

Research Degree Supervision: A Code of Practice

Introduction

1. This Code of Practice for research degree supervision sets out what City University of Hong Kong (the “University”) regards as the responsibilities of supervisors, Qualifying Panel members and those of research students, and provides a basic framework within which research degree candidature will be pursued.
2. The University considers that the ultimate responsibility for the supervision of research students rests with the supervisor, who is the formal point of contact between the student and the University. Other members of the Qualifying Panel and co-supervisors, if any, are to assist the supervisor in providing effective supervision to students.

Responsibilities of the Supervisor

3. The responsibilities of the supervisor include the following:
 - (a) identify and prescribe coursework or recommend credit transfer/coursework exemption for the student through the Qualifying Panel;
 - (b) assess the results of performance in the prescribed coursework, together with the student’s Qualifying Report, and recommend to the Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies (SGS) through the Qualifying Panel, the Head of Department and the College/School Graduate Studies Committee (C/SGSC) on the student’s suitability to continue the study or to transfer from MPhil to PhD candidature or vice versa, if applicable;
 - (c) report annually in writing to SGS through the Qualifying Panel, the Head of Department and the C/SGSC on the student’s work during the previous year, and recommend whether the student should be permitted to continue the study. If at any time the supervisor is of the opinion that the student is unlikely to achieve the degree for which he/she is registered, the supervisor should report this through the Head of Department to SGS immediately, without waiting for the annual recommendation on continuation of candidature;
 - (d) give guidance to research students with respect to the nature of research and the standard expected; the planning of the research programme, literature and sources; attendance at taught classes; and the requisite techniques which need to be acquired (including arranging for instruction where necessary);
 - (e) maintain regular contact with the student at agreed intervals;
 - (f) be accessible to the student at other appropriate and reasonable times for consultation and advice;
 - (g) closely monitor the progress and give detailed advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the thesis may be completed within the scheduled time;

- (h) request written work as appropriate, and return such work with constructive criticism and in reasonable time;
- (i) arrange, as appropriate, for the student to give graduate seminars or the like, and guide the student in the preparation of the oral examination;
- (j) supervise and assist the student in making revisions to the thesis after the oral examination; and
- (k) generally oversee the student's progress while upholding the academic standard and with the interest of student in mind.

Responsibilities of Co-supervisor

4. The responsibilities of the co-supervisor include the following:

- (a) work with the supervisor in overseeing the student's study progress;
- (b) serve in place of the supervisor when he/she is on leave;
- (c) provide academic guidance and advice to student;
- (d) maintain regular contact with both supervisor and student at agreed intervals to know the progress of the student; and
- (e) evaluate the Qualifying Report/Annual Progress Reports submitted by the student and give feedback to student.

Responsibilities of the Qualifying Panel Members

5. The responsibilities of the Qualifying Panel members include the following:

- (a) assist the supervisor in providing academic guidance and advice to the student;
- (b) assist the supervisor in monitoring the student's study progress;
- (c) assist the supervisor in examining the student's performance through assessment of Qualifying Report and Annual Progress Reports and other forms of examinations as prescribed by the Qualifying Panel; and
- (d) assist the supervisor in overseeing the overall standard of the student's research work.

Responsibilities of the Student

6. The responsibilities of the student include the following:

- (a) discuss with the supervisor or the Qualifying Panel the type of guidance he/she finds most helpful, and agree on a schedule of meetings;

- (b) take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties with the supervisor;
- (c) maintain the progress of the work in accordance with the stages agreed with the supervisor, including in particular the submission of written material as required in sufficient time to allow for comment and discussion before proceeding to the next stage;
- (d) ensure that the prescribed coursework, if any, is satisfactorily completed;
- (e) provide, on time, formal reports on study progress to the Qualifying Panel through the supervisor according to the required time intervals;
- (f) ensure that the thesis is completed within the period stipulated by the University for assessment; and
- (g) conform with the Code of Practice for Research, and observe honesty in the conduct and reporting of research.

Relationship between the Supervisor and the Student

- 7. The relationship between the supervisor and the student will follow accepted norms conducive to academic and professional development as a result of each party fulfilling the responsibilities imposed on him/her.
- 8. If an effective working relationship does not develop and the student and/or the supervisor believes that, for this reason, the work is not proceeding satisfactorily, either person may make a representation to the Head of Department. The Head should consider the matter carefully and, if appropriate, recommend a replacement supervisor to SGS via the C/SGSC.

Publications

- 9. Care should be taken to ensure that the contribution of the student is recognised and properly acknowledged in any publication arising from the student's research work.

Written Material

- 10. At the time of presentation of the thesis, the student should certify that the thesis embodies the results of the study and research he/she has conducted and has been composed by himself/herself. The supervisor should ensure that, structurally and grammatically, the thesis presented is of an acceptable standard. The supervisor will properly comment at regular intervals, as indicated in this Code, on the student's written submissions and offer advice and guidance on their improvement; but the supervisor will operate within the general principle that the final written thesis must be the student's own work.