
IIUM CODE OF SUPERVISION
FOR POSTGRADUATE THESIS AND DISSERTATION

IIUM CODE OF SUPERVISION FOR POSTGRADUATE THESIS AND DISSERTATION

INTRODUCTION

This code sets out the policy of IIUM on the responsibilities and good practices in all matters concerning postgraduate students' supervision. All postgraduate students and their supervisors should be provided with copy of the Code.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the IIUM Code of Ethics for Staff, the Student Disciplinary Rules 2004 (Amended 2006) and the Policies on Academic Integrity.

The Code of Ethics for Staff (Academic's Staff) provides that the role of thesis and dissertation supervisors is to provide guidance as well as assessing student's work. Supervisors should contribute to the student's scholarly and professional development, while acting as models to nurture the maturity and confidence of students.

The Code lays down supervisory responsibilities that include commitment; consistency in managing and monitoring supervisees; maintaining ethical supervisor-supervisee relationship and interaction; and continuously engaging in developing oneself professionally.

The Code states that the violation of supervisory responsibilities include using student's research materials for supervisor's publication without prior consent writing the student's thesis with or without fee; vague or lack in clarity when commenting on supervisee's work; inconsistency in juggling supervisee's work; neglecting supervisory duties; late or irregular feedback on supervisee's work; not providing reasonable consultation time; failure to set and apply reasonable meeting time and feedback; soliciting the student to nominate him/her as supervisor for self-interest or own glorification; refusing to supervise the student without valid reason; and victimizing the student.

In ensuring that the Code of Ethics is strictly and consistently observed as well as ensuring that supervisors carry out their functions effectively, this Code of Supervisor for Postgraduate Thesis and Dissertation is hereby promulgated.

RESEARCH SUPERVISOR

The IIUM Postgraduate Policies and Regulations, 2009 Edition (Revised), Rules 21 provide the following rules:

1.1 Appointment of Supervisor/Supervisory Committee

- i. The department shall recommend the appointment of a supervisor/supervisory committee for a student doing “Research Only” upon admission to the programme.
- ii. A co-supervisor of other than IIUM teaching staff may be appointed under the following circumstances.
 - a) Research is conducted in collaborating establishments
 - b) Specific aspects of research require additional expertise such as interdisciplinary research.
 - c) In the case where the supervisor leaves the University or declines to supervise or in the case of death, whereby there is no expert available for replacement.
 - d) No expert is available to supervise a student, who has already enrolled for the graduate programme at the IIUM.

1.2 Responsibilities for the supervisor and supervisory committee:

- i. To assume responsibilities for directing the student’s programme under the leadership of the committee chair, who is also research supervisor;
- ii. To identify weaknesses and evaluate the present standing of the student in the major and minor/ supporting areas in consultation with the KPGC;
- iii. To assist the student to prepare his/her student plan based on the background and the present standing of the student;
- iv. To advise the student to audit or attend courses relevant to his/her research area and do relevant background reading and starting literature survey/review. Also to advise the student on scholarly activities such as seminar preparation, short term paper writing and presentations, and the preparation of academic discussion;
- v. To advise the student in the preparation for the comprehensive examination;

- vi. To supervise and guide the student in the process of proposing and conducting his/her research indicating areas in the research that need amendments, corrections and revisions, and suggesting necessary changes to improve the quality of research;
- vii. To facilitate the student in conducting research;
- viii. To ensure regular contact with student, overseeing the successful completion of the study plan within a specific time frame, and submitting the progress report to CPS through the KPGC; the supervisor/supervisory committee for Master as well as Ph.D. The student must submit this report every semester after the commandment of his/her research;
- ix. To certify that a completed thesis/dissertation is of an acceptable standard in terms of content, quality and presentation style and that it is ready for submission;
- x. Where the supervisor does not want to certify that the research of a student is of an acceptable standard for submission, the student shall approach the KPGC to look in the matter and, if required, to recommend his/her work for UCPS's approval to be endorsed in the Senate;
- xi. To evaluate and assign an appropriate grade for a Master's thesis/research work if requires by the department.

2. Responsibilities of supervisors and students

2.1 Attendance in skill courses

- 2.1.1 Member of staff responsible for supervision are required to attend the University's training programme for new supervisors or to update their knowledge in supervisory regulations, skills and practices.

