

Supervisory Practices Complaint Procedures

Preamble

From time to time, students or other Faculty Members make complaints to the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (hereafter the “Dean”) regarding graduate supervision. In all cases, attempts should be made to first resolve complaints within the academic unit. Such efforts should involve the supervisory committee, the graduate advisor, and the head of the academic unit to a degree that is reasonable considering the nature of the complaint. A record of efforts at resolution at the academic unit level should accompany any complaint brought forward to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This document sets out the internal procedures of the Faculty of Graduate Studies in responding to such complaints involving faculty members.

1. Dispute Resolution

1. 1 Where the Dean has received a complaint regarding graduate supervision, the Dean may determine that the complaint is likely to be best addressed:
 - a) by mediation;
 - b) by professional development or education;
 - c) by fact-finding by an assigned group or individual leading to a consensual solution among parties to the complaint;
 - d) if efforts at a consensual solution have failed, by a determination of the facts together with recommendations to the Dean; or
 - e) where it appears that there are reasonable grounds to believe that a Faculty Association Member has engaged in culpable conduct, by disciplinary processes.
- 1.2. Where the Dean has determined that the dispute should be resolved by means of one or more methods set out in section 1.1 a), b), c) or d), the Dean may refer the matter to an Associate Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (Associate Dean) to conduct these processes.
- 1.3. If the Dean has reasonable grounds to believe that the situation falls within section 1.1 e), the Dean will follow the processes and procedures of Article 56 of the Framework Agreement.

2. Unavailability of Associate Dean

- 2.1 If the Dean so decides and, in any case, if no Associate Dean is available to undertake the processes set out in section 1.1 a), b), c) or d), either because the Associate Dean has other commitments that would interfere with a timely solution to the problem or because the Associate Dean’s involvement in the matter to date might lead one or more of the parties to have concerns about his or her neutrality, the Dean may refer the matter to the Supervisory Practice Group.

3. Supervisory Practice Group constituted

- 3.1 The Dean will appoint nine persons with one member representing each of the faculties having graduate programs to form a Supervisory Practice Group (SPG). The Dean will appoint one of the members as Chair of the SPG for a term of one year.
- 3.2 Members of the SPG must be members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and should have extensive experience in graduate supervision.

4. Functions of the SPG

- 4.1. When requested by the Dean, the Supervisory Practice Group (SPG) of the Faculty of Graduate Studies has the following functions:
- To examine and attempt to resolve complaints on a consensual basis with respect to graduate supervision, including by mediation or negotiation;
 - To make recommendations to the Dean with respect to particular complaints that have been referred to it if consensual resolution fails.
- 4.2 The Dean may also seek general advice from the SPG as a whole with respect to policies and best practice with respect to graduate supervision.

5. Complaint Process of the SPG

- 5.2 When the Dean refers a matter to the SPG, the Chair of the SPG (Chair) will consult with those responsible for the relevant graduate program in the particular academic unit and then establish a sub-committee of the SPG, normally consisting of three persons, with at least one member from a discipline related to that principally concerned in the complaint. The Chair should avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest in the make-up of the sub-committee. The Chair will either designate one of the sub-committee members to chair the sub-committee or will assume the chair him/herself. In either case, the Chair of the SPG will be available to consult with the sub-committee throughout.
- 5.3 Once established, the sub-committee will proceed by means of informal, facilitative and collegial efforts to address the problem. If the sub-committee determines that the problem may be resolved by mediation, the sub-committee shall facilitate such mediation and may designate one or more of its members to mediate the dispute. If the sub-committee considers that the matter reveals a need for professional development, the sub-committee may undertake those educative processes or may recommend to the Dean that seminars, information sessions or similar procedures are needed.
- 5.4 In its processes, the sub-committee will make every effort to resolve the matter through a solution that is acceptable to the complainant, the academic unit, the Dean and any person affected by the complaint.
- 5.5 Subject to s. 5.9, where the sub-committee determines that the facts are unclear or where efforts to reach an all-party consensual solution fail, the sub-committee shall make inquiries, meet with the parties, relevant staff, and others whom the sub-

committee may determine, attempt to determine the facts, and recommend to the parties and to the Dean measures to deal with the situation.

