

**POLICY FOR RECOGNIZING  
APPROVED SUPERVISORS AND  
CLINICAL CO-SUPERVISORS FOR  
Ph.D STUDENTS**

**Ph.D FACULTY EVALUATION  
COMMITTEE**

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**Acknowledgement:**

Content in this policy has been adopted (and modified) from the following HEC documents:

HEC RECOGNIZED PHD SUPERVISORS  
HEC GRADUATE EDUCATION POLICY 2023

## I. INTRODUCTION

Doctoral education aims to cultivate the research skills and knowledge necessary to undertake independent inquiries. Faculty play an important role in this process by mentoring students about research trends, conduct, and guiding their academic careers in general. The approved PhD Supervisor Program was initially started by the University Grant Commission. Eventually, Pakistan Council for Science and Technology (PCST) became principal agency responsible for evaluating and approving faculty and researchers as PhD supervisor. 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. The specific objective of this program was to identify and register well-qualified, experienced, and active researchers/scholars amongst faculty members of HEC recognized Universities/Degree Awarding Institutions (DAIs) and R&D Organizations.

In December 2023, HEC assigned the authority to review the credentials of PhD faculty to serve as supervisors of students enrolled in HEC-approved PhD programs to Higher Education Institutions (HEI)<sup>1</sup>. To ensure that the University continues to provide the most experienced supervision and mentorship of students in its doctoral programs, Dow University of Health Sciences has established a committee (**PhD Faculty Evaluation Committee; PFEC**) that is composed of peers and is chaired by the Vice Chancellor to review the credentials of PhD supervisors using the criteria that was previously established by HEC. All PhD supervisors who are already recognized by HEC and all new applicants will be required to register and complete their profile on **DUHS PhD Faculty E-portal**. *All clinical faculty who serve as co-supervisors of PhD students are also required to register and complete their profile on the Faculty E-portal.* Additionally, all PhD supervisors who are within three (3) years of HEC recognition will be grandfathered into this program. After expiry of the duration of three years, the already recognized supervisors and co-supervisors will be required to update their credential on DUHS PhD Faculty E-portal for review of their credentials for continuation of this status. Once reviewed and approved by PFEC, a certificate will be issued to the faculty identifying them as **DUHS-recognized PhD Supervisor** or **Clinical Co-Supervisor** having met all the terms and conditions of this credentialing program. Faculty will be credentialed for a maximum period of three (3) years after

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<sup>1</sup>Appendix 1 - HEC Letter No. DDJI/QAD/PhD-Policy-2021/ 2022/119 dated December 22, 2023

which, they have to re-apply for review of their credentials to continue to serve as DUHS-recognized PhD Supervisor or Clinical Co-Supervisor.

## **II. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the program are as follows:

- Assist PhD students by pairing them with qualified and experienced faculty members in basic and clinical sciences.
- Motivate the PhD faculty and students to conduct research of the highest quality that is beneficial for the students and is published in internationally renowned journals.
- Encourage faculty and students to participate in national and international conferences.
- Provide a platform/database of active researchers in the University holding PhD and/or advanced degree/qualification in respective fields.

## **III. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS<sup>2</sup>**

### **General Requirements for Supervisors of All Disciplines**

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

- Must be a PhD degree holder complying with the criteria and standards provided in this policy.
- Must have NO CONFLICT OF INTEREST in personal, financial, or professional stakes.
- Must have the time and availability to supervise PhD dissertation and give clear and constructive feedback.
- Must be capable of conducting themselves in a professional and respectful manner throughout the supervision process.
- Must be capable of maintaining confidentiality and protecting the intellectual property of the dissertation.
- Must primarily, be a (regular/contracted/TTS/adjunct/visiting) faculty member in DUHS.

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<sup>2</sup> Please see Appendix II – Checklist for Review of Credentials for DUHS-recognized PhD Supervisors

- Must have a PhD Equivalency Certificate by HEC for foreign PhD holders

### **Specific Requirements for Health Sciences**

Approved Supervisors must have (for indigenous and foreign PhDs):

- Within the last three (3) years after PhD at least one (1) research publications in “W” category journal, OR
- Within last five (5) years after PhD: at least five (5) research publications in “X” category journal.

