



USM CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDIES

APPRECIATION

Our sincere appreciation goes out to all involved in contributing ideas in the preparation of this document. Committee members involved in developing USM's Code of Good Practice for Postgraduate Research Programme 2012 are as follows:

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**Schedule of Activities For Preparation of Final Draft Report on
USM Code of Good Practice for Postgraduate Research Studies**

Meeting/Workshop	Date	Agenda
First Meeting	1 March 2012	Establishment of focus and scope
First workshop	5 – 6 June 2012	Gathering of inputs for the 5 scopes of Good Practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Intake and Enrolment ii. Supervision iii. Research iv. Examinations v. Feedback, Appeals and Complaints
Second Workshop	4 July 2012	Presentation of inputs and feedbacks from each group
Third Workshop	16 – 17 July 2012	Presentation of updated reports by the Committee Members
Fourth Workshop	6 September 2012	Preparation of draft report
Fifth Workshop	6 – 7 October 2012	Improvising of the draft report
Meeting	22 November 2012	Presentation of final draft to JPPS members

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USM CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAMME

OVERVIEW

This Code of Practice for postgraduate training and research provides guidelines on good practice in postgraduate research studies at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). It does not constitute or supersede USM's regulations for postgraduate studies but describes recommended practice and stipulates the academic standards expected from USM staff and postgraduate students.

INTRODUCTION

USM acknowledges that the processes and procedures of training of postgraduate students may be influenced by a variegation of factors which makes it difficult to provide a uniform code for everyone to adhere. These factors include the personalities involved and the environment in which students and supervisors work. USM also accepts there are variations in supervisory practice between the diverse disciplines and also among individuals. Taking into account the diversity of disciplines and to maintain academic freedom to individuals the Code of Practice does not attempt to elucidate the academic role of the institution and individuals within the framework of research training. Rather the Code of Practice aims to identify aspects of good practice which are acceptable to all disciplines. It also defines the general responsibilities of the institution, supervisors and students. The Code is mainly intended to be applied to the various aspects of supervision of postgraduate research candidates registered for the degrees of PhD and Masters by research mode, but, where relevant, may also be applied for courses involving a significant component of research.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE

USM acknowledges the contribution of postgraduate research in enhancing its research activities and in elevating its status as research-intensive university. USM believes that the quality of postgraduate training offered will have a major impact on its research capacity and undertakings. USM also realizes its responsibility to ensure that all postgraduate students involved in research are given the opportunity to develop their potential for creativity and innovation during their candidacies.

This Code of Practice provides the means to ensure that quality assurance and universally accepted standards in postgraduate research and training are maintained. The Code is based on the principles that all the stakeholders have valid expectations from postgraduate research training, and that each party has responsibilities. This Code provides guidelines for the responsibilities of the university, schools, institutes, Centres of Research Excellence within USM, supervisors and students.

AIMS

The aim of this Code is to outline USM's broad expectations and the roles of those involved with postgraduate education and training, and to provide the general terms for responsibilities of individuals, committees, University officers and students in ensuring that the research training experience of each student is in concordance with international standards and practices. This document is intended for:

- Academic, research and relevant support staff employed by USM, and other individuals carrying out research at, or on behalf of, USM
- USM postgraduate students engaged in research
- Supervisors of USM postgraduate research students
- Any person with honorary positions conducting research within, or on behalf of, USM
- Individuals involved in the peer review of a research process

SECTION 1: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 The University

In general, USM bears responsibility to maintain appropriate academic standards and enhance postgraduate research programmes. The University fulfills this responsibility through the University Senate, University Postgraduate Council, Institute of Postgraduate Studies, School/Centre Academic Council and the School/Centre Postgraduate Committee. Through these committees, the University

- i. Maintains regulations for postgraduate education and making them available to students and staff.
- ii. Ensures students admission standards are maintained.
- iii. Ensures students candidature matters and personal records are maintained.
- iv. Provides training to supervisors on appropriate supervisory skills.
- v. Ensures sufficient materials are available on matters pertaining to plagiarism.
- vi. Appoints examiners.
- vii. Handling of reviews and appeals.

1.2 The Institute of Postgraduate Studies (IPS)

IPS has the responsibility for managing all postgraduate programmes and students, including policy development and quality assurance.

To fulfill these responsibilities, IPS

- i. Identifies issues relating to research degrees and students which need to be improved and developed, and taking these forward (including recruitment, curriculum issues, quality assurance, facilities, research training, etc).
- ii. Provides clear, accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date information on academic areas, entrance requirements and resources (including supervisors).
- iii. Manages all matters related to student candidature such as application process, induction and admission, enrolment and re-registration, maintaining student records and examination processes.
- iv. Carries out marketing and recruitment for all modes of postgraduate study including the production of generic brochures and maintaining a website.
- v. Manages all financial assistance and any university-funded scholarship scheme.
- vi. Manages the university's external relations that involve research students with external partners and industry.
- vii. Monitors quality assurance in relation to all postgraduate programmes and maintaining standards.
- viii. Ensures Schools and Centres fulfill their responsibilities towards postgraduate student management and programmes.
- ix. Cooperates with the Schools/Centres on the progress of USM's research postgraduate students every semester.
- x. Oversees and produces the training manuals for the personal and professional development of research and mixed mode students.
- xi. Manages the training of supervisors of research mode students.

1.3 Schools/Centres

The Schools/Centres

- i. Ensures that this Code of Practice is followed to the best of its ability.
- ii. Responsible for all matters pertaining to postgraduate programmes including regulating processes and procedures.
- iii. Research Centres without an Academic Council shall seek approval from the appropriate School/Centre in all matters pertaining to postgraduate studies.
- iv. Responsible for creating, ensuring and developing a conducive research environment and ensure good research practice is undertaken.
- v. Ensures sufficient and appropriate workplace is available for each student.
- vi. Conducts periodic strategic review of contents and direction of a postgraduate programme.
- vii. Provides all necessary information through an updated website and printed materials about courses, induction programmes and any information relating to postgraduate degree.
- viii. The Dean/Head of Department has overall responsibility for the welfare and academic progress of the research students.
- ix. The Dean/Head of Department is expected to be involved in resolving any difficulties and conflicts involving staff and students in strict confidence.
- x. Actively encourages cooperation via exchange of ideas within and outside between peers, and respect for freedom of expression and enquiry.
- xi. Ensures arrangements are in place for the pastoral care of all postgraduate students.
- xii. May impose additional conditions on candidates registered with them.

1.4 School/Centre Postgraduate Studies Committee

The Committee

- i. Acts under the School/Centre Academic Council and is responsible for all matters pertaining to postgraduate programmes including regulating processes and procedures.
- ii. Should be chaired by a Dean/Director and should include members who are experienced researchers and supervisors.
- iii. Meets at least 6 times a year (not virtual meetings).
- iv. Ensures that the School/Centre and the supervisory team appointed can provide sufficient research, academic and administrative support for every student selected.
- v. Ensures backup arrangements are made for supervisors on sabbatical leave, absent or have left the University.
- vi. Reviews progress reports from students and supervisors and respond appropriately to the issues raised in the reports.

1.4.1 Pertaining to Students

The committee

- i. Responsible for student selection, the students' research degree programmes and for monitoring and supporting their progress.
- ii. Ensures that all students admitted to studies into postgraduate programme are suitably qualified with the necessary competency in the English Language.
- iii. Where relevant, recommends/sets special conditions such as English requirements, courses to be taken prior the student's admission.
- iv. Monitors students progress.
- v. Recommends upgrading from Masters to Doctoral candidature following stipulated procedures.

1.4.2 Pertaining to Supervisors and Examiners

The committee

- i. Assigns/arranges/appoints a student's supervisory team taking into account existing teaching and research load, funds and resources of the individuals concerned.
- ii. Ensures that new supervisors/academic staff attends the USM Supervision Training Workshop and continuing professional development.
- iii. Investigates complaints about examination and supervision at the School/Centre or when requested by the University.
- iv. Recommends and endorses qualified and appropriate examiners for thesis examination following university regulations regarding these appointments.

1.5 Supervisors and Supervisory Teams

Supervision involves a supervisory role in relation to academic advising and research as well as coaching.

A research student in USM is normally supervised by a Main Supervisor. In instances where the project/part of a project is not within the expertise of the Main Supervisor, is interdisciplinary or involves an industrial partner, a Co-Supervisor or a Supervisory Team should be appointed. A new academic staff may be appointed as a Main Supervisor within a Supervisory Team that consists of experienced supervisors and researchers only if he/she has special expertise not otherwise available.

This section however outlines the general responsibilities of the Supervisor/Supervisory Team. Specific roles and responsibilities are detailed in Section 5.3.

1.5.1 Supervisors and Supervisory Team

- i. The supervisory team members are expected to familiarise themselves with the Code of Good Practice.
- ii. The supervisory team members must declare/disclose to the School/Centre any conflict of interest that exist or may arise prior to their appointment and at any point during the supervision period. Conflict of interest could involve supervising relatives by marriage or blood ties,
- iii. The supervisory team members are expected to be aware of diversity issues such as cultural experience, gender, professional identity and experience level.
- iv. The supervisory team members are expected to inform the School/Centre should he/she be away from the University for an extended period for backup supervisory arrangements.

1.5.2 Training and Development of Supervisors

- i. Academic staff with less than 5 years' experience is expected to complete all modules listed in the Postgraduate Supervision for Academic Staff Workshop organised by the University, prior to supervising a postgraduate student.
- ii. Experienced supervisors must ensure that their knowledge of the current regulations and practices for supervision are up to date, and must adhere to the University guidelines on training and development for supervisors.

SECTION 2: INTAKE AND ENROLMENT AND CANDIDATURE

2.1 Pre-Application

- i. USM will endeavor to provide the latest information about application processes, entrance requirements (including Policy on English Proficiency, Professional Experience and work experience), fees, funding assistance available, visa requirements and accommodation.
- ii. USM encourages prospective students to communicate with academic members of the university with relevant background regarding their field of interest.
- iii. USM encourages academic members of the university to continually engage in discussions with the prospective student.
- iv. The university shall provide a Directory of Expertise with detailed information on research interests of the academic members of the university.

2.2 Application

- i. USM will provide clear information on application procedures.
- ii. In situations where an interview is required to assess the suitability of the candidates, USM will ensure constructive interviews are conducted.
- iii. USM emphasizes on the practice of good faith and honesty in application and will take appropriate measures at any stage of candidacy, should this principle be breached.
- iv. USM requires research mode applicants to submit a research proposal outlining the research area of interest.
- v. USM requires students to have sufficient funds to support themselves (and dependents) throughout the duration of study.
- vi. USM undertakes to provide an efficient/latest tracking system to ensure that applicants can be kept updated on the status of their application.
- vii. USM practices transparency and accountability in considering applications. Schools/Centres must ensure that all applications are considered fairly and professionally.
- viii. To facilitate speedy application process, USM promotes online application including submission of referees report. However manual application remains acceptable in exceptional circumstances.
- ix. USM ensures that applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application within 2 months of submission, subject to receipt of full and completed documentation from applicants.
- x. In conjunction with the offer letter, IPS will provide a Postgraduate Student Registration Guide detailing matters about arrivals and registration and other candidature matters.

2.3 Registration and Admission

- i. USM strives to provide the highest degree of “*Smile and F=Greet*” hospitality to arriving students for example by meeting them at the airport and facilitating temporary accommodation upon advanced notification.
- ii. At enrolment, academic qualifications and certificates will be checked and verified by IPS.
- iii. USM will organise a comprehensive orientation and induction programmes to learn about USM and assist students to acclimatise to the university environment and local culture.
- iv. IPS will provide a Postgraduate Student Handbook which contains the Rules and Regulations of Postgraduate Studies for Research, Coursework and Mixed Modes.
- v. IPS will provide a copy of the USM Code of Good Practice for Postgraduate Studies.
- vi. Schools/Centres will provide relevant information pertaining to academic matters of individual programmes.
- vii. Supervisors or Heads of Schools/Centres should make available to each research student information on applicable government and institutional guidelines for the conduct of research, including those covering ethical requirements for studies on human and animal subjects, requirements for confidentiality, and occupational health and safety matters.

2.4 Extension and Conversion of Candidature

- i. In circumstance such as long periods of illness or in the case of problems with laboratory equipment, a research student may require an extension to the maximum candidature. It is important that any such application is submitted at the earliest possible stage before the end of the maximum period, and not after it has expired.
- ii. Applications for an extension exceeding the maximum period of study must be submitted to the relevant Dean of School/Head of Centre to be endorsed by the Academic Council of the School/Centre. Request for a further extension which is supported with details justifying the extension and additional time required to ensure completion, must be endorsed by the Academic Council of the School/Centre and forwarded to the University Postgraduate Council, for approval.
- iii. Applications for conversion from Masters to PhD must be done within the first year of the Masters candidature period. Applications must be submitted to the Dean/Head of Department with and reviewed within 3 months by a Special Evaluation Committee. Approval for conversion must be endorsed by the Academic Council of the School/Centre and forwarded to the University Postgraduate Council, for approval.

SECTION 3: RESEARCH

3.1 Research Environment

- i. USM is committed towards ensuring a research environment that generate new or expand existing concepts, methodologies and understandings. Such environment must comprise research independence, central research management, sufficient resources and feasible infrastructure.
- ii. All parties involved in research activities and administration should have the independence to exercise their professionalism and conduct intellectual discourses in accordance with the highest standards of research practices.
- iii. Offices and sections of the university in charge of research such as the Research and Creativity Management Office (RCMO) and Institute of Postgraduate Studies (IPS) shall work together towards providing a central research management approach by integrating and facilitating processes that support postgraduate research training.
- iv. USM undertakes to ensure that postgraduate research is supported by adequate ergonomical space, maintained equipment, well-organised repository of databases and student centric amenities including for those with special needs.
- v. All parties, in particular the University, shall endeavor to provide and allocate reasonable funds for postgraduate research activities, where appropriate.
- vi. USM undertakes to ensure that postgraduate research it supports conforms to strict legal and ethical standards according to the best current practice.

