M.Ed. – Graduate Supervision Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines eligibility and responsibilities for 1) graduate supervision for the M.Ed. program, and 2) membership on graduate student supervisory committees. It also stipulates the requirements for when a graduate student can begin their capstone project.

The supervisor's role is to act as an academic mentor and an evaluator of the student's performance. The supervisor must provide professional guidance and help the student acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to plan, conduct, and complete the capstone project.

The supervisor also mentors adjunct faculty who are engaged in secondary supervisory roles, whether the adjunct faculty is acting as a co-supervisor or a committee member. The supervisor is a permanent member of the Faculty of Education at St. Mary's with either a tenured or tenure-track appointment.

Members of the student's supervisory committee aid in mentoring as they engage in each step of the capstone project process and act as second or third readers of the capstone project. The supervisor maintains the ultimate evaluative role. Members of the supervisory committee may be permanent members of the Faculty of Education at St. Mary's with either a tenured or tenure-track appointment or adjunct faculty.

All graduate students in a program with a research project requirement must have a supervisory committee and receive permission from their primary supervisor to begin their capstone project.

2. Scope and Authority

This policy is applicable to:

2.1 Eligible full-time and sessional/adjunct faculty members who supervise graduate students in the M.Ed. program, those serving on supervisory committees, and the Graduate Program Advisor.

Approval Authority	Responsible Office	Effective Date	Date Last Revisited	Review Frequency
Academic Council	Academic	Sept 23, 2024	N/A	Every 5 years

2.2   The assignment and provision of supervisory duties to eligible faculty members; and graduate students in a capstone project-based program.

The Dean is responsible for determining deadlines, guidelines and procedures for capstone project preparation and submission. The VP Academic is the Policy Owner and oversees the implementation, administration and interpretation of this Policy.

3. Definitions
For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

"Graduate Research Supervisor", "Supervisor" or **"Supervision Committee Chair"** refers to a faculty member with a Graduate Faculty Appointment who oversees a graduate student's research and academic progress towards successful completion of the student's Program.

"Supervisee" or **"student(s)"** refers to graduate students being supervised by a supervisor.

"Capstone" refers to the application of research and a written report that are assigned to all M.Ed. graduate students as part of the research project component of the M.Ed. program.

"Master's Degree" means an advanced degree in a specific area of disciplinary or interdisciplinary study. It is normally completed after receiving an undergraduate degree. It contains a prescribed set of courses, and/or other units of study, research or practice within an area of disciplinary or interdisciplinary study.

"Graduate Program Advisor" means academic administrators with a Graduate Faculty Appointment within an academic unit who, together with the Dean, help to oversee and ensure the success of the Program and its students.

"Graduate Faculty Appointment" means a faculty member with an academic appointment (tenured or tenure-track) at the University who has been approved to participate in a graduate Program.

"Program" means a complete set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice, the successful completion of which qualifies the candidate for a formal credential (degree with or without major; diploma), provided all other academic and financial requirements are met.

4. Supervisory Committee

Each graduate student in a capstone-based graduate program requires a supervisory committee. The supervisory committee should be formed early, meet regularly and maintain formal meeting records.

5. Appointment of the Supervisory Committee

5.1 The supervisory committee is appointed by the Dean or Graduate Program Director after consultation with the Graduate Research Supervisor and the student.

5.2 The appointment of committee members is made no later than eight months after the student begins their program.

5.3 The supervisory committee must have at least one scheduled meeting in the first 10 months of study.

6. Composition of the Committee

6.1 Normally, each supervisory committee for a master's level candidate consists of the candidate's Graduate Research Supervisor(s) and at least one other faculty member from the University that meets the requirements of supervisory faculty or an external expert who meets the faculty requirements for graduate student supervision.

6.2 The chair of the committee is usually the Graduate Research Supervisor but may be someone other than the candidate's Graduate Research Supervisor, as appointed by the Dean or Graduate Program Director of the candidate's home faculty.

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7. Non-voting Advisor

7.1 The supervisory committee may request a non-voting advisor to a master's supervisory committee, upon the approval of the Dean or Graduate Program Director.

7.2 A non-voting advisor would normally be an industry or discipline expert who does not have and would not normally be given a Graduate Faculty Appointment.

7.3 The non-voting advisor would be allowed to attend and ask questions during master's capstone project defense but will not be permitted to vote.