### **Specific Requirements for Business Education**

Approved Supervisors must have (for indigenous and foreign PhDs):

- Within the last three (3) years after PhD: at least one (1) research publication in “W” category journal; OR
- Within the last five (5) years after PhD: at least five (5) research publications in “X” and “Y” category journal

### **Requirements for Clinical Co-Supervisors**

Clinical co-supervisors working in conjunction with the PhD supervisors, play a very critical role in integrating clinical perspective into the research being conducted by the students. The bench-to-bedside (and reverse) translation of research ensures practical applicability of the outcomes and its enhanced assimilation in the practice of medicine. The following guidelines shall be observed while allocating a co-supervisor status to a faculty in a clinical department. At the time of allocation, the co-supervisors:

- Must hold a MBBS/MD degree from a PMDC-recognized medical college.
- Must have post-graduate training and qualification in an area of specialization from a PMDC-recognized institution in their field of clinical interest.
  - This may include Membership and/or Fellowship of regional and national institutions that have PMDC recognition.
- Must have an active medical license to practice medicine in the field of specialization from PMDC.

- Must have at least five (5) years of clinical experience in an academic environment after obtaining post-graduate qualification in an area of specialization.
- Must have NO CONFLICT OF INTEREST in personal, financial, or professional stakes.
- Must have the time and availability to co-supervise PhD dissertation and give clear and constructive feedback.
- Must be capable of conducting themselves in a professional and respectful manner throughout the supervision process.
- Must be capable of maintaining confidentiality and protecting the intellectual property of the dissertation.

#### IV. MONITORING OF SUPERVISORS

One of the purpose of this credentialing process is to ensure that the recognized faculty maintains the required standards to continue to hold the title as “DUHS-recognized PhD Supervisor or Clinical Co-Supervisor”. As such, the title of DUHS-recognized PhD Supervisor or Clinical Co-Supervisor will be valid for the duration of three years from the date of award. After three years of approval, it will be required by the relevant faculty to update their profile using DUHS PhD Faculty E-portal. PFEC will re-evaluate the profile as per **existing** eligibility criteria and make the recommendation to the Vice Chancellor for continuation (or otherwise) of the recognition accordingly. **Visiting faculty can only serve as co-supervisors, and they must also register using the DUHS Faculty e-Portal and their status must be reviewed and approved by PFEC.**

#### V. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- The DUHS-recognized PhD Supervisor or Clinical Co-Supervisor program aims to assist PhD students by pairing them with qualified and experienced faculty members at DUHS.
- Under the DUHS-recognized PhD Supervisor or Clinical Co-Supervisor program, the faculty are being scrutinized over the defined eligibility criteria and then recommended by

PFEC to be recognized by the competent authorities. After obtaining recognition their names with key details will be published on DUHS official website.

- DUHS-recognized PhD Supervisor of Clinical Co-Supervisor will be evaluated every three (3) years to continue to maintain their recognition.
  
- Responsibilities of the DUHS-recognized PhD Supervisor as are follows:
  - The supervisor can only supervise MPhil/PhD students in their field of study or equivalence by HEC.
  - The supervisor must ensure that the scholar attends university/laboratory regularly and maintains full-time status. They must report any significant inconsistencies to the Program Director of the relevant program with a copy to the Principal, School of Post Graduate Studies, and Chair, Doctoral Admission Committee.
  - The supervisor is responsible for informing the University when/if their student leaves the program for any reason.
  - The supervisor must inform the University 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 HEC and University requirements.
  - The supervisor is also responsible for ensuring that the scholar, in keeping with their agreement with the University, is not employed while they are studying specially at the PhD level.
  - Supervisors must ensure that their advisee recognizes the role of the University in their final PhD thesis.
  - Supervisors must also extend their full cooperation to their scholars as they complete their PhD.
  - Supervisors are also expected to guide their scholars on matters of moral and personal growth (patience, self-confidence, and civic responsibility).
  - Supervisor can serve as a co-supervisor in an interdisciplinary fields of study.
  
- Responsibilities of the DUHS-recognized PhD Clinical Co-Supervisor as are follows:
  - The clinical co-supervisor can only supervise MPhil/PhD students in their field of specialization.

- The clinical co-supervisor must assist the students in designing clinical studies and providing access to patients (if required), relevant clinical data, and clinical samples.
- The clinical co-supervisor working in conjunction with the PhD supervisor must:
  - Ensure that students are effectively integrating clinical perspectives in their research.
  - Guide the students in facilitating the development of research manuscripts and in its publication in peer-reviewed journals.
  - Meet with the students at regular intervals to discuss their progress and to assist with timely completion of their thesis.

