



Guidelines for academic supervision and guidance as well as the monitoring of student progress at the University of Helsinki

An overhaul of the structure of the education provided by the University of Helsinki has been prepared in connection with the Big Wheel education reform under the leadership of the University's Academic Affairs Council. When the University was planning the reform, it decided that guidelines for academic supervision and guidance as well as the monitoring of student progress would be drafted once the new degree programmes were established.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide an overall picture of academic supervision, guidance and monitoring at the University of Helsinki. The guidelines support teaching and research staff, undergraduate and doctoral students as well as University Services in the supervision and guidance of students and the monitoring of student progress. The guidelines also provide a basis for the design of information systems, applications and processes employed in supervision, guidance and monitoring. In addition, the teaching and research staff and University Services will together determine a division of duties based on the guidelines.

The preparation of the Guidelines for academic supervision and guidance as well as the monitoring of student progress began in the autumn of 2016, and an extensive round of commenting was conducted in the spring of 2017. The Academic Affairs Council discussed the guidelines at its meetings on 7 November 2016, 19 December 2016 and 16 October 2017. The steering group for doctoral education discussed the guidelines at its meetings on 19 December 2016 and 2 May 2017, and the cooperation group for teaching and teaching support discussed them on 29 September 2017.

I hereby decide on the guidelines for academic supervision and guidance as well as the monitoring of student progress as specified in the Appendix. The guidelines will enter into force on 1 August 2020. The preparations for services, information systems, applications, processes and the division of duties between the parties involved will be initiated immediately.

These guidelines supersede the provisions of the Etappi monitoring system for postgraduate students and for students pursuing first- and second-cycle degrees, as well as the policies concerning the supervision and progress monitoring of postgraduate students (Decision of the University Senate, 8 June 2006).

Rector

Jukka Kola

Senior Advisor

Päivi Aronen

Appendix: Guidelines for academic supervision and guidance as well as the monitoring of student progress at the University of Helsinki

GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC SUPERVISION AND GUIDANCE AS WELL AS THE MONITORING OF STUDENT PROGRESS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

I OBJECTIVES OF THE GUIDELINES

- To support teaching and research staff, undergraduate and doctoral students as well as University Services in the supervision and guidance of students and the monitoring of student progress
- To support the progress of studies and promote seamless study processes and student-focused learning
- To ensure that the University of Helsinki offers adequate and timely supervision, guidance and support for its degree students
- To enhance equal access to supervision, guidance and support in the various degree programmes
- To advance the status and visibility of the supervision provided by the teaching and research staff
- To clarify the division of duties and develop cooperation between the teaching and research staff and University Services
- To determine practices for academic supervision and guidance as well as the monitoring of student progress to establish a basis for the planning of related information systems and applications.

II GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. These guidelines will apply to all degree programmes leading to a first- and second-cycle (Bachelor's and Master's) degree as well as a third-cycle (doctoral) degree. They will be implemented in the new degree programmes during the transition period for the education reform, which ends on 31 July 2020.
2. Supervision and guidance in this document refers to the provision of support for the learning process, personal development and professional growth of undergraduate and doctoral students. Overall, the means used encompass communication, advice, as well as general and specialised supervision and guidance.
3. The teaching and research staff provide **supervision** relevant to teaching and research that requires consideration of the academic content of studies and disciplines, including supervising the drafting of personal study plans (PSP) as well as theses and dissertations. University Services is responsible for **communication, advice and specialised guidance** in its own areas of expertise, including student and researcher exchange, traineeships and careers, and the consultation provided by counselling psychologists.

4. In Finnish- and Swedish-language degree programmes and in multilingual degree programmes, supervision and advice are offered in the languages of Finland (Finnish or Swedish, depending on the student's native language), or in English or another language as agreed with the student. If the student's native language is other than Finnish or Swedish, supervision and advice are offered in English, or in another language as agreed with the student. In English-language Master's and doctoral programmes, supervision may be offered in English only.

