# Graduate Student - Supervisor Guidelines and Agreement

The purpose of this document is to outline a set of guidelines to enable clarity of roles and expectations during the graduate student supervision process. It provides staff administering graduate programs, faculty and graduate students with operating principles and guidelines which will contribute to positive working relationships between supervisors and graduate students.

# Supervisor – Student Guidelines and Agreement

The Supervisor-Student relationship involves mentoring, support, career development, as well as academic oversight. Supervisors and Students must arrive at mutually agreeable terms to establish their relationship and interaction.

The Graduate Studies Advisory Committee (GSAC) has prepared this document to provide a framework for discussion to enable supervisors and graduate students to establish guidelines for developing and managing their supervisory relationship and interactions. Graduate students should familiarize themselves with these general guidelines at the start of their degree program.

The Supervisor – Student Guidelines and Agreement should be completed at the beginning of the student’s program and then reviewed annually. Both the supervisor and student should retain a copy of the signed agreement and forward a copy to the Head of the Graduate Program for placement in the student’s file. Additional supplementary information that may pertain to the guidelines such as or any related program forms should also be reviewed at various stages of the student's graduate program.

In some programs students are supervised by one faculty member, while in others, a thesis supervisory committee is used. In what follows, the word 'supervisor' refers to the single faculty member who is the supervisor, or to the principal supervisor if there is a thesis supervisory committee.

## Guidelines

1. While it is generally important to acknowledge the leadership role which supervisors should undertake in the overall relationship with graduate students, it is paramount for graduate students to understand that they have a shared responsibility in maintaining open channels of communication, and finding out for themselves what may be needed to enable their success, and acting accordingly. The prudence of open and timely communication between supervisor and student is paramount.
2. The Supervisor is responsible for supervising the graduate student during their program. The Supervisor is the Student’s primary point of contact at Vancouver Island University.
3. Both the Student and the Supervisor need to have a working knowledge of the [University’s policies, procedures and regulations](https://research.viu.ca/graduate-studies/policies) for graduate programming as well as the specific supplementary regulations of the academic unit. Because policies and procedures are revised regularly, they should be reviewed by both parties semi-annually. This form does not replace official VIU statements outlining approved policies and procedures.
4. If Students or Supervisors have any questions or concerns regarding their graduate program or these guidelines and this form, they should contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. The Supervisor and Student must review each of the sections below and should check off each relevant box to confirm that the items have been discussed and that both parties confirm they understand them. This document should be completed at the beginning of the student-supervisor relationship.

# Graduate Student – Supervisor Agreement

## Part 1: Supervisor and Student

The Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [Insert Supervisor Name], (the “Supervisor”) may supervise students in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [Insert Department/Area/Academic Unit] at Vancouver Island University and agrees to supervise the graduate program of the student named below and;

The Student \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [Insert Student Name], (the “Student”) is registered in a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [Insert Degree] degree program studying in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [Insert Department/Area/Academic Unit] at Vancouver Island University and wishes to carry out a graduate program under the supervision of the above named Supervisor.

## Part 2: Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Supervisor

Please review the following points and then check each relevant box to acknowledge it has been discussed with the graduate student. Supervisors have a responsibility to adhere to the general roles and responsibilities as outlined within the relevant policies and procedures.

In addition, the supervisor will:

* Provide mentorship and guidance to the Student for the duration of their program.
* Provide guidance to the Student on all program requirements as outlined in the [Student Calendar](https://www.viu.ca/registration/dates-and-deadlines), including selecting required and appropriate coursework, research, thesis writing, suitable resources, and workspace.
* Develop a workplan for program completion with the student and review bi-annually to ensure milestones are met. Attach a copy of the workplan (including timelines) to this agreement if required.
* Assist the student in the completion of Progress reports as required by the program.
* Provide advice on the composition of the supervisory committee (where applicable).
* Assess and confer appropriate and fair acknowledgement of Student contribution to scholarly activities as outlined in Part 6 below.
* Dedicate the appropriate amount of time to the graduate student in order to support effective progress.
* Provide timely, honest, and fair feedback in support of high academic performance. Feedback on work submitted by the student should be reviewed and returned within two weeks, unless negotiated to enable them to maintain momentum and meet deadlines.
* Give reasonable notice to the Student of extended absences from campus, such as vacation, assisted leaves, travel, and make satisfactory arrangements during such absences;
* Disclose any conflicts of interest that may arise with respect to the Student;
* Review and ensure program regulations and requirements as outlined within the Student Calendar and the appropriate degree-specific Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures manual are met.
* Ensure awareness and compliance with research policies and support the student to obtain necessary approvals from the Research Ethics Board (REB) or the Animal Care Committee (ACC) if required. Supervisors and students must complete the TCPS 2 online tutorial Course on Research Ethics (CORE) if their research involves working with human subjects.
* Discuss performance expectations and academic and ethical standards with the Student.
* Provide guidance on how to work effectively as a team.
* Assist in providing the resources and facilities required for the Student to undertake scholarly activities.
* Any other mutually agreed upon responsibilities; specify below:

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2.2 The Student

Please review the following points and then check each relevant box to acknowledge it has been discussed. Students have a responsibility to adhere to the general roles and responsibilities as outlined within University policies as outlined in the Student Calendar and other official documents.