2.2 Number of student under supervision

- 2.2.1 No principle supervisor may supervise more than eight research students at one time. However, under special circumstances the Kulliyah may allow a supervisor to supervise more than eight research students;

- 2.2.2 One postgraduate supervisee (at a PhD or Master’s level) is equivalent to one (1) credit hour of academic load;
- 2.2.3 The calculation of credit for supervision activities will begin when the student registers for thesis writing as this is the point when constant supervision from the supervisor is required;
- 2.2.4 Co-supervisor(s) will also be assigned the same credit as the main supervisor as they are also supervising the student. The number of co-supervisors who are eligible for the credit shall be limited to a maximum of three (3);
- 2.2.5 The credit is assigned to the supervisor/co-supervisor(s) until the student’s status change to **T1** or **T2** (after the supervisor has completed his assessment).
- 2.2.6 The post-viva supervisor will also be assigned the same credit as he is supervising the student on the corrections based on comments in the viva session;
- 2.2.7 The credit is assigned to the post-viva supervisor until the deadline for submission of the thesis/dissertation as determined in the post-viva;
- 2.2.8 An academic staff is allowed to claim overtime on extra workload based on teaching assignment only and not supervision. The credit for supervision us meant for calculating academic workload in a semester;
- 2.2.9 The required and maximum teaching hours as recommended by the Dean’s Council shall be adopted, which are as follows;

POSITION	REQUIRED TEACHING HOURS	MAXIMUM TEACHING HOURS
Dean	3	6
Director	3-6	6
Deputy Dean	6	6
Head of Department	6-9	9
Professor	9-12	12
Associate Professor	12	12
Assistant Professor	12	12

2.3 Guiding Students

- 2.3.1 The supervisor shall explain to his/her student the nature and planning of the research and the standard expected; literature and sources; attendance at taught classes (if appropriate); requisite techniques (and access to training where appropriate) and legal, ethical and professional norms of research.
- 2.3.2 The supervisor shall remind his/her student about the University's academic rules and policies especially on the requirement to register for thesis/dissertation in every regular semester and to register for course required under the student's specific student plan
- 2.3.3 The supervisor shall remind his/her student about the policies and rules pertaining to academic integrity as well as codes of ethics on academic and research of the University.
- 2.3.4 During the first meeting with the student, supervisor shall discuss potentially contentious issues, such as work with animals, particular political or religious topic, with the student to ensure that these issues are not going create a problem.
- 2.3.5 Supervisor shall ensure that students follow the right safety procedures when handling dangerous equipment and materials in the course of their research.
- 2.3.6 Supervisors are required to be familiar with the *IUM Thesis Manual* and to ensure that students' thesis/dissertation adhere to the guidelines provided in the *Manual*.

2.4 Language proficiency and other essential skills for students

- 2.4.1 The supervisor shall ensure that students have at least an adequate command of English/Arabic prior to starting their work. If need be, the supervisor may require student to take additional English/Arabic language courses with CELPAD or other agencies.

2.5 Regular supervisor-student meetings

- 2.5.1 The supervisor is responsible to provide adequate and effective supervision to his student that includes maintaining contact through regular meetings to be scheduled after discussion with the student concerned.
- 2.5.2 The onus is on the students to ensure that they contact their principal supervisor at least once a month to report on progress, and more frequently at the beginning.

2.6 Appointment and roles of co-supervisors/supervisory committee

- 2.6.1 The supervisor may recommend to the K/C/D/I that a co-supervisor with relevant expertise where necessary to be appointed to assist in supervising the student.
- 2.6.2 The supervisors should have a good working relationship but should be able to act independently of each other. At the outset they should outline the role that each expects to take in supervision. A co-supervisor may contribute a particular expertise, or may play a mentoring role for the principal supervisor.
- 2.6.3 The co-supervisor shall stand in during the absence of the principal supervisor.

2.7 Monitoring student's progress

- 2.7.1 Student, from the start in conjunction with his/her supervisor(s), has to set a series of goals or targets which can then be monitored by both parties on a regular basis.
- 2.7.2 The supervisor shall required students to submit written work as appropriate and return such work with constructive criticism within times mutually agreed.
- 2.7.3 The supervisor may arrange for the student to give presentations on the progress of his/her research to the Departmental/Divisional staff and other postgraduate students.

