



## **GUIDELINES**

for the

### **Postgraduate Research Supervisors**

**Unit of Postgraduate, External degrees, and Extension Courses**

**Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka**

#### **Purpose and Scope**

This document delineates the roles and responsibilities entrusted to MA, MSSc, MPhil, and PhD supervisors within the Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka (BUSL). These terms apply to all supervisors guiding postgraduate candidates within the University to ensure healthy and productive student /supervisor relationships.

#### **Rationale**

A supervisor plays a key role in the student's academic development, inculcating the scientific approach, and research ethics. Practically, a supervisor is responsible for providing help, support and mentoring of a postgraduate student in order to enable the student to complete the research and produce a thesis to the best of the student's ability. Supervisor behaviour needs to reflect varying levels of direction and facilitation. The supervisor should possess recognised subject expertise, skills and experience to monitor, support and direct student research and the final preparation of the thesis.

## **Appointment of Supervisor/s**

Candidates have the choice to select the Principle Supervisor for their research projects. The Principle Supervisor and any additional Supervisor/s are appointed by the University Senate based on recommendations provided by the Higher Degree Committee. It is mandated that the Principle Supervisor, or in cases of multiple supervisors, at least one should be from the Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka.

### *Principle Supervisor*

The Principle Supervisor must possess a qualification above the SLQF Level sought or equivalent. Furthermore, the Principle Supervisor is expected to make a substantial and pioneering academic contribution that advances the frontiers of knowledge within their field. The Principle Supervisor has the primary responsibility for the provision of academic advice and support and associated administrative requirements.

### *Co-Supervisor*

Similarly, the Co-Supervisor is required to hold a qualification above the SLQF Level sought or equivalent. Moreover, the Co-Supervisor is entrusted with making significant and innovative contributions to academic scholarship, thereby playing a key role in generating new knowledge.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

### **1. Ensure the development of good rapport with the student and a conducive environment.**

The relationship between a research supervisor and their research student is pivotal to the success of the research process. A strong rapport builds trust and open communication, while a conducive environment fosters creativity, critical thinking, and productivity.

### **2. Ensure that the administrative requirements are met.**

A research supervisor plays a crucial role not only in guiding the academic aspects of a student's research but also in ensuring that all administrative requirements are fulfilled. Meeting these requirements is vital for the smooth progression and completion of the research project, as well as compliance with institutional, ethical, and legal guidelines.

**3. The supervisor should have a good knowledge of the student's subject area.**

The Principle Supervisor is tasked with providing mentorship to cultivate a deeper understanding of the subject matter and the development of original insights. This may involve engaging students in scholarly discussions, recommending relevant literature, and facilitating opportunities for research collaboration or participation in academic conferences.

**4. Research Proposal Guidance**

The Supervisor/s is/are expected to guide the structure and content of the research proposal, ensuring that it aligns with academic standards and addresses the research gap effectively. Additionally, they may offer feedback on the feasibility of the proposed research plan and suggest potential sources of funding or resources to support the project.

**5. Research Project Development**

The Supervisor/s is/are expected to work closely with students to refine their research objectives, design appropriate methodologies, and select suitable data collection techniques. They guide ethical considerations, data management, and research best practices throughout the project. Additionally, the Supervisor/s may facilitate access to research facilities, equipment, or expertise necessary for the successful execution of the project.

**6. The Nature of Research Supervision: Modes of Communication and Interaction**

Research supervision involves guiding and supporting a student throughout their academic journey, and effective supervision can take various forms. The mode of supervision often depends on the nature of the research, institutional guidelines, geographical constraints, and the preferences of both the supervisor and the student. Supervisors should maintain flexibility and openness to ensure that the chosen modes of communication foster effective guidance and support. However, it is advised to have regular face-to-face supervisory sessions between the student and the supervisor.

**7. The Need for More Intensive Research Supervision in the Initial Planning Phase**

The initial planning phase of research is a critical foundation for the entire research. During this stage, students may require more intensive supervision to define their research goals, refine their methodology, and align their efforts with academic or professional

expectations. This guidance is essential for setting the path of the research and avoiding potential issues later.

#### **8. Regular meetings with the research student**

Carrying out continuous discussions and meetings with the research student regarding the progress of the study and guiding the student at regular intervals, at least not less than 10 meetings as mentioned in the supervisor's record prepared by the UPEDEC.