3.2 Management of Research Data and Research Materials

- i. Researchers (both academic staff and postgraduate students) must ensure that all findings generated at the University must comply with copyright laws and standard ethical practices.
- ii. Researchers must ensure that all data which include in hard copy and electronic form be accurately documented and kept with proper reference to its storage.
- iii. Data must be kept within a reasonable timeframe to allow reference. A published set of data should be made available for reference as long as there is interest and discussion related to the area.
- iv. It is recommended that the School/Centre, to which the staff or students involved in the research are affiliated to, will be the repository for maintaining the original data resulting from the research. With regard to secondary data, only the location and key information regarding the database should be placed at the School/Centre.
- v. All parties involved in postgraduate research should ensure the confidentiality and protection of the research data.
- vi. Data presented for publication or examination can be made available for the intended purpose(s) when the need arises. It is strongly recommended that a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is notified to and filed with the School/Centre of the researchers where confidentiality provisions are necessary. This would apply in such instances where undertakings have been given to third parties (example research subjects) by the University or researchers prior to the research study.
- vii. Where research data is generated by a team of researchers, security and confidentiality protocols must be in place and are documented in such a way that they can cope with the implications to security and confidentiality in the event of departure of team members at any point of the research.

3.3 Usage of Research Findings through Publication and Dissemination

- i. USM shall endeavor to comply with the highest standard of codes and ethics of publication including the rules and regulations on plagiarism.
- ii. USM shall endeavor to disseminate and communicate research findings to other interested parties which include researchers and professionals from other organisations and to the wider community. Where research is published, reported or shared in the public domain, including in theses/dissertations, academic journals, multiple forms of media or forum, these should be accurate and reflective of the work done.
- iii. It is important that publications of research data should include identification of financial sponsors. USM does not encourage research that prohibits or restricts the publication or identification of the name of financial sponsors.
- iv. Due acknowledgement must be given to the University for all work published, reported or shared. This should also be extended to all parties involved in the research.

3.4 Authorship for Publication

- i. It is expected that all contributing members of the supervisory team shall be considered as part of this authorship. This includes those who make a substantial contribution in one or more of these areas
 - Conception of ideas or experimental design
 - Execution of the study
 - Analysis or interpretation of the data
 - Writing of the manuscript
- ii. Students should obtain consent from the supervisory team to publish, report or share any output from the research.
- iii. A mutual understanding among all authors of the publication should be reached to confer responsibility as a corresponding author and order of authorship. The corresponding author should bear full responsibility in coordinating the preparation, submission and corrections pertaining to the published work.
- iv. In general terms, authorship refers to substantial participation in the publication process, in relation to development, planning and execution of the research, data analysis and interpretation, drafting, reviewing and approval of article content for publication.
- v. All the authors are accountable for the accuracy and integrity of the published work.
- vi. Authors for research outputs in web-based repositories/databases must be clearly identified.
- vii. All parties who have contributed to the research but not amounting to authorships should be duly acknowledged in the publication. These include
 - Editing the paper
 - Providing funding, equipment or laboratory space
 - Contribution of labour and technical assistance for example in surveys
- viii. In the case when a thesis is published in its entirety, a student should retain sole authorship regardless of the input extended by the supervisor/supervisory team however, due acknowledgement must be given to all who provided intellectual input.

3.5 Intellectual Property

- i. All parties including students should follow and adhere to Rules and Regulations outlined in the University's Intellectual Property Policy.
- ii. The University should facilitate the inclusion of students as a team member of *Originator* as defined in the University's IP policy document.

3.6 Conflict of Interest

- i. A key aspect of responsible conduct of research is the disclosure to the University of any potential conflict that may arise during the course of the research. It is the responsibility of all parties involved in a research project to disclose to the University any affiliation and/or financial interest (for instance a stakeholder, directorship, consultancy) with any funding agency or non-funding entity that has vested interest in the research activities including disclosure of project data and any similar situation of conflict of interest.
- ii. Disclosure must be made at any time during the research and publication processes in which the situations of conflict of interest arise.

3.7 Misconduct in Research

USM upholds high standards of research practices and ethics. Therefore the following, but not limited thereto, are regarded as acts of misconduct in research and must be avoided:

- i. Fabrication of findings including the subsequent documenting and communicating of such data or results.
- ii. Acting in pursuance of an attempt to or actual falsification of data. This include acts of modifying or misreporting of data as well as manipulation of study materials, equipment and processes causing inaccurate and misleading representation in the documenting and reporting of the research. Recording and reporting of research refer to the documentation of findings purported to have emerged from the research. The documentation includes, but is not limited to research proposals, progress reports, abstracts, theses, oral presentations, internal reports, journal articles, and books.
- iii. Committing plagiarism by taking or using other person's thoughts, expressions, processes, findings, or language without acknowledging or by doing any act that constitute plagiarism according to the USM Policy on Plagiarism.
- iv. Ascribing authorship to research documentation in a misleading way.
- v. Failing to declare and avoid potential conflict of interest that is reasonable to foresee.
- vi. Falsifying and misrepresenting information with the intent to obtain research funding and disregarding ethical guidelines and norms for obtaining such funding.
- vii. Intentionally risking the safety and wellbeing of living subjects (human, animals and plants) or the environment.
- viii. Colluding to conceal and facilitate research misconduct by others.

SECTION 4: THESIS AND DISSERTATION

4.1 Introduction and Definitions

The good practices outlined in this Section apply to all USM postgraduate theses and dissertations. These are not intended as rigid rules that must be applied under all disciplines or circumstances, but rather as elaborative guides towards a timely and successful completion of a thesis or dissertation in various higher degree programmes.

At this University, a thesis represents a substantial piece of original research undertaken in fulfilment typically that of a doctoral or a research mode master's degree. In contrast, a dissertation usually features a smaller piece of research or a critical scholarly analysis of a specific topic, frequently in association with masters degree (by mixed and coursework modes, including professional masters degrees). In this Section, the general term "thesis" represents both, unless otherwise specified.

4.2 Understanding the Groundwork and Expectations

- i. A thesis provides training for students in the processes of deliberating significant and credible research and/or scholarly work in their fields that meet international standards, under the direction of a supervisor or supervisory team. The processes require the students to explore in-depth into focused areas or problems, whilst utilising and developing their analytical and thinking skills in expanding the existing scholarship.
- ii. Students should acquaint themselves, soon after their enrolment and before advancing into their research and/or scholarly work, with the regulations and information regarding University thesis requirements, general thesis formatting and thesis processes which are accessible at the Institute of Postgraduate Studies (IPS) (www.ips.usm.my).
- iii. As part of continuing efforts to improve thesis processing, University may from time to time introduce changes with regards to this process. Any such change should be effectively and promptly communicated, particularly to the students.
- iv. It is expected that all Postgraduate Programmes afford students with a Programme Handbook that elaborates on what to expect at all stages of their graduate study in the respective programme, including that of the thesis stage to gauge the standards expected of the relevant degree.
- v. USM actively seeks to fulfill its obligation to the public funding it receives as a higher education institute by targeting acceptable rates of thesis completion and on time graduation. In this regard, students-supervisors cooperation is the most crucial to ward off University and its future students from being adversely affected by unsatisfactory performance in these areas.

4.3 Responsibility for the Thesis/Dissertation

- i. The responsibility for the thesis ultimately rests with the students; be it a success or failure. This covers the responsibilities to produce a written piece of high academic standards, partly through constructive discussion and inputs from their supervisors, to incorporate and ensure a thesis that is produced with scholarly integrity, good research practices and vigilant of any plagiarism acts.
- ii. This responsibility is also extended to include completion of thesis processing forms and attend to any related fees, to observe and meet relevant deadlines for a timely final thesis submission, and to obtain relevant authorising signatories.
- iii. Students should initiate early plans and lend adequate efforts to ensure that all the requirements for the thesis are fully met before the final submission. It should be emphasised that once final approval has been endorsed by the University for the arrangement of thesis examination stage, any amendment to the thesis are no longer permitted.
- iv. Although the main supervisor bears responsibilities to exercise supportive roles in assessing and guiding matters relating to student's thesis, they should refrain from making a categorical or pre-examination judgment on the thesis outcome, particularly on its worthiness of passing when formally assessed by the Examiners. It is emphasised that the liberty to accept or reject supervisors' opinions on matters to do with the thesis rests with the students who shall bear the ultimate responsibility for it.

4.4 Initiation Stage of Thesis/Dissertation Work

- i. At this stage, the outline of the research and/or scholarly work should be realistically drafted by the students and their supervisors for the period of candidature, including all required coursework or related modules in the study programme for a timely completion.
- ii. Students should attend workshops organised within the University on responsible conduct and ethics of research (including research involving human and animal subjects) and exercise as well as demonstrate sound understanding of these good research practices.
- iii. Students should be familiar with the use of relevant and appropriate literature from authoritative sources as well as the citation styles common to the publication works in the field, including the use of citation manager software.
- iv. The process of thesis writing may differ between disciplines for the various higher degree programmes at this University. Main supervisors should initiate discussions with their students on the process of thesis writing, agreeing upon the time plan and work arrangements, as well as efforts to produce satisfactory level of competency in academic writing. Students should attend workshops on academic writing regularly organised by the IPS.

4.5 Research Stage of Thesis/Dissertation Work

- i. Throughout this stage where research or scholarly undertaking occupies most of the student's time, this is anticipated to pose the biggest challenge for the student to make a timely progress on thesis writing. Both supervisor(s) and student should meet as regular as possible, although the frequency of such encounter may vary by discipline and/or expectations for progress.
- ii. Students and their main supervisors should refer to the agreed time plan and work arrangements on a regular basis in order to streamline delivery of specific thesis chapter(s)

and to ensure the time plan is being appropriately observed. Both parties should allow some flexibility to the time plan or consider revising the schedule if the projected progress is likely to be interrupted.

- iii. Supervisors should periodically lay out the progress of thesis to the students. This should be done according to the previously agreed outline of the thesis chapter(s), and should be set with realistic completion date(s) for the different chapter(s) to match the progress of research or scholarly work. This will facilitate those with motivation and/or procrastination issues, and will keep everyone on track.
- iv. Supervisors must give prompt and substantial feedback to the work submitted by the students. Such feedback may encompass a more detailed guidance on literature review, methodology descriptions, flow and logical coherence of the thesis outline, as well as general issues of support and encouragement. For these purposes, it is recommended that supervisors adopt a structured rubric for feedback when dealing with student's thesis progress. **(See Appendix 2)**
- v. This structured rubric for thesis feedback may serve as guides to both parties should significant doubts are raised at a later stage about the quality of the thesis. Supervisors are advised to raise their concerns and criticisms in writing to the students, supported by the documented feedbacks recorded from the rubric. However, students should take note that supervisor's criticisms may or may not be at variance from that of the Examiners.
- vi. Students should be honest about the progress and should not hesitate to seek guidance as required. Supervisors should also be transparent on reporting the student's progress, and to indicate so if progress has been inadequate on the feedback reporting. If progress remains poor and becomes unacceptable in relation to the agreed/revised time plan, discussion should be directed towards candidature termination provided that all remedial steps had become exhausted.
- vii. The above recorded observations (i to vi) must be reflected in the Supervisor's semester progress report.

4.6 Review Stage of Thesis/Dissertation Original Work

- i. Frequent and early guides for the students in their thesis preparation process will promote the incorporation of good practices of scholarly writing in their respective discipline as well as the use and proper documentation of literature sources. The use of plagiarism detection tools as outlined in the USM Plagiarism Policy is part of this guiding effort.
- ii. USM requires all students submitting a thesis as part of their postgraduate degree requirements to first screen their thesis electronic draft documents through plagiarism detection tools, prior to final submission. The key rationale of this measure is to weigh on the originality of the submitted thesis work and to aid objective amendment(s) based on the plagiarism detection tool reports with the students.
- iii. Supervisors should provide consistent and clear expectations to their students on the standards and quality expected from the thesis in their respective discipline and to demonstrate that the standards are being adhered to in light of the plagiarism detection tool reports.
- iv. Students should also be made aware of the possible consequences arising from any acts of plagiarism and should acquaint themselves with the University policy on such matters.

Supervisors should become familiar on the how best to deal with a possible occurrence of plagiarism in the student's thesis work.

- v. Both parties, should be trained on the basics about plagiarism and their detection and the use of relevant software as outlined in the University Plagiarism Policy.

4.7 Final Submission Stage of Thesis/Dissertation

- i. Supervisors should emphasise to the students the requirements to state on the appropriate IPS form the intention to submit, and to conform to the standards and guidelines approved by USM on the thesis length, format, binding and repository details, specific to their respective field or discipline.
- ii. Supervisors should assist students to aim to submit their thesis, ideally no later than three months into their last remaining prescribed period of candidature, be it full- or part-time registration. Students must discuss this intention to submit the thesis with their supervisor.
- iii. Students should be aware that the process of the appointment of examiners may take some time, and is similarly the case for thesis examination as a whole. Although USM anticipates a two-month time window for the examiners to spend evaluating the submitted thesis, students should be reminded of the examiners' other commitments.
- iv. Supervisors of any overseas students should be reminded of the students' specific visa restrictions, and both parties must factor this in when planning for thesis submission.
- v. A Student Checklist for thesis processes for the higher degrees should be distributed to all students soon after registering for their final year of candidature. **(See Appendix 3)**

SECTION 5: SUPERVISION

5.1 Supervision

5.1.1 Appointment of Supervisor

- i. In principle, team supervision is highly recommended to ensure that high qualities of supervision are upheld. The supervisory team should comprise at least one member of the School/Centre Council, who will be the Main Supervisor, Co-Supervisor(s) and/or Field Supervisor(s). The appointment of a Co-Supervisor and/or Field Supervisor can be extended to include experts external to the University.
- ii. The Main Supervisor who is a member of a USM Academic School/Centre Council holds primary accountability for the student.
- iii. In ensuring good practices in supervision, the School/Centre Selection Committee should consider availability and fair distribution of supervision time in the context of Main Supervisor – Supervisee ratio. This is pertinent when it involves sole supervision.
- iv. In cases where the Main Supervisor lacks supervisory experience and/or does not have an academic qualification equivalent to the degree being supervised or is an Early Career Academic, the School/Centre should ensure the appointment of a supervisory team comprising at least a senior School/Centre Council member who holds a degree equivalent to or higher than the degree desired by the candidate.
- v. The area of research and/or expertise of the Main Supervisor should be related to the field of research or scholarly work of the student. If the work transcends different disciplines, the supervisory team should include experts in related fields.
- vi. To nominate a Main Supervisor, consideration will be given to the number and progress of candidates currently being supervised by the Academic staff, the experience, teaching or administrative commitments as well plans with respect to leaves.
- vii. The Main Supervisor's tenure at the University should not be less than the minimum time allowed for the completion of the degree.
- viii. Should the case be that the Main Supervisor's tenure will expire before the minimum period of study for the research degree, a Co-Supervisor who possesses related experience or expertise in the field of research and, is an academic staff under tenure will take up appointment before expiration of the main supervisor's tenure.
- ix. A student may nominate a Main Supervisor who has been approved by the Council of the School/Centre. Should the supervisor be rejected by the Council, the student may appeal.
- x. In cases where certain other relevant experience or expertise is needed or where research needs to be conducted at a distant site, a field supervisor may be appointed by the School/Centre Council as part of the supervisory team, but with no financial implications. It is the responsibility of the supervisory team through its academic members to monitor the fieldwork.
- xi. The School/Centre Selection Committee is responsible for the selection of the appropriate supervisor and/or the supervisory team using funding, facilities, resources (laboratory/studio/clinical facilities, and space) and expertise to support the research, as criteria for decision.