- 5.6 The sub-committee's process is intended to be informal, facilitative and collegial, proceeding in a non-adversarial manner, without formal documentary submissions and without formal hearings. However, any person against whom a complaint has been made must have a fair opportunity to reply to the complaint and the sub-committee must protect confidential information in a manner consistent with the University's obligations.
- 5.7 In coming to consensual resolutions or in making recommendations, the sub-committee may distinguish between actions that are, in its view, mandatory versus those that are simply recommended, or propose a specified duration for certain measures.
- 5.8 The sub-committee may determine that a consensual resolution is not feasible or desirable. In such case, the sub-committee shall report to the Chair of the SPG and to the Dean. The Dean will then determine whether the sub-committee's recommendations (if any) should be implemented or whether any further action is required. If the sub-committee determines that the matter is not suitable for a consensual solution, the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies may request the sub-committee to report its findings to date or to continue with its inquiry and make recommendations to the Dean after it has concluded its processes.
- 5.9 If the sub-committee, at any time, becomes aware of conduct on the part of a Faculty Association member that might reasonably lead to discipline, the sub-committee shall immediately report the matter to the Dean together with any facts that support its conclusion and it will withdraw from the process at that time. If the Dean decides to proceed with disciplinary measures, Article 56 of the Framework Agreement must be followed.
- 5.10 If a Faculty Association member refuses to cooperate with the sub-committee, the sub-committee should refer the matter to the Dean for possible investigation under Article 56 of the Framework Agreement.

6. Resolutions and recommendations concerning complaints

- 6.1 The sub-committee will report any consensual resolution, any findings and any recommendations to the Dean. The Dean must approve any consensual resolution before it is implemented.
- 6.2 If the Dean considers that findings of the sub-committee support disciplinary action against any person, the Dean may initiate the appropriate processes. For Faculty Association members, these will be proceedings in accordance with Article 56 of the Framework Agreement. Where Article 56 is not applicable, the Dean will follow a fair procedure appropriate to the circumstances and will permit the person a fair right to reply to the complaint. This does not, however, require the Dean to hold an in-person hearing unless credibility is an issue. Nothing in this document precludes the right of a student to appeal to the Senate Committee on Appeals from any decision of the Dean arising out of recommendations of the SPG.

7. Examples of Resolutions for Complaints and Issues within these Guidelines

7.1 Subject to s. 7.2, the following are examples of actions that may form the subject of a consensual resolution or that may be recommended by an Associate Dean or a sub-committee of the SPG. They are not intended to be exhaustive.

- Clarification of the academic unit's procedures and of means of compliance with those procedures;
- Establishment of a schedule of regular meetings between supervisor and student;
- Guidance or direction to a student or supervisor with respect to appropriate conduct;
- Required attendance by a supervisor at a professional-development workshop;
- Change of supervisor;
- Addition of a co-supervisor in a particular case, or the requirement of a co-supervisor in all present and future supervisions;
- Limitation in the number of students admitted by a program or supervised by a particular individual;
- Suspension of supervisory privileges until specified conditions have been met;
- Resignation or removal from membership in the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

7.2 No action that would constitute discipline may be taken against a Member of the Faculty Association without following the procedures in Article 56 of the Framework Agreement.

7.3 At some later date, any conditions imposed through any of these processes may be varied by the Dean upon the request of the graduate program of the relevant academic unit or a faculty member directly concerned on the basis that circumstances have changed. The Dean shall consult with academic unit's graduate advisor and the head of the academic unit, and may (if he/she so wishes) refer the matter back to the SPG, before deciding.