

OTAGO POLYTECHNIC ACADEMIC POLICY		Number: AP0705.03
Title:	Supervision within Postgraduate Programmes	
ITPNZ Std:	7 Programme Delivery	
Chief Executive Approval:	Date of Approval: 27 Jul 12	Effective Date: 27 Jul 12
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Purpose To provide a policy on the minimum requirements for academic supervision provided within the postgraduate programmes at Otago Polytechnic.

Compliance Indicate the statutory regulations or guidelines that this policy responds to.

- Policy**
1. **Number of supervisors**
 - 1.1. Students enrolled in postgraduate programmes should have an appointed primary supervisor/s at the research project/work-based inquiry stage and, where appropriate, a co-supervisor.
 - 1.2. Primary supervisors should be appointed from the school offering the qualification. They are responsible for overseeing student progress in the research project/work-based inquiry from the time that they are appointed as supervisors to the point at which the student submits the final work. In the case of work-based learning programmes, the Academic Mentor will take the role of the primary supervisor and the role of co-supervisor will be taken by either an Academic Mentor or Professional Mentor or both.
 - 1.3. 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. Additional co-supervisors may be co-opted where necessary.
 2. **Appointment of supervisors**
 - 2.1. 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 School/Programme Manager only after a process of mutual negotiation between the student, supervisor/s, Programme Manager and Head of School/Programme Manager has taken place. This must be done prior to the commencement of the student's research project/work-based inquiry. The outcome of the negotiation will be reported to and recorded by the responsible committee/forum within the school.
 3. **Role of Supervisors**
 - To provide guidance, advice and mentoring in the field of research or work-based inquiry undertaken by the student and to arrange the practical support necessary for the realisation of the research project or work-based inquiry.
 - To assist in the definition of the aims and objectives of the examinable



components of the research or work-based inquiry and to advise on methodological, conceptual and procedural matters relating to their production.

- To arrange regular meetings with the candidate to discuss progress. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that there is good communication between the candidate and supervisor whether the candidate is working on or off campus within a work place.
- To arrange group meetings between a candidate and all their supervisors or advisors or mentors at least once per semester, but preferably once a term and to report on such meetings to the Programme Manager.
- 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 work.
- To meet with the Programme Manager at set times and act as a member of the student's review panel.
- To provide written reports on the student's progress to the Programme Manager, with a copy to the candidate for comment, at the end of each review.
- To provide comments on the student's progress to the examination panel. This should be included in a formal statement available to the examination panel, especially in the case of research projects as the supervisor will not be part of the examination panel.
- To examine course work components of programmes moderated by an internal staff member or external industry partner who has not been involved with the student's supervision.
- To encourage candidates who have difficulty to discuss his or her 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 Manager and the student.
- To assist the Programme Manager in ensuring that all regular meetings are arranged and attended by all involved.
- To provide the student with pastoral care and/or to refer the student to the appropriate support services.
- To align student projects with Otago Polytechnic Strategic Directions where appropriate.

4. Qualifications and training of supervisors

- 4.1. Primary supervisors will normally have an academic qualification which is equal to, or higher than, the degree in question. Where it is deemed appropriate, significant experience in the specific research field or, as in the work-based inquiry case, significant experience in mentoring and/or facilitating work-based learning projects may qualify staff to act as primary



supervisors. All primary supervisors (or, in the case of work-based inquiry, the Academic Mentor) must be provided with adequate training in order to undertake effective supervision (see knowledge and skill set for supervisors below).

5. Knowledge and Skill Set of Supervisory Team

- current theoretical knowledge of the particular discipline or area of work-based inquiry integrated with
- relevant practical experience within the field of research or work-based inquiry
- research methodology skills or skills in work-based inquiry methods
- meta-cognitive skills for high-level problem solving and wider contextualisation of research projects or work-based inquiry
- ability to communicate clearly and to listen to students
- writing and analytical skills
- project management skills
- mentoring ability and feedback skills
- pastoral care sensitivity and awareness of student support services

6. Problems or disagreements between students and supervisors

6.1. Where problems, issues or disagreements occur between students and supervisors, the student should approach the supervisor concerned in the first instance. If the student is genuinely uncomfortable with this, or if the supervisor is unavailable, the student can approach the responsible Programme Manager or committee/forum who will review the situation with both parties. At this point, the Head of School will be informed of the issue or disagreement by the responsible Programme Manager or committee/forum and the supervisor will be advised that there has been a request to change supervision arrangements. This approach to the responsible Head of School or committee/forum 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 School may appoint a new supervisor or co-supervisor.

7. Supervision meetings, reporting and record keeping

7.1. The frequency of supervision meetings may vary depending upon students, supervisors, schools and whether programmes are on-campus, distance or work-based. 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.

7.2. 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 the six monthly report.

7.3. Supervisors are required to produce a six-monthly 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 Manager or committee/forum and a summary passed on to the Head of School for noting on a yearly basis. For



audit purposes these 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. (Appendix 1).

8. Role of Supervisors in assessment

8.1. Supervisors have no role in assessing research projects that they have supervised. This is the role of internal and external examiners/work-based learning assessors who have been recommended to the responsible committee/forum by the supervisor/s. Supervisors do, however, have a role in assessing course work components of programmes, including those which are part of work-based inquiry. The Head of School will appoint the internal and external examiners where these are required unless the Head of School is involved in the supervision process, in which case the Programme Manager will appoint the examiners.

**Related Policy,
Forms and
Documents**

**Approved by Chief Executive
Date: 27 July 2012**



Questionnaire.



Postgraduate 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 School and wider Polytechnic.

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

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

Degree: _____

School: _____

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 Honours/Masters degree?

3. What aspects were the greatest obstacle/s to the successful completion of your Honours/Masters 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 Otago Polytechnic 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.

Signed _____

Name _____

Date _____