- xii. Should a conflict of interest arise prior, during, or at any stage of the supervision (for example, a potential threat to research integrity or involving a non-academic relationship), the Academic staff or supervisor should either decline or withdraw from his/her supervisory role.

5.1.2 Expertise, Qualification and Experience

- i. The School/Centre Council strives to appoint only appropriately qualified members of academic staff as members of the supervisory team.
- ii. Where appropriate, all newly appointed academic staff will be asked to attend formal supervision training. Existing academic staff members are expected to stay abreast with current development in supervision.
- iii. Members of the supervisory team will normally have equivalent qualification or qualification higher than the degree for which the candidate is being supervised. If not all members of the team have such qualification, at least one of them should.
- iv. Only an academic staff of USM can be a Main Supervisor. He/she should possess a qualification that is in a related field to that being undertaken by the student.
- v. Under normal circumstances, the Main Supervisor will be an academic member who possesses a practicing research record and previous supervisory experience.

5.1.3 Work Load of Supervisor and Commitment

- i. The School/Centre will give due consideration to an Academic staff's existing teaching, administrative, and research commitment prior to assigning new supervisees to him/her.
- ii. The School/Centre will strive to ensure that supervisors can effectively supervise the postgraduate students under their supervision. A supervisor shall act as Main Supervisor to a reasonable number of students. As a guided recommendation, the UK QAA suggests eight full-time doctoral students at any one time as main supervisor.

5.1.4 Changing Supervisor

- i. A request for change of supervisor will only be entertained in the extraordinary case of a serious conflict or a major disagreement between supervisor and student or owing to certain unsatisfactory situations that may have arisen. Such a change will only be allowed after discussions with all parties concerned and if found that the conflict cannot be settled easily or the situation cannot be improved.
- ii. The request for change in supervisor can come from either the supervisor or the candidate. Situations, which may be reasons for the request, include a long period of absence of the supervisor or student, an increase in the workload or commitment of the supervisor, differences in personality of the two parties, and changes in research.
- iii. It should be stressed that both parties must have made an attempt to discuss the circumstance that is challenging the research supervision process. Changes must be agreed upon by School/Centre's Council.
- iv. A request for change in supervisor would be considered if it were submitted reasonably early in the student's candidature and/or the research process. If the request is made

late, towards the end of the research study period, the request is unlikely to be considered.

5.1.5 Absence of Supervisor

- i. In all cases of protracted absence of beyond 3 months, such as research/sabbatical leave, unforeseen circumstances, where possible, the supervisor or the supervisory team will be expected to maintain the continuity of supervision. If this is not possible, the School/Centre must plan in advance to put in place other suitable arrangements.
- ii. The Main Supervisor who retires from employment or whose status has changed to that of only an honorary member of the School staff, may still continue to supervise if he/she so wishes as one of the Co-Supervisors in the supervisory team. A new Main Supervisor needs to be appointed to take on the responsibilities upon the retirement of the existing Main Supervisor. The student should be consulted prior to the decision.
- iii. In cases where the Main Supervisor ceases to become an Academic staff of USM for whatever reason, the School/Centre should take early measures to appoint a new Main Supervisor.

5.2 Monitoring Exercise

5.2.1 Progress Monitoring

- i. USM places importance on the submission of a thesis within the stipulated time. The supervisor or supervisory team and the student are expected to strive for timely completion. USM through its Institute of Postgraduate Studies and the School/Centre concerned will, together, ensure that an efficient monitoring process is put in place.
- ii. The efficiency of the research process rests on the understanding between the supervisor and his/her student with respect to how work should progress. In addition to guidance on research, the supervisor has a duty to monitor his/her supervisee. The supervisee, in turn, is expected to keep to the schedule of work agreed upon with the supervisor or supervisory team at the outset of the period of study. Both parties are expected to work together to achieve quality research within a reasonable period.

5.2.2 Research Proposal

- i. To ensure timely completion of thesis, students are required to present their research proposals within the time frame stipulated by their Schools/Centres. As a guide, full-time Masters and PhD candidates should present their proposals within twelve months. The time frame is doubled for part-time candidacy.
- ii. The research proposal is expected to reflect a solid written conceptualisation of the research being attempted. Hence, its evaluation will depend heavily on the student's academic writing skill and their oral communication skill to present and defend their proposal. If the student is found to be lacking in these skills, the supervisor should advise the student to take necessary remedial steps.

5.2.3 Progress Report

- i. For Research Mode Programmes, both the Main Supervisor and the Supervisee must, before the end of a semester, complete a report of progress to enable the student to renew their registration for the following semester. Comparable reporting mechanisms should be implemented for other modes of study. This is to ensure continued progress and timely graduation.
- ii. For all modes of study, the Progress Report should contain the following information:
 - a. Start and End Dates – with an update if the expected end date has changed;
 - b. Overall project status;
 - c. Overall percentage of completion;
 - d. Comments on the project's progress;
 - Milestones achieved since last report;
 - Upcoming milestones;
 - Any unresolved technical/study issues; and
 - Assistance required or decisions made by supervisor or school on an unresolved issue.
 - e. Non-academic issues affecting progress
- iii. Progress reports, once submitted, are accessible by the student who may also comment on them. Supervisors should evaluate the student's progress constructively and honestly. Students, on the other hand, should attempt to understand and accept positive criticism and bring any concerns they may have with it back to their supervisor for further discussion.
- iv. Schools/Centres which have additional in-house requirements for reporting progress should inform students of this arrangement in advance about who are expected to organise their work accordingly.
- v. The supervisor-supervisee reports should be made after an informed deliberation between them.
- vi. The progress report from the supervisor is expected to be made in a transparent manner, reflecting an honest and constructive appraisal and highlighting salient points.
- vii. The School/Centre Postgraduate Committee will review the submitted progress reports, in confidentiality, and institute appropriate measures if deemed necessary. The outcome of the review may be presented to the School/Centre Council every semester.
- viii. Disclosure of information regarding any student's progress, or supervisor-student relationship, if necessary, should be done discretely and only to relevant parties.

5.2.4 Managing Unsatisfactory Progress

- i. Whilst the supervisor is responsible for appraising progress and determining if it is unsatisfactory, the student is responsible for determining the obstacles that hinder his/her progress.
- ii. Upon detection of unsatisfactory progress through the semester monitoring process, the student should be informed and areas for improvement identified in consultation with the appropriate authority School/Centre.
- iii. In the case of Research Mode students, the Main Supervisor should monitor the steps taken to rectify the slow progress of research. If progress remains unsatisfactory, the

student and the School/Centre Postgraduate Committee should be informed for possible termination of candidature.

- iv. In cases where the student has suffered a health problem or some other personal problems, the student is advised to consider deferment of study and the situation of the student should be closely reviewed by the supervisor. A credible report/evidence such as a certified medical certificate should be kept for future reference.

5.2.5 Supervisor-Student Interaction

- i. The interaction between the supervisor-supervisee contributes the most to the completion of a research degree successfully. In short, it is essential that there is continuity in supervision to achieve the completion of research.
- ii. It is expected that the supervisor clarifies the supervisory role and relationship for the student and discusses the best work arrangement with the latter before the research commences.
- iii. The frequency of meetings between the supervisor and student will be determined by mutual agreement based on the nature of the research activities and type of candidacy. It is recommended that meetings be more frequent in the early stages of the supervisory process and at least once a month thereafter.
- iv. Meetings scheduled between the two parties and substantive outcomes should be recorded. This record should preferably be kept by the supervisory team. The student is to be responsible for this documentation which needs the supervisor(s) verification by signing.
- v. This record can be made accessible to the School/Centre Postgraduate Committee to enable the School/Centre to get a holistic view of the student's progress and ensure that meetings occur regularly.
- vi. The role of the Committee, however, should not supersede the professional accord between supervisor and student with respect to the work arrangement and the whole research process.

5.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Supervisor and Supervisory Team

Supervisors and supervisory teams must report their students' research progress, be it satisfactory or unsatisfactory, to the Dean of the School/Centre.

5.3.1 General Responsibilities

The Main Supervisor

- i. Facilitates appropriate access to the supervisory team and any other relevant member of staff deemed necessary for successful completion of the study.
- ii. Ensures the student participates in programmes conducted by the School or University to implement the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Students and regulations.
- iii. Ensures adequate resources and equipment for the student for research purposes are available at the School/Centre and facilitate access to other facilities as required.
- iv. Advises/suggests to the School/Centre, qualified examiners for his/her student's thesis

- v. Ensures that co-supervisors are actively involved in the supervision process so that they are able to take over primary supervision duties either temporarily or permanently (if appropriate) when the Main Supervisor is unavailable;
- vi. The supervisor should create a conducive learning environment that protects the student's individuality, safety, and sense of comfort and belonging.
- vii. Discuss and co-sign the student supervisor agreement with his/her student confirming understanding the roles and responsibilities stipulated in this Code of Good Practice before time exceeds 3 months.

The Co-Supervisor

- i. Takes over temporarily the role of the Main Supervisor should the latter be absent for an extended period or is found to suffer from a long-term health problem or passes away. The Co-Supervisor should also step in should the relationship between the Main Supervisor suffer a breakdown in the research process.
- ii. Assists in finding a replacement for the Main Supervisor should any of the circumstances in (i) arise. It is not expected or required that the Co-Supervisor becomes the Main Supervisor unless the former is found to be suitable academically to replace the Main Supervisor.

5.3.2 Guidance on Research Project

- i. Makes clear to a candidate that the degree is awarded only for original work.
- ii. Gives guidelines with respect to the type of research that can be conducted, the quality and standard that should be achieved, the organization of research required, the research techniques and methods required, legislation pertaining to health and safety (that would ensure students receive proper instructions and have access to appropriate training) and matters of ethics that may be necessary for the conduct of the research.
- iii. Vouches for the suitability and scope of research proposed for the degree sought, taking into account funding, availability of resources, the timeline set by the University for a student to complete and submit the thesis, and the student's prior academic experience and qualification, and research inclination.
- iv. Helps the student to draw up a plan for conducting research, direct his/her focus to the essential aspects of research, and achieve a positive development in research through proper scheduling of work right from the start of the research.
- v. Advises the student on relevant literature, methodology and policies of the University with respect to academic integrity and convention, for example, the issue of plagiarism.
- vi. Advises on ethical and safety implications of work and facilitate for approval of relevant Ethics Committees, both at University and external bodies.
- vii. Clarifies to the student at the outset all matters regarding ownership of Intellectual Property Rights of the research.

5.3.3 Progress Review of Research

- i. Provides specific advice and guidance to ensure acceptable progress at successive stages of the work for a timely completion.
- ii. Highlights any inadequacy of progress and unsatisfactory standard of work to the students and recommends necessary action to rectify these situations.
- iii. Monitors and submits progress reports in a timely manner through the Campus Online Portal every semester or other alternative reporting mechanisms. Supervision reports will be considered by the University in the review and evaluation of any examination of which the result has been challenged or disputed, should such as a case arises.

5.3.4 Skills Development and Training

- i. Works with other parties in the university through various training programmes to enhance students' transferable skills;
- ii. Familiarize themselves with the Personal and Professional Development Programme workshops and courses provided by the Institute of Postgraduate Studies, to determine the students' training needs; and
- iii. Advises on general interpersonal and professional development skills from other sources.

5.3.5 Interaction with Student

- i. Inculcates the elements of trust, mutual respect, a non-confrontational attitude and honesty, and responsiveness to ideas in the interaction with students;
- ii. Respects the student's right to privacy as long as it does not interfere with the research progress;
- iii. Appreciates and understands a student's work habits, learning styles and individual differences;
- iv. Progressively develops the student's competence and problem solving skills through a conducive and non-confrontational approach;
- v. Establishes an effective means of communication, frequency and timing of meetings with the student;
- vi. Responds immediately and as necessary to the student's request for a meeting and for feedback on his/her work at intervals in the period of candidature;
- vii. Provides support and empathetic help to the student who may be facing a health problem or problem of a personal nature that may cause delay to his/her work, thereby making it unlikely for the student to meet the standard for the degree sought as early as possible during the candidature period;
- viii. Advises on the dissemination and publication of research through journals and conferences;
- ix. Seeks feedback from the Student on potential thesis/dissertation examiners;
- x. Cooperates with Co-Supervisors and the rest of the supervisory team consistently throughout students candidature;

- xi. Ceases to assume any supervisory role in the event of the development of a personal relationship with the student;
- xii. For the development of a profitable intellectual relationship, supervisors are responsible for setting in place the mechanism for which the relationship progresses through three phases - Infancy Phase, Maturity Phase and Completion Phase – as below.
 - a. Infancy Phase: where the rules of the relationship are made known, negotiated and agreed upon by the two parties, where an effective collaboration is outlined, where additional external teaching assistance is sought and selected, where competencies are nurtured, and where obvious or potential problems are anticipated and solutions planned;
 - b. Maturity phase: where both parties can reflect their individuality yet relate to each other as partners in the research process, where bonding socially is liberated, where the parties become less bound to their roles and more free to go with the dynamics of research, where the student becomes better equipped with the skill to conceptualize his/her research, and where the student's confidence gains strength;
 - c. Completion phase: where the understanding of how theory relates to practice is substantially achieved, where the student can find his/her own way comfortably without much help from the supervisor, where the anticipated completion of the research is evaluated comprehensively through honest and open discussions between supervisor and student relating to their perceptions of and feelings towards the research product, and goals they may have of the future of this research product.