#### **VI. RULES AND REGULATIONS OF PHD SUPERVISION:**

- A PhD supervisor or clinical co-supervisor of a student is a DUHS faculty (regular/contracted/adjunct/TTS/visiting) whose role is to guide the PhD candidates, helping them select coursework, as well as shaping, refining and directing the students' choice of discipline in which they will be examined, or on which they will write a dissertation.
- The PhD Students generally choose supervisors and/or clinical co-supervisors based on their areas of interest within their discipline, their desire to work closely with particular faculty, and the willingness and availability of those faculty to work with them.
- The DUHS-recognized PhD Supervisor or Clinical Co-Supervisor is required to be familiar with the regulations and guidelines which is implemented within the University. It includes (but not limited to) the following:
  - They must guide the student in a choice of research topic; a suitable topic of research which can be completed as a research project and written up within the prescribed period of study (normally three to maximum up to eight years).
  - They must ensure that the student complete (no later than six months after completion of PhD course work), the basic structure of the research project; an appropriate research method; a realistic plan of work; and any additional required study including Skills Development Training;



- They must ensure that, where applicable, risk assessment of laboratory and/or field-based activities has been carried out in accordance with the University rules and that the student receives the required safety training certificate/approval.
  - They must monitor student's progress according to mutually agreed milestones.
  - They must establish a practice of regular meetings with the student at which all matters relating to the research project can be discussed.
  - They must provide constructively feedback to the student on their oral and written work. Ensure that the written record of supervisory meetings is kept within the program and is shared with the relevant Program Director and the Principal, School of Postgraduate Studies.
  - They must inform the student what they may expect from him/her by way of constructive feedback of their research work.
  - They must complete annual progress reports in consultation with the relevant student. The written report must be shared with the relevant student as well as with the Program Director and the Principal, School of Postgraduate Studies.
  - They must 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 recognized/impact factor journals.
  - They must provide guidance on the preparation of the thesis and the oral examination.
  - They must ensure the timely submission of PhD thesis by the student, and it should be presented in appropriate venue within six (6) months of submission.
  - The University Board of Advanced Study & Research must ensure to obtain foreign evaluators report within six (6) months after final submission of thesis.
  - They must ensure that the student is familiar with the University and HEC policy on plagiarism.
- Students and PhD supervisors and clinical co-supervisors must decide on the topic of research before the student commences their study at the University or in the first three months of study. The project will depend on the:
    - Student's background and interests with study aptitude.
    - Student's motivation for the topic.
    - Supervisors' areas of expertise.

- Availability of the supervisors and/or clinical co-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 funding agency like HEC Indigenous PhD Scholarships etc.
- Close contact between PhD supervisors and clinical co-supervisors and students is essential. The frequency of meetings will depend on the subject area, and the stage of the student's training. 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 to their thesis. Unless the Student has agreed in writing to assign Intellectual Property to others, the Student owns Intellectual Property created by that Student.

## **VII. QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE SUPERVISOR OR CLINICAL CO-SUPERVISOR:**

- An effective and supportive supervisor or clinical co-supervisor is one who enables the student 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 in high quality journals.
  - Lay the basis for their future career.

- Soft skills that the PhD Supervisors and Clinical Co-Supervisor must have (or enhance) are:
  - Communication
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Integrity
  - Leadership.
  - Critical Thinking
  - Interpersonal Skills
  - Time and Priority Management
  - Diversity and Generational Differences in the Workplace
  - Problem Solving
  - Emotional Intelligence
  - Empathy

## **Appendix 1**

**HEC Letter No. DDJI/QAD/PhD-Policy-2021/  
2022/119 dated December 22, 2023**



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## HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

H-9, Islamabad, Pakistan, Website: <http://www.hec.gov.pk>  
Email: [nrshah@hec.gov.pk](mailto:nrshah@hec.gov.pk) Phone: 051-90402700

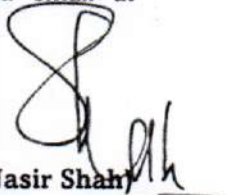
**SUBJECT: Discontinuation of HEC Approved Supervisor Post Promulgation GEP-2023**

This is to bring to your kind attention that the Higher Education Commission has discontinued awarding HEC Approved Supervisor, post promulgation of the Graduate Education Policy 2023 i.e., July 10, 2023.

