

Student Signature ……………………………………….Date………………

Supervisor Signature……………………………………Date………………

Co-Supervisor Signature …………………………...….Date……………….

**Communication**

*The greyscale details should be changed to suit faculty, departmental or individual preferences/needs.*

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| Most appropriate modes of communication  *According to what applies to both supervisor and student, E mail and/or, face to face, telephonic, SMS, MS Teams or Zoom, evidence must be available. Both parties should acknowledge receipt of submissions/feedback within 2 days.* |
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| How often will we communicate?  *Once a month at least for part time students and once a week for full time students.* |
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| Who will schedule the meetings?  *Preferably the Supervisor and Co supervisor* |
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| Who will set the agenda for the meeting?  *Preferably the Supervisor and Co supervisor* |
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| Who will take the responsibility to document the meeting proceedings and circulate these to the other parties?  *Preferably the Student* |

**Timelines and Feedback**

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| After how long will the project plan or schedule be drawn up?  *Meeting 1: before PG1 approval (for contract discussion, signing and clarification of the focus area). The PG1 and supervisor-student contract should be submitted within 10 working days following submission of the concept note and Meeting 1.*  *Meeting 2: Project Plan discussion and first draft of PG2a. The first draft PG2a should be submitted within 30 days after the two preliminary meetings. Submission dates of the above must be contained in the plan and agreed to by the student, supervisor, and co supervisor.*  *Thereafter meetings must be scheduled once a month using MS Teams or face-to-face communication.* |
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| Once the student has submitted a document to the supervisor for comment, when can the student expect feedback?  *For submissions of less than 15 pages, after 10 working days; for submissions longer than 15 pages, within 20 working days.* |
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| How will the supervisor provide feedback?  *Electronically using “track changes” or via a recorded MS Teams meeting if the student is deviating from the focus area or struggling to understand what is expected.* |
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| What will the feedback cover?  *Comments will be on the scientific validity of the research mainly.*  *The focus will not be on changing grammatical and spelling errors: this will be the responsibility of the student or language editor* |
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| Once the student has received feedback from the supervisor when can the supervisor expect feedback/ and amended document?  *The student will submit feedback to the supervisor and co supervisor, which has the previous version with the initial supervisor comments together with the corrected/changed version within a period of time to be negotiated between the student and the supervisor, but not more than 20 working days* |
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**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Student responsibilities in terms of completing the research project**

**The student**

* Abides to all applicable rules and regulations of the University including the University's Codes of Practice for Research and Intellectual Property
* Works independently with the guidance of the supervisor.
* Ensures that he/she works safely in the research environment and ensures the safety of others especially if working within a hazardous research context.
* Develops a research project plan in consultation with the supervisor that is achievable within the timeframes allocated and maintain progress in accordance with the agreed timeframes.
* Takes into account the feedback that is provided by the supervisor.
* Undertakes to submit the final dissertation or thesis within the prescribed time frame and plans accordingly.
* Communicates any challenges or circumstances with the supervisor that may affect his/her research progress.
* Takes the responsibility of submitting a scientifically valid document free of punctuation and grammatical errors as well as plagiarism.
* Realises that non-compliance to agreed timelines will result in action such as termination.
* Ensures that any output that emanates from this postgraduate registration either oral or written is done in consultation with all supervisors and the department in which the student is registered (see Postgraduate Student Guidelines 2021 DUT).
* Ensures that the submission of the thesis for examination includes a draft manuscript published/for publication.
* Undertakes to attend relevant workshops arranged by the university or the department in which s/he is registered and keep evidence of attendance.

**Student responsibilities in terms of duties and obligations**

(Source: The Postgraduate Student Guide 2021, pages 10-11)

**Before the project begins** it is your responsibility:

* To be fully informed about the degree requirements and procedures at the University;
* To discuss with your supervisor/s the relevant responsibilities of each party, as set out below;
* To ensure that the proposed research project will not duplicate previous research;
* To arrange financial support for the project, where appropriate, and pay the required fees;
* To be willing to work with your supervisor/s;
* To sign confidentiality agreements where appropriate to the project concerned;
* To comply with the University’s Policy on Plagiarism;
* To comply with the procedures for Referencing (referencing guide and EndNote software are available from the DUT Library and the DUT Library website);
* To sign the Intellectual Property (IP) form (available at the Faculty Office);
* To sign a company confidentiality agreement (if applicable).

During the **course of the project** it is your responsibility:

* To maintain a professional attitude to and relationship with, your supervisor/s sponsors and any other members of the research group;
* To negotiate with your supervisor/s mutually acceptable arrangements regarding the sequence of tasks to be undertaken, target dates, submission of work for scrutiny and the schedule of meetings between supervisor and yourself;
* To meet obligations made during the supervisory contact;
* To make positive suggestions to your supervisor about the next stage of the work;
* To become familiar with the relevant literature in the field;
* To take responsibility for your research to ensure that there is conformity with the University regulations, on the advice of your supervisor;
* To record and report observations honestly and to examine experimental approaches critically;
* To acknowledge accurately all sources of information used and assistance received, and to ensure that all material complies with the University’s Policy on Plagiarism;
* To consult with your Head of Department about the adequacy of supervision or about any complaints and other matters affecting your research (where your supervisor is the Head of Department, you should consult with the Executive Dean of the Faculty);
* To bring cases of conflict between your supervisor and yourself to the attention of your Head of Department, or where your supervisor is the Head of Department, to the attention of the Executive Dean of the Faculty;
* To keep accurate records of the supervisory process by methods arrived at by mutual consent with your supervisor;
* To submit an annual progress report PG3a to the Head of Department;
* To re-register timeously every year and to pay the fees in time (or to ensure, at each registration, that Student Fees has been officially informed of the relevant fee waivers: contact the Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate for further information).