2.7.4 The supervisor shall ensure that the student is made aware of the inadequacy in progress or when the standard of his/her work falls below expectation.

2.7.5 The system of progress monitoring and regular progress review means that students have their progress formally reviewed every semester by the supervisor and the Deputy Dean (Postgraduate)/Head of Department.

2.8 Publication

2.8.1 Supervisors may encourage and assist students to publish their research findings whenever appropriate.

2.9 Dealing with weak, de-motivated or uncooperative students

2.9.1 The supervisor should proactively identify student whose progress is slow or have problems with data collection or those who need to re-orientate their research in some ways. This should be explicitly communicated to the student. Pursuant to this situation, immediate proper action should be taken.

2.9.2 The supervisor should identify students whom during the first year do not have the ability or motivation to undertake a postgraduate research. He/she shall be given the opportunity to address any problems and come back with a revised work or study plan by the end of the second semester of his/her study. Should he/she could not make any significant progress and are unlikely to do so; he/she should be requested to withdraw his/her candidacy.

2.9.3 By the end of the fourth semester, or into fifth semester, if the supervisor finds that the student is making slow progress, or is not motivated or generally not able to complete his/her thesis, it is desirable at this stage for the supervisor to identify a series of achievable targets for the production of the thesis including an agreed upon chapter structure and timetable for the completion of each. If the student is unable to achieve the set target, he/she shall be advised to withdraw his/her candidacy.

- 2.9.4 Student and supervisors should agree on when draft chapters are to be returned to the student upon submission of the chapters. Additionally, it is good practice to add the date of submission to all written work so that there is a clear record of turnaround times in case of later dispute.
- 2.9.5 Where the student has lost motivation, disheartened or for other reasons is unable to proceed with his/her thesis within the first 2 semester of his/her study, the supervisor should discuss this thoroughly and sympathetically with the student and if no other recourse is possible to overcome the student's problem, he/she shall be advised to withdraw.
- 2.9.6 If the supervisor finds that a student does not have the ability to undertake a Ph.D. during the first two semesters of the study and this is apparent in the formal progress review meeting, the student should be told the nature of the problem and asked to resubmit the work before the end of third semester of his/her study. If the work is not up to the required standard or capable of improvement the student should be advised to withdraw his/her candidacy.
- 2.9.7 If the student does not want to withdraw from his/her study, the supervisor shall write to the department/Kulliyyah to recommend the termination of the student's registration.
- 2.9.8 If the supervisor finds that a student is unwilling to listen to advice or guidance, it is important to clearly spell out to the student –in writing– what is expected and what he/she is required to do. A specified time frame shall be laid out and he/she shall be required to agree –in writing– to what is proposed. If he/she refused to do this, and subsequently failed to progress, the supervisor may recommend the student be awarded the unsatisfactory progress (UP) grade.

2.10 Supervisor-student relationship

2.10.1 The supervisor and student shall at all times maintain a strictly professional and academic relation and shall abstain from any form of inappropriate personal and emotional attachments to each other.

2.10.2 The supervisor shall not ask his student to carry out or assist in carrying out the supervisor's personal work/project errands or anything that is not related to the research undertaken by the student.

2.11 Complaint by students

2.11.1 Students who are unhappy with any aspect of their supervision should refer their complaint in writing to the Deputy Dean, Postgraduate Studies of their respective Kulliyah.

2.12 Selecting examiners

2.12.1 The supervisor may recommend to the department/Kulliyah suitable examiners for the thesis/dissertation of his/her student.

2.12.2 The supervisor shall attend his/her student's *viva voce*.

2.13 Breakdown of supervisor-student relationship

2.13.1 In the case where there is a breakdown of supervisory relationship; or the relationship between two supervisors falls out, and the conflict cannot be resolved, the Dean of the Kulliyah should intervene to resolve it, this includes assigning the student under a supervisory or panel or allocating another supervisor for him/her.