In addition, the Student will:

* Develop a working knowledge of the University’s relevant policies, procedures, regulations, and deadlines set by Vancouver Island and their respective academic unit. Because policies and procedures are revised regularly, they should be reviewed by both the Student and Supervisor semi-annually.
* Seek the advice of the Supervisor regarding required and appropriate coursework, research, thesis proposal, thesis writing, suitable resources, and work space.
* Develop a workplan for program completion with the supervisor and review bi-annually to ensure milestones/timelines are met. Attach a completed workplan with this form when required.
* Ensure that progress reports are completed as required by the program.
* Demonstrate appropriate professional judgement, collegial behaviour, academic rigour and integrity at all times and in every facet of the graduate program. Academic integrity at Vancouver Island University refers to principles associated with honest, ethical and sound scholarship. Students should refer to the [General Regulations](https://www.viu.ca/registration/general-regulations) which outlines this further, paying special attention to the [Academic Integrity](https://learningmatters.viu.ca/ready-set-go/academic-integrity) for both academic and non-academic offences;
* Dedicate the appropriate amount of time to the graduate program in order to make effective progress towards any associated deadlines and timely degree completion. Submission of Progress reports biannually as required by the program.
* Submit materials in a timely manner to the Supervisor for review and assessment as identified in the agreed upon workplan.
* Consult with the Supervisor regarding the composition of the supervisory committee (where applicable).
* Maintain contact with the Supervisor as discussed in section #4 (Meeting and Communication) of this form.
* Keep laboratory, research, and computer areas tidy and adhere to laboratory safety rules as outlined in the General Regulations.
* Adhere to professional norms for space use including respecting others and their belongings.
* Strive to work effectively as a member of a team.
* Obtain the required safety and research training, and, if necessary, obtain required ethics approvals by the [Research Ethics Board](https://research.viu.ca/research-ethics-board/) (REB) at VIU or the academic unit. Students must complete the TCPS 2 online tutorial Course on Research Ethics (CORE) if their research involves working with human subjects.
* Work with the Supervisor to identify and address any barriers to academic success (for example, English as a Second Language challenges, writing support, or deficits in required background knowledge); and
* Any other mutually agreed upon responsibilities; specify below:

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Part 3: Timelines and Completion

Please review the following points and then check each relevant box to acknowledge it has been discussed.

* The Supervisor and Student have met to discuss and complete this form.
* The Supervisor and Student have developed a timeline for program completion (attach when seeking approval).
* Progress reports will be submitted biannually and used to refine the timeline as needed.
* The maximum time period, including course work, examinations, research, thesis proposal, thesis writing and defense (if applicable) permitted for the student’s program is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years (please consult the [Time to Completion and Request for Leave Policies and Procedures](https://research.viu.ca/current-students)).
* Student commitments for other duties such as non-degree research, teaching and teaching assistantships, or other responsibilities should not delay efforts to complete the degree requirements of the graduate program; and
* Any other mutually agreed upon responsibilities; specify below: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Part 4: Meetings and Communication

Please review the following points and then check each relevant box to acknowledge it has been discussed.

* The Supervisor and the Student will arrange and attend regular meetings to report on progress, to provide support and mentorship, and to attend to relevant deadlines. The frequency of the meetings may vary, but at minimum, meetings will normally be held every \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (indicate weekly or monthly intervals and/or frequency);
* The Supervisor will respond in a timely manner (within 2 weeks unless negotiated) with constructive suggestions/revisions to written work (including proposals, literature reviews, analysis, thesis chapters), as well as research grants and scholarship applications, reports, manuscripts or scholarly presentations;
* The Supervisor and the Student will organize and schedule meetings with the entire supervisory committee (where applicable) at least twice annually. Additional meetings may also be held at the request of the Student or the Supervisor. If appropriate, the Student will distribute reports or meeting materials in advance of the scheduled meetings with the supervisory committee;
* The Student will participate in meetings, seminars and training regularly as determined by the Supervisor; and

Any other mutually agreed upon responsibilities; specify below: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Part 5: Publication

Please review the following points and then check each relevant box to acknowledge it has been discussed.

