



RESEARCH SUPERVISION

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RESEARCH SUPERVISION

Maximising the student learning experience along with the successful completion of student research is the primary role of research supervision at AUT. The key responsibility of research supervisors is to be accessible advisors working with students to develop their capabilities as well as meeting the characteristics defined in each programme's graduate profile.

Principles of Supervision

- Provide guidance to graduate research students in design, conduct including ethics and timely completion of their research thesis.
- Facilitate the students' academic development and integrity, quality of the thesis and administrative activities required during the students' candidature.
- Maintain a professional relationship with the student (dignity and respect)
- Facilitate the supervisory relationship to assist in developing the researcher's independence.

The University has developed the following guidelines for supervisors at bachelor's with honours, master's, and doctoral level to encourage quality supervision of postgraduate student research.

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Supervisory Eligibility

Academic staff are required to have appropriate qualifications, have undertaken supervision training, have demonstrated expertise in the discipline or methodology to be supervised and be active researchers.

Supervisors of doctoral degrees must normally have a doctoral degree.

Supervisors of master's and bachelor's with honours degrees must normally have a minimum of a research master's degree.

Supervisors must normally have:

- Expertise in a relevant field, discipline, or subject area and/or methodology;
- Be active researchers;
- Have supervised at the qualification level to completion.

Additionally, in order to maintain competency, academic staff need to:

- Continue with their own research activity;
- Produce one peer reviewed paper, or equivalent, per year, as evidence of continuing scholarship;
- Maintain currency in supervision practice by attending at least one Supervision Workshops on a biennial basis.

In order to commence supervision of postgraduate student research, staff must complete the mandatory workshop “Being a Supervisor at AUT” which covers university policies, practices and processes around supervision.

In exceptional circumstances, experienced researchers and supervisors may be appointed as a supervisor without meeting the normal requirements. A case would need to be made on an individual basis for such exceptions and be agreed to by the Faculty postgraduate committee and ratified by the University Postgraduate Board.

Where supervisors do not meet the requirement to have the experience of supervising a thesis to completion, an approved mentor should be appointed to guide them through the supervision process.

An official register is kept of all supervisors, including details of workshops attended. Those who do not attend the necessary workshops within the required timeframes will have their eligibility to supervise reviewed by their Faculty in conjunction with the Graduate Research School, which may result in no new supervisions.

Supervisory Mentors

A supervisory mentor is allocated to a supervisor/supervisory team for the mentoring of the supervisor(s) rather than the student. A mentor may also be appointed as one of the supervisors.

The supervisory mentor is approved by the Faculty at the time of development of the admission proposal.

A supervisory mentor is appointed for overseeing, discussing and signing off on the:

- Admission – Application and Research Proposal;
- Supervision agreement;
- Progress reports;
- Full research proposal (PGR9) for confirmation of doctoral candidature;
- Appointment of examiners;
- Submission and readiness of the research to be lodged for examination (PGR12);
- Revisions or amendments (major or minor) to the thesis.

Mentor Eligibility

In order to eligible to be a mentor a staff member is required to:

- Have supervised a doctoral student to successful completion and/or provide evidence of considerable experience as a successful supervisor;
- Be familiar and compliant with the processes involved in ensuring a successful completion at AUT;
- Be broadly working in the area of the research;
- Have recent evidence of national and international recognition through publications, exhibition, peer-esteem, professional contribution or their equivalent;

If not appointed as a supervisor, the mentor must meet with the supervisory team on a regular basis to ensure that supervision is being conducted within these guidelines. The mentoring can be through either an individual or group process. Mentors are expected to provide opportunities for reflection and open communication regarding supervision issues and will observe part of the supervision process in order to give feedback to the supervisor(s).

Supervisor(s) may be informally assisted by other members of the University staff and may refer the student for advice to any appropriate specialist within or outside the University. A mentor can report on difficulties that arise for either the student or supervisor/s at any time during the supervisory process. This can be via the Associate Dean (Postgraduate) in the first instance, followed by the GRS. The mentor can initiate discussion of any other issues that may arise during supervision which may require expert guidance.

When a mentor is appointed, the GRS will write to the supervisory team, outlining the various expectations of the mentor relationship.

Researcher Development

The Researcher Development team runs a professional development programme for supervisors of postgraduate research through the Graduate Research School. The purpose of the Supervision Workshop Series is to support the increase in supervisor capability and capacity and strengthen AUT's supervisory community of practice. The workshops provide the opportunity to learn, share and discuss, while networking with research supervisors in other areas of expertise and with peers across all Faculties. More than 50 workshops are offered each year, covering an array of topics. Online resources for supervisors are also available on AUTi. The link to the schedule is:

<https://auti.aut.ac.nz/resch/postgradresearch/Pages/Supervisor-Workshops.aspx>

Supervision Practice

Research for a doctoral thesis requires a minimum of two supervisors.

