



TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY

Operating Procedures: Series A 2-25 Supervisor and Supervisory Committee (PhD)

Policy Hyperlink:

A -25 Supervisor and Supervisory Committee (PhD)

Policy Administrator:

Associate Provost, Graduate Studies

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Procedures

Supervision

It is the responsibility of the **supervisor** to:

1. Abide by the highest standards of academic integrity in the development of a mature and professional relationship with the student. There is a power imbalance in the supervisory relationship that requires the supervisor to commit to a productive and respectful supervisory relationship and a positive learning and research environment.
2. Be knowledgeable on related department and University regulations, policies, and procedures, and have these guide their decision-making and interactions with doctoral students.
3. Be familiar with the support services available to students and faculty.
4. Be reasonably accessible to the student for consultation and discussion of the student's academic progress and research challenges. The frequency of a supervisor-student meeting depends on the stage of the program, and should normally occur at least once a month, but never less than once each term. Supervisors who regularly provide clear feedback on student progress and how to successfully complete program milestones (e.g., comprehensive exams, oral defences) tend to have students graduate sooner with fewer complications.
5. Give timely response to submitted written work, with constructive and concrete suggestions for improvements. This normally means within two weeks or as agreed upon between supervisor and student.
6. Make satisfactory arrangements in advance with the approval of the PhD Director for the supervision of the student when on sabbatical, leave or extended absence from the university.
7. Topics to be covered during the introductory meetings between the supervisor and student include:
 - program requirements

- academic integrity
 - role of the supervisor
 - role of the supervisee (student)
 - composition of supervisory committee
 - preferred means of communication
 - availability of funding
 - scholarly practices and outputs
8. Clarify expectations regarding collaborative work, authorship, publications, and conference presentations. Discuss with the student, very early on, any expectations concerning authorship on publications, and issues surrounding ownership of intellectual property.
 9. In consultation with the doctoral student and the Program Director, coordinate the establishment of the supervisory committee (by the time the student has completed 18 months in the program).
 10. Convene bi-annual meetings (every six months) with the supervisory committee to monitor the student's progress, where the student presents their report to the committee. The committee will assess student's performance and give feedback. When necessary, the committee will determine the measures aimed at enhancing student performance and progression in the program.
 11. Submit an Annual Report to the Program Director and the School of Graduate Studies.
 12. In conjunction with the Office of Graduate Studies, ensure the student is aware of University, Faculty/School, and program requirements and standards to which the dissertation is expected to conform.
 13. Assist the student with attempts to acquire external funding, including meeting appropriate deadlines, and to engage in scholarly development (e.g., conference presentations, publications, creative knowledge translation).
 14. Offer supervision and advice appropriate to the stage of the student's work, helping the student to establish and modify a suitable timetable for completion of the various stages of the dissertation project:
 - a. At the comprehensive exam stage, guide the student in preparations including feedback on their reading list (see Comprehensive Exam Procedure);
 - b. at the proposal stage, assist the student with selection of a suitable and manageable topic and approach;
 - c. at the research stage, assist the student with initial research design and subsequent modification, with alleviating current and anticipated problems, with interpretation and analysis of findings, and with bringing the project to completion;
 - d. at the writing stage, assist the student with appropriate and timely feedback on individual draft chapters, and with revision to the draft dissertation as an integrated whole;
 - e. at the oral defence stage, advise the student on preparation for the examination and assist the student to interpret and comply with any changes recommended by the examining committee.

15. When the final draft of the dissertation is complete, ensure that all members of the committee have read the document and are agreed that it is ready to proceed to an oral defence. Suggest possible members of the examining committee to the Program Director.

A dissertation supervisory committee shall:

1. Review the student's progress at least once each term, at the call of the supervisor and student. Contribute to the Annual Report regarding the student's progress.
2. Read the entire completed dissertation in a timely fashion (within two weeks) and provide substantive written feedback.

The **student's** role is to focus on learning and research to complete their program requirements within the expected time frame. The student should make and maintain a strong commitment to devote the required time and energy needed to engage successfully in graduate work and research, write a dissertation, and contribute fully to the scholarly and intellectual life of the University. The student shall:

1. Inform themselves of the statutes, rules and regulations, and ordinances (including bylaws, codes, and policies) and to any amendments thereto applicable at the University.
2. Abide by the highest standards of academic integrity and professionalism
3. Maintain registration throughout the program.
4. Show dedicated efforts to gain the background knowledge and skills necessary to pursue and complete the dissertation research successfully.
5. Pursue the agreed upon research topic unless a change is mutually agreed upon.
6. Develop, in conjunction with the supervisor, a timeline for completion of all stages of the degree, and work systematically and within the agreed deadlines, as far as possible.
7. Assist the supervisor in forming the composition of the supervisory committee.
8. Work with the supervisor and supervisory committee to call meetings on a regular basis and whenever issues relating to student progress need to be addressed.
9. Make themselves available for meetings with their supervisor during regular business hours.
10. Be well prepared for meetings with the supervisor (e.g., providing materials in advance, setting an agenda, and maintaining a record of decisions).
11. Give serious attention to the advice and direction received from the supervisor and other members of the supervisory committee, and to provide a reasonable explanation when advice is not followed.
12. Recognize that the supervisor and members of the supervisory committee having teaching, research and service obligations that may preclude immediate responses. This relates to student requests for letters of reference, for which students must obtain permission of the faculty in advance (Faculty have the option to decline to provide a letter of reference, including cases where in sufficient notice is given). Students must inquire of a faculty member well in advance of the deadline and provide supporting materials such as an academic transcript or a statement of goals).
13. Inform their supervisors of their intention to take vacation days or leaves of absence (see policy xx). Students are not required to disclose health information, or other personal or confidential information related to the leave.

14. Acknowledge direct assistance of material drawn from other scholars (including the supervisor and supervisor committee).
15. Apply, if eligible and as appropriate, for internal and external scholarships and awards.

The Program (academic unit) must ensure continuity of appropriate supervision when a student is separated from a supervisor (e.g., sabbatical, retirement). The Program Director must address student concerns promptly. The Program Progressions Committee will meet with the student if they are not displaying a reasonable effort, if they fail to heed advice on changes deemed essential, or if the student changes the agreed dissertation topic without consent. Only the Associate Provost Graduate Studies may withdraw a student for failure of academic standards. Requests to withdraw a student are made by the Program Director. In the case of alleged non-compliance with these supervisory guidelines by the supervisor or a committee member, the Program Director will request and review a written report from the person making the allegations (see Conflict Resolution below).

Conflict of Interest in the Supervisory Relationship

All supervisors, supervisory committee members and students have the responsibility to be aware of situations of potential conflict of interest or roles and conflict of commitment and to deal with them according to official university guidelines. All students, supervisors and committee members have the responsibility to maintain a professional relationship. If a substantial conflict of interest arises (e.g., the existence or development of a romantic, sexual, family, or financial/business relationship), the individuals involved must immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Dean of the Academic Unit.

Conflict Resolution

Should conflict arise, the Program Director must address serious disagreements, for example, between a student and a supervisor or between a supervisor and committee members. Conflicts should be resolved, whenever viable, as close as possible to the source of the problem (i.e., at the lowest level of administration). If the issue cannot be resolved at the Program level, or in the case of confidentiality concerns, then the Associate Provost Graduate Studies must be contacted to facilitate a resolution. The Director must correspond with all parties concerning the decision, proposed actions, and resulting implications ten (10) working days prior to any action being taken. Appeals of the Director's decision must be addressed to the Associate Provost Graduate Studies.