

3. SUPERVISION AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

See [Academic Policies](#) for more information.

Revisions approved <i>Section 3</i> by CGPS Council May 9, 2024	Implementation May 9, 2024
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3.1. ROLE AND SELECTION OF SUPERVISOR

The supervisor must be a faculty member of CGPS and should be familiar with the rules and procedures of the academic unit, CGPS, and the university. Both student and supervisor are responsible for ensuring that all CGPS and academic unit policies, regulations, and requirements are observed and met.

Selection of a supervisor in thesis or dissertation-based programs is completed by mutual agreement among the student, supervisor, graduate chair, head, dean/executive director (non-departmentalized colleges/schools) or designate. This selection should take place as quickly as possible and must occur within 12 months of the first registration.

The supervisor should be free of any conflicts of interest with the student. Should any conflicts of interest emerge they should be disclosed and managed accordingly (see [CGPS policy 14.2](#)).

3.2. ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THESIS AND DISSERTATION-BASED PROGRAMS

Revisions approved <i>Section 3.1</i> by CGPS Council January 11, 2022	Implementation May 1, 2022
Revisions approved (renumbered to <i>Section 3.2</i>) by CGPS Council May 9, 2024	Implementation May 9, 2024

As soon as possible following a student's first registration in a thesis or dissertation-based program, an advisory committee should be named. Responsibility for naming the members of a student's advisory committee lies with the graduate chair, head, dean/executive director (non-departmentalized colleges/schools) or designate. It is the responsibility of the advisory committee, including the supervisor, to assist students in course selection and definition of research area, to provide support and advice, to evaluate regularly the student's progress by meeting at least once yearly, to take appropriate and timely action in view of this progress, and to keep records of this evaluation and all actions taken. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that progress reports, meeting minutes, programs of study, and other advisory committee paperwork is completed and forwarded to the unit's graduate administrator. The members should be free of any conflicts of interest with the student. Should any conflicts of interest emerge they should be disclosed and managed accordingly (see [CGPS policy 14.2](#)).

3.2.1. CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The advisory committee is the central group of experts that educate, mentor, inspire, role-model, and adjudicate graduate students, over a period of years at the university and often beyond graduation within professional networks. In addition to research and (inter-) disciplinary expertise, graduate chairs, head, deans/executive directors (non-departmentalized colleges/schools) or designates must consider other factors when composing student advisory committees, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Student perspective - Knowing the academic, personal, and career goals of the student and ensuring the student has a voice in selecting their advisory committee.

2. Equity, diversity, and inclusion - Success and the overall experience of students with a range of personal attributes and qualities, diverse talents, perspectives, backgrounds, worldviews, ways of knowing, skills, and abilities, will be supported by a diverse advisory committee (e.g., race, gender identity, cultural background, lived experience, physical ability). [[see USask Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy](#)]
3. Conflict of interest – Situations where the private interests of a prospective member(s) conflict with, or could reasonably be perceived to conflict with, their obligations to provide impartial advice, support, and to exercise independent judgment on an advisory committee, must be avoided. Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest to the graduate chair, head, dean/executive director (non-departmentalized colleges/schools) or designate must occur, and consideration of their implications should occur in the process of constituting advisory committees and at the first full advisory committee meeting with the student. (see [CGPS policy 14.2](#) and [USask Conflict of Interest Policy](#)).

Academic units should ensure that the application of these factors is discussed and monitored in a meaningful way on a consistent basis.

3.2.2. ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The master's advisory committee consists of at least two members	The Ph.D. advisory committee consists of at least three members
<p>1. Supervisor A member of the faculty of the CGPS (adjunct professors included, but cannot be a professional affiliate). The supervisor typically chairs meetings of the advisory committee.</p> <p>Co-supervisor, if applicable Persons who are not members of the faculty of CGPS may be granted permission to be a co-supervisor by the dean, CGPS or designate. Co-supervisors share a vote in decision-making, and thus count as one member.</p>	<p>1. Supervisor A member of the faculty of the CGPS (adjunct professors included, but cannot be a professional affiliate). The Supervisor typically chairs meetings of the advisory committee.</p> <p>Co-supervisor, if applicable Persons who are not members of the faculty of CGPS may be granted permission to be a co-supervisor by the dean, CGPS or designate. Co-supervisors share a vote in decision-making, and thus count as one member.</p>
<p>2. Additional Member Must be a regular member of the faculty of CGPS, adjunct professors, professional affiliates or be granted one-time membership by the dean, CGPS or designate. The list of regular faculty, adjuncts, and professional affiliates can be accessed in PAWS.</p>	<p>2. Additional Member Must be a regular member of the faculty of CGPS, adjunct professors, professional affiliates or be granted one-time membership by the dean, CGPS or designate. The list of regular faculty, adjuncts, and professional affiliates can be accessed in PAWS.</p>
	<p>3. Cognate Member Must be a member of the faculty of the CGPS (adjunct professors included, but cannot be a professional affiliate) from a different principal academic unit (department/college/school) than the student and supervisor.</p>