#### **9. Feedback and Suggestions**

This involves conducting thorough reviews of student manuscripts, thesis drafts, or research reports and offering specific suggestions for improvement. The Supervisor/s provide/s feedback on aspects such as clarity of writing, coherence of arguments, methodology validity, and adherence to academic conventions. Additionally, they may recommend additional readings or methodologies to enrich the student's understanding and enhance the scholarly standards of their work.

#### **10. Communication of Expectations**

Informing students of the approximate timeframes for providing feedback on drafts, and scheduling meetings for progress updates are expected. The Supervisor/s set/s realistic deadlines for milestone achievements, such as research proposal submission, data collection, and thesis completion, defense, and communicates any changes or adjustments to these timelines promptly.

#### **11. Assisting Students in Time Management, Programme Development, and Progress Monitoring**

A research supervisor plays a vital role in helping students navigate the complexities of their academic journey. Effective planning, time management, and regular progress monitoring are essential for ensuring that students stay on track and achieve their research goals.

#### **12. The Progress Updates and Reporting**

The Supervisor/s offer/s constructive feedback on the student's progress, identifies areas for improvement, and provides encouragement and support in achieving academic goals.

Also, involves assisting students in compiling comprehensive progress reports that document their research activities, milestones achieved, challenges encountered, and future plans. The Supervisor/s review/s and provides feedback on the progress reports, ensuring they align with programme requirements and academic expectations.

### **13. Thesis Acceptability**

This involves reviewing the student's draft thesis or research project to assess its readiness for submission. The Supervisor evaluates the quality of the work, identifies any deficiencies or areas requiring revision, and communicates their assessment to the student in writing. If the Supervisor determines that the work is not yet ready for submission or will not be ready within a specified timeframe, they provide clear reasons and guidance to the student on how to address any shortcomings.

### **14. Maintenance of Intellectual Integrity and Avoidance of Plagiarism**

Candidates and supervisors are obligated to ensure that all aspects of the thesis, including literature review, methodology, analysis, and conclusions, are original and properly cited. They must adhere to academic standards of attribution and citation, accurately acknowledging the contributions of others and avoiding misrepresentation or appropriation of intellectual property. Supervisors play a crucial role in guiding candidates on best practices for academic integrity, providing resources for citation management, and conducting thorough reviews to detect and rectify any instances of plagiarism or academic misconduct.

### **15. Arrangements during Absences**

Proactively planning for absences by notifying the student in advance and making appropriate arrangements for co-supervision is essential. The Supervisor communicates with the student to establish continuity in supervision and delegates responsibilities to co-supervisors. This ensures the student's progress is not unduly impacted by the Supervisor's absence.

### **16. Change in Supervision**

Change of supervisor can be considered by a request made by the student/supervisor on reasonable grounds acceptable to the Higher Degree Committee, or in situations of the

Supervisor's sickness/leave/inability/unwillingness to supervise the student effectively. In all situations, the request should be made to the Higher Degree Committee.

### **17. Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

Conflicts of interest may arise in situations involving personal, professional, or financial relationships between the Supervisor and student, or when there are irreconcilable interpersonal conflicts. The Supervisor is expected to maintain objectivity and professionalism in their interactions with students and promptly disclose any conflicts of interest that may impact their ability to fulfil their supervisory responsibilities. In cases where conflicts of interest cannot be resolved, such Supervisor/s may withdraw from the role of supervisor to ensure the integrity of the academic supervision process.

### **18. Encouragement for Publication and Authorship**

Supervisor shall encourage the student to disseminate the results of the research through publications in reputed journals and/or presentations at international conferences. By acknowledging the student's contributions, the Supervisor/s foster/s a collaborative research environment and supports the student's academic and career aspirations. Authorship should be based on the contribution provided by each author who has made a significant scientific contribution to a study. In such a case, it is advised that the Supervisor be the co-author based on the contribution given for the research/publication, and the student be the first author who as conducted the entire research.

### **19. Professional Development**

Advising on the student's professional development needs at the start of the programme and reviewing these throughout the student's studies. Also needs to encourage students to develop transferable skills and to attend appropriate training courses where possible.

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