PhD Supervisory Committee Guidelines

1. Establishing the Supervisory Committee

All PhD students are required to establish a Doctoral Supervisory Committee (DSC) before the end of their **first year of study**, in consultation with their research supervisor(s).

For students who were more than 12 months into their PhD studies as of Fall 2026, the DSC must be established by the end of December 2026. These students must hold their initial DSC meeting by the end of February 2027, after which they will follow the regular annual December meeting schedule.

The committee will normally consist of:

- The student's research supervisor;
- At least two additional faculty members who are not the student's supervisors;
- Where applicable, a co-supervisor, in addition to the two other committee members.

Committee members are normally selected from eligible TMU faculty, although external experts may be included with approval from the Associate Chair (Graduate Studies).

Students must complete and submit the Supervisory Committee Approval Form to the Graduate Program Office to confirm their committee membership. Subsequent changes to committee membership require approval from the Associate Chair (Graduate Studies).

2. Annual Supervisory Committee Meetings

PhD students are required to meet with their DSC **at least once annually**, normally during the designated meeting period in December after the Fall examination period.

Students are encouraged to hold an initial meeting with their DSC within the first 12 months of beginning their PhD studies. This meeting is intended primarily as an introduction to the committee and an opportunity to discuss the proposed direction of the student's research. Preparation requirements are minimal, and a formal research progress presentation is not expected.

- Regular meetings are scheduled for **60 to 75 minutes**.
- Supervisors are responsible for coordinating meeting availability with the student and all committee members.
- Meetings may be held in person or in a hybrid format.
- Supervisors must book an available meeting slot using the designated online booking system and invite all participants.

Meetings outside the designated December period may be arranged in accordance with the approved supervisory committee procedures. Supervisors and committee members should make every effort to remain available during the designated annual December meeting period to facilitate scheduling.

3. Preparing for the Meeting

Students are normally required to prepare a **Supervisory Committee Update Report (SCUR)**, not exceeding 10 pages, and circulate it to committee members at least **one week before** their scheduled meeting.

The report should summarize research progress, address recommendations from previous meetings, and outline research priorities and plans for the coming year.

If an introductory DSC meeting is held during the first year of study, submission of a SCUR is optional. The meeting provides an opportunity for the student and committee to discuss the proposed research direction, including preliminary literature review, research objectives and planning, as appropriate. A record of the meeting should be maintained, even where a SCUR is not submitted.

A regular meeting will normally include:

- 20 minutes – Student presentation
- 30 minutes – Questions, discussion and committee feedback
- 10 minutes – Committee deliberation

4. Progress Assessment and Reporting

Following the meeting, the DSC will document the student's research progress, provide feedback, and identify key recommendations or action items for the coming year.

The committee's assessment will be recorded on the Supervisory Committee Progress Report, which will be submitted to the Graduate Program Office and retained in the student's academic file.

At subsequent meetings, students should address previous recommendations and discuss any changes to their research direction.

5. Special Supervisory Committee Meetings

Special DSC meetings may be held for the following purposes:

- **Candidacy Examination:** The Thesis Proposal replaces the regular SCUR and must be circulated at least two weeks before the meeting.
- **Research Completion:** Normally held approximately 6–8 months before the anticipated dissertation defence to assess research completion and readiness to proceed toward the final examination.
- **Exceptional Circumstances:** Additional meetings may be arranged when necessary to address significant academic or research-related matters.

Special meetings may have different preparation requirements and durations, depending on their purpose.

For questions regarding Supervisory Committee requirements or procedures, please contact the Aerospace Engineering Graduate Program Office.