



The supervision of Graduate Students can be one of the most rewarding, and challenging, responsibilities of a faculty member. Supervisory Committees provide support for the student and the supervisor. The supervisory committee not only evaluates the student's work, but provides additional assistance with the development and progress of the student's research, professional development, and career goals. They can also help with communication and with the supervisory relationship.

Co-Supervisors and members of the supervisory committee must not have spousal or other intimate personal relationship with each other, as this constitutes conflict of interest. Co-Supervisors, supervisory committee members, as is the case with all Supervisors, must not have a personal relationship with the student.

All supervisory committee members are expected to:

- participate in regular progress meetings;
- participate in additional meetings if there is unsatisfactory performance, or a change in supervisor;
- help evaluate academic progress and advise on the next year's objectives;
- ensure academic standards in the discipline;
- assist the supervisor in providing guidance, consultation, and advice on the student's research, professional development, and career goals;
- determine mutually-agreed upon expectations for feedback and best methods of communication;
- provide expertise that complements and expands on that of the supervisor;
- assist with determining topics, questions, and/or readings for Field of Study Examinations;
- evaluate the research proposal in a timely fashion, and participate as an examiner on Field of Study Examinations, final thesis and oral defence;
- provide timely feedback on draft dissertation chapters only after the student has completed at least one round of revision based on feedback from the supervisor, or on other written work;
- work together to provide the student with clear and consistent advice when their own opinions conflict or diverge on the direction of the research; and
- with the rest of the committee, approve when the thesis is ready for examination.

In addition, your role as a committee member places you in a position to help students manage their wellbeing and plan their careers.

Be a Wellness Advocate for Students. Progressing through a graduate program can be stressful for many students, and some students may experience difficulty effectively coping with this level of stress. Additionally, other factors outside of school may also negatively impact a student's overall wellness, which can have negative impacts on their ability to make appropriate progress towards their degree. UCalgary has many resources that can support students. As a wellness advocate you can help students access the resources that they may need, with early intervention providing them the best opportunity to improve their wellness, and be successful in their graduate education. You are not expected to have the professional skills needed to directly resolve these issues, nor may it be appropriate to become too involved in difficult personal issues. However, you may be able to help students access appropriate, and sometimes critical, resources.

- Consider yourself a wellness advocate. You will have significant contact with students over an extended period of time; therefore, you may be in the best position to notice changes in attitude and behaviour that could be indicators of a wellness issue. Familiarize yourself with possible indicators of distress, as well as on-campus resources that can help you if you are unsure as to the seriousness of what you are observing.
- Familiarize yourself with the University of Calgary Campus Mental Health Strategy. The University of Calgary is committed 'to the mental health and well-being of its university family'. As such, it has implemented a strategy to create a 'campus culture where students, faculty, staff and post-doctoral scholars feel supported and valued'. By familiarizing yourself with this strategy, you can determine your role in creating this culture.
- **Know who to contact for advice or support for the student and/or yourself.** Supervising a student who is managing complex issues (health-related or otherwise) can be demanding. Consider visiting [Staff Wellness](#) for support.

Ensure Professional Conduct. The supervisory committee should ensure that the relationship between the student and supervisor remains professional. This also pertains to members of the supervisory committee and the student. Given the power imbalance that exists within the academy, any romantic or sexual relationship (perceived consensual or otherwise) is highly discouraged and should be avoided. If you become aware of such a relationship, it is your responsibility to report the situation to your Department Head or Dean. If the student comes to you with concerns, you should direct them to any of the following resources who will provide confidential support:

- Graduate Program Director
- Graduate Academic and International Specialists in the Faculty of Graduate Studies (grad.advisor@ucalgary.ca)
- Sexual Violence Support Advocate: 403-220-2208
- Protected Disclosure Advisor, Office of Diversity, Equity and Protected Disclosure (ODEPD): 403-220-4086
- Student Ombuds Office: ombuds@ucalgary.ca
- Student Wellness Centre: 403.210.9355

Help Train Graduate Students for Future Careers. Both Graduate Students and Supervisors can sometimes focus on the importance of the Graduate Student's research to the extent that they neglect the development of attributes

and skills in the student that could help them progress in their graduate program and be successful in their future careers. You can encourage students to attend My GradSkills workshops. These workshops offered through the Faculty of Graduate Studies cover topics designed to directly aid students in completing their degrees, such as learning to format their theses, as well as to learn skills that will help them in their graduate program and beyond, such as time management.