At least one of the supervisor(s), additional member, or cognate member on the advisory committee must be a regular member of the faculty of CGPS who is an employee of the university.

The graduate chair, head, dean/executive director (non-departmentalized colleges/schools) or designate is a non-voting *ex officio* member of the advisory committee.

The dean of the CGPS or designate is a non-voting *ex officio* member of the advisory committee.

Ex officio members are not required to attend advisory committee meetings but may be included in these meetings and deliberations at the invitation of the student, supervisor(s), any other member of the advisory committee, or in accordance with the policy and practice of the academic unit.

When one of the proposed members of the advisory committee is not a member of the CGPS graduate faculty, the proposed member's CV and a written rationale as to why the person should be approved to serve on the committee must be provided. Please note this is a one-time approval for that person to serve on a specific advisory committee.

Postgraduate diploma and graduate certificate students do not require an advisory committee. The use and composition of advisory committees for course- and project-based master's degrees is at the discretion of each academic unit.

The policy is in effect for all students beginning their program May 1, 2022 onward. Academic units may choose to adopt these changes for advisory committees where students began before that date and are encouraged to consider it for students that are in the early years of their program.

3.3. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- a. A graduate student and members of the advisory committee (including supervisor(s)) are encouraged to resolve any issues informally through discussion. Should this be unsuccessful, the graduate student and/or any member(s) of the advisory committee (including supervisor(s)) should refer the matter to the graduate chair, head, dean/executive director (non-departmentalized colleges/schools) or designate.
- b. If the matter is not resolved by the academic unit, the graduate student or advisory committee member(s) (including supervisor(s)) may bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Dean, CGPS.
- c. Resources, including the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy, the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy, the Sexual Assault Prevention Policy and the Violence Prevention Policy (<https://policies.usask.ca>) are available to all members of the university. Students can seek further support from support from [Student Affairs and Outreach](#), the [Student Wellness Centre](#), and the [Graduate Students' Association](#)

3.3.1. ENDING THE STUDENT-SUPERVISOR RELATIONSHIP

For matters related to non-satisfactory academic progress, see [CGPS policy 15 – Requirement to Discontinue](#).

For non-academic misconduct, please refer to [USask regulations and procedures for non-academic misconduct](#).

In instances when a graduate student is progressing satisfactorily academically, but the student-supervisor relationship is beyond repair, it may be in the best interest of all parties to end the student-supervisor relationship.

In agreeing to supervise a graduate student, a faculty supervisor commits to assume the roles and responsibilities specified by CGPS and the program/academic unit. If the supervisor and student agree that a change to the supervisory relationship is needed, typically the graduate chair will work with the student, supervisor

and/or head to find a solution as early as possible. In instances when a graduate student is progressing satisfactorily, but the process of resolving conflict between the student and supervisor fails, the following apply:

- The student has the right to request a change of supervisor by contacting their graduate chair.
- Supervisors may be released from their supervisory commitment only if:
 - the supervisor leaves the university;
 - the student has been required to discontinue from their graduate program per policy 15.1;
 - the supervisor has disclosed a close personal relationship in accordance with policy 14.2;
 - The academic unit determines that there are exceptional circumstances, including unresolvable conflict, and grants the supervisor permission to discontinue supervision of a graduate student.
- The student's and faculty member's requests for changing supervisors or committee members will be reviewed by the academic unit

3.3.2. FINDING A NEW SUPERVISOR

It is the responsibility of the graduate chair, in consultation with the student, the academic unit and CGPS to facilitate finding a new supervisor, if required. A new supervisor is typically arranged within 30 days of the decision that the student-supervisor relationship has ended. In cases where the graduate chair is the student's supervisor or if there is a conflict of interest, the department head assumes the responsibilities of the graduate chair. If a new supervisor cannot be found within 30 days, the matter must be referred to the Associate Dean, CGPS.