2.14 Completed thesis and thesis examination

2.14.1 Completed thesis

2.14.1.1 If the supervisor/supervisory committee believe that the thesis is largely complete, of adequate standard and submersible, they should instruct the student as clearly as possible that this is the case and recommend that they submit. On the other hand, the decision of when to submit is in the student's hands and they cannot be forced to submit. If however their registration exceeds the maximum period, they can be threatened with unsatisfactory (UP) grade.

2.14.2 Standard of thesis

2.14.2.1 The supervisor shall certify that the thesis of his/her student is of acceptable standard in terms of content, quality and presentation style and has been checked through the TURN IT IN software.

2.14.2.2 If the supervisor is of the opinion that the thesis has not reached the required minimum standard to be ready for examination even though the student feels otherwise; the Kulliyyah/Institute/Centre shall appoint a committee to evaluate the work and make recommendation to K/C/D/I shall abide by the committee's recommendation.

2.15 Research data from external bodies/industries

2.15.1 Where a student's research is dependent on data or facilities provided by an industry or an external body to the University, it is important that safeguards are put in place at the outset to ensure access and availability of the data or facilities at the appropriate time. Supervisor should always have contingency plans in place in case collaborators failed to deliver what has been promised.

2.16 Absence of principal supervisor

2.16.1 When a student's principal supervisor plans to be absent from the University for a period of at least one month, he/she should inform the student and appropriate authority within the K/C/D/I and make appropriate arrangements for a substitute. In the case of an unplanned absence, for example due to illness, the K/C/D/I shall ensure that an appropriate substitute is provided.

2.16.2 When the primary supervisor leaves the University, systems must be in place within K/C/D/I to ensure that students affected by the departure of their primary supervisor are immediately re-assigned to an alternative supervisor.

2.17 Post-viva supervision

2.17.1 Post-viva supervisor shall ensure that the student understands and undertakes all correction as required by the examiners of the thesis/dissertation.

2.17.2 If the thesis needs to be re-examined, the post-viva supervisor shall guide the student in completing the work so that it reaches the required standard

2.17.3 The post-viva supervisor shall review the thesis and certify that it is ready for submission for re-examination.

3. Responsibilities of academic administrators in charge of Postgraduate Studies at K/C/D/I

- 3.1 To exercise overall responsibility for the welfare and academic progress of the research students.
- 3.2 In the case of a joint research supervision in more than one K/C/D/I, to agree-in writing on the responsibilities of each relevant institution and to specify in advance what facilities, equipment and benefits (e.g. field trips) are expected to be provided by each party.
- 3.3 To exercise responsibility for safety and provide appropriate training and information through the nominated Safety Officer.
- 3.4 To ensure that the requirements set out in the Guidelines are followed and in particular to ensure that the procedures for effective supervision and monitoring of student are strictly observed.
- 3.5 To delegate, where appropriate, responsibility for the organization of graduate research in the Department/Division to a nominated person and/or Departmental/Divisional committee.
- 3.6 To familiarize themselves with the Guidelines, Postgraduate Policies, Rules and Regulations of the University.
- 3.7 To ensure that student is recommended for admission to the SAC for a research degree only when suitable supervision and the necessary equipment and facilities are available.
- 3.8 To ensure that suitable research topics have been agreed upon for each student and that an appropriate primary supervisor and co-supervisor/advisory panel are appointed within the specified time.
- 3.9 To ensure that the procedure for transfer of registration from Thesis Proposal to Thesis Registration is operated efficiently and effectively.
- 3.10 To provide general guidance to all research students and to establish standard procedures for their effective academic supervision and monitoring.

- 3.11 To encourage all students to attend the Induction Course and other relevant courses recommended by their supervisor(s).
- 3.12 To review the monitoring reports from students and supervisors and to take action accordingly to facilitate completion of the research degree.
- 3.13 In case of a breakdown of relations between a supervisor and the student and in other circumstances where a change of supervisor is desirable, to give advice in strict confidence, to assist in resolving any difficulties and, where necessary, to arrange the appointment of a replacement supervisor. Where a supervisor leaves the University's employment, to ensure suitable arrangements that the student received appropriate support and supervision.
- 3.14 In the case of absence or departure of the principal supervisor, adequate arrangements must be made for the student's continuing supervision.