Research for a master's and bachelor's with honours thesis/dissertation/research projects normally requires one supervisor. Where the research is practice-focused, two supervisors will normally be appointed.

Supervisor Location

Normally, all supervisors will be appointed from the School where the student is registered. Normally, a primary supervisor from a different Faculty will not be permitted. Secondary supervisors can be from the same Faculty, a different Faculty or external to the university.

Where a secondary supervisor is from a different school or Faculty, their Head of School should also sign the PGR1/PGR2/PGR9 or change of supervisor requests

(PGR7) in order to ensure that supervisory resource is available.

External Supervisors

Where external supervisors are appointed, it is the responsibility of Associate Deans (Postgraduate) to ensure that the Graduate Research School (GRS) are advised of the supervisor details to enable access to supervision workshops and that external supervisors are familiar with the University and programme regulations and expectations for thesis/dissertation supervision. An information package for supervision at AUT will be sent to these supervisors by the GRS. Normally, an external supervisor will only supervise a maximum of two AUT students. Details of external supervisors should be included on the appropriate form when they are appointed.

An external supervisor is required to seek approval from their line manager to undertake the external supervision with AUT. This approval is collected and stored by the student's faculty. If the external supervisor does not have a direct line manager, or manages their own workload (i.e. is an independent contractor), an email detailing this is sufficient. Where an external supervisor's line manager does not approve of the appointment, the external supervisor will not be appointed.

Adjunct Staff

Adjunct staff who are appointed as supervisors will be treated as external supervisors.

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Supervisor Register

The GRS maintains a register of all supervisors. The Supervisor Register records supervisors' workshop attendance; levels of prior supervisory experience; 'leading researcher' status; and primary supervision eligibility; and continued eligibility. The Supervisor Register is consulted when supervisors are first appointed to a student.

Supervisor/Mentor Absence and Sabbatical Leave

If a supervisor or mentor supervisor is unavailable for an extended period because of illness, leave or other reasons, the second supervisor (if one is appointed) would normally oversee the student's progress. If there is no second supervisor, then another appropriately qualified supervisor will be appointed, or the student should be advised in writing by their supervisor how the student can contact them. New supervisions should not be undertaken just prior to, or when the supervisor is going on sabbatical. This must be part of the sabbatical/study leave proposal and approval process. Sabbatical arrangements that impinge on supervision should be communicated in writing from the HOS/Dean of the Faculty to the Associate Dean (Postgraduate) and be approved through the appropriate Faculty postgraduate committee.

General Responsibilities of Supervisors

Supervisors organise regular contact with students (a minimum of once a month) for formal discussions, constructive evaluation and feedback in relation to satisfactory progress. The type and amount of contact between supervisors and students may vary,

depending on the developing experience and expertise of the student, the nature of the study being undertaken, and the amount of practical work involved. This and other requirements are best identified in the Research Supervision Agreement (see page 58), which must be completed with all students and supervisors.

Supervisors:

- Assist students with the development of the research proposal and submission to Faculty postgraduate committees for approval and submission to the University Postgraduate Board for doctoral and Master of Philosophy proposals;
- Assist students in planning an appropriate course of collateral reading, suggesting relevant background reading and giving advice on the literature review;
- Advise students of the aims, scope and presentation of the thesis/dissertation, monitoring and discussing progress throughout candidature and commenting critically on the final draft;
- Guide and challenge the student's development as a researcher, thesis writer and critic;
- Provide guidance on the theoretical frameworks, models, methodology, methods and standards of research;
- Submit applications to the University's Ethics Committee (AUTEC) or other ethics approval body as appropriate through working with the student and ensuring that the student understands the principles and procedures of the relevant ethics committee, and that research projects are of an acceptable ethical standard. It is important to note that the application is in the name of the supervisor;
- Encourage students to practice dissemination of research results, for example, presenting seminars, submitting articles for publication, presenting work at exhibitions, submitting work for peer and/or public review.