5.3.6 Submission of Thesis and Examination Process

- i. Ensures that the student submits a pro-forma stating his/her intention to submit the thesis to the Institute of Postgraduate Studies at least three months before he/she plans to submit the completed thesis for examination.
- ii. Shall not participate in any formal examination for the degree.

5.3.7 Constructive Guidance and Feedback

- i. Ensures that the best interest of the student is the main priority when giving feedback and constructive guidance.
- ii. Be mindful of potential research related difficulties, risks and uncertainties and provide the necessary guidance to mitigate the situation. If appropriate, the supervisor may seek advice from the Deputy Dean/Deputy Director Research and Postgraduate Studies.
- iii. Provides constructive comments and feedback within a reasonable time for submitted work such as technical reports and manuscripts.
- iv. Reads and comments on draft chapters in a timely manner in order to enable the student to make necessary amendments to his/her writings.
- v. Ensures the student knows the appropriate techniques for gathering data and analyzing, and the ways to achieve required skill and standard of work.

5.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Students

5.4.1 Preparation for Postgraduate Studies

- i. It is important for a potential student to understand the intricacies and processes involved in a postgraduate study to ensure a smooth and timely degree completion.
- ii. As preparation to undertake the degree, the individual should read some literature about conducting research in general. This is especially pertinent if he/she has not been exposed to the processes of conducting research.
- iii. The individual should be familiar with the research interests of academic staff within their discipline and talk to several prospective supervisors about their research interests, possible research topics, their styles of supervision and their expectations of supervisees.

5.4.2 Rules and Regulations

Students are expected to

- i. be responsible for all his/her research activity and to ensure his/her candidacy for the degree desired is sustained;
- ii. be familiar, right from the outset, with all Regulations relevant to their study and the Code of Postgraduate Practice and its provisions.
- iii. make certain, right from the beginning, that their research is conducted in the proper manner expected of good research practice and likewise with the presentation of the research findings;
- iv. be in the know of their responsibilities as stipulated in the Health and Safety at Work Act, if appropriate.
- v. discuss and co-sign the Student/Supervisor Agreement with their supervisor(s) confirming understanding of roles and responsibilities stipulated in this Code of Good Postgraduate Practice before time exceeds three months from the date of registration (see **Appendix 4**);
- vi. pay fees and other relevant bills, for example, accommodation fees in a timely manner;
- vii. abide by any requirement pertaining to matters of ethics in conduct, and matters of collection, retention and disclosure of data;
- viii. comprehend and comply with guidelines relating to infringement of privacy, protection of intellectual rights and property, and procedures for occupational health and safety, and with University legislation that is relevant with such legislation as including regulations, rules and policies;

5.4.3 Interaction with Supervisor

The student should

- i. observe the elements of trust, mutual respect, non-confrontational and honesty, and responsiveness to comments in the interaction with the supervisors.
- ii. keep a record of supervisor consultation meetings that have been validated by the relevant supervisory team member.
- iii. seek the help of the supervisor to explain the guidance that he/she needs, and ensure that throughout the research period, he/she regularly meets the supervisor to discuss the research. Ideally contact should be maintained through meetings that are set after every meeting with the supervisor(s). However, where physical presence at the School/Centre is not necessary or appropriate, contact must be maintained via telephone or email.
- iv. agree upon a timetable of meetings and/or contact at the start of the research project. The frequency can be amended throughout the course of the research project, but agreement has to be reached between both parties before any changes are made.
- v. Inform the supervisor of changes, whether of a personal nature or of other circumstances, that might hinder the work progress.
- vi. take the initiative to alert the supervisor promptly of any problems or difficulties encountered.
- vii. keep track of the progress of work after consultation with the supervisor; the progress entails early submission of work to the supervisor to enable the supervisor to provide comments and feedback for amendment of the draft before the student moves to another stage of his/her research.
- viii. feel free to consult any lecturer other than those in his/ her supervisory team for additional guidance.
- ix. prepare proposals, submissions and presentations relating to the research project as required after discussions with the supervisor.
- x. ask to change supervisor or to have another assessment arrangement should the student realize that a personal relationship has developed between the student and the supervisor.

5.4.4 Progress Review

- i. Because the research and the thesis belong to the student, he/she should be responsible for the progress of his/her work in the quest and training to become independent researchers.
- ii. The student is expected to read widely on the subject to master the research project well and to be very familiar with the steps involved in research
- iii. The University requires that the student complete and submit at the closing of each semester a report of their Progress.
- iv. The student should access the end of semester progress report by his/her Supervisor and attend to the issues raised in the report with the Supervisor.

5.4.5 Training and Development

- i. All postgraduate students should undertake appropriate training and/or attend courses which will enhance their research capacity, writing skills and language proficiency.
- ii. Students should do a training needs analysis in consultation with the supervisor and identify the relevant courses to take for their personal and professional development.
- iii. Participation in school events including research seminars and any other related events is encouraged as part of training and development but not at the expense of their research progress.

5.4.6 Research Outcomes and Submission of Thesis

- i. Students are expected to disseminate widely their research findings through publications in reputable journals and other scholarly platforms
- ii. Students should be made aware that, unless otherwise specified, all data collected and research outcomes during their candidature period at this university as well as the Intellectual Property Rights arising from a student's research work belongs to USM.
- iii. Students should familiarise themselves with the University procedures for thesis submission.
- iv. Upon completion of their research, students should take responsibility for a timely submission of their theses. One best practice would be the joint agreement of the Main Supervisor and student with respect to the readiness of the thesis to be submitted.
- v. It is expected that students acknowledge the nature of all contributions made by other individuals/parties pertaining to their research in their thesis and publications where appropriate.
- vi. Students should understand and comply with the USM Plagiarism Policy in order to avoid acts of plagiarism and academic dishonesty in all their publications and thesis.

5.4.7 Periods of Absence and Vacation

Students should

- i. obtain the permission of his/her Main Supervisor prior to any periods of absence or vacation planned.
- ii. upon approval by the Supervisor, obtain further permission from the Institute of Postgraduate Studies and the Vice-Chancellor for overseas research or protracted leave of absence.
- iii. inform his/her Main Supervisor promptly if research progress is impeded due to ill health or other grave cause.
- iv. inform the Main Supervisor any intention and decision to withdraw their candidature from the University.

5.5 Mutual Expectations

5.5.1 Postgraduate and School/Centre

Supervision at USM will imply resolving issues of responsibilities as well as rights relating to the matters below.

- i. Deciding on the research topic;
- ii. Clarifying the issues to be research;
- iii. Setting the theoretical framework;
- iv. Preparing for presentation of the proposal for research, for instance, helping to arrange the oral presentation;
- v. Introducing students to the school and university's infrastructure and services available to them;
- vi. Getting access to literature for thesis writing;
- vii. Assisting students to read critically to extract relevant information or knowledge for thesis writing;
- viii. Helping to source for funding;
- ix. Initiating students into networking;
- x. Encouraging participation at conferences and publication of their work;
- xi. Outlining a research schedule;
- xii. Making sure that the schedule is observed by the student;
- xiii. Coaching the student on good writing for thesis;
- xiv. Making sure that the thesis meets a certain quality and standard;
- xv. Preparing the student to defend his/her thesis at the viva voce; and
- xvi. Offering, where possible and as much as possible, non-academic support, in addition to emotional or social support.

5.6 General Issues

5.6.1 Supervisor Expectations of Students

Supervisors may have certain expectations of their students. They may expect their students to

- i. articulate their research idea
- ii. have the ability to work independently, without constant push from the supervisor
- iii. be conscientious and persistent in their work
- iv. be committed to meetings as scheduled
- v. take notes as necessary in the meetings
- vi. reflect on the supervisor's comments and make necessary correction to their drafts
- vii. be cautious of time and ensure work is completed as scheduled;
- viii. be fully responsible for all of their work
- ix. work well on their own
- x. have command of the language used for research; and

- xi. provide intellectual input and acknowledge their supervisors who are not authors in subsequent publications
- xii. be capable of editing or proofreading their own work or seek outside help with it, if this proves to be necessary.

5.6.2 Student Expectations of Supervisors

Students may also have certain expectations of their supervisors. They may expect supervisors to

- i. be readily available when there is a need
- ii. be punctual for supervisory meetings
- iii. facilitate supervision meetings that enable exchange of ideas
- iv. read drafts before supervisory meetings
- v. provide constructive feedback
- vi. have a clear understanding of the research area
- vii. show passion for sharing their research knowledge with the student
- viii. be collegial, open-minded and supportive
- ix. provide assistance to help the student secure a job, if this is necessary

SECTION 6: EXAMINATION

6.1 Principle

- i. This section should be read and understood in conjunction with the University Academic Calendar and Rules and Regulations for information about postgraduate assessment processes.
- ii. USM validates the completion of postgraduate education through the process of an examination. The university practices established methods of assessment deemed appropriate to the varied nature and requirements of postgraduate programmes.
- iii. USM is committed towards ensuring quality assessment through a comprehensive examination process to uphold a high standard of research and academic standing. All parties involved in this process are expected to observe good examination practices.
- iv. In this section 'thesis' is used to broadly refer to Master thesis or Doctoral dissertations. All other forms of academic work (for example theoretical assessment, clinical assessment, experiments, and reports) in the course of postgraduate education are referred to as 'academic work'.
- v. The principle governing postgraduate conferment is that all thesis and academic work leading towards degree conferment is the student's original work. The student and his/her main supervisor must establish the student's and supervisor's responsibilities (including ethical conduct) in relation to the student's written submissions during the early stage in the candidature. The responsibilities must be in accord with relevant University guidelines including the nature of guidance or feedback all supervisors will offer and expectations on the student regarding progression, and thesis matters.
- vi. USM will provide periodic guidance/training on formatting, structuring and writing a thesis or dissertation through IPS. All students are recommended to familiarise themselves with the expectations placed upon them as regards thesis completion and undertake relevant training through joint-identification in the Training Needs Analysis Form issued by IPS
- vii. USM, through schools, centres or the IPS; will provide or promote available guidance on the administrative process for submission and examination. This includes information on thesis development, timescales and procedures for submission, and the examination protocol.

6.2 Thesis Submission

- i. All parties involved must work towards ensuring that a student's thesis is submitted within the candidature period.
- ii. The latest version of the USM [*Guide to the preparation submission and examination of thesis*](#) should be available in the USM IPS website.
- iii. USM recommends mutual decision between the supervisor and supervisee in the submission of the latter's thesis. However, the decision to submit ultimately rests with the supervisee with or without the approval of the supervisor.
- iv. In the event that the supervisor does not support the submission he/she will formally indicate in the *Notice for Thesis Submission form*. This information will not be disclosed to the examiners at any point of the examination process (including *viva voce*) but may be used in the event of an appeal related to the outcome of the examination.
- v. The *Notice of Thesis Submission form* must be sent to IPS 3 months prior to thesis submission depending on the nature of thesis submission.
- vi. Once the *Notice of Thesis Submission* has been received by the School/Centre, appropriate examiners must be appointed and arrangements made for the examination within 3 months. The examination including the *viva voce* should be completed within 3 months after the thesis is submitted.

6.3 Appointment of Thesis Examiners

- i. The supervisory team and candidate may recommend relevant individuals to be appointed as thesis examiners. However, to ensure impartiality, transparency and quality assurance in the examination process, these recommendations may not be adopted and should be approved by the School/Centre Board through the School/Centre Postgraduate Committee..
- ii. The individuals recommended should have knowledge, experience, and skills related to the candidate's area of research. Thesis examiners should have complementary areas of expertise relevant to the work under examination.
- iii. The School/Centre Postgraduate Committee and subsequently the School/Centre Board shall
 - a. Ensure the suitability and ability of examiners by considering their degree qualification, research experience in the related area, postgraduate supervision, previous experience as examiner and publication.
 - b. Ensure that the examiners have complementary expertise in all aspects covered in the thesis.
 - c. Be mindful of potential conflict of interest of the approved examiners with either student or supervisor in regard to degree of closeness for example joint publications between the parties, involved as research collaborators, in a personal relationship or immediate family members.
 - d. Make the final decision regarding appointment of thesis examiners.
 - e. Ensure the process of viva voce is chaired professionally.
- iv. All examiners are jointly responsible and have equal role in academic assessment of the thesis and *viva voce*.
- v. USM expects examiners to decline their nominations should there be any conflict of interest. Conflict of interest includes but is not limited to, co-authors in previous research publication, individuals who have provided intellectual input in the student's research on a continued basis, relatives by blood, marriage or any other ties.
- vi. Examiners are expected to exercise highest standards of professionalism and due impartiality, leading to the conclusion of the examination process.
- vii. External examiners should not have a significant connection with USM or the candidate.

6.4 Thesis Examination

- i. USM explains the relevant taught and oral examination process through IPS. Nonetheless, all schools and centres offering postgraduate studies should make examination criteria clearly available to candidates.
- ii. For the purpose of timely graduation, candidates must complete all elements and minimum standards of assessed work for each course. In submitting written or physical work, candidates must abide with USM's policy on plagiarism.
- iii. When new or approved changes to the examination format is made, candidates must be given due notice.
- iv. Any student who requires specific examination arrangements due to illness, death in the family or any other unforeseen circumstances, should contact the Main Supervisor so that reasonable adjustments can be made. Applications for specific exam arrangements not due to an emergency should normally be made no later than two weeks before the date of the candidate's examination.
- v. Any mitigating circumstances in the period preceding or during the examination that may have adversely affected a student's attendance at, or performance must be communicated in writing to the IPS with all relevant supporting documentation, such as medical certificates, not later than seven days after the exam.

- vi. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that all preparations are made before the examination and that all relevant documents (if required) are accounted for during the examination.
- vii. The examination panel should be provided with a copy of the USM Guide to Thesis Examination and Viva voce process together with a copy of the thesis.
- viii. Prior to the viva voce the examiners are required to assess the thesis independently and to prepare written reports on it. Assessment of the thesis should be based on what may reasonably be expected of a candidate after completion of the prescribed period of research.

