



QUAID-E-AWAM UNIVERSITY

of Engineering, Science & Technology Nawabshah

Directorate of Postgraduate Studies & Research

Portal: pgs.quest.edu.pk



Policy for QUEST Approved PhD Supervisor

1. INTRODUCTION

Doctoral education aims to cultivate the research skills and knowledge necessary to undertake independent inquiries. Supervisors play an important role in this process by mentoring students about research trends, conducting research, and guiding their academic careers.

The approved PhD Supervisor Program was initially started by the University Grant Commission. Eventually, the Pakistan Council for Science and Technology (PCST) became the principal agency responsible for evaluating and approving faculty and researchers as PhD supervisors. However, PCST's emphasis was only on the discipline of Science and Technology. In February 2004, the whole program was taken up by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Islamabad, until 2023. Now it has been handed over to the universities (HEIs) to control and monitor this process.

The specific objective of this program was to identify and register well-qualified, experienced, and active researchers/scholars amongst faculty members of Higher Education Commission (HEC) recognized Universities/Degree Awarding Institutions (DAIs) and R&D Organizations. The rationale behind this activity was the selection of PhD supervisors for doctoral students under various disciplines.

The QUEST Approved PhD Supervisors program aims to assist PhD students in this regard by pairing them with qualified and experienced faculty members of QUEST Nawabshah. PhD students studying in any program or discipline at the university will work with QUEST approved PhD supervisors for three years.

All PhD supervisors, either already HEC approved supervisors or new applicants, are required to fill out the application form.

QUEST will issue an award letter to those PhD faculty members who have applied and attained the title '**QUEST Approved PhD Supervisor**' and meet all the terms and conditions of the program. After the expiry of three years, the already "QUEST approved PhD supervisors" will be required to update their credentials at QUEST for continuation of the title. QUEST will evaluate the case and approve it if they still meet the criteria.

All applicants, either existing approved supervisors or new applicants, are required to submit and upload their HEC Attested PhD degree/HEC Equivalence Certificate at QUEST for further processing in any case.

Note:

- All new/existing PhD supervisors are required to forward the application for '**QUEST Approved PhD Supervisor**' through the proper channel. In case of failure, the application will be rejected.
- All applicants for '**QUEST Approved PhD Supervisor**' will be required to submit a copy of the HEC Attested PhD degree/HEC PhD Equivalence Certificate along with the application form.
- It is expected that all applicants will provide truthful information without any manipulation. In case of any misrepresentation, QUEST reserves the right to take stern action in this regard.

2. OBJECTIVES

The basic objectives of the program are as follows:

1. To assist PhD students by pairing them with qualified and experienced faculty members of QUEST Nawabshah.
2. To ensure that continuous research is carried out with the highest standards of integrity and updated knowledge, at par with international standards.
3. To motivate the PhD faculty to conduct high-quality research and publish it in internationally renowned journals, distinguishing them from other PhD faculty.
4. To provide a platform/database of active researchers holding PhD degrees in their respective fields.
5. To effectively and clearly communicate orally and in writing, participate in international conferences, collaborate in international research groups, and publish in top-ranked international journals.
6. To enable faculty to hold positions in leading academic and research institutions.
7. To have PhD students work with QUEST Approved PhD Supervisors for three years, with the possibility of extension for another three years after evaluation.

3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 General Requirements to Supervise Doctoral Research Scholars

The following general guidelines shall, at least, be observed while allocating a PhD supervisor. At the time of supervisor allocation, the supervisors:

- i. Shall hold a PhD degree, complying with the criteria and standards provided in this policy.
- ii. Must be relevant to the field of research in which the student intends to conduct research.
- iii. Should have "No Conflict of Interest" in personal, financial, or professional stakes.
- iv. Should have the time and availability to supervise the PhD dissertation and give clear and constructive feedback.
- v. Should be capable of conducting themselves in a professional and respectful manner throughout the supervision process.
- vi. Should be capable of maintaining confidentiality and protecting the intellectual property of the dissertation.

- vii. Should primarily be a regular/adjunct faculty member of the supervisee's University (i.e., QUEST Nawabshah).

