

Faculty of Medicine
University of Colombo
Sri Lanka

HANDBOOK FOR SUPERVISORS AND STUDENTS OF
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

1. Guidelines for selection of supervisors
2. Responsibilities of supervisors
3. Responsibilities of students

Research & Higher Degrees Standing Committee
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The Research and Higher Degrees Standing Committee (RHDC) of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, formulated the guidelines in this booklet at the end of a series of 4 special meetings held from October 2000 to June 2001 to discuss the responsibilities of supervisors and students. The following documents were used as references:

1. "Standards for the Ph.D. Degree in the Molecular Biosciences." Recommendations of the Committee on Education of the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, 2000.
2. "A Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students." The University of Edinburgh. September 2000.
3. "Handbook for Postgraduate Research Students" Graduate School of Life Sciences, The University of Edinburgh. 1999-2000.
4. "Research Students' Handbook". London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

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1. Guidelines for selection of supervisors

Faculty of Medicine, Colombo should preferably register research degrees of those candidates where most of the work is performed at the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo and in its associated institutions.

- 1.1 Supervisors should be persons competent in the field of study proposed.
- 1.2 Principal supervisor should be a permanent member academic staff of the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo, except in conditions as described under 1.3
- 1.3 When a candidate requests registration, where the project work will be carried out in an institution, which does not have a mechanism for awarding a research degree, a supervisor from such an institute should be the principal supervisor, provided a permanent member of staff from the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo competent in the field of study is a co-supervisor. The co-supervisor will be responsible to the RHDC and should be involved in regular consultative meetings with the student and the principal supervisor.
- 1.4 Principal supervisor should have a research degree equivalent to or higher than that for which registration is sought. Senior experienced supervisors may be considered on a case by case basis.
- 1.5 A person without a research degree is eligible to be the principal supervisor at the discretion of the RHDC, provided there is evidence of research in terms of original research papers published in peer reviewed journals and a co-supervisor with a research degree equivalent to or higher than that for which registration is sought is appointed.
- 1.6 If the principal supervisor is a researcher who is less than 3 years after the higher degree, it would be preferable to have an experienced senior researcher as a co-supervisor.
- 1.7 The desirable number of first year M. Phil/Ph. D/DM students for a principal and sole supervisor should not be more than three. However more students per supervisor will be allowed at the discretion of the RHDC.

2. Responsibilities of supervisors

A supervisor should:

- 2.1 ensure that the students are aware of and comply with the current regulations outlined in the booklet titled “Regulations pertaining to registration for higher degrees by research” issued by the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo.
- 2.2 ensure that the students are aware of and comply with Departmental, Faculty, University and internationally accepted policies and regulations including relevant safety procedures and research ethics.
- 2.3 ensure that the student chooses an appropriate topic, draws up the research project and completes the necessary procedures for registration and ethical approval.
- 2.4 guide the student to carryout the research project ensuring that appropriate instruments are available and appropriate quality assurance methods are used for data collection.
- 2.5 encourage the student to acquire other relevant skills such as statistical analysis, research methodologies, presentation skills etc.
- 2.6 encourage the student to follow seminars/lectures and to make presentations and publications on the work that has been carried out at appropriate times.
- 2.7 monitor progress periodically. Initially more frequent meetings are desirable with frequency of formal meetings gradually decreasing, as the student becomes more independent.
- 2.8 ensure that the student submits progress reports at prescribed times in the format prescribed by the RHDC. These reports should be forwarded to RHDC through the Head of Department and Dean Faculty of Medicine Colombo, with the supervisor’s comments.
- 2.9 bring to the attention of the RHDC any difficulties in continuation of student’s supervision or any interruption to the research programme and seek advice.
- 2.10 Inform the RHDC and make appropriate arrangements for supervision if the supervisor plans to take more than 6 weeks of leave in the case of a principal and sole supervisor and for more than 3 months in the case of a principal supervisor with co-supervisors and in the case of a co-supervisor.
- 2.11 instruct the student to submit the thesis and apply for examination at the appropriate time.
- 2.12 recommend to the Dean names of examiners for approval of the RHDC, Faculty Board and the Senate of the University at the appropriate time.

3. Responsibilities of students

A student registering for a higher degree by research (M. Phil, Ph. D, DM) should:

- 3.1 be familiar with and conform to regulations, requirements and guidelines prepared by the institutions, departments and principal and other supervisors.
- 3.2 draw up the research proposal and obtain Research and Higher Degrees and Ethical Review Committee approval.
- 3.3 maintain annual registration
- 3.4 be familiar with the handling and care of equipment and material to be used in the research work. Special norms and internationally accepted standards must be followed in case of animal research, genetic and fertility research.
- 3.5 be familiar and comply with internationally accepted norms of research ethics.
- 3.6 maintain professional and ethical relationships at all times with supervisors, peers, the department and the institution.
- 3.7 inform RHDC through the supervisor before seeking simultaneous registration for any other degree.
- 3.8 inform RHDC through the supervisor any interruption to the study programme. e.g. leave abroad.
- 3.9 attend regular meetings with supervisor (s), work according to the time table set up and bring to the notice of the supervisor any difficulties encountered.
- 3.10 provide written progress reports, make oral/poster presentations and present himself / herself for interviews required for monitoring progress.
- 3.11 attend all assigned courses, training programmes and other activities as required by the supervisor(s), department and institution.
- 3.12 update oneself on literature on the relevant area of research.
- 3.13 ensure that all data on the research work are recorded diligently and assigned for safe keeping in the department for not less than five years after completion of thesis work.
- 3.14 take part in the departmental teaching programmes.
- 3.15 ensure that the thesis is submitted within the timeframe indicated in the regulations.