



Saint Mary's University

SCIENCE

PhD in Applied Science Establishment of Supervisory Committee Form

Information for Students & Faculty

- The attached form must be used to establish a student's Supervisory Committee.
- A Supervisory Committee must be established for all new PhD students within the student's first two months in the program.

Role of the Supervisory Committee

- The Supervisory Committee plays several important roles over the course of the student's degree progress:
 1. Guidance in both academic and research skill development,
 2. Impartial evaluation of the student's progress in both formal examinations and informal committee meetings,
 3. Impartial evaluation of the final Dissertation and Defence,
 4. Impartial mediation in the event of student/Supervisor conflict.

Supervisory Committee Makeup

- A PhD student's Supervisory Committee must consist of a minimum of three faculty members:
 1. the research thesis Supervisor,
 2. a faculty member who doesn't specialize in the student's area of research (and typically isn't from the same department as the Supervisor), and
 3. a faculty member or other expert in the area of research who holds a PhD or equivalent.
- Supervisory Committee members may be external to the university.

Things to Consider When Establishing a Supervisory Committee

- **Graduate Academic Regulation 16e(i) states that "co-supervision is only allowed in exceptional cases and must have approval from both the GPC and the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research."**

- While faculty often believe that additional supervision is beneficial to the student, the reality is that it adds to the student's burden having the expectations of two supervisors to meet instead of one.
- In the rare case where co-supervision is warranted, a minimum of four committee members are needed (supervisors plus two additional committee members).
- **Not everyone involved with the project needs to be on the Supervisory Committee.** A larger committee will inevitably create problems with scheduling Committee Meetings and milestone examinations.
- **Consider the expertise that will be required to evaluate the student's knowledge during the Qualifying Examination.** It is best to ensure this expertise is on the Committee at this stage to ensure proper development.
- Given that one of the roles of the Supervisory Committee is to mediate in the event of problems arising, a committee member from outside the home department of the student and Supervisor is very valuable.
- Supervisory Committee composition can be changed if necessary by submitting an updated version of this form.

Establishing the Supervisory Committee

- The student should consult with their Supervisor to identify potential faculty members for their Supervisory Committee.
- The student should complete Part I of the attached form, and then obtain signatures from those faculty willing to serve on their committee (electronic signatures are fine).
- When complete, the student should email the form to keith.bain@smu.ca.
- The completed form must be submitted within two months of starting the PhD program.