II. This policy shift provides Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) increased authority in approving PhD supervisors, thereby enhancing their capacity to elevate the quality of doctoral research. The HEIs are required to assign supervision of doctoral research to their PhD faculty adhering to the conditions delineated in its Clause 4.2. In this regard an extract of the relevant clause of the policy along with a sample checklist is enclosed for assistance of the HEIs.

III. Accordingly, HEC encourages the HEIs to adopt the Graduate Education Policy 2023 and authorize qualified faculty for doctoral research supervision strictly in accordance with the policy regulations. HEC is developing a mechanism to synchronize supervisor's data with the Higher Education Data Repository. Subsequently, periodic evaluations of authorized supervisor's data will be conducted in accordance with the criteria outlined in the policy for a PhD Supervisor. For any inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us via email at [aanwar@hec.gov.pk](mailto:aanwar@hec.gov.pk).

Your support in this regard is highly appreciated.



(Nasir Shah)

Director General (Quality Assurance)  
Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan

### All Vice Chancellors/Rectors/Heads of Institutions

No. DD-II/QAD/PhD-Policy-2021/2022/119

Dated: December 22, 2023

#### Copy for information:

- i. ES to the Chairman, Higher Education Commission, Islamabad
- ii. ES to the Executive Director, Higher Education Commission, Islamabad
- iii. All Divisional & Regional Heads of HEC, Islamabad
- iv. Office Copy

**Appendix II:**  
**PhD Faculty Evaluation Checklist**

# PhD Supervisor: Eligibility Assessment Checklist

## DOW UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES PHD FACULTY EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Sr.	GEP's Clause	Minimum Criteria to a PhD Supervisor:	Evidence Required to Validate	Yes / No
1	4.2.1.i	holds Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree	PCD Number/Attested copy of PhD degree	
2	4.2.1.ii	is relevant to the student's PhD research field	As determined by following principle and procedure given at clause 7.1.2 of GEP-2023	
3	4.2.1.iii	does not have CONFLICT OF INTEREST with student in personal, financial, or professional	Undertaking from the faculty member and judgement of the evaluator	
4	4.2.1.iv	have the time and availability to supervise PhD dissertation and give clear and constructive feedback.	Students' Feedback Survey and supervisory and teaching workload of undergrad & graduate level	
5	4.2.1.v	is capable of conducting themselves in a professional and respectful manner throughout the supervision process.	Professional judgment of the evaluator supported by Students' Feedback Survey	
6	4.2.1.vi	is capable of maintaining confidentiality and protecting the intellectual property of the dissertation.	Professional judgment of the evaluator supported by Students' Feedback Survey	
7	4.2.1.vii	is a regular/adjunct faculty member of the supervisee's University/HEI/DAI	Notification from the Registrar/HR Department	
8	4.2.1.ix OR	does not have more than 1 PhD student in 3rd year from obtaining PhD degree.	To be calculated from the date of PhD notification	
9	4.2.1.ix OR	does not have more than 1 PhD student in 4th year from obtaining PhD degree.	To be calculated from the date of PhD notification	
10	4.2.1.ix	does not have more than 1 PhD student in 5th year from obtaining PhD degree.	To be calculated from the date of PhD notification	
11	4.2.2.i-a	holds a PhD degree from a recognized national/international university/degree awarding institute (DAI)	Copy of PhD degree attested by HEC	

Sr.	GEP's Clause	Minimum Criteria to a PhD Supervisor:	Evidence Required to Validate	Yes / No
12	4.2.2.i-b	has qualified courses containing content on research ethics, publications, patents, etc.	Certificate by the HEI/NAHE or recognized MOOCs	
13	4.2.2.i-b.i	has qualified basic level courses to supervise students of MS/MPhil/equivalent degrees	Certificate by the HEI/NAHE or recognized MOOCs	
14	4.2.2.i-b.ii	has qualified advanced level courses to supervise students of MS/MPhil/equivalent degrees	Certificate by the HEI/NAHE or recognized MOOCs	
15	4.2.2.ii	is an active researcher.	Publishing in reputed journal and participating conferences/research events regularly.	
16	4.2.2.ii-A	fulfills the specific publication requirements for Health Sciences	Check and verify research publications	
17	4.2.2.ii-A.i	fulfills the specific publication requirements for Business Education	Check and verify research publications	
		<p style="text-align: center;">_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Secretary, PFEC</p>		