6.5 *Viva Voce*

- i. Supervisors should provide their students with general information about the expectations and processes during the viva. This includes a mock viva, the process, attendance, the duration, and format.
- ii. Examiners should be advised by IPS that the *viva voce* should normally take place within 3 months of their receipt of the thesis.
- iii. The candidate should be given at least 1 week notice of the date and venue of the viva voce.
- iv. The supervisory team should be available prior to and following the viva voce to offer advice and support.
- v. A candidate who intends to leave USM on a specified date, for example to return home, should ensure that a reasonable amount of time is available after the viva in case it is necessary to consult the supervisory team on any revisions or amendments to the thesis.
- vi. The main supervisor will play no part in the *viva voce* and must not be involved in the decision making of the thesis.
- vii. The guide for *viva voce* and submission of final thesis copies is found as a downloadable document in the IPS website: *Guide to the preparation submission and examination of thesis*.
- viii. The Chairperson should
 - a. Be familiar with the rule and regulations for the examination of a thesis and in the conduct of a *Viva voce*
 - b. oversee and moderate the examination and viva voce process.
 - c. ensure that the examination process is fair, rigorous, consistent, reliable and pertinent to the thesis.
 - d. ensure that the candidate has opportunities to defend the thesis and respond to all relevant questions posed by the examiners.
 - e. ensure that the questioning by examiners are conducted fairly and professionally within the scope of the field of research.

SECTION 7: FEEDBACKS, APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

7.1 Feedback Form (see Appendix 5)

7.2 Appeal

7.2.1 Introduction

- i. In general terms, an appeal in this section refers to a reference or request for review, made by the postgraduate students to the University, with regards to the decisions made on their assessments and/or examinations.
- ii. Students have the right to appeal to the University for a review of a decision which may implicate undesirable effect(s) on the study progression, assessment and/or award. The outcome of such an appeal may result in either the decision remained upheld or judiciously changed.
- iii. Students should be aware that the purpose of an appeal is not to discredit academic judgements.

7.2.2 Appeal procedure

- i. The best practises for the appeal procedure outline in this section are recommended for use in an appeal that pertains to the award of the degree(s), including for:
 - a. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD; including by alternative publication track)
 - b. Doctorate by Examination and Thesis (such as DBA, D.Eng., D.Edu, DrPH, Neurosc.D)
 - c. Master's degree
 - d. Professional Master's degree (such as M.Med, M.Clin Dent)
- ii. The grounds to appeal in relation to the above may relate to the following:
 - a. Reasonable doubts being raised pertaining to the presence of defects or procedural irregularities in the examination, or in written instructions or in advice relating to these, for which the outcomes would have been different had they not occurred;
 - b. A *prima facie* of exceptional personal circumstances where undesirable effects on the student's performance may occur. (For these, a student must show acceptable and good reason for not disclosing the circumstances to the University's attention before a decision being made. Where these could have been reported by a student to the University, those circumstances cannot serve as grounds for appeal).
 - c. An error had occurred in calculating or recording marks (arithmetical in nature) on which the original decision was made and affects the outcome of the examination.
 - d. A case prejudice or bias with evidence on the part of one or more of the Examiners involved in reaching the original decision.
 - e. Issues related to the supervisor, notably from insufficient supervision and that there were exceptional reasons why this had not been reported by a student to the University prior to the original decision being made.
 - f. Failure to attain conversion of Degree from Master to PhD level or vice versa (where applicable).
- iii. Appeals that amount to questioning the Examiners' academic judgement are not allowed for appeal. Disagreement with the academic judgement of the appointed Examination Board, or in reaching any assessment decision cannot in itself be used as grounds for an academic appeal.

- iv. An appeal should be in writing, submitted to the University and be made no later than **one month** after the notification of the result(s). Once received, it should be acknowledged within five working days and taken to the attention of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), or his/ her nominee (to act on behalf).
- v. If the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) or his/her nominee had affirmed a *prima facie* case, he/she may choose:
 - a. to refer the case to the relevant Examining Board;
 - b. to refer the case to a full Appeal Board for decision.
- vi. If the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) or his/her nominee decides that 'no case', this can be the ground for appeal. This shall be accomplished within **three months** of its receipt.
- vii. An Appeal Board set up for hearing shall identify the grounds of the appeal and shall be guided by the student's submission, the testimony of the Chair of the Examining Board, evidence from representative of the School/Centre concerned and any further evidence which it deems relevant.
- viii. As soon as the appeal decision is being made, the Appeal Board shall pass a decision, either the appeal is rejected and no further action be taken, or that the appeal be upheld, and be communicated to the student in writing. This decision shall be final, and the relevant School/Centre shall act accordingly for the decision and/or recommendations as guided by the Appeal Board.
- ix. If an appeal is upheld, good practices on the course of actions that the Appeal Board may adopt include:
 - a. To recommend to the Examining Board to reconsider the decision of the previous Board.
 - b. To recommend that a new Examining Board to reconsider the decision of the previous Board.
 - c. To permit re-write of the thesis and re-submission for re-examination by the original, or a revised Examining Board within a specified time limit.
 - d. To permit re-write of the thesis and to re-submission for re-examination by a new Examining Board within a specified time limit. New members of this Examining Board shall be kept unaware of the previous examination outcome apart from re-examination following an appeal.
 - e. Following re-examination for (c) and (d) above, it is at the discretion of the Examining Board to permit the student one further opportunity of thesis re-submission, with an appropriate fee.
- x. Provided that all other key requirements for the degree admission have been met, and given the appeal are successful, this shall qualify the student for an award of the degree at the next opportunity.

7.2.3 Time limit

- i. Strict deadline governing the submission of academic appeal should be within one month of the result being issued to the student.
- ii. Appeals received outside of the normal deadline are to be regarded as late appeals and will only be accepted for consideration in exceptional circumstances. The decision as to whether or not exceptional circumstances exist rests with the Appeal Committee.
- iii. Appeals which are two or more years late will not be accepted under any circumstances.

7.2.4 University Academic Appeal Board

At this University, the organisation of the Academic Appeal Board may constitute the following:

- i. The Appeal Board quorum is the Convenor, secretary and three other academic staff (selected from eligible nominees).
- ii. The Appeals Board shall be appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor which consists of three members, one of whom shall be Chair, and among the Academic staff.
- iii. Members of the Appeals Board and members of the Examining Board shall be different or shall not be members of staff from the same School/Centre as the student.

7.2.5 Steps for Appeal concerning postgraduate supervision

The following are the recommended steps for a student to file an appeal concerning postgraduate supervision.

- i. An initial informal meeting is the most ideal step for the student and the person whose action has led to the filing consideration for the appeal so that a mutual resolution can be reached. This meeting should be within one month of the concerned action.
- ii. If remains unresolved, the student may complete and submit the Student Complaint/Grievance/Appeal Form to the supervisor within seven days of the informal meeting.
- iii. The supervisor shall schedule a meeting with the student, within the next seven days to resolve the situation. The student or the supervisor may invite the person whose action caused the complaint/grievance/appeal to attend the meeting.
- iv. Within seven days of the meeting, a written response (either a letter mail or an email) will be provided to the student by the supervisor.
- v. If no resolution is acquired even after this meeting, the student may submit the complaint/grievance/appeal to the second-level supervisor within seven days of receiving the written response. For this purpose, the student shall include a copy of the first complaint/grievance/appeal, the response provided, along with an explanation as to why that response was unsatisfactory to the student.
- vi. Subsequent to this, the second-level supervisor, first-level supervisor and the student shall schedule to meet. The student or the second-level supervisor may invite the person whose action caused the complaint/grievance/appeal to attend the meeting. Within seven days of the meeting, a written response (either a letter mail or an email) will be provided to the student by this supervisor.
- vii. If the situation remains unresolved, the student may appeal in writing within seven working days of the meeting to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). At this stage, the decision made is final and will be put in writing to the student, either personally or by email, seven days following the receipt of the appeal. All written copies of the appeals and the responses shall accompany this final complaint/grievance/appeal.

7.2.6 Review of Examination for Postgraduate Qualifications

- i. A student who is not approved for the qualification may request a review of results of the examination. Students should become familiar with the basis for the review of the examination results which are as follows:
 - a. Existence of **material circumstances** relating directly to examination (but exclude circumstances to do with the candidate's course of study) without prior knowledge to the examiners.
 - b. Existence of procedural irregularities **in the conduct of the exam**, the nature of which may give rise to reasonable doubts as to whether similar conclusion would have been obtained had the irregularities not occurred.
 - c. Demonstrable **evidence of prejudice, inadequate, or bias assessment** in the examination.
- ii. It is important to note that this is **NOT an appeal procedure**, but rather a review of the student's examination. This review is not to change the outcome of the examination, but could lead to a remedy that may include re-examination under different circumstances, provided that a case is upheld.
- iii. A three-month time limit is deemed reasonable for reviewing process, clocked from the date the IPS letter is sent to the student on the outcome of the examination.

7.3 Complaints

7.3.1 Types of Complaints

- i. Students and supervisors should be aware of the types of complaints that are addressed in this section and the outline for good practices in dealing with such a complaint. The types of complaints include:
 - a. Complaints to do with student's educational experience (but *exclude disputes on assessment and examinations – refer Section 7.2. Appeal*)
 - b. Complaints to do with academic and/or administrative support or other services provided by the Universiti Sains Malaysia
 - c. Complaints with regards to poor teaching or supervision
 - d. Complaints arising from the behaviour of a member of staff
 - e. Complaints arising from the behaviour of another fellow student

7.3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

- i. The good practices in the procedural dealing of these complaints shall exercise the principles of natural justice and fairness so as to adhere to the following roles and responsibilities:
 - a. Those about whom complaints are being raised have rights to know what is being claimed and who is making a complaint. However, there are exceptions to this rule, for example in the initial assessment of an alleged harassment, and that the complainant may choose to be under the Whistleblower Act 2011.

- b. The decision should be unbiased, in good faith and should declare any personal conflict of interest in the proceedings.
- c. The proceedings shall be conducted so that justice should be seen as done.
- d. A complainant will not be discriminated against or suffer recrimination for lodging complaint unless it is verified as malicious or vexatious.
- e. It is expected that confidentiality of the documentation generated in the proceedings regarding the complaint will be respected by all parties involved.

7.3.3 Complaints Procedure: Informal Process

- i. The initial step to raise complaints in this procedure is through the School/Centre Dean/Director/Head. The recommended course of actions is as follow:
 - a. The Dean (or equivalent) shall acknowledge the complaint when one arises. It is expected that the complaint is to be made within three months of the occurrence of the matter under this process. (In the event that the complain concerns the Dean, the complainant should raise the complaint to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic and International/Campus Director/Equivalent.
 - b. Upon further inquiries by the Dean, and if the complaint appears unfounded, ill-conceived or vexatious, the Dean may write and invite withdrawal of the complaint to the complainant. If the complainant provided a written response within 14 days choosing to abide with this decision, the Dean shall attempt to resolve the complaint by way of informal discussion with the complainant and the individual concerned with the complaint.
 - c. Conversely, if the complainant provided a written response within 14 days choosing to disagree with this resolution, the formal complaint procedure will ensue and the complainant shall be advised accordingly. (See Appendix – for Formal Complaint Form)

7.3.4 Formal Complaint Procedure:

- i. For a formal procedure of dealing with complaints, the good practices entail the following course of actions taking place sequentially at three levels as outlined below. The needs to progress to the subsequent level are guided by whether satisfactory resolution had been obtained with mutual agreement by all parties involved.
- ii. Stage 1 (PTJ Level)
 - a. On receiving the Formal Complaint Form (see Appendix), the Chairman of the appointed (fixed-term) PTJ Complaint Committee will acknowledge the complaint in writing and will initiate the investigation to produce a written report.
 - b. The Committee shall forward to the Dean a written report within 30 days of receiving the complaint form. This written report and recommendation therein will be forwarded to the complainant within 14 days of the Dean approval.
 - c. If the complainant provided a written response within 21 days choosing to abide with the decision made, OR provided no written response even after the stipulated timeframe had elapsed, the Dean shall record this outcome as a fair

and equitable resolution of the complaint. All parties involved will be advised accordingly.

- d. Conversely, if the complainant provided a written response within 21 days choosing to disagree with the decision made, the Dean shall record this outcome and shall refer the case to Stage 2 of the formal complaint procedure within 7 days of receiving the complainant response. All parties involved will be advised accordingly.

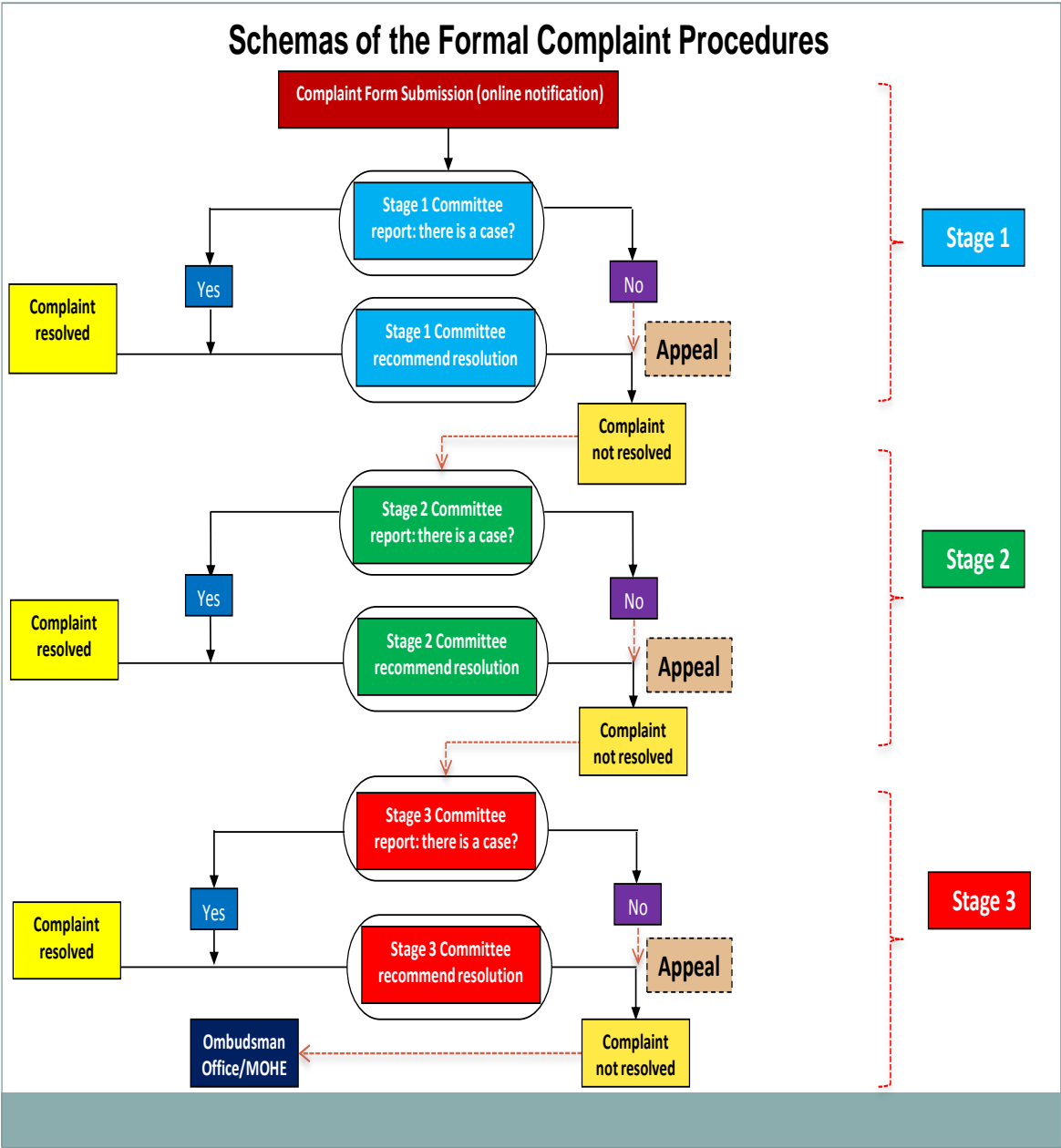
iii. Stage 2 (IPS Level)