If the academic unit's arrangements fail to meet the expectations of the student, the student may choose to withdraw without prejudice. In rare cases, if a new supervisor cannot be found within 60 days or by the end of the term, whichever is later, and no extension is approved by the Associate Dean, CGPS, the student may be required to withdraw from their program.

Students transferring to a new program should refer to the [CGPS policy 4.4. Program Transfers](#).

3.3.3. FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

Where the supervisor has been providing funding to the student, the funding must continue for a period of at least 30 days from the date on which the academic unit determines that the student-supervisor relationship has ended.

A loss of funding is not a valid reason for a faculty member to end a supervisory relationship. In those cases, it is the responsibility of the supervisor and the academic unit to secure funding to support the student to the end of the funding commitment as articulated in the student's offer of admission or to the University-mandated program time limits.

3.4. STUDENT-SUPERVISOR AGREEMENT

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The student-supervisor agreement is a tool that provides a basis for shared understanding surrounding expectations, roles and responsibilities, and milestones and establishes guidelines to govern the student-supervisor relationship. The purpose of the agreement is to facilitate conversations on the various stages and aspects of the student's academic lifecycle and inform one another on any challenges that may arise.

Graduate students enrolled in thesis-based programs will complete a student-supervisor agreement in collaboration with their supervisor(s). The initial agreement must be completed within the first twelve months of the student’s program and is a non-course requirement.

The student-supervisor agreement is a non-legal living document and should be revisited and updated as needed to accommodate changes in the student-supervisor relationship and/or the research project. The student-supervisor agreement is supplemental and does not supersede any departmental, CGPS, or other university regulations.

CGPS recognizes there may be instances where the student and supervisor(s) may have questions or may not be able to successfully complete the student-supervisor agreement. The student or supervisor may refer the matter to the graduate chair, head, dean/executive director (non-departmentalized colleges/schools), or designate or may contact CGPS directly.

Procedures and Guidelines 3.4

The student-supervisor agreement [template is available here](#). The following steps can aid in ensuring the successful completion of the Student-Supervisor Agreement:

1. Students and supervisors should arrange a time to meet and discuss the student-supervisor agreement.
2. In preparation for the meeting, the student and supervisor should read the agreement and draft a list of questions/concerns/comments for review and discussion. Likewise, the student and supervisor should familiarize themselves with university regulations, resources, and student services.
3. The student and supervisor should discuss each of the points listed in the agreement and check each box. In the discussion, questions can be addressed, and new items can be added.
4. The discussion should result in a mutual understanding of what is expected of both the student and supervisor. The student and supervisor will sign and keep a copy of the agreement.
5. When the student-supervisor agreement has been completed and signed by the supervisor and student, it should be submitted to the graduate administrator in the academic unit.
6. The graduate administrator should keep a copy in the academic unit’s files, and submit a copy to CGPS using the [student-supervisor agreement form](#) in the service desk.
7. Once CGPS has received the agreement, it will be saved in the Banner Document Management student file and will mark the non-course requirement as complete in Banner. This will update the requirement as complete in the student’s DegreeWorks record.
8. If at any time the agreement is updated, the document should be added to the student record, as per steps 6 and 7.

3.5. SUPERVISORS ON SABBATICAL, PLANNED OR UNPLANNED LEAVE

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Supervisors and academic units will ensure that adequate provisions have been made for the continued supervision and support of students during any absences or leaves. This can include sabbatical leave, parental leave, administration leave, educational leave, and other leaves.

It is the responsibility of the academic unit to arrange for supervision of their graduate students during a leave, make appropriate arrangements that entail satisfactory supervision of the students, and document adequate provision of supervision. Temporary supervisory arrangements during a leave do not release a supervisor from responsibility for the adequate supervision of their students.

All such arrangements must be communicated well in advance (whenever possible) to the academic unit (grad chair and department head) and the student.

In the event of an unplanned absence, academic units will update the impacted students as soon as possible and support them until such a time when a new supervisor can be found.

The campaign for the University of Saskatchewan