Administrative Responsibilities

The primary supervisor must be an AUT academic staff member and will have overall responsibility for the administrative welfare of students and the coordination and guidance involved in academic supervision. However, all supervisors will:

- Be familiar with the University regulations governing postgraduate programmes and being responsible for drawing the attention of the student to relevant aspects of the regulations and ensure they report as required to the relevant Faculty postgraduate committee and/or the University Postgraduate Board on prescribed matters;
- Notify the Faculty postgraduate committee of recommendations for appointment of additional supervisors or changes to the supervisory team;
- Nominate examiners;
- Ensure students format their work appropriate to the formats undertaken;
- Discuss intellectual property issues with the student and assess the commercial potential of the research;

- Sign the lodgement form to accompany the thesis/dissertation for examination, testifying that requirements for the thesis/dissertation meet the standards and requirements for examination. These include appropriate format of the work as stated in the Postgraduate Handbook, signing the attestation statement of own work, checking all appendices and forms (e.g. Ethics) are included and that all work has been completed to the satisfaction of the supervisor/s and declared ready for examination.

Managing Student Progress

As part of the academic supervision of a student's progress, supervisors:

- Give guidance on necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the whole may be submitted within the scheduled time;
- Assist students with recording, planning and reviewing progress between meetings, and negotiating goals for the next period;
- Monitor progress of students and providing feedback on written work with constructive criticism within a reasonable time;
- Advise a student of any inadequate progress or work below the standard that is generally expected;
- Advise students about University resources available to them so they make full and proper use of appropriate data sources and resources to assist their research development;
- Meet with/contact the student a minimum of once every month.

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Student Responsibilities

It is important to note that students are responsible for their own development and that part of the process of undertaking postgraduate research is that they become independent researchers. Student responsibilities include:

- Selecting, negotiating and refining a research proposal in consultation with their supervisor(s);
- Working with the supervisors to obtain approval from the University Ethics Committee and/or other ethical approval as appropriate;
- Discussing with the supervisor(s) the type of guidance and comment they find most helpful and agreeing on a schedule of meetings;
- Completing a supervision agreement in consultation with the supervisor(s);
- Maintaining contact as agreed with the supervisors (at least once every month), attending meetings and seminars scheduled by the supervisors, and others that contribute to the completion of the research and production of the thesis/dissertation;
- Responding to arrangements proposed for supervision and the advice and instruction given by the supervisor(s);
- Maintaining the progress of research, especially written work, to meet the stages

and timeframe agreed with the supervisor, to facilitate feedback before the next stage;

- Taking the initiative in raising problems and difficulties, however elementary they may seem;
- Timely progress reports on their work;
- Providing peer support and feedback to other students as appropriate.

Responsibilities of the Associate Dean (Postgraduate)

The Associate Deans (Postgraduate) or delegated academic authority have responsibility for the academic and administrative welfare of all enrolled research students through:

- The approval of a student's proposal (PGR1 or PGR2 or PGR9);
- Overseeing of all academic supervision;
- Monitoring progress of students undertaking theses or dissertations through the review of regular progress reports;
- Submitting research proposals and recommendations for the appointment of supervisors to the faculty postgraduate committee;
- Monitoring reports on student progress toward completion of research;
- Submitting thesis/dissertation examiners for approval to the relevant Postgraduate Committee within the faculty;
- Ensuring students supply copies of theses or dissertations as appropriate for examination and graduation;
- Signing, after the supervisors have signed the work is ready for examination, the lodgement form for the thesis/dissertation to be submitted for examination, thereby stating that the requirements for the thesis/dissertation have been met.

Supervision Agreements

In order to facilitate the supervision process, a template is provided which forms the basis of an agreement between the student and the supervisor. This must be completed by all students in consultation with the supervisors and includes spaces for supervisors and student to record their joint understanding. It is expected that students and supervisors will complete such a research supervision agreement and provide evidence of doing so when the research proposal is submitted for approval (i.e. PGR1 for master's and honours degrees, PGR9s for all doctorates). Without this evidence the proposal will not be approved. During candidature this agreement can be re-negotiated by all parties. Copies are available on the AUT website:

Refer to the Postgraduate Research Tab in the Student Digital Workspace (SDW)
<https://sdw.aut.ac.nz>

Doctoral Research Supervision Agreement

This pro-forma agreement document is provided for discussion between a doctoral studies students and supervisor(s) with the intention of facilitating a collaborative, transparent process designed to ensure the successful completion of a scholarly thesis in which the student makes an original contribution to knowledge.

The pro-forma may be amended by mutual agreement of student and supervisor(s) according to specific department/faculty requirements. The agreement should not be considered a legal contract.

In signing this agreement, students and supervisors are stating:

- That they have read the Regulations Governing Doctoral Degrees and the Postgraduate Handbook;
- That they understand the requirements of a doctoral thesis;
- That if disputes or difficulties arise during the course of supervision (and supervisors cannot resolve these issues) then students can approach the faculty postgraduate office, Associate Dean (Postgraduate), Dean of Graduate Research School or any member of the University Postgraduate Board in order to seek a satisfactory resolution.

