PhD Supervisory Committee

Purpose

The Supervisory Committee (SC) is a resource for PhD students to ensure every opportunity for success. Its role is to provide support by expanding the range of knowledge and experiences available to the student. The main goal of the SC meetings is to provide constructive, objective feedback to the student and the supervisor regarding the progress to date. The most important function of the SC is to provide both the student and supervisor with necessary perspective on the student's progress. The supervisory committee may also be called upon to take a more active role in cases where supervisors are absent for an extended period of time or in cases of disputes between supervisors and students. The student should view the SC as a resource for dealing with any problems that may occur during their study.

SC meetings must take place at least once a year and represents an opportunity for the student to present their work to a committee of faculty members who are from the same or related academic disciplines as the student. This presentation is followed by feedback from the committee members. When faculty agree to sit on a supervisory committee, they are agreeing to be available for consultation and discussion. They will also serve on the examination committee.

PhD Students have the ability to request an SC meeting whenever they feel it is necessary or would be beneficial and are strongly encouraged to do so. Annual meetings are a requirement, but the committee can and should be convened as often as necessary.

Supervisory Committee Composition

The supervisor is required to form the Supervisory Committee. This committee consists of the supervisor and two additional faculty members from MIE program. Where appropriate, a Yeates

School of Graduate Studies faculty member from outside MIE graduate program, a faculty member from outside the Yeates School of Graduate Studies or an expert professional In the field of the dissertation may be recommended as a member of the Supervisory Committee. Supervisory committee members are subject to the approval of the Associate Chair Graduate Studies. Selection of supervisory committee members are based on:

- the collective experiences of the people involved
- their ability to contribute to the intended study
- their availability and willingness to serve

The Supervisor will chair the Supervisory Committee. The supervisor is responsible for calling SC meetings and arranging a time and place suitable for all members of the committee. While the supervisor has the major responsibility for overseeing the student's research and progress, the members of the Supervisory Committee also have a responsibility toward the student.

Role and responsibilities of supervisory committees

I. Annual Progress Review Meetings

Supervisory Committee progress review meetings are required at least once a year and the progress report must be completed by May 15.

Prior to each meeting the student (with help from the supervisor) should produce a presentation that:

(i) summarizes recent progress in the research,
(ii) lists the major tasks that remain, and a timetable for completion and ,
(iii) lists any difficulty or concerns they may have in completing their research work.

There should be enough detail to allow the committee to assess the progress of the student. Additional meetings may be arranged to discuss problems and progress.

A progress review meeting begins with a student presentation of no more than 20 minutes, followed by questions from the committee. Following the meeting, the committee assesses the student's progress. If the assessment is "unsatisfactory", another meeting may be scheduled to determine the next course of action. The presentation should bring up the progress as well as any problems. It should be emphasized that the SC meeting is not meant to be an exam. The student

will be expected to sign the SC report form acknowledging they are required to fulfill the stipulated conditions. After the meeting, the signed report form is submitted to the GPA.

All committee members must attend the committee meeting before signing the report (in-person or remotely). The feedback from the committee should also be reflected in the winter semester progress report.

II. Approval of research proposal

The supervisory committee is responsible for evaluating whether the candidate has the appropriate knowledge and expertise to undertake a dissertation in the selected field or area of study and whether the expected outcomes of the study proposed meet the requirement of a PhD degree. This is accomplished through candidacy exam procedure described in the following document:

http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/graduate/mechanical/documents/PhDCandidacyExaminationGuide%20Feb%202015%20FINAL.pdf

In cases when the timing of the candidacy examination allows, the oral candidacy exam can substitute for the annual supervisory committee meeting.

III. Evaluation of the readiness of the dissertation to be examined (Preliminary PhD examination)

Members of the supervisory committee are expected to provide constructive criticism of the thesis prior to final dissertation exam. This is accomplished through the preliminary PhD examination described in the following document:

http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/graduate/mechanical/documents/MIEGPPhDDissertationGuide.pdf

In cases when the timing of the preliminary PhD examination allows, it can substitute for the annual supervisory committee meeting.

IV. Membership in PhD Dissertation examining committee

The supervisory committee members are the internal examiners on the PhD Examining Committee (YSGS Faculty - Within program). As such, they cannot be appointed as internal-external examiner (YSGS Faculty - Outside program). For more details, see Senate policy 142.