* The Supervisor and Student discussed and agree upon what methods of knowledge mobilization will be done to share the results of their graduate work.
* The Supervisor and Student mutually agree upon deadlines for timely completion and publication of manuscripts or presentations.
* The Supervisor will acknowledge the contribution of the Student in any publication and /or presentations, as appropriate.
* Order of authorship and the fair and reasonable criteria to determine the order of authorship on any shared publications will be established.
* Should the need arise, the Student and the Supervisor will discuss the patentability of any invention arising out of the research before any publication or presentation of the research in order to ensure that the patentability of the invention is not compromised. Supervisors and Students should consult the Intellectual Property Policy and Knowledge Mobilization Procedures to assist with such decisions; and

Any other mutually agreed upon responsibilities; specify below: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Part 6: Intellectual Property, Academic Integrity and Ethics

Please review the following points and then check each relevant box to acknowledge it has been discussed.

* The Student and Supervisor will review, understand and discuss the Intellectual Property (IP) Policy and Knowledge Mobilization Procedure to provide a framework for graduate students and Supervisors to address the various issues associated with IP that may arise in the graduate education context;
* The Student will keep orderly records of all research data produced or developed.
* Document or data storage should be limited to University servers or a server that is accessible by the Supervisor at any time.
* The Student will adhere to any institutional agreements related to their research or any equipment being used in their program. These include, but are not limited to agreements such as external and internal grant/funding agreements/awards (e.g., Tri-Agency Award Holders Agreements). Students should have a working knowledge of all restrictions on time of use, ethics information and approvals and any other relevant information related to these agreements.
* All Students are responsible for understanding the meaning of academic integrity at Vancouver Island University and ensuring they abide by it during their work. Academic refers to principles associated with honest, ethical and sound scholarship. Students should refer to the General Regulations which outlines this further, paying special attention to the [Student Academic Code of Conduct](http://csci.viu.ca/~kabirh/Academic-Misconduct.pdf)
* All Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to the University’s Copyright Policies.
* The Supervisor and Student will adhere to the University’s policies and procedures relating to the conduct of research, including any necessary human ethics review procedures, and animal care ethics that must be completed. For more information, please see the Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity website and.
* Any other mutually agreed upon responsibilities; specify below:
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Part 7: Funding

Please review the following points and then check each relevant box to acknowledge it has been discussed.

* The Student, in consultation with the Supervisor, will actively seek internal and external opportunities for scholarships, awards, and grants related to their program
* Where agreed upon, the Supervisor will provide $ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for the academic year(s) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in funding to the Student as a Research Assistantship or Research Stipend, subject to the satisfactory progress of the student; and
* Any other mutually agreed upon responsibilities; specify below:
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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Part 8: Professional Development

Please review the following points and then check each relevant box to acknowledge it has been discussed.

* In consultation with the Supervisor, the Student will develop an individualized professional development plan. The Student will be encouraged to actively seek out opportunities to attend professional development workshops on topics such as effective writing, teaching training, grant writing and transferable skill development (e.g., project management, networking, etc.).
* Opportunities for the Student to attend suitable conferences and present scholarly work will be sought.
* Sources of funding for Student travel should be investigated and then appropriate applications submitted; and
* Any other mutually agreed upon responsibilities; specify below:
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Part 9: Safety

Please review the following points and then check each relevant box to acknowledge it has been discussed.

* The Student may be subject to safety courses/workshops or requirements at Vancouver Island University, including those pertaining to workplace protection (including but not limited to Workplace Hazardous Material Information System “WHMIS”), hazardous materials, radioisotopes, laboratory and environmental waste management, or others; and
* The Supervisor and Student will seek input and direction from safety officers or other appropriate personnel within their unit and/or Risk and Safety Services to determine if further training is required.

Part 10: Privacy and Confidentiality

Please review the following points and then check each relevant box to acknowledge it has been discussed.

* If confidential information is provided to a student in the program, the student will not disclose the confidential information to any third parties, except as required by law or as permitted by the agreement pursuant to which the confidential information was shared;
* When appropriate a Confidentiality and Privacy statement should be prepared and signed by the student; and
* The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act applies to the student’s program. For more information, see the [Access and Privacy at VIU Webpage](https://gov.viu.ca/fippa/access-and-privacy-viu).

Part 11: Procedure for handling conflict

In the case that the Supervisor and Student encounter challenges in their working relationship that result in the potential interruption of the student completing their obligations, the Supervisor or Student should contact the Head of their Graduate Program to seek resolution.

For further information on this form, Supervisors and Students can contact the Head of their Graduate program for clarity.

**Signatures**

The Student and Supervisor have reviewed and agree to these guidelines.

Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Head of Graduate Program/Dean: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A copy of the signed agreement should be kept by the Student, the Supervisor and the Head of the Graduate Program for the student’s file.