- a. Upon receiving details from the Stage 1 procedure, the IPS Dean shall acknowledge the complaint in writing and will appoint an IPS Complaint Committee to initiate the investigation to produce a written report.
- b. The Committee shall submit to the IPS Dean a written report within 30 days of receiving the complaint. This written report and recommendation therein will be forwarded to the complainant within 14 days of the IPS Dean approval.
- c. If the complainant provided a written response within 21 days choosing to abide with the decision made, OR provided no written response even after the stipulated timeframe had elapsed, the IPS Dean shall record this outcome as a fair and equitable resolution of the complaint. All parties involved will be advised accordingly.
- d. Conversely, if the complainant provided a written response within 21 days choosing to disagree with the decision made, the IPS Dean shall record this outcome and shall refer the case to Stage 3 of the formal complaint procedure within 7 days of receiving the complainant response. All parties involved will be advised accordingly.

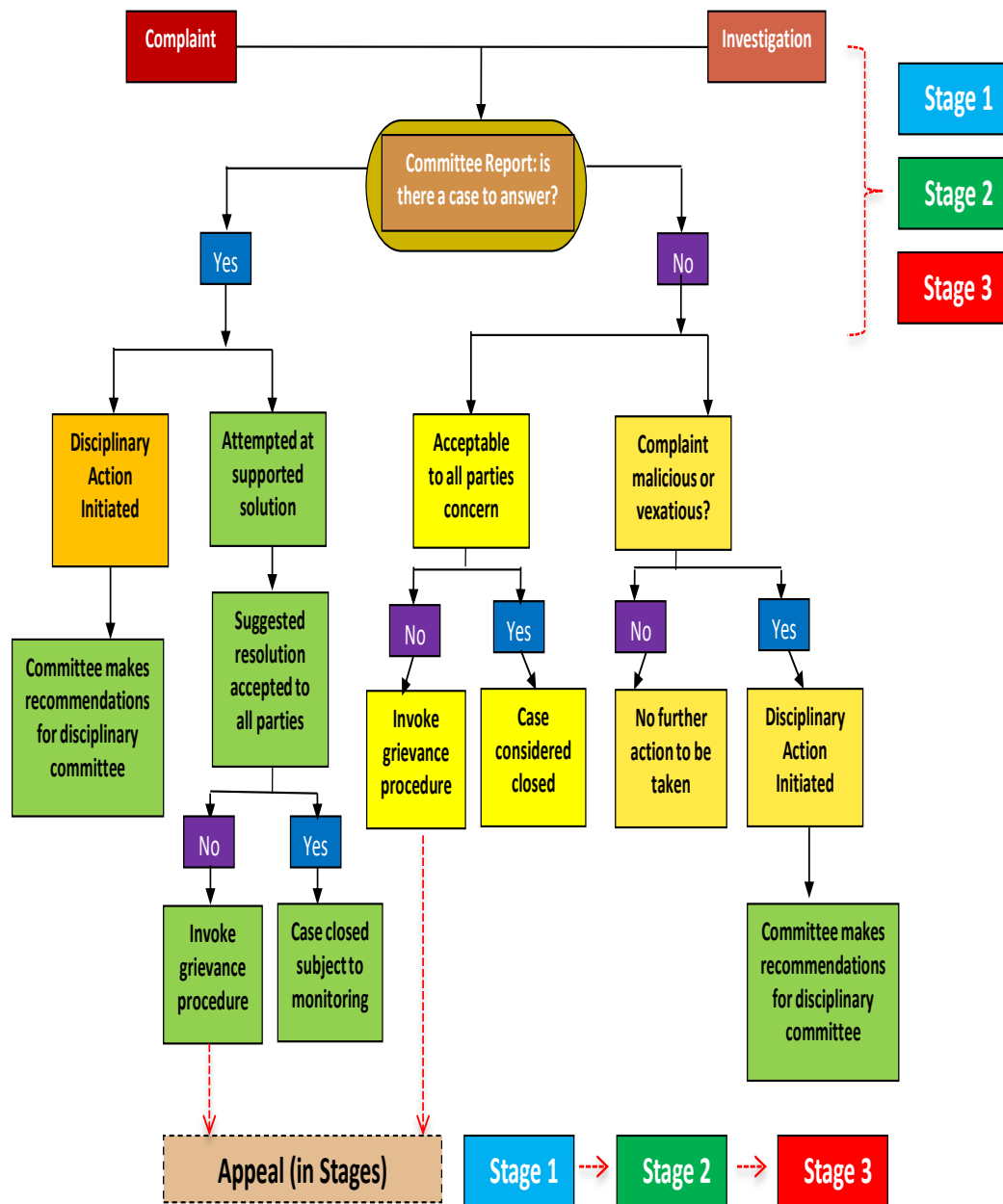
iv. Stage 3 (DVC Academic and International, Level)

- a. Upon receiving details from the Stage 2 procedure, the DVC, Academic and International Office shall acknowledge the complaint in writing and will arrange a Central Review Committee of all the complaint documentations held thus far to establish grounds for appeal. The outcome of this review will be provided to the complainant within 30 days of the acknowledgement to the complainant.
- b. If the complainant provided a written response within 21 days choosing to abide with the decision made, OR provided no written response even after the stipulated timeframe had elapsed, the DVC Academic and International Office shall record this outcome as a fair and equitable resolution of the complaint. All parties involved will be advised accordingly.
- c. Conversely, if the complainant provided a written response within 21 days choosing to disagree with the decision made, the DVC Academic and International Office shall record this outcome and shall refer the case to the Ombudsman Office/Ministry of Higher Education within 7 days of receiving the complainant response. All parties involved will be advised accordingly.

Schemas of the Formal Complaint Procedures & the Grievances Workflow:



Schemas of the formal complaint procedures: grievances workflow



7.3.4.1 Complaints Procedure for Harassment

- a. The University takes on any complaints in relation to harassment with great care, due sensitivity and seriousness. It is universally accepted that one regards harassment in the forms such as the following:
 - a. Trouble or vex a person with repeated and unwelcome attacks and/or behaviour.
 - b. Include belittling comments, offensive name calling, verbal abuse, mockery, insults, ridicule, threats or physical assault.
 - c. On racial, religious or gender premise, or that of sexual nature, or against the disabled.
- b. It is recommended that the following steps are considered when dealing with harassment:
 - a. Individual Action: Send clear signals to the offender that their conduct is objectionable and can be formally brought to the attention of the University if the raised concerns remain irresponsibly ignored.
 - b. Informal Assistance (via a trusted fellow student or the supervisor): Send clear signals to the offender that their conduct is objectionable and can be formally brought to the attention of the University if the jointly raised concerns remain irresponsibly ignored. All parties should be made aware of the potential outcomes should this step is taken which include general strategies for dealing with the issue, informal conciliation involving interviewing the harasser by *a trained conciliator* (as instructed by the University), or if to no avail, to subsequently proceed to a formal complaint.
 - c. Formal Complaint (as outlined in Section 7.3.4 Formal Complaint Procedure): A formal complaint can be made by the complainant or someone on their behalf, to the Head of PTJ/Equivalent. *A trained conciliator* will advise the complainant further on how to go about the procedure and support the complainant throughout the investigation.

7.3.5 Examination Allowances

- i. **Eligibility:**

The University considers applications for examination allowances from the School/Centre on behalf of postgraduate students registered for all modes of postgraduate studies in USM. Students and supervisors are expected to become familiar with its purposes, the related forms and procedures involved as part of the good practices on examination allowances.
- ii. **Purpose:**
 - a. An allowance comes into effect if a student has been or is unable to undertake/failed/underperformed in part or all of an exam because of unforeseen urgent cause.

- b. Cases will be considered on personal, cultural (including religious observance), medical, and/or compassionate grounds, provided that the circumstances are unanticipated and beyond the student's control.
- c. An examination may constitute a thesis and/or any other written assessed work in the respective courses, in addition to a formal examination paper.
- d. An examination allowance does not affect the marks received.
- e. A student may not apply direct to the DVC, Academic and International for an examination allowance. The DVC, Academic and International may only consider applications made by the School Supervisor on the student's behalf.
- f. The DVC, Academic and International will normally grant only one examination allowance to a candidate during their graduate career.

iii. Forms

Applications for the examination allowances may require one of two forms (**see Appendix 6**):

- a. The student is approved for the qualification, provided that the IPS establishes that the student has performed well in a significant part of the examination. The degree will be awarded and the transcript will show all the marks (including any fail marks) obtained in the examinations.
- b. Student is examined or re-examined at such time and under such conditions as deliberated and recommended by the Board at the School/Centre i.e. student returns for part or all of the next academic year to repeat the exam(s) or assessment.

iv. Procedures

- a. Applications must be submitted no later than three months from the official announcement of the outcome of the exam to the student.
- b. Applications are submitted by the student's supervisor and be counter-signed by the Deputy Dean (Postgraduate Studies), or equivalent. On the application form, the School is to confirm whether it supports the case (see Appendix).
- c. The declaration form asks students to give permission for any medical evidence to be disclosed to appropriate persons (**see Appendix 6**).
- d. An application must include all of the following:
 - I. Application form (to be completed fully)
 - II. Supportive statement from the School supervisor
 - III. Completed declaration form from the student
 - IV. Evidence of medical circumstances or other grave cause
- e. Completed application should be sent to the IPS Registrar.
- f. The DVC, Academic and International Office expects evidence from an appropriate professional. Medical certification will only be approved if issued by authorized public health care establishment.
- g. Certificates issued overseas will be subjected to re-evaluation by a similar establishment in Malaysia. The Board does not consider evidence from a relative, friend or close connection of the student or family.

- h. In every case, the DVC, Academic and International will consult the respective School/Centre regarding the student's academic progress to date.
- i. If academic/medical evidence is considered to be unconvincing, the Board may defer a decision until further appropriate evidence is obtained (in case of medical evidence) or it may propose an allowance other than the one requested or it may decline the application.
- j. If the DVC Academic and International agrees to uphold the examination allowance, it will, consult the School Degree Committee to establish whether the student should be approved for the degree or the conditions for the student to be examined or re-examined.
- k. The IPS Registrar will inform the respective School/Centre's Dean to forward the offer, including the conditions of the allowance, to the student who is given a period of 01 month to confirm to the Registrar whether the students wish to accept the offer.
- l. The IPS while granting on approved and appropriate grounds, the permission to return in the following academic year to re-sit an examination or examinations, will normally attach a condition of fitness to return to study.

Evidence of this condition having been met is required prior to the student returning to the course, and a separate application form is available for this purpose.

SECTION 8: FACILITIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES

USM's priorities to its students are:

- A healthy study environment.
- A comfortable and conducive research environment.
- Security and a general sense of well being while on campus.

To achieve these priorities, USM must provide academic and support services with modern facilities. With all of these facilities and services, students must ensure that they uphold and observe the relevant university's policies, procedures and regulations that have been put in place.

8.1 Academic Facilities and Resources

- i. USM must provide academic facilities and resources to students, such as laboratories, facilities including library and computing services that can be accessed directly or remotely (inter library loan), work stations, studios, lecture halls and tutorial rooms as well as other non-academic service facilities, such as the bursary. USM must ensure all students have access to modern technology such as free Wi-Fi available throughout USM. Students are responsible to use these facilities and services wisely and ethically as these are shared facilities. All regulations and manuals with regard to handling or using equipment in these facilities as well as the general conduct of the students while in these facilities must be made available to students. The students in turn must abide by these regulations and procedures in the manuals.
- ii. USM must provide services in the form of research methodology advice, editorial advice and training programmes to all USM postgraduate students at cost. This will include appropriate additional assistance that are considered appropriate at the postgraduate level such as statistical and qualitative research methodologies, content analysis, data and research findings interpretation, thesis writing and editing skills. These programmes must at least be conducted by the IPS (can be replicated and conducted at other centres of responsibility) and students are informed of the programme schedules well in advance.
- iii. Students are responsible for the use of the student identification smart card, issued to all postgraduate candidates upon enrolment. Students are not allowed to transfer the usage of the smart card and must not abuse the privilege of the facilities dedicated only to registered student. Students must immediately report the loss or damage of their smart cards to the IPS. A fine will be charged for issuance of a new card).

8.2 Students' Personal Responsibilities

- i. Students are encouraged to monitor their health and update their medical status through annual check-up at the Pusat Sejahtera (USM's Clinic) and at any clinic in USM's panel of clinics. This is to ensure that they are fit and able to pursue their studies without any major health complications.
- ii. Students who wish to stay outside USM's campuses are advised to consider safety concerns, location accessibility, rental contracts and available support network (student or institution-led) before deciding to do so.

- iii. Students facing stress and mental health issues can get help from the university's counselling support services officers.
- iv. Students with disability and special needs, requiring special attention must know the extent of services, support and assistance provided by the Student Affairs office.

8.3 University in a Garden

USM continuously preserve and nurture the garden ambience of its campuses. This in turn will create and sustain a conducive setting for intellectual pursuits. USM values initiatives from students to continuously engage and encourage new ideas in promoting and sustaining this noble effort.