Students

Students may assume:

- That they will receive regular supervision by a supervisory team with the requisite knowledge and expertise in their chosen field of study;
- That supervisors will provide regular and timely comment on any work submitted during the course of the doctoral programme;
- That they will have access to resources commensurate with the research project being undertaken.

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Supervisors

Supervisors may assume:

- That the student will meet with them on a regular basis;
- That students will draw on their supervisors' expertise and advice as appropriate;
- That the students will provide supervisors with copies of papers/drafts/reports for comment during the course of the doctoral programme;
- That they will be supported by the school/department/center in which they are located so that they exercise their responsibilities as supervisors of the doctoral programme.

Minimum Requirements

In accepting these requirements, students and supervisors agree to:

- Meet or make contact on a regular basis (e.g. every 4 weeks) to discuss the students doctoral programme and review progress;

- Submit 6-monthly reports that record the student's progress and any issues that need to be brought to the attention of the faculty postgraduate committee and/or University Postgraduate Board;
- Ensure that University requirements with respect to ethical approvals, intellectual property, adjournments and extensions are dealt with in accordance with the regulations in this handbook;
- Accept additional requirements as specified by the University Postgraduate Board.

Headings and prompts for consideration, and possible agreement, in more detail below.

The headings are based on an assumption that there are some basic issues that underpin effective doctoral study, discussion of which will lay the foundations for a good working relationship. They are provided so that mutual understanding may be reached over fundamental (and often mistakenly assumed) beliefs and expectations. Different aspects may need to be renegotiated during the period of the study programme.

Sample Doctoral Supervision Agreement

The undersigned agree that they have read and are utilising the Postgraduate Handbook for assistance in working through issues that are likely to arise in the course of a postgraduate programme undertaken by:

[Student ID and full student name] and [full supervisor name] have come to the following understandings:

Thesis/Dissertation

University Postgraduate Board guidelines and mutual expectations / possible structure / research model / length / referencing conventions / publication issues: parts that could be published as papers, appropriate conferences.

Meetings

Frequency and duration / access to supervisor outside scheduled meeting times / responsibility to schedule meetings, if not scheduled regularly / protocol for missed meetings / responsibility for noting decisions taken.

Advice and Support

Initial research proposal / ethics requirements / feedback arrangements / knowledge needed (e.g. academic writing, of the literature, data storage and retrieval, statistical measurement) / sources of funding / supervisor resources and support / access to sources of funds / personal circumstances affecting progress.

Time Frame

Length of different stages, realistic completion date.

Supervisors

Roles of main and secondary supervisors, inputs and feedback / resolution of disagreements between supervisors.

Faculty Resources for Support

Useful documents, URLs / study places / lockers / pigeon holes / paid work (e.g. tutoring) / email access / internet access / library facilities and interloan funding / scholarships or other funding or research grants -how to make applications, deadlines, contacts / technical support services / secretarial support services.

Faculty Expectations

Seminar presentation of work in progress / small group meetings to discuss progress/ other.

AUT Expectations and Requirements

Documents available on postgraduate and doctoral study / protocols for assessment of the dissertation / protocols for extension and deferment / for normal or unsatisfactory progress / ethics approval and deadlines.

Intellectual Property

Ownership of intellectual property / student's rights & responsibilities / agreements with third parties / commercial potential of the research- see page 84 – Intellectual Property Rights.

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Postgraduate Supervision Agreement for Master's and Bachelor's Degrees with Honours

Guidelines for Discussion

These guidelines are designed to be used in an early discussion between supervisor and postgraduate student. They are based on an assumption that there are some basic issues which underpin effective supervision. Discussion of these issues will lay the foundations for a good working relationship. Different aspects may need to be renegotiated during the process.

Introduction

In preparing these guidelines it is envisaged that both student and supervisor would respond to the issues below. One of the main objectives of this process is to share understanding so that there is agreement over fundamental (and often mistakenly assumed) beliefs and expectations. We suggest a copy of the completed document is made for each party.

We have put personal issues first because they are most immediate to the supervision process and then listed faculty and AUT issues that are also relevant.