5. Degree students at the University of Helsinki are entitled to receive supervision and guidance that supports their learning and professional growth as part of their study and research processes, and as a separate service, when necessary. Undergraduate and doctoral students are responsible for their studies, and doctoral students are also responsible for their own research.

6. Supervisors may provide supervision and advice for groups, seminars, undergraduate- or doctoral-level peer groups organised by the supervisor, or in individual meetings between the supervisor and undergraduate or doctoral student. Supervision and advice can also be provided online.

7. The personal study plan (PSP) is a process spanning the entire duration of studies that supports student progress and the development of expert skills. The personal study plan enhances the planning of studies and the management of the study process. Drafting a personal study plan is required for all degrees.

The drafting process and monitoring of the progress of studies are supported through supervision, guidance and advice. The University offers a web tool to assist in the drafting and processing of personal study plans. The monitoring of student progress is also based on an information system.

8. Supervision duties will be clearly and concretely integrated into the work plans of the teaching and research staff. University Services offers support, training and material for the teaching and research staff engaged in supervision.

III POLICIES FOR SUPPORTING ACADEMIC SUPERVISION AND GUIDANCE AS WELL AS THE PROGRESS MONITORING OF STUDENTS PURSUING A FIRST- AND SECOND-CYCLE DEGREE

9. Degree programme steering groups are responsible for the provision of supervision for students. Supervisors will agree with their superiors about including supervision duties in their work plans.

10. The degree programme steering groups are responsible for ensuring that each student will be assigned a **coordinating teacher or group of coordinating teachers**, who are responsible for the supervision related to the drafting of the personal study plan (PSP). If a group of coordinating teachers is responsible for the supervision, their duties will be defined and communicated to the students.

The coordinating teacher or group of teachers is especially concerned with the integration of students into their degree programme and its student and academic communities at the initial stages of studies.

APPENDIX to rector's decision

Discussed by the Academic Affairs Council on 16 October 2017
Preparing official: Päivi Aronen, tel. 02941 22537

University Services annually provides the coordinating teacher or group of teachers data on the progress of students under their supervision. The degree programme steering group will determine how the data concerning the progress of studies will be discussed with students on an annual basis.

11. The degree programme steering groups are responsible for ensuring that each student will be assigned a first supervisor and possibly other supervisors to supervise the writing of their thesis.

12. The degree programme steering groups annually process the student progress monitoring data and decide on measures to be taken to support students whose studies may be delayed, who progress according to the target schedule and who are ahead of schedule. University Services provides the monitoring data for the steering groups' consideration.

IV POLICIES FOR SUPPORTING ACADEMIC SUPERVISION AND GUIDANCE AS WELL AS THE PROGRESS MONITORING OF STUDENTS PURSUING A DOCTORAL DEGREE

13. Doctoral programme steering groups are responsible for the provision of supervision for doctoral students. Supervisors will agree with their superiors about integrating supervision duties into their work plans.

14. Special attention will be paid to the supervision, guidance and advising of doctoral students at the initial stages of their studies. Doctoral programmes are responsible for ensuring that new doctoral students are acquainted with the objectives of the doctoral degree, the required studies and dissertation, the practices for supervision and monitoring, the research environment and procedures for problematic situations.

15. Each doctoral student will be assigned a **first supervisor** to be responsible for the supervision of the doctoral dissertation, and any further supervisors. The faculty that admitted the student to pursue the degree will appoint the supervisors at the proposal of the relevant doctoral programme.

16. Each doctoral student will be assigned a **coordinating professor**, who must be a professor employed by the faculty which will grant the degree or a docent in the same faculty, and who is familiar with the instructions concerning doctoral education and doctoral degrees at the University of Helsinki. The first supervisor may be appointed as the coordinating professor, provided that he or she fulfils the above criteria. The coordinating professor will be appointed at the same time as the supervisors.