In addition to the aforementioned guidelines:

- The research supervisor shall be allocated to a doctoral student from the date of enrollment.
- The supervisory workload of research supervisors should be determined based on the availability of teaching and research facilities, and the academic standing of supervisors. However, it is mandated that the maximum supervisory load shall not exceed five PhD students simultaneously. Further, fresh PhDs can supervise ME/MS students and co-supervise PhD students, while a PhD faculty member, after two years of obtaining a PhD degree, can supervise one PhD student in the 3rd year, two PhD students in the 4th year, and up to a maximum of five PhD students from the 5th year onwards, subject to the fulfillment of other conditions provided in this policy.
- The university (QUEST) shall allocate supervision/research space to doctoral students in their respective departments or any other suitable place as the university deems appropriate.
- PhD research work completed under supervision is shared property of the supervisor and supervisee. All publications resulting from such research shall reflect the authorship of both parties and shall be subject to mutual consent.
- The guidelines for PhD supervision should be followed in letter and spirit, as prescribed in this policy.

3.2 Criteria to Be a QUEST Approved PhD Supervisor

To be a PhD research supervisor, an individual shall meet the following requirements:

1. General Requirements

A PhD degree from an HEC recognized national/international university/degree awarding institute (DAI).

2. Publication Requirements

In addition to fulfilling the General Requirements, a PhD supervisor must publish research articles in HEC recognized International or National research journals for the publication year. These conditions aim to ensure that the potential PhD supervisor is an active researcher. The requirements for Engineering, Sciences, Technology, Computational Sciences, Natural Sciences, Social & Management Sciences, and Humanities disciplines are as follows:

For indigenous as well as foreign PhDs:

- i. Within the last 3 years after PhD:** at least one research publication in W category journals, or two in X category journals, or three research publications in X and Y category journals, or four in Y category journals. OR

- ii. **Within the last 5 years after PhD:** at least two research publications in W category journals, or one in W category and two in X category journals, or four research publications in X category journals, or five research publications in X and Y category journals, or six publications in Y category journals.

4. HOW TO APPLY

Before applying, please read the following information:

Read the "**QUEST Approved PhD Supervisor**" **Policy Manual** available at www.quest.edu.pk & pgs.quest.edu.pk

Applicants will be required to get their PhD degrees/Equivalence Certificates attested before processing the application for 'QUEST Approved PhD Supervisor'.

1. The applicant must fill in and attach the HEC attested PhD degree / HEC issued PhD Equivalence Certificate in the case of a Foreign PhD degree. If any misrepresentation is found, QUEST will not process the application further without any intimation.
2. Publication details must be provided along with the application.
3. Send the Application form along with the PhD degree through the proper channel to QUEST.
4. QUEST will communicate mostly via the email provided by the applicant if required.
5. The title of '**QUEST Approved PhD Supervisor**' is valid for three years. After three years, the supervisor will be required to update the profile. QUEST will re-evaluate the profile as per the eligibility criteria.
6. Mandatory documents that need to be attached are: CNIC copy, recent picture, Copy of HEC Attested PhD degree/HEC Equivalence Certificate of PhD degree, and a covering letter.
7. Please note that there is no other way of applying for "QUEST Approved PhD Supervisor" except through the proper channel along with all required documents.

Important Notes

The application process will be initiated after the receipt of two hard copies as well as a soft copy of the application along with the PhD degree and HEC attested/equivalence certificate issued by HEC.

- Incomplete applications, especially those without the HEC Attested PhD degree/Equivalence Certificate of PhD degree, will not be entertained.
- The entire process takes a certain period of time after submission of the application. Your concerns are important to us, but please do not send unnecessary emails or make personal visits for updates. This will help in the smooth functioning of the entire process.
- In case of any misrepresentation found in documents/information, QUEST will take stern actions, including legal action, in this regard.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- The supervisor must ensure that the scholar attends the university/laboratory regularly and maintains full-time/part-time status. They must report any significant inconsistencies to the QUEST scholar.
- The supervisor is responsible for reporting to the QUEST when/if their student leaves the program for any reason.
- The supervisor must inform the QUEST of any changes in a scholar's proposed study plan that may extend his or her time of study.
- The supervisor is responsible for ensuring the timely completion of the scholar's PhD. To this end, they should make a study plan with their students, complete with a timeline of major goals, consistent with the QUEST candidature period (2 years for ME/MS and 3 years for the PhD).
- Supervisors of scholars must ensure, consistent with QUEST regulations, that they are physically enrolled on campus. QUEST does not allow distance learning for scholars.
- Supervisors must ensure that scholars do not change their studentship (from Indigenous to foreign) without the approval of QUEST.
- Supervisors must submit a profile to be published on the QUEST website.
- Supervisors must not advise scholars beyond the set boundaries of QUEST.
- Supervisors must ensure that their advisee recognizes the role of QUEST in their final PhD thesis.
- Supervisors must support their advisees as they submit their Academic Progress Report and Funds Utilization Report (if any) to QUEST.
- Supervisors must also extend their full cooperation to their scholars as they complete their PhD, and are also expected to guide their scholars on matters of moral and personal growth (patience, self-confidence, and civic responsibility).

