

Supervision Policy for Taught Master's Students

1. Supervision of Taught Master's Dissertations

- (1) The first task for students registering on Part II of a Master's programme, the dissertation, will be to prepare and submit a dissertation proposal for consideration by the Programme Director. The Head of School will be responsible for identifying an appropriate dissertation supervisor, in consultation with the appropriate Programme Director and, where appropriate, with the Dean of Faculty. This section outlines the responsibilities of the Dean of Faculty, the Head of School, the Programme Director, the supervisor and the student in relation to providing support and guidance for the Master's dissertation candidate.
- (2) On some Programmes of Study, Part II consists of a project or portfolio rather than a traditional dissertation. Throughout this document, all references to the dissertation will also apply to such projects and portfolios.
- (3) A dissertation submitted for a Taught Master's degree shall normally be openly available and subject to no security or restriction of access. A student may request that a bar on photocopying and/or access to a dissertation may be put in place for a specified period of up to 5 years. Requests for a bar on access should normally be made in writing to the relevant Head of School immediately after the approval of the dissertation proposal. The title and summary of the dissertation should remain freely available.

2. Responsibilities of the Dean of Faculty

- (1) The Dean of Faculty will be responsible for ensuring that:
 - a) the Heads of School, Programme Directors and Supervisors carry out their responsibilities as set out below.

3. Responsibilities of the Head of School

- (1) The Head of School will be responsible for ensuring that:
 - a) there is an appropriate overview in terms of supervisor allocation and time management;
 - b) ensuring that dissertations are allocated to supervisors with suitable expertise;
 - c) informing students if a dissertation proposal is not acceptable due to the unavailability of a suitable supervisor, and advising candidates on possible alternative proposals;
 - d) ensuring that all markers are assigned duties compatible with their experience and capacities;
 - e) a mechanism is put in place whereby a student is able to request a change of supervisor, and whereby an alternative member of staff is made available should any supervisor be absent for a prolonged period of time;

- f) the number of students allocated to a supervisor is such that he/she will have the capacity to fulfil the responsibilities identified in Section 5.

4. Responsibilities of the Programme Director

- (1) The Programme Director will be responsible for:
 - a) ensuring that candidates are provided with written guidelines with regard to attendance, frameworks for meetings and general expectations (see Section 7);
 - b) ensuring that the implementation of the guidelines is monitored on a regular basis;
 - c) attending all examination boards relating to the programme;
 - d) ensuring that the nature of the tutorial supervision is made explicit in the Programme of Study Handbook.

5. Responsibilities of the Supervisor

- (1) The Dissertation supervisors will be responsible for:
 - a) encouraging the candidate to explore a range of possible research topics within the area chosen for study and indicated in the proposed title;
 - b) ensuring that dissertation proposals are feasible in terms of the timescale and resources available;
 - c) providing appropriate advice and guidance in relation to the candidate's initial dissertation proposal
 - d) ensuring that the student is provided with advice and guidance with the aim of facilitating the production of a dissertation of the requisite standard for a Taught Master's Degree by:
 - providing support with the selection of a definitive research topic;
 - assisting in the clarification of aims and objectives;
 - recommending appropriate research sources and methods;
 - providing guidance with the structuring and presentation of the dissertation;
 - generally supporting, encouraging and motivating the student's research.
 - e) ensuring that appropriate ethical approval is obtained at every stage of preparing the dissertation;
 - f) ensuring that the student's initial dissertation proposal is refined as necessary in consultation with the candidate;
 - g) agreeing a timetable with the student for the submission of work and the scheduling of regular meetings (see Section 7);
 - h) keeping a careful record of all such formal meetings, including dates, action agreed and deadlines set;

- i) recording a summary of the outcomes of each meeting on the Postgraduate Taught Dissertation Supervision Record Form (Appendix GA19), and ensuring that the form is signed by both the supervisor and the student;
- j) ensuring that work is returned according to specified deadlines and accompanied by constructive comment;
- k) ensuring that dissertations are not accepted for assessment unless they have undergone a process of tutorial supervision (see Section 7).

6. Responsibilities of the Student

- (1) The Dissertation student will be responsible for:
 - a) ensuring that the dissertation produced is first and foremost his/her own work, albeit achieved with benefit of advice and guidance from the supervisor;
 - b) agreeing a timetable with the supervisor for the submission of work and the scheduling of regular meetings;
 - c) keeping a careful record of all such formal meetings, including dates, action agreed and deadlines set;
 - d) ensuring that a summary of the outcomes of each meeting is recorded on the Postgraduate Taught Dissertation Supervision Record Form (Appendix GA19), and signed by both the supervisor and the student;
 - e) making a considered case to the supervisor if requesting additional meetings;
 - f) ensuring that their work is appropriately edited, particularly with reference to accuracy of grammar and spelling;
 - g) ensuring that any relevant material resulting from his/her research, such as transcripts, are included in the dissertation or are presented as appendices;
 - h) completing the work within the agreed framework, with any problems relating to late or unsatisfactory submission being brought to the supervisor's attention in writing as soon as possible.

7. Dissertation Support Entitlement

- (1) Dissertations shall not normally be accepted for assessment unless they have undergone a process of tutorial supervision. The nature and demands of such tutorial supervision shall be made explicit in the Programme of Study Handbook or other formal information provided for students.
- (2) A dissertation contract should be prepared for each student at the start of Part II, the dissertation, in order to formally agree the terms of the dissertation supervision.
- (3) The student and the supervisor are expected to form an agreement based on partnership, with both parties providing inputs and having responsibilities. This section is intended to offer guidance to students and to supervisors regarding the amount of support that a supervisor can be expected to provide during the course of a student's dissertation.

- (4) Students must be provided with clear guidelines regarding the assessment criteria for the dissertation.
- (5) The total amount of supervision should not normally exceed 25 hours, including any preliminary work in identifying a dissertation topic. Tutors are required to keep a record of the supervision time spent with each student, using the Postgraduate Taught Dissertation Supervision Record Form (Appendix GA19). This will include time spent on providing support by different means including phone, e-mail and letter.
- (6) A proportion of the total amount of dissertation supervision as specified in paragraph (5) above may take the form of group tutorials. Such supervision should not exceed 15 hours in total.
- (7) The maximum amount of individual dissertation supervision should not exceed 10 hours per student.
- (8) Within the dissertation contract, it should be agreed that students are required to report to the dissertation supervisor at regular intervals, and are also required to produce draft versions of the dissertation.
- (9) Supervisors should monitor student progress on a Postgraduate Taught Dissertation Supervision Record Form, reporting absences from tutorials and taking any appropriate subsequent action.