Note: *If there are two or more supervisors, we suggest that this document be negotiated amongst all parties at an initial meeting.*

Supervisor/Student Understandings

What is a Thesis/Dissertation? Issues to discuss might include:

- What do “thesis” and “dissertation” mean?
- What form should a thesis/dissertation proposal have in this discipline?
- What is the appropriate structure of the written part of a thesis/dissertation for this topic?
- What paradigm/model of research will be used?
- What is the appropriate length?
- What referencing conventions should I follow?
- Some titles of good thesis/dissertation examples in this field;
- What is meant by “originality” or “advanced knowledge” or “new knowledge” or “new theory”?
- Who owns papers arising during and after thesis/dissertation supervision?
- In what publications could parts of the thesis/dissertation be published as papers and how authorship will be determined?
- What conferences could be attended to present parts of the thesis/dissertation or the completed thesis/dissertation?

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Meetings

Issues to discuss might include:

- Frequency and duration of meetings;
- Access to supervisor outside scheduled meeting times;
- Who has responsibility to initiate meetings (if not scheduled regularly)?
- Protocol for when one person can't make the meeting;
- Should meeting decisions be noted? By whom?

Advice and Support

Issues to discuss might include:

- Development of the research proposals (initial proposal, ethics proposal): how much input from supervisor, how will this proceed?
- Expectations of feedback: how much, how often, in what form, with how much notice?
- Support with theoretical content, e.g. resources, contacts: how much can be expected, given the supervisor's knowledge of the area?
- What other kinds of knowledge are needed, e.g. of the research process, of academic writing, of the literature, of data storage and retrieval, of statistical treatment etc.?
- What resources does the supervisor know of; how much help can she/he give?

- Are there sources of funding for this research? If so, how can they be accessed?
- Are there relevant personal circumstances that might make the supervision or completion of the Thesis/Dissertation difficult, e.g. student suffering financial hardship or experiencing relationship difficulties or supervisor going on sabbatical, expecting a baby etc?

Time Frame

Issues to discuss might include:

- How long should the different stages take to complete?
- What would be a realistic completion date in view of our separate commitments and AUT policy?

Joint Supervisors (for thesis students)

- What roles will be taken by each supervisor (main and secondary), what inputs will each have and what kind of feedback will each have?
- If there is disagreement about methods, content etc., between joint supervisors, how is this to be resolved?
- Other issues relating to supervisor/student understanding?

Faculty Expectations & Resources

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- Written information;
- What documents are relevant for postgraduate students?
- What web URLs are useful?

What access does the student have to:

- A study place, pigeon-hole, locker, etc?
- Tea/coffee facilities?
- Paid work, e.g. tutoring?
- Computer, data storage, email, internet access, interloans?
- Funding/research grants/scholarships?
- If available how do I apply? When are the deadlines? Who can I contact for more information?
- Support services, e.g. technical, secretarial, library?

What expectations does the faculty have of the student?

- Seminar presentation of thesis/dissertation in progress?
- Small group meetings to discuss progress?
- What else?

Monitoring Supervision, Resolving Conflict

What are the faculty procedures for monitoring the supervision in the event that one of us is not happy with its progress? For replacement of supervisor? For establishing a time commitment by the student (e.g. hours per week, weeks per year, etc).

Other Faculty Issues?

AUT Requirements

AUT guidelines/regulations.

- What documents are available on postgraduate supervision?
- What web URLs are useful?

Clarification of Thesis/Dissertation Assessment

- How is the assessment of the thesis/dissertation or dissertation conducted?
- Who will be the examiners? When is this decided? Can I have a say?
- What is the difference between a thesis/dissertation that passes and one that is awarded with honours?
- How does the thesis/dissertation grade contribute to the overall pass/honours for the qualification?

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Extensions and Deferment

- What are the protocols for extensions and deferment?
- In the event that I need an extension over the summer, or beyond, what will the position be regarding supervision? Will there be an extra cost?

AUT Protocols

- What AUT-wide channels are available in the event that one of us is not happy with the progress of the supervision and the faculty cannot or is inappropriate to resolve this?

Ethics

- What ethical issues need to be considered in the research project?
- Do I need to apply for approval from the AUT Ethics Committee?
- How do I apply for ethical approval? Deadlines?

Intellectual Property

- Who owns the intellectual property that I produce?
- AUT's background intellectual property remains AUT's;
- Who will be the beneficiary(ies) of the income that is generated if the research is commercialised? How will the proportions be decided?
- This discussion should be mediated by AUT Ventures Ltd, AUT's commercialisation office;

- Are there any documents outlining my rights and responsibilities with respect to the University and any third parties?
- What publications might be planned?
- How will authorship be managed?
- Seek permission before use of AUT brand;
- Have a mediation process in place if any conflict arises. See page 85 – Intellectual Property Rights.

Other AUT-wide Issues?

Example Template of Meeting Schedule

Schedule of first three meetings			
Date	Time	Place	Supervisor(s) present with candidate