8.4 Professional and Personal Development Programme

IPS provides a Professional and Personal Development Programme (www.ips.usm.my/ppd) that offers a range of training workshops that students are encouraged to enrol in. The objectives of the professional and personal development programme is to develop the level of ability, knowledge and skills that students' possess so as to enhance their research and generic skills through a comprehensive range of workshops. These workshops will provide instructional and interactive activities helping students obtain a better academic achievement and value added skills.

The key areas are:

- Responsible Research Conduct
- Research Environment
- Research Development and Management Skills
- Academic Writing and Publishing
- Oral Communication
- Personal Development
- Commercialising your Research
- Career Management
- Information Technology Skills
- Research Skills

8.5 Scholarships

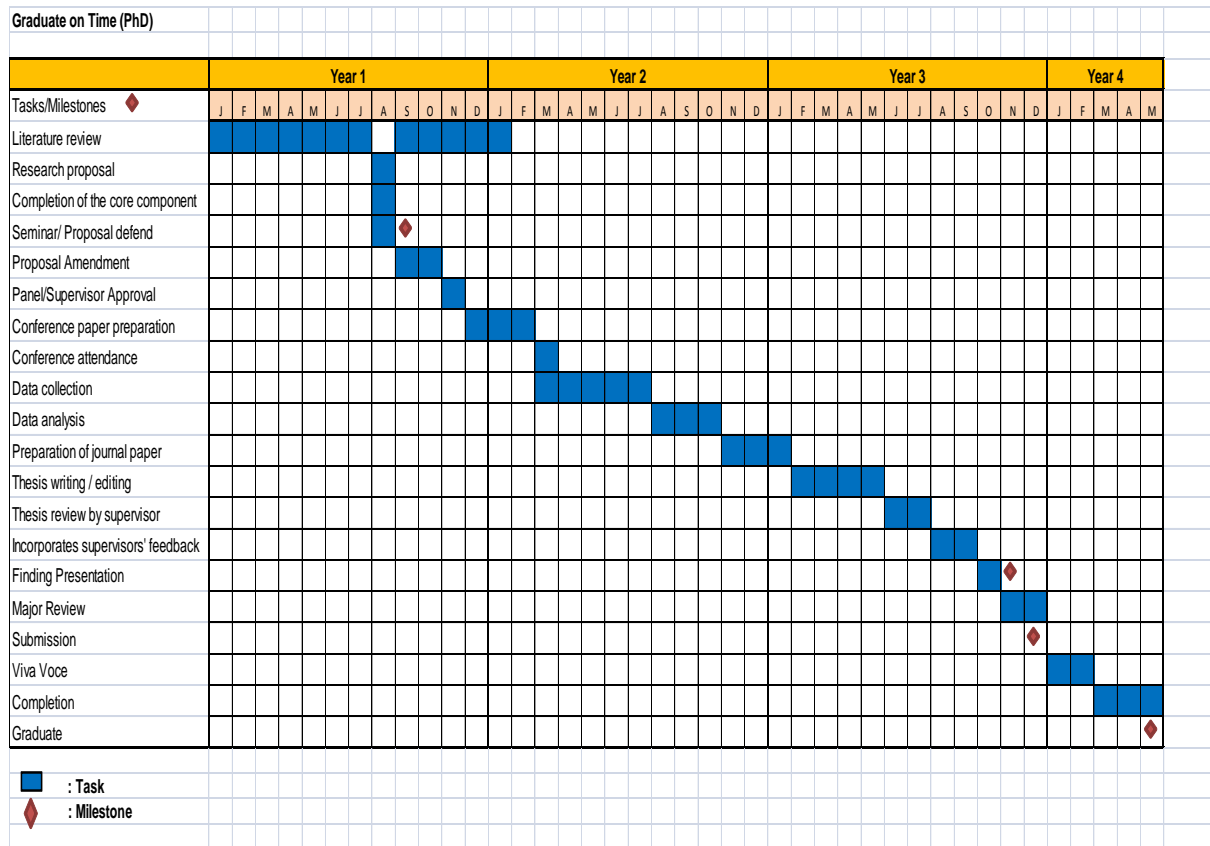
- i. USM has a number of scholarships available for research students funded by the University, or by external sponsors.
- ii. All scholarships must be advertised on the IPS's website (www.ips.usm.my). The particulars of the criteria pertaining to eligibility, application and selection processes of any awards or honours given are in line with the requirements of equal opportunities, with the relevant closing dates clearly specified so as to facilitate the application process)
- iii. USM reserves the right to dictate the teaching, research and administrative duties that recipients of scholarships have to undertake as part of their scholarship obligations.

8.6 Dress Code

Students are expected to observe the rules for the stipulated dress code of the University and be appropriately attired at all times.

- i. Students are encouraged to wear smart attire when attending official functions, lectures, tutorials/laboratories, going to the Library, the Sejahtera Centre, the Chancellery, eateries as well as during appointments/meetings with officers. Short/long-sleeved shirts, uniforms, T-Shirts with collars, proper shoes, would be appropriate for male students. Women's clothes should be below knee length, with sleeves and modestly cut necklines.
- ii. Japanese slippers should not be worn by all students while attending classes or interviews, visiting University departments, experimenting and working at the studio, workshop or laboratorial area. Laboratory coats are expected to be worn while working in the Laboratories.

Example of Candidature Timeline



- Reminder system for lecturers and students through online services are recommended
- During the Research Candidature, students are also encouraged to attend relevant Conferences/ Seminars.

Supervisor's Rubric of Thesis/Dissertation Feedback to Student

Guides to the Ratings Score for Thesis/Dissertation Rubric:

Rating 1 to 3 = FAVOURABLE Rating 4 to 5 = UNFAVOURABLE Rating 6 = NOT APPLICABLE

<i>The level of scholarship in this section is highly commendable.</i>	1
<i>All key elements are described with adequate deliberations.</i>	2
<i>A degree of revision is suggested on one or more aspects of the written work. Comments on how to enhance quality should be provided by the supervisor.</i>	3
<i>Revision and resubmission is required because one or more aspects are inadequately described.</i>	4
<i>Revision and resubmission is required because one or more aspects are absent (or previous suggestions for revision(s) had been largely ignored).</i>	5

Date: _____ Supervisor: _____

Student: _____ Level of Studies: _____

Expected Standards

Rate: 1 to 5; 9

1.	Abstract: has concise study description; brief statement of the problem; indicate methods and procedures; summary of implications/rationales or findings. <i>Remarks:</i>	
2.	Introduction: has clear statement to emphasise the focus of the study on an issue or topic that worth pursuing; a brief and succinct summary of relevant literature to substantiate the study. <i>Remarks:</i>	
3.	Rationale and/or Purpose of the study: Explicitly described in a logical manner. <i>Remarks:</i>	
4.	Nature and Objective of study: General and Specific Objectives/Research Questions or Hypotheses are clearly described. <i>Remarks:</i>	

Expected Standards

Rate: 1 to 5; 9

<p>5.</p>	<p>Operational Definitions: technical terms, jargon, or special work uses provided.</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Study significance is incorporated in terms of: a. knowledge generation, b. professional application c. positive social change.</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Literature review elaborates on: a. the content of the review b. the organization of the review, and/or c. the strategy used for searching the literature.</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Literature review clearly relates to: to the problem statement as expresses in: a. research questions and hypotheses, or b. study objectives</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Literature review includes: a. comparisons/contrasts of different points of view or different research outcomes. b. the relationship of the study to previous research</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Literature review content is drawn from acceptable peer-reviewed journals or sound academic journals or there is justification for using other sources.</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Literature review content is based on the most relevant and current published knowledge of the topic, and organised around major ideas or themes.</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p>Methodology: the research design derives logically from the problem or issue statement</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>13.</p>	<p>Methodology: includes role of the researcher in the data collection procedure.</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>14.</p>	<p>Methodology: processes for data collection and data analysis clearly described.</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	

Expected Standards

Rate: 1 to 5; 9

<p>15.</p>	<p>Data Analysis: state how and when the data analyse including specific use of a named software.</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>16.</p>	<p>The findings: a. build logically from the problem and the research design, and b. are presented in a manner that addresses the research questions</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>17.</p>	<p>The findings: Discrepant cases and nonconforming data are included.</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>18.</p>	<p>The findings: Patterns, relationships, and themes described are supported by the data.</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>19.</p>	<p>The Discussion: shows how this study followed procedures to assure accuracy of the data (e.g. trustworthiness, member checks, etc.). Appropriate evidence occurs in the appendixes (sample transcripts, researcher logs, notes, etc.).</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>20.</p>	<p>General impression of the written work: adheres to the format and has a professional scholarly appearance; correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling; includes citations for the following: direct quotations, paraphrasing, facts, and references to research studies; shows wide and scholarly use of literature sources.</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>21.</p>	<p>Overall Impression of the written work: scholarly approach (accurate, balance, objective); clear and precise writing with no redundancy; key statements are satisfactorily described; flow of content is coherent and comprehensible between the different sections/ideas.</p> <p><i>Remarks:</i></p>	
<p>22.</p>	<p>Additional suggestions/comments:</p>	

Student's Checklist

STAGE 1	Appointment of Examiners		
	Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Download, Fill, Print and Submit Notice of Submission of Thesis Form to School/Centre	
	Supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/> Signs Notice of Submission of Thesis Form	
	School/Centre	<input type="checkbox"/> Determines Examiners using Notice of Submission of Thesis Form <input type="checkbox"/> Sends Notice of Submission of Thesis Form to IPS	
	IPS	<input type="checkbox"/> Notifies and Appoints Examiners	
	MPSU/ SENATE	<input type="checkbox"/> Endorse the Appointment of Examiners	
STAGE 2	Submission of Thesis		
	Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Downloads, Fills, Prints and Submits the Submission of 10 Copies of Thesis <input type="checkbox"/> Submit 6 copies of the thesis to the School/Centre <input type="checkbox"/> Signs and submits Declaration Form, Thesis Submission Form together with 4 copies of thesis to IPS. <i>Ensure that you have paid all your tuition fees and examination fees. Proof of payment is the clearance statement from the Student Accounts Section, Bursary</i>	
	Supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/> Signs Submission of Ten (10) Copies of Thesis Form	
	School/Centre	<input type="checkbox"/> Dean signs Submission of Ten (10) Copies of Thesis Form	
	IPS	<input type="checkbox"/> Receives 4 copies checks if student has paid all fees and exam fees Sends Thesis to Examiners. 1 month for Masters / 2 months for PhD to be examined	
	Examiners	<input type="checkbox"/> Submits Report	
	IPS	<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule viva upon receiving all examiners' reports <input type="checkbox"/> Prepares for Viva	
	STAGE 3	Viva and Submission of Final Copies	
		IPS	<input type="checkbox"/> Notifies Thesis Examination Panel <input type="checkbox"/> Notifies Student <input type="checkbox"/> Notifies School/Centre <input type="checkbox"/> VIVA Thesis Examination Panel convenes <input type="checkbox"/> The Secretary of the Examination panel will pass the list of correction done by the supervisor and examiners to the student
		Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Makes corrections as recommended by Thesis Examination Panel <input type="checkbox"/> Submit corrected thesis to supervisor and Dean for endorsement
Supervisor		<input type="checkbox"/> Endorses corrections made to the thesis <input type="checkbox"/> Signs Thesis Submission – Final Three (3) copies Form	
Dean		<input type="checkbox"/> Endorses corrections made to the thesis	
Student		<input type="checkbox"/> Signs Thesis Submission – Final Three (3) copies Form <input type="checkbox"/> Submits Final Three (3) Copies of the thesis <input type="checkbox"/> Submits 1CD1of the final thesis <input type="checkbox"/> Submits Thesis Submission – Final Three (3) copies Form	
IPS		<input type="checkbox"/> Obtains endorsement form the University Graduate Studies Council (MPSU)	
MPSU		<input type="checkbox"/> Endorses results	
SENATE		<input type="checkbox"/> Confirms results	

NOTE: After the viva you will be given your results and list of corrections, if you receive a status 3 (major corrections), you will be required to resubmit the corrections to IPS for the examiners to review.

STUDENT - SUPERVISOR AGREEMENT

- This agreement is served as to facilitate planning and completing the research project. It is not intended to be **legally binding**.
- The Supervisor and the Student are free to change, omit, or add items to suit their joint purposes during the course of the student's candidature.
- If the research questions or research methods change substantially, or issues arise which require that the agreed dates be altered, this agreement is to be modified with the **changes highlighted**.
- **Latest version of the Agreement** should be provided to both signatories and submitted to the School/Centre.

SECTION A: DETAILS OF SUPERVISOR - STUDENT

Student

Name: _____ Email: _____

Course

Degree: _____ Start Date: _____

Project Title: _____

Supervisor(s)

Name: _____ Email: _____

School/Centre: _____

Student's Co-/Field Supervisor (If Relevant)

- _____
- _____
- _____

Student Funding for Personal Use

Source: _____

Duration: _____

SECTION B: DETAILS OF PROJECT

- 1) Scope of study:

- 2) Details of the project/objectives of the research:

- 3) **Question(s)** that the project addresses:

-
-
- 4) Person involved in giving **statistical advice** on the design and analysis:
-
-
- 5) List any **difficulties, invasives, or time-consuming measures** that require another person's help. Who is helping, and what is their status on any publication (co-authorship or acknowledgement)?
 Measures: _____
 Person(s): _____
 Publication Status: _____
- 6) Describe any **pilot work completed** or needed to be completed to establish the feasibility of the project, including student training (animal care; statistics including commercial software such as SPSS, etc.).
-
-
- 7) Supervisor's **initial** intellectual contribution to this research project:
-
- 8) Student's **initial** intellectual contribution to this research project:
-
- 9) Pre-existing contracts that impact on the student's ability to claim **Intellectual Property rights** or that may delay publication?
- Supervisor and student should discuss IP rights and append any written agreement to this document.
-
-
- 10) **Approximate cost** of the research project not including the student's stipend? Where are the funds coming from?
 Where are the funds coming from: _____
 Cost: _____ Funding source(s): _____
- 11) If ethics approval is required, who will write the first draft of the application? What is the timeline for submission?
 Who: _____ Timeline: _____
- 12) Indicate **who is responsible** for each of the following issues.
- Securing assistance of others (e.g., technician, statistician)

 - Certification of student (e.g., for lab safety procedures)

 - Calibration and maintenance of equipment

 - Agreements or contracts for access to outside equipment/facilities

 - Intellectual property rights for collaborative work with other institutions

SECTION C: RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERVISOR AND STUDENT

1) If human subjects are involved, who will **provide feedback to subjects** when the project is finished?