17. The duties of the coordinating professor are as follows:

- To ensure the continuity of the supervision arrangements of doctoral students together with the doctoral programme steering group
- To ensure that doctoral students are aware of the requirements set for the doctoral degree and of the procedures for the preliminary and public examinations of the dissertation
- To approve the study modules included in the doctoral degree, unless otherwise specified in the curriculum of the doctoral programme

18. At the beginning of the supervision process, the doctoral student and the supervisor(s) draft a **supervision agreement**, which will define the obligations, rights and responsibilities of the supervisor(s) and the student, as well as the division of duties between the supervisors, the schedule of the dissertation project and the methods of communication between the doctoral student and the supervisor(s). The purpose of the supervision agreement is to help the supervisor and the doctoral student to discuss and agree on the principles and practices of supervision so that

APPENDIX to rector's decision

Discussed by the Academic Affairs Council on 16 October 2017
Preparing official: Päivi Aronen, tel. 02941 22537

the duties, roles and expectations of all the parties to the agreement are clear. The agreement will be updated as necessary.

19. The doctoral student and the first supervisor, possibly assisted by the coordinating professor, will draft a **personal study plan (PSP)** for the doctoral student during the first year of studies. The plan must include the objectives of the dissertation project as well as a schedule for the completion of the dissertation and studies included in the degree.

20. The doctoral programme steering group will assign each doctoral student a **monitoring group** to support the dissertation project and progress of studies. The monitoring group must include at least one member with qualifications comparable to those of a holder of the title of docent, and other members. The coordinating professor assigned to the doctoral student may be a member of the monitoring group if he or she is not the dissertation supervisor. The monitoring group may include members from outside the University of Helsinki. The monitoring group must be appointed during the first term of doctoral studies in accordance with instructions issued by the doctoral programme steering group.

21. The duties of the monitoring group are as follows:

- To provide feedback on the progress of research and studies
- To support the completion of doctoral studies in the target duration and to monitor that other duties are not preventing the scheduled progress of the dissertation
- To issue recommendations for the continuation or interruption of the dissertation as well as for changes to be made in supervision
- To support doctoral students in career planning
- To support the progress of high-quality doctoral studies by offering expertise in the topic of the dissertation

22. The monitoring group will convene at least once a year in a manner to be further specified by the doctoral programme. The monitoring group must study the doctoral students' research plans and personal study plans and discuss with the students their schedule and progress with research and studies, any factors that may be hindering their progress, as well as their postdoctoral career plans.

23. The supervisors, the doctoral student and the monitoring group will together annually evaluate the progress of the dissertation project. The evaluation will be documented in the student information system using the following three-tier scale:

Stage I: The dissertation is in its initial stage (1–49% completed).

Stage II: The dissertation is about halfway finished (50–74% completed).

Stage III: The dissertation is in its final stage and will be publicly examined within 12 months (75–100% completed).

24. The supervisor may participate in the meetings of the monitoring group, which, however, will also hold discussions with the doctoral student without the supervisor being present. If necessary, the monitoring group will inform the doctoral programme steering group of any problems in the supervision relationship. To address problematic situations, the University will develop a clear administrative procedure which will take into account the doctoral student's position as a student, and possibly as an employee, of the University of Helsinki. If necessary, the monitoring group may be consulted when addressing problematic situations.

25. The doctoral programme steering group will annually discuss the research and academic progress of students in the programme and will decide on measures to be taken to support the

APPENDIX to rector's decision

Discussed by the Academic Affairs Council on 16 October 2017
Preparing official: Päivi Aronen, tel. 02941 22537

progress of students according to the target schedule. The progress evaluation will be based on data such as the assessment of the first supervisor on the progress of studies and research, the credits recorded in the student information system, the doctoral student's status as a full- or part-time student as well as reports provided by the doctoral student. **University Services** provides the monitoring data for the steering groups' consideration.