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| *Policy No.*  **GRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISION POLICY** | |
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| *Approved on* | To Be Inserted |
| *Approving Authority* | Kenya Senate and University Academic Council |
| *Contacting Office* | Provost / DVC or designate |
| *Related Policies* | *This document should be read in conjunction with related University policies* |

1. **PURPOSE**
   1. An intention of the University is to encourage intellectual thinking, academic growth and excellence in research. Research Supervisors play a crucial role in this regard by guiding, motivating and evaluating the progress and the performance of graduate students (doctorate and masters).
   2. Programmes should ensure that faculty have the appropriate knowledge to facilitate excellence in PhD supervision.
   3. This policy enables students to be part of an intellectually stimulating academic environment and receive effective supervision during their studies.
   4. Research students’ expectations from their supervisory team, and the Supervisor’s expectations from the student have been outlined in this policy.

*(Note: Dean refers to the Dean of the faculty or delegate.)*

1. **ELIGIBILITY FOR SUPERVISION**
   1. The supervisor must meet the criteria for supervision eligibility of the country in which the programme is being offered.
   2. If there is an absence of, or conflict between, the supervision eligibility requirements set by the country of the programme and the University’s requirements, the one more rigorous will be applied.
   3. The supervisor's affiliation with a different program or campus than the student's is permissible.
   4. **PRINCIPAL SUPERVISORS**
      1. All Principal Supervisors should be faculty members of AKU approved by the Dean of the faculty in which the programme exists.
      2. Principal Supervisors nominated from other faculties should have the necessary approval from their Deans.
      3. If the Principal Supervisor is the Dean of the entity, the Provost/Vice Provost should approve the supervision.
      4. Principal Supervisors must have a qualification that is at least equivalent to the programme (doctorate/master's) that they are supervising.
      5. Principal Supervisors must have a proven track record of peer-reviewed research publications or other evidence of scholarly activity pertinent to the research of the student.
      6. The Principal Supervisor is expected to be a content and/or methodological expert.
      7. It is anticipated that Supervisors commit to their AKU assignment for at least the minimum duration of the student’s research period (typically four (4) years for doctorate and at least two (2) years for master’s programs).
   5. **CO-SUPERVISOR**
      1. A co-supervisor is responsible for assisting the principal supervisor in overseeing the student’s research plans and progress. Co-supervision will also provide a mentoring exposure for the new and less experienced supervisors.
      2. Co-supervisors may be:
         * a full or part-time faculty member of the University
         * a member of a different institution
         * an independent researcher
         * an emeritus professor
         * a retired academic
   6. **SUPERVISION FOR PHD PROGRAMMES**
      1. For PhD supervision, all the requirements for Principal Supervisors and Co-supervisors as stated in the previous section must be met, along with the following additional requirements.
      2. The Principal Supervisor must hold the rank of Associate Professor or above.
      3. An Assistant Professor may be nominated as Principal Supervisor by the Dean giving substantive reasons.
      4. The Principal Supervisor must have served as Co-supervisor in at least two graduate thesis supervisory committees under two different supervisors.
      5. Each PhD student must have at least one Co-supervisor.
      6. The Principal Supervisor and Co-supervisor must attend the PhD supervision training offered by AKU on a regular and ongoing basis.
2. **MODIFICATIONS TO THE SUPERVISORY TEAM**
   1. It is imperative to ensure the continuity of the supervisory team assigned to a student throughout the entire research process.
   2. If the appointed supervisor will not be able to continue supervising the student due to any reason, they must ensure a new supervisor is appointed before they relinquish their responsibilities.
   3. In case a supervisor is taking temporary leave for a period of two or more weeks, or permanent leave from the University, they must inform the Dean of their faculty.
   4. The Deans of the respective faculty are responsible for ensuring that supervision of the student continues uninterrupted.
   5. As soon as they are informed of a change in supervision, the Dean of the faculty must nominate a replacement supervisor as soon as possible, who should be able to provide the same quality of support and guidance as former supervisors.
   6. Any new development regarding changes in the supervision of the research project, if appropriate, should be discussed with the student.
3. **RESPONSIBILITIES OF** **SUPERVISOR AND STUDENT**
   1. Supervisors are expected to ensure students are provided with appropriate guidance, helpful feedback, access to resources and academic support.
   2. Supervisors must challenge the student and ensure a high level of cognitive involvement.
   3. While graduate students bear the ultimate responsibility for their research endeavours, supervisors play a pivotal role in facilitating their progress.
   4. Supervisors must communicate the inadequacies in the progress or the standard of research work to the student, and must identify the problems and recommend methods for rectifying them.
   5. Supervisors should assist students in networking with fellow researchers in related fields, facilitating their attendance at pertinent conferences, and encouraging the submission of conference papers and articles to peer-reviewed journals.
   6. Supervisors should also make sure that the students undertake pertinent subject-specific training by providing them information related to these training opportunities.
   7. Supervisors should arrange appropriate training/practice sessions for students to improve their oral and written communication skills like academic writing and seminar presentation.
   8. Supervisors must direct students to fully comprehend all pertinent University policies and procedures related to their work. They are also responsible for ensuring that the student's research aligns with the project and the University's guidelines.
   9. Students have a right to consultation with the supervisor at regular intervals - preferably every fortnight. Supervisors must ensure that all meetings between the student and the supervisors are properly documented.
   10. When supervising a doctorate programme, the Supervisor must ensure that the PhD Student-Supervisor Agreement is properly completed and signed by both parties.
   11. Supervisors must report the progress of the student to the relevant head of departments, relevant committees and their respective Deans.
   12. The involvement of other committee members or co-supervisors, as per their designated roles, must be overseen and evaluated by the primary supervisor.
   13. Supervisors and students need to mutually agree on the ownership of intellectual property related to the research.
   14. Any existing or potential conflicts of interest concerning activities, students, or supervisors must be promptly disclosed to the Dean of the faculty or the appropriate authority. Such issues will be resolved following the relevant Conflict of Interest Policy, and any necessary changes in supervision will be addressed accordingly.
4. **PHD STUDENT-SUPERVISOR AGREEMENT**

Each faculty should develop a PhD Student-Supervisor Agreement which will provide a clear course of action, transparency on roles and responsibilities, as well as a timeline for completion. The key details mentioned in the agreement must include, but are not limited to:

* 1. The design of the proposed study, subjects/participants and the sample size.
  2. Any preliminary work completed or needed to establish the feasibility of the project.
  3. Milestones and key dates e.g. for proposal finalisation, synopsis defence, field work dates, first draft of thesis, publication of article, final thesis.
  4. A detailed timeline with estimated hours per week the student will spend on the project, regular meetings with the supervisor, and expected/known leaves of student and/or supervisor (including sabbatical).
  5. The individual responsible for drafting the first iteration of the Ethics Review Committee (ERC) application should be specified, along with a timeline for submission.
  6. Clarity on practices and important policies related to research including Intellectual Property Rights, Research Misconduct etc.

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