8. Responsibilities of the Supervisory Committee

The supervisory committee's main responsibilities include the following:

– Advise the student and help define the course of study.

- Assess and approve the student's research proposal.
- Provide support to the student and Graduate Research Supervisor by broadening and deepening the range of expertise and experience available.
- Be reasonably accessible to the student to discuss and suggest other sources of information.
- Offer comments when requested on written work submitted by the student.
- Review the student's progress toward successful completion of the capstone project, with scheduled meetings at least once per year.
- Provide constructive feedback and provocative discussion of the student's Program of study, thereby exposing the student to a wider range of expertise and ideas than can be provided by the Graduate Research Supervisor alone.
- Report progress to the Dean or Graduate Program Advisor and recommend continuation in the Program in compliance with Grading System, Research Progress and Academic Standing (Graduate) policy.
- Recommend to the Graduate Program Advisor and/or the Dean whether the capstone project work is considered ready to proceed to evaluation.

9. Chair's Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the chair of the supervisory committee include the following:
- Convene and run regular supervisory committee meetings.
- Keep the Dean or Graduate Program Advisor informed of the student's progress.
- Recommend potential external examiners.
- Ensure a copy of the student's capstone project is sent to members of the examining Committee.
- Ensure that the examining committee members are appraised of relevant intellectual property and other professional considerations prior to the capstone project being released to them.

10. Graduate Research Supervisor's Responsibilities

The supervision of M.Ed. students begin following the completion of students' second research methods course through to the final presentation of the supervisee's capstone project.

Duties Include:
- Mentor the supervisee throughout the research process and help supervisees to complete their capstone project successfully.
- Help ensure the student has adequate support during the capstone project .
- Give the supervisee ongoing guidance regarding academic standards for scholarship and research.
- Be available and accessible to the supervisee.
- Provide the student with advice and constructive criticism to support the achievement of high academic standards.
- Respond promptly to the academic needs and queries of students.
- Assign additional readings where necessary for the successful completion of the capstone project.
- Hold regularly scheduled meetings with supervisees at agreed-upon times.
- Help supervisees develop an achievable timeline for the completion of their project's components and to help ensure they meet those goals.

11. Eligibility of Supervisors

To be eligible to be primary supervisor of a master's capstone project, a faculty member must:

11.1 Be a member of the Faculty of Education at St. Mary's University in a tenured or tenure-track appointment;

11.2 Have a Ph.D. or Ed.D; and

11.3 Be active in an area of educational research relevant to the supervisee's capstone project within the last 5 years.

A member of another program, or a sessional/adjunct faculty member, may serve as a co-supervisor (secondary supervisor) providing that the primary supervisor meets the above criteria.

12. Selection of Supervisors

12.1 Supervisory duties shall be assigned by the Dean of Education in consultation with the Student, and the Department Chair, the Graduate Program Advisor, and any Faculty members opting to serve as supervisors.

12.2 Tenure-track faculty members will be given priority in the assignment of students.

12.3 Students will be assigned to supervisors before completing the students' second methods course.

13. Supervisory Reassignment

13.1 Switching of supervisors shall only take place under certain rare circumstances upon the approval of the Dean of Education.

13.2 Supervisors may request that a student be reassigned to another supervisor if they do not have the requisite expertise to support the student with their research project.

13.3 Students may be reassigned to another supervisor if the assigned supervisor can no longer perform their duties (e.g., medical, maternity/parental, sabbatical, or other leaves of absence).

13.4 Supervisors or students may request reassignments when conflicts between the supervisor and supervisee cannot be resolved through normal conflict resolution processes, or if the normal conflict resolution process is deemed inappropriate for the situation (e.g., human rights violations). The Dean of Education will adjudicate these requests.

13.5 Should the conflict involve the Dean of Education; the Vice President Academic will adjudicate the conflict resolution and/or reassignment.

14. Permission to Begin

Permission to begin the capstone project is given by the student's supervisory committee when there is general agreement that a sufficient plan of research has been completed. Students should consult their Graduate Research Supervisor(s) about using a style manual appropriate to the academic discipline they are working in, and they are expected to be aware of and follow all research policies and procedures.

15. Monitoring and review

This Policy will be reviewed as necessary, and at least every three years. The Dean, or successor thereof, is responsible for monitoring and reviewing this Policy.