



Responsibilities of IRES Graduate Student Supervisors

Supervisors should be available to help their graduate students at every stage, from formulation of their research projects through establishing methodologies and discussing results, to presentation and possible publication of dissertations. Graduate supervisors must also ensure that their students' work meets the standards of the University.

Some specific responsibilities of a graduate supervisor include:

- assisting the student with the selection and planning of a suitable and manageable research topic.
- sufficient familiarity with the field of research to provide guidance and/or a willingness to gain that familiarity before agreeing to act as a supervisor.
- accessibility to the student for consultation and discussion of the student's academic progress and research. The frequency of meetings will vary according to the discipline or field, nature of the program in which the student is enrolled, stage of work, nature of the project, independence of the student, etc. For some students, weekly meetings are essential; for others, monthly meetings are satisfactory. In no case should interaction be less frequent than once per term.
- establishing a supervisory committee, and convening meetings, at least 2 annually, to evaluate the student's progress. Master's students are to have 2 members inclusive of their supervisor; PhD students are to have a minimum of 3 members inclusive of their supervisors. For master's students, the annual meeting could include only the primary supervisor in the first year.
- responding in a timely manner to written work submitted by the student, with constructive suggestions for improvement and continuation. The turnaround time for comments on written work should not normally exceed three weeks.
- making arrangements to ensure continuity of supervision when the supervisor will be absent for extended periods, e.g. a month or longer.
- helping the student gain access to facilities or research materials.
- ensuring that the research environment is safe, healthy and free from harassment, discrimination and conflict.
- assisting the student in being aware of current graduate program requirements, deadlines, sources of funding, etc.
- encouraging the student to make presentations of research results within the University and to outside scholarly or professional bodies as appropriate.
- encouraging the student to finish up when it would not be in the student's best interests to extend the program of studies.

- acknowledging appropriately the contributions of the student in presentations and in published material, in many cases via joint authorship.
- ensuring that recommendations for external examiners of doctoral dissertations are made to the graduate program advisor and forwarded to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in a timely manner.
- assisting the student to comply with any changes that need to be made to the thesis after the thesis or dissertation defence.

When there is a conflict in advice or when there are different expectations on the part of co-supervisors or members of the supervisory committee, the supervisor is expected to endeavor to achieve consensus and resolve the differences.

Guidelines for Working Relationship between Supervisor and Student

Even with the best intentions and efforts, situations may arise in which the working relationship between a supervisor and a student breaks down. The following procedures have been developed to address difficulties in the relationship between supervisor and student within the RMES program:

1. When the student experiences problem in relationship with a supervisor & supervisor doesn't know it
 - a. Student to approach the Graduate Program Coordinator
 - b. Student to approach the Graduate Advisor to dispel problem
 - c. Director to be informed of the concern by the Graduate Advisor
2. When the supervisor experiences a problem with a student but the student doesn't know it
 - a. Graduate Advisor and Supervisor meet
 - b. Graduate Advisor meets with the student
 - c. Graduate Advisor meets with the Director and Supervisor
3. When mutual concerns arise in relationship between Supervisor and student*
 - a. Student approaches Graduate Advisor
 - b. Written statement required from Supervisor
 - c. Graduate Advisor informs Director of concerns

Should the relationship between the primary supervisor and student be unable to be resolved, the primary supervisor should assist the student (if the student has not already done so) in finding another supervisor. This new primary supervisor will take responsibility for guiding the graduate student's academic program. Issues of financial support should be resolved among the parties in reasonable ways.

If a student is unable to build and maintain a successful working relationship with any of the available advisors, then that student may be asked to leave the program.

Statement from the Faculty of Graduate Studies website states:

“In general, it is expected that student concerns will be dealt with as close to the source of concern as possible.

Status in the program, comprehensive examinations, thesis supervision:

- student’s supervisor
- graduate program coordinator / graduate program advisor
- head of the department

If no resolution can be achieved after following these steps, the problem may ultimately be taken to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Dean of Graduate Studies will check to ensure that each previous level of problem resolution has been explored to the fullest extent before proceeding to other levels.”

Every transitional breakdown with a supervisor is to be brought forward to the Academic Committee to get approval of change or suggestion on next step. If student is supervised from a member of the committee, member must be absent from the meeting.

Responsibilities of Graduate Students

When you register as a graduate student at UBC, you're making a commitment to devote the time and energy needed to engage in research and write a thesis or dissertation. Your supervisor has a right to expect substantial effort, initiative, respect and receptiveness to suggestions and criticisms.

As a graduate student, you must accept the rules, procedures and standards in place in the program and at the university and should check the University Calendar for regulations regarding academic and non-academic matters. You are expected to:

- Make a commitment and show dedicated efforts to gain the background knowledge and skills needed to pursue your research project successfully.
- In conjunction with your supervisor, develop a plan and timetable for completion of all stages of your thesis project, adhere to a schedule and meet appropriate deadlines.
- Meet with your supervisor when requested and report fully and regularly on progress and results.
- Maintain registration throughout the program and (for international students) ensure that study permits and (where applicable) employment authorization documents are kept up to date.
- Keep your supervisor, the RMES office (Graduate Secretary) and Enrolment Services informed about your contact information.
- Give serious consideration to the advice and criticisms received from your supervisor and other members of your supervisory committee.
- Be thoughtful and reasonably frugal in using resources provided by your supervisor and the University, and assist in obtaining additional resources for your research or for other group members where applicable.
- Conform to University, Faculty and graduate program requirements, including those related to deadlines, dissertation or thesis style, conflict of interest.
- When your degree program requirements have been met, terminate your work and clean up your workspace.