At the **conclusion** of the project it is your responsibility:

* To follow the procedures laid down for preparation, submission and examination of the dissertation/thesis;
* To take responsibility for stylistic presentation of the dissertation/thesis, including grammar, spelling, punctuation and referencing. Your supervisor should not be expected to check grammar, spelling, typographical errors and corrections of references;
* To acknowledge accurately all sources of information used and information received.
* To submit an electronic copy of the final, corrected dissertation/thesis to the Durban University of Technology Institutional Repository.

(see [openscholar.dut.ac.za/static/20181210\_submission\_guidelines.pdf](https://openscholar.dut.ac.za/static/20181210_submission_guidelines.pdf))

# The Supervisor/promoter

* Takes overall responsibility for the progress of student with the postgraduate registration, including administrative issues, the student’s registration, supervisor-student agreement, research ethics compliance and progress reports.
* Abides by all applicable rules and regulations of the University including the University's Codes of Practice for Research and Intellectual Property.
* Facilitates the growth and development of knowledge in the student’s research area during every stage of the process that is aligned to the level of the degree.
* Facilitates the development of a research plan, which includes dates of completion to achieve satisfactory performance.
* Submits feedback to students on the dates jointly agreed to at the commencement of the research.
* Is open and responsive student communication for example to clarify/explain feedback sent to students.
* Is accessible to the student according to the schedule of meeting agreed to by the student and supervisor.
* Ensures that any significant absence from the supervision is communicated timeously to the student and arranges for a suitable alternative should this be required.
* Assists the student in the preparation for the examination and provides the student with the examination assessment criteria.
* Ensures that the student works safely in the research environment and ensures the safety of others especially if working within a hazardous research context.

# The Co-supervisor

In addition to the duties of the Supervisor/promoter listed above:

* Contributes his/her expertise by working collaboratively with the main supervisor throughout the development of the student’s postgraduate degree.

**Supervisor responsibilities in terms of duties and obligations:**

(Source: The Postgraduate Student Guide 2021, pages 11-13)

**Before the project begins** it is the responsibility of your supervisor/s to:

* Identify the specific roles and responsibilities of each team member in the supervision process;
* Initiate discussion of the supervisory contract;
* Advise on resources and support systems;
* Discuss and plan to address risks and benefits of the proposed research;
* Submit the PG2a to the DRC and then to the FRC;
* Guide you, where possible, to obtain financial support for the research project;
* Inform you, before the research begins, of any risks involved in the project, e.g. possible unavailability of data;
* Where appropriate, clearly indicate to you what may be expected of you in terms of field trips, use of hazardous chemicals, etc.;
* Where appropriate, indicate to you that you may be required to sign confidentiality agreements;
* Bring to your attention the University’s Policy on Plagiarism;
* Bring to your attention the University’s Policy on Intellectual Property (IP).

**During the course** of the research project it is the responsibility of your supervisor/s to:

* Negotiate with you mutually acceptable arrangements regarding the sequence of tasks to be undertaken, target dates, submission of work for scrutiny and the setting up of a schedule of meetings between supervisor and you;
* Give guidance on the formulation of the research proposal to ensure that you are conversant with the relevant research methods and techniques, and where necessary, to help you to acquire and develop the relevant research skills;
* Ensure that your research complies with commonly accepted ethical standards for research in the discipline;
* Be available for guidance and discussion and to be prompt and comprehensive in response to stages of work completed, in accordance with mutually agreed arrangements as above;
* Motivate and encourage you, and endeavour to maintain a positive attitude to you and the research;
* Alert you to the academic requirements, the standard of language required, and any special conventions necessary in the presentation of a dissertation/thesis;
* Ensure at all times that you are aware of inadequate or sub-standard work in order to avoid misdirection and wasted effort. This responsibility includes alerting you to sub- standard linguistic ability;
* Advise on the organisation and style of the dissertation/thesis;
* Provide the opportunity for your work to be critically assessed by others with expertise in the field of study (e.g. the research project should be presented, in seminar form, to your peers and academic staff, and you should be encouraged to give paper presentations at conferences and submit articles to relevant journals while your work is in progress);
* Bring cases of conflict between your supervisor and you to the attention of the Head of Department or, where the supervisor is the Head of Department, to the Executive Dean of the Faculty;
* Keep accurate records of the supervision process. The method of recording this process should be arrived at by mutual consent;
* Provide you with access to the record of the supervisory practice on a regular basis. This record should be signed by both you and your supervisor;
* Remind you to submit an annual progress report, and to submit a supervisor’s annual report to the HoD.

**At the conclusion** of the project it is the responsibility of your supervisor/s to:

* Ensure, as far as the supervisor is able, that the dissertation/thesis will meet the standards likely to be required by the external examiners locally and internationally;
* Assist the HoD with the nomination of examiners for the Masters and Doctoral degrees, as/when required;
* Submit a report to the HoD if the supervisor does not approve the submission of the dissertation/thesis;
* Report to the FRC and the HDC if ongoing interaction is known to have occurred between you and examiners approved by the FRC;
* Take careful note of the reports of external examiners so that future research and supervision can be improved.

**Sources**

Postgraduate Student Guide. Directorate for Research and Postgraduate Support. Durban University of Technology. 2021.

Supervision policy for masters and doctoral qualifications Faculty of Health Sciences. Durban University of Technology. 2006.

Memorandum of Understanding Between postgraduate student and supervisor (s). Postgraduate Skills Development Programme at Stellenbosch University. Updated January 2017.

Memorandum of Agreement for Academic Supervision of Postgraduate Students. University of Pretoria. 2015.

Responsibilities of Supervisors and Students. School of Education. University of KwaZulu-Natal.