2) What will be the **role, if any, of the supervisor in obtaining and analyzing the data?**

- Examples: active assistance with whatever; training of other personnel; guidance with analysis only.

3) How many **hours per week** will the student spend on the project generally (when gathering data and when writing up)?

4) How many **hours per week of additional, formal commitments** (coursework, marking, demonstrating, teaching, outside work) does the student have?

5) When will the student table a **written proposal** and give a **seminar** on the proposal?

Written proposal: _____ Seminar: _____

How often or when will the student have **regular meetings** with the supervisor and supervisory committee, and who will keep and circulate minutes of the meetings?

Meetings with supervisor: _____

Meetings with committee: _____

Minutes: _____

6) Who is to take responsibility to **arrange meetings**?

7) If **shared equipment or facilities** must be used, who is responsible for booking the equipment or otherwise ensuring it will be available?

List Equipment/Facility: _____

Booked by: _____

8) Which **seminars, colloquia and journal clubs/research teams** are the student expected to attend?

9) Approximate date for completion of lab/field work/collection of data:

10) Approximate date for completion of data analysis:

11) Approximate dates of submission of the first draft of the thesis (could be subdivided by section of thesis).

- 12) How long at most will the supervisor take to review and return each draft?
Turn-around time: _____
- 13) Will the student write up the project **for journal publication(s)** before extending it into a thesis?

- 14) If the data are sufficient to **submit for publication**, who will write the first draft of the manuscript, and what will be the order of the authors?
Write first draft: _____
Order of authors: _____
- 15) What is the model for the **form of the thesis** (e.g., traditional chapters, collection of manuscripts with Introduction and Conclusion), **style of the thesis** (styles for headings, references, tables, and figures; e.g., APA, a specific journal, a past thesis), and will it be submitted in paper or electronic form?
Form: _____
Style: _____
Paper or Electronic: _____
- 16) If the student is **dissatisfied with supervision** and has been unable to resolve it with the supervisor, who will the student consult?

I agree, to the best of my ability, to act in accordance with the above agreement.

Student: _____ **Date:** _____
Supervisor(s): _____ **Date:** _____

I agree that the data / information collected during my candidature period belongs to USM, unless otherwise stated.

Adapted from: Graduate Student – Supervisor Agreement, University of Saskatchewan

Feedback Form

Instructions: Kindly provide us with your honest feedback. This information will be very helpful in improving the programme as well as to provide better learning experience for future students. We kindly ask for your participation for evaluation purposes only. All information given is strictly **CONFIDENTIAL**.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. I am:

<input type="checkbox"/>	25 years old or younger
<input type="checkbox"/>	26-35 years old
<input type="checkbox"/>	36-45 years old
<input type="checkbox"/>	46-55 years old
<input type="checkbox"/>	56-65 years old
<input type="checkbox"/>	66 years and above

2. I am:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Female

3. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

If yes, please choose one from the following options

<input type="checkbox"/>	Dyslexia
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blind/visually impaired
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deaf/hard of hearing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheelchair-user/mobility impairments
<input type="checkbox"/>	Autistic spectrum disorder
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (If other, please specify.....)

4. My ethnicity is:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Malay
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese
<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Middle eastern
<input type="checkbox"/>	European
<input type="checkbox"/>	African
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (If other, please specify.....)
<input type="checkbox"/>	

5. For fees purposes, is your normal place of residence registered as:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Malaysian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Malaysia

6. I am (select all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-funded
<input type="checkbox"/>	Government funded
<input type="checkbox"/>	Institution funded
<input type="checkbox"/>	Industry funded
<input type="checkbox"/>	Funded overseas
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____

7. I am currently registered as studying:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Full-time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Part-time

8. I am registered as doing a:

<input type="checkbox"/>	PhD by research
<input type="checkbox"/>	PhD by mix mode
<input type="checkbox"/>	DBA/D ed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Masters in research
<input type="checkbox"/>	Masters by coursework
<input type="checkbox"/>	Masters by mix mode/M med
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____

10. I am studying at (school) :

11. My discipline is :

SECTIONS B AND C ARE FOR RESEARCH AND MIX-MODE POSTGRADUATE STUDIES. FOR COURSEWORK BASED POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, PLEASE PROCEED TO SECTION D.

SECTION B: SUPERVISION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

For each statement, please rate the extent of your agreement or disagreement

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither disagree or agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	My supervisor/s have the skills and subject knowledge to adequately support my research.					
2	My supervisor/s make a real effort to understand any difficulties I face					
3	My institution values and responds to feedback from research degree students					
4	I am encouraged to think about the range of skills development that are available to me.					
5	I understand the required standard for the thesis.					
6	I have adequate access to the equipment necessary for my research.					
7	I have been given good guidance in topic selection and refinement by my supervisor/s.					
8	I have a suitable working space.					
9	I am encouraged to reflect on my professional development needs.					
10	My department provides opportunities for social contact with other research students.					
11	My department provides opportunities for me to become involved in the broader research culture.					
12	I know who to approach, or where to find information related to any element of my postgraduate programme.					
13	There are adequate opportunities available for me to further develop my research skills.					
14	I have received good guidance in my literature search from my supervisor/s.					
15	I understand my responsibilities as a postgraduate student.					
16	There are adequate opportunities available for me to further develop my soft skills (communication, presentation, teamwork).					
17	As a result of my experience so far I feel confident about managing a research project					

SECTION C: THESIS EXAMINATION

Have you sat your final viva examination?

No (If No, please go to section E)

Yes (If Yes, please respond to the following statements)

For each of the following, show the extent of your agreement or disagreement

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither disagree or agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	The thesis examination process was fair					
2	The examination of my thesis was completed in a reasonable time scale					
3	I was given adequate support and guidance in preparation for my viva voce					
4	I was given adequate support and guidance to make any changes to my thesis following my viva voce					

SECTIONS D-F ARE FOR COURSEWORK BASED AND MIX-MODE POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

SECTION D: COURSE DELIVERY (LEARNING OUTCOME AND SUBJECT MATTER)

For each of the following, show the extent of your agreement or disagreement

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither disagree or agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	The overall content of the course corresponds to the course description (fulfills the objectives)					
2	The teaching methods (lecture/ tutorial) applied were appropriate.					
3	The overall course was well structured to achieve learning outcomes(balance between lectures, tutorials and practical)					
4	The overall course was well organized (eg: timely access to material, notification of changes)					
5	The course workload(s) was manageable					
6	The coursework and continuous assessment correlated with the course					
7	Lecture and exam schedules are not a burden and can be reviewed within the period prescribed					
8	I was able to gain knowledge on theories, methods and application related to the field I was enrolled in					
9	I am able to transfer learned theories into practice					
10	The courses in my studies met my expectations					

SECTION E: TEACHING AIDS & LEARNING ACTIVITIES

For each of the following, show the extent of your agreement or disagreement.

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither disagree or agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	Course materials (notes, presentation files) and references (books, url) were relevant and useful					
2	The overall quality of learning activities and teaching in the programme was good.					
3	The lecturer(s) carried out their duties professionally					
4	The lecturer(s) responded to questions and comments clearly and concisely					
5	Teaching aids facilities in the hall / lecture room were conducive and adequate					
6	Lab facilities were conducive and adequate					
7	The laboratory and clinical facilitators were responsive to student needs and problems					
8	Wi-Fi / Hotspot facilities were good					
9	Resource centre facilities were adequate and appropriate					

SECTION F: QUALITY OF POSTGRADUATE SERVICES

For each of the following, show the extent of your agreement or disagreement

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither disagree or agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	Academic Administration Management at the Institute of Postgraduate Studies (IPS) was effective and satisfactory					
2	Academic Administration Management at the school level was effective and satisfactory					
3	Dissemination of information was effective					
4	Personnel were competent and able to complete a related task within a specified time and can be contacted easily					
5	Academic Regulations are clear and understandable					
6	The student portal (GRASIS) helps in the management of students' information and studies					

SECTIONS G-L ARE FOR ALL POSTGRADUATE STUDIES.

SECTION G: INTELLECTUAL CLIMATE & INFRASTRUCTURE

For each statement, please rate the extent of your agreement or disagreement

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither disagree or agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	There is appropriate financial support for research activities.					
2	The research ambience in my department or faculty stimulates my work.					
3	My experience so far has improved my analytical skills.					
4	I understand the standard of work expected.					
5	There is adequate provision of computing resources and facilities.					
6	I understand the requirements and deadlines for formal monitoring of my progress.					
7	I understand the requirements of thesis examination.					
8	My experience so far has helped me to develop a range of communication skills.					
9	There is adequate provision of library facilities.					
10	My supervisor/s provide helpful feedback on my progress.					
11	I am encouraged to reflect on my career development needs.					
12	As a result of my experience so far I have improved my ability to learn independently.					
13	My supervisor/s are available when I need them.					
14	I have the technical support I need.					
15	I feel integrated into my department's community.					
16	My department provides a good seminar programme for postgraduate students.					
17	I am aware of my institution's responsibilities towards me as a research degree student.					
18	I prefer face-to-face learning.					
19	I prefer distance learning.					

SECTION H: TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

For each of the following, show the extent of your agreement or disagreement.

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither disagree or agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	I have had adequate opportunity to gain experience of teaching (e.g., lectures, seminars or workshops) whilst doing my postgraduate programme.					
2	I have been given adequate support and guidance for my teaching.					
3	I think the experience that I have gained through teaching has been a worthwhile aspect of my postgraduate programme.					

Please provide further information regarding your teaching experience:

SECTION I: SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither disagree or agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	My friends and family are emotionally supportive of my studies.					
2	My spouse/partner is supportive of my studies.					
3	My friends and family are understanding of any demands placed upon me by my studies.					
4	My spouse/partner is understanding of any demands placed upon me by my studies.					
5	My employer is supportive of my studies.					
6	My personal finances are supportive of my studies.					

SECTION J: MEETING EXPECTATIONS

Please rate the following broad aspects of your postgraduate studies in terms of how your experience of them has met with your expectations.

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither disagree or agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	Supervisory support and guidance.					
2	Opportunities to develop a range of research skills.					
3	Opportunities to develop a range of soft skills.					
4	Access to appropriate facilities.					
5	The research environment.					
6	Provision of guidance of institutional standards and expectations for your postgraduate programme.					
7	Overall experience of my postgraduate programme.					

SECTION K: GOAL

STATEMENT	yes	no
I have completed the progress of my postgraduate studies within the planned timescale (based on my Gantt Chart).		

SECTION L: AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Please provide further information about your experience of your postgraduate studies. For example, what would further improve your experience?

Thank you for your feedback

Application Form for an Examination Allowance

Full Name:		Date of Birth: (dd/mm/yy)	Matrix No:
School:	Supervisor:		Supervisor's Email:
Course:			
D/ Director's programme name & email:			
Date of formal notification of outcome of examination (if applicable):			
Graduate Supervisor's signature:			Date:
The School supports this application:			Yes No
If "No" , this has been explained to the student			Yes No
Supervisor's (or equivalent) signature:			Date:

DECLARATION

I confirm that I give my consent for the enclosed supporting medical evidence to be submitted and made available, on a confidential basis, to the IPS (please tick as appropriate).

Yes	No
-----	----

Only members of the IPS and the School have access to the medical evidence. The medical advisor makes a recommendation based on the professional assessment of the medical evidence provided.

The University undertakes to process the information lawfully and in accordance with the Data Protection Act and will not divulge its contents to any third party or use it for any purpose without your express consent.

I agree that my School may contact my Medical Practitioner for further information (for instant to confirm he or she has read IPS Guidelines for Medical Practitioner or to help ensure continuous of any medical care or other support on my return to institution.

Yes	No
-----	----

Surname:	Forename (s):	USN:
College:	Signature:	Date:

Please return this form and supporting paperwork to Secretary of the Board of Graduate Studies. The Student Registry or submit completed, scanned copy by email to email@address.com

Formal Complaint Procedure: Complaint Form

1. Personal Details

First Name : _____

Surname : _____

Address : _____

Email : _____

Telephone : _____

Program of Study : _____

Matriculation No : _____

2. Your Complaint

A. Please provide a summary of your complaint below.

(300 words max)

B. Please describe what action you have taken to pursue the complaint to date.

(200 words max)

C. Please provide a brief explanation of the issue(s) you consider to be unresolved.

(200 words max)

D. Please explain how you would like your complaint to be resolved.

(200 words max)

E. If you are submitting a complaint later than one month following the last related incident, the please provide a brief explanation for the delay.

(200 words max)

Signature : _____

Date : _____

Completed forms should be returned to the relevant Head of School or Head of Support Service. If the complaint relates to the aforementioned individual, then the form should be returned to the relevant higher ranked authority. Respective PTJ may appoint existing postgraduate committee or appoint a dedicated and fixed complaint committee with the School Board endorsement.

For University Use Only: Date Received_____ Date Acknowledged_____

Action by_____ Stage 1 Investigator_____ Date response_____

Glossary of Definitions

Experience	The familiarity possessed by the academic staff in the subject matter and/or supervision and/or work and research in the said field of study
Research officers	Research fellows or other similar personnel who plays a substantial role in supervising the student may be appointed as a field supervisor
Thesis (PhD by Research)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Contributes to the maturity of the knowledge and exhibits the potential of the student to relate the research to a bigger discipline framework, with the standard of research being recognized internationally. II. Reflects the originality of the work done within 3-4 years and contributes to the advancement of knowledge. III. The thesis must proves that the student is able to analyze subject matters critically, perform research scientifically, and solving problems scholarly.
Thesis (PhD by mixed-mode)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Contributes to the maturity of the knowledge and exhibits the potential of the student to relate the research to a bigger discipline framework, with the standard of research being recognized internationally. II. Reflects the originality of the work done within the stipulated period and contributes to the advancement of knowledge III. The thesis must proves that the student is able to analyze the subject matters critically, perform research scientifically, and solving problems scholarly IV. Pass the examination as required by the programme.
Thesis (Masters)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Reflects intellectual capacities and skills that are necessary to carry out the research. II. The thesis must reflect an original research in that field and cover sufficient scope of study.
Dissertation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. The dissertation must be an original work by the student II. Reflects the ability of the student in conducting a research and demonstrating critical thinking. III. Pass the examination as required by the programme.