GUIDELINES FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL SUPERVISORS AND EXTERNAL CO-SUPERVISORS FOR DOCTORAL DEGREES

Supervisors are normally appointed from within the University, since it is good practice only to accept doctoral candidates where there is a staff member with the appropriate expertise in the area of research available to supervise. However, on occasion it is necessary to appoint a supervisor from outside the University, in which case the Faculty concerned will carefully consider its ability to hold the supervisor so appointed to his or her obligations in regard to the student and the University. To this end the terms of the MoU between the supervisor and the student must also be recorded formally as an agreement between the Faculty and the supervisor.

The reasons for appointing external supervisors or co-supervisors include the following:

(a) The UCT supervisor has left the service of the University, and now needs to be appointed as an external supervisor to continue supervising the student. Where the departing supervisor is not willing to continue as supervisor, a new external supervisor may need to be brought in to see the student through if there is nobody else suitable in the department.

(b) A UCT principal supervisor seeks the benefit of the expertise of an external specialist as co-supervisor on parts of the thesis to complement the expertise in the department;

(c) Candidates in sandwich programmes (e.g. USHEPIA) and co-managed degrees need to have a co-supervisor from their home institution appointed.

When an external supervisor or co-supervisor is appointed, his or her external status must be explicitly stated in the Dean’s Circular through which the appointment is made.

Payment of external co-supervisors must be initiated by the faculty office and is made against the budget for these payments held centrally by the Deputy Registrar, Academic Administration.

If an external supervisor is appointed, he or she will normally be paid an honorarium in the final year.

In the exceptional and rare cases where an external supervisor is appointed by the DDB for a PhD candidate, the annual honorarium will be determined by the Registrar after consultation with the faculty dean concerned, and paid from the same budget.

NOTE:
These guidelines are framed in respect of doctoral candidates for consideration by the DDB. However, the Deputy Registrar has recommended that guidelines should also be drawn up for Master’s dissertations. The guidelines set out above can, mutatis mutandis, be applied to Master’s dissertations, with the addition of the following possible reason for the appointment of external supervisors or co-supervisors:

“Lack of capacity, particularly for coursework master’s dissertations where the programme convenor is the sole supervisor for all students in the programme (sometimes a big group) and needs assistance or specialist expertise from outside.”

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