6. RULES AND REGULATIONS OF PhD SUPERVISION

A PhD supervisor of a student is a member of a university faculty whose role is to guide the PhD candidates, helping them select coursework, as well as shaping, refining, and directing the students' choice of sub-discipline in which they will be examined or on which they will write a dissertation. PhD students generally choose supervisors based on their areas of interest within their discipline, their desire to work closely with particular PhD faculty, and the willingness and availability of that faculty to work with them.

The QUEST Approved PhD Supervisor is required to be familiar with the regulations and guidelines implemented within QUEST. These include but are not limited to:

- Guiding the student in the choice of a research topic that can be completed as a research project and written up within the prescribed period of study (normally three to a maximum of eight years).
- The supervisor must ensure that no later than 6 months after PhD coursework completion, the scholar should complete the basic structure of the research project, an appropriate research method, a realistic plan of work, and any additional required study.

- The Supervisor must ensure that, where applicable, risk assessment of laboratory and/or field-based activities has been carried out in accordance with QUEST rules and university/departmental procedures.
- The Supervisor must monitor progress according to agreed milestones (and revise them based on issues in the field) and also submit the progress report of the scholar to the concerned Directorate on a yearly basis.
- The PhD Supervisor must establish a practice of regular meetings with the student, during which all matters relating to the research project can be discussed. They must provide commentary, constructively and within a reasonable timeframe, on the student's oral and written work, and ensure that written evidence of the meeting is kept within the Department.
- The supervisor must alert the student to what they may expect from the supervisor by way of a critique of work.
- The supervisor must complete annual progress reports in conjunction with the student and ensure supervision of a maximum of 12 students, out of whom 05 at maximum are at the PhD level.
- Encourage the student to present work in progress from time to time, as appropriate, attend relevant conferences, meetings, and workshops, and publish their work in HEC recognized international and national journals.
- Provide guidance on the preparation of the thesis and the viva voce examination.
- The supervisor should ensure the timely submission of the PhD thesis by the student, and it should be presented to the appropriate board within 06 months of submission. The Supervisor should ensure that the foreign evaluators' reports are received within a maximum of 06 months after final thesis submission.
- The supervisor must guide the student, who acts as an author, that submitting substantially similar work to more than one publisher must be disclosed to the publishers at the time of submission.
- The supervisor must ensure that the student is familiar with the QUEST policy on plagiarism.

Students and supervisors will decide on the topic of research before the student commences their study at the University or in the early months of study. The project will depend on:

- The student's background and interests along with study aptitude
- The student's motivation for the topic
- The supervisors' areas of expertise
- Availability of the supervisors during important periods of the candidature
- Available resources and relevant training
- Suitability for the research degree in which the student is matriculated
- Analysis of whether the project can be completed within the prescribed period of study
- Any requirements stipulated by any funding agency (if any)

Close contact between PhD supervisors and students is essential. The frequency of meetings will depend on the subject area and the stage of the student's preparation. Meetings may occur weekly in the first few months of candidature in order to scope and define the research project.

A student always owns copyright in a thesis. Unless the student has agreed in writing to assign Intellectual Property to others, the student owns Intellectual Property created by that student.

An effective supervisor has been well described as someone who enables the candidate to:

- Initiate and plan a research project
- Acquire the research skills to undertake the project and gain adequate access to resources
- Complete the project/thesis on time
- Produce a high-quality thesis
- Be successful in examination
- Disseminate the results
- Lay the basis for their future career

The Code of Ethics is based on **Equity, Justice** and **Respect** for People.

Soft Skills that PhD Supervisors need to have:

- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Leadership
- Critical Thinking
- Interpersonal Skills
- Time and Priority Management
- Diversity and Generational Differences in the Workplace
- Problem Solving

7. MONITORING OF SUPERVISORS

One of the purposes of the QUEST Approved PhD Supervisor program is to award the rank of "**QUEST Approved PhD Supervisor**" to those PhD faculty members who are active researchers. Therefore, the title of 'QUEST Approved PhD Supervisor' is valid for three years. After three years of Approval, the relevant PhD Faculty will be required to update their profile. QUEST will re-evaluate the profile as per the eligibility criteria and make a decision regarding the continuation of the title accordingly.