

Ethical Guidelines for Supervision at Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet)

Issued by the Rector on 21 October 2014.

The Ethical Guidelines for Supervision at Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet) are enclosed with the supervision contract and employment contract for PhD candidates.

Introduction:

Ethical Guidelines for Supervision at OsloMet shall apply to academic supervisors and students in bachelor, master, and PhD programmes (hereinafter referred to as 'students' at all three levels). The guidelines primarily concern individual supervision.

OsloMet expects all supervisors to perform their duties in a professional, considerate, and ethically exemplary matter.

OsloMet has overall responsibility for ensuring that the quality of the supervision provided holds a high standard. At the same time, the departments and the individual supervisors have responsibility for administrating and practising such supervision. The managements at all three levels have a particular responsibility if they become aware of undesirable circumstances in a supervisory relationship.

The supervision provided must satisfy academic as well as personal considerations of individuals in the best possible way.

Students are also expected to contribute to ensuring that the supervision works as best as possible.

Ethical guidelines

The obligations of the faculty (or department) to its students:

- a) The faculty (or department) must assure the quality of its supervision through training and/or by raising awareness about supervision.
- b) The supervisor must give his/her cooperation with the student the priority that follows from the role of supervisor.
- c) The supervisor must show respect for supervision as a field of expertise. This entails respect for the specific challenges which supervision represents and an obligation to develop his/her personal expertise in the field.
- d) The supervisor must endeavour to be a good role model for his/her students.
- e) The supervisor should allocate time to discussing how the supervision should be organised. The teaching and working methods should be evaluated continuously and adjusted in line with the results of the evaluation.

The responsibility of the supervisor and student for ensuring a good result

- a) The supervisor must offer constructive, relevant, and detailed feedback.
- b) The supervisor should recognize and take action when completion of a project seems unlikely or when there are signs that the student will have difficulty completing it.
- c) The student must be prepared to devote all the time and effort the programme demands.
- d) The student must be open and receptive to the supervisor's input.
- e) The student must give the supervisor full insight into his/her work and progress, and must accept the supervisor's advice at an early stage should problems arise.

Respect for the student's personal and academic integrity

- a) The supervisor must show respect for the student's personal and academic integrity, and must refrain from any actions or opinions that may offend the student's dignity.
- b) The students must work systematically on attitudes and language use that harmonise with his/her right to respect and personal integrity, and must adopt a reflective approach to gender, ethnic origin, world view, sexual orientation, life situation, etc.
- c) The supervisor must not make remarks or behave in ways that may be perceived by the student as offensive or sexually provocative.
- d) The supervisor must be open to the student's reactions to bias, offensive language or inappropriate behaviour, and must place emphasis on correcting any such adverse behaviour.

Asymmetrical supervisory relationships

The supervisor must be conscious of the asymmetrical nature of the supervisory relationship. Academic knowledge and authority must not be exploited for academic or personal gain at the expense of others nor be exploited to offend or oppress others.

Trust and confidence

- a) The supervisor must not give priority to his/her own needs during supervision by, for example, confiding professional or personal problems to the student unless it has significance for the student's work.
- b) The supervisor should be open and receptive to any personal circumstances of the student that have significance for his/her work on the assignment or thesis.
- c) The supervisor should demonstrate extreme caution and discretion with regard to discussing colleagues during supervision.

Dual relationships

- a) The supervisor must endeavour to maintain professional distance to the student, and has a particular responsibility to avoid entering into a relationship that would place the student in a vulnerable situation. Dual relationships should not arise in a supervisory relationship.
- b) Should a romantic relationship develop between the supervisor, the student, the head of faculty/head of department must be informed, and the supervisory relationship must end.

Gifts and payment

The supervisor must not accept any form of payment for supervision beyond that agreed with OsloMet. The supervisor must carefully consider the consequences if he/she accepts gifts or other remuneration from the student.

Academic integrity

Should the supervisor want to use the student's data material or research results in his/her own publications or research, the supervisor must obtain the student's prior consent. The supervisor must comply with the accepted practice that applies for source citations and for accreditation of others' contributions to the discipline if such material is used.

Conflicts between the supervisor and the student

- a) Both parties should be able to raise problems in the cooperation or with its progress and should make every endeavour to reach a constructive solution.
- b) Should the supervisor or student find the supervisory relationship so difficult that it is impossible to continue, the supervisor and/or the student should consider involving a third party to help determine whether the supervisory relationship should be terminated or renegotiated.
- c) Should the supervisor and student feel compelled to terminate the supervisory relationship, the faculty/centre must take responsibility for changing supervisors in an orderly and satisfactory manner.

Termination of the supervisory relationship

Should the supervisory relationship be terminated before the agreed time for whatever reason, the supervisor and the student are obligated to help ensure that this is done in an orderly fashion. Both parties may request to be released from the supervisory agreement and may ask the faculty/centre to appoint a new supervisor. The supervisor may not withdraw before a new supervisor has been appointed.

Other relevant documents

- [Act relating to Universities and University Colleges](#)
- [PhD Handbook](#) (currently under revision)
- [Regulations governing the Degree of Philosophiae Doctor \(PhD\) at Oslo Metropolitan University](#)