



## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING/AGREEMENT**

### **Between postgraduate student and supervisor (s)**

The aim of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) is to give the postgraduate student and supervisor an opportunity to develop a sound and productive working relationship. There is no blueprint for such an agreement. Rather, it is the result of an open discussion in the early stages of the relationship, during which both student and supervisor can clarify expectations and preferences, surface any misunderstandings or misaligned expectations and pave the way for a productive working relationship.

The aim of this current document is simply to provide a starting point for such a discussion. The content given here is meant to serve as a prompt for things to include in your own agreement, and you are encouraged to make as many changes as needed during your discussion with your supervisor/student. In its current form, IT SHOULD NOT BE REGARDED AS POLICY OR EVEN AS A FIXED TEMPLATE. Each supervisor-student relationship is unique and the outcome of this discussion will be a personalised and adapted version of this MoU.

Having said that, it may be the case that your faculty or department already has its own MoU template. It may even be compulsory for you to complete such a MoU, according to your departmental requirements. In that case, please see this document as an additional prompt for issues you might want to discuss with your supervisor/postgraduate student at the start of your relationship. Departments and faculties are also welcome to use and adapt this template. It is then up to individual departments or faculties to explain the “status” of the MoU, e.g. whether it is compulsory, recommended or optional.

# Memorandum of Understanding

## STUDENT INFORMATION

NAME OF STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

DEGREE COURSE \_\_\_\_\_

## SUPERVISOR INFORMATION

NAME OF SUPERVISOR \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

## CO-SUPERVISOR INFORMATION (if applicable)

NAME OF CO-SUPERVISOR \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

The signatures below serve to confirm that all parties agree to the role and responsibilities as set out in this Memorandum of Understanding:

	SIGNATURE	DATE
STUDENT	_____	_____
SUPERVISOR	_____	_____
CO-SUPERVISOR	_____	_____
DATE	_____	_____

## Managing the project

*How do we want to work together? What are our expectations and assumptions about our roles? Use the questions below to clarify expectations, even if you do not want to answer as specifically as in the examples below.*

### 1. Meetings and communication:

**How often do we want scheduled meetings to take place?**

*Example: At least once every three months.*

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**Alternative – How many scheduled meetings are we aiming for per academic year?**

*Example: at least 4 scheduled meetings*

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**Duration of scheduled meetings (approx.)**

*Example: 1 -2 hours*

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**Who has the responsibility for scheduling meetings and how far in advance should these be scheduled?**

*Example: Meetings to be scheduled in xxxx days in advance by xxxxxx (e.g. student or supervisor)*

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**Who will set the agenda for the meeting? How is the meeting documented and by whom?**

*Example: The student will send the agenda to the supervisor xxxx days in advance and supervisor to make additions/amendments. The student will summarise key points from the meeting and send them by email to the supervisor no later than xxxx days after the meeting took place. The student and supervisor should both keep a record of meetings and other interactions, in case departmental requirements demand 'proof of supervision'*

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**Procedure for changing the meeting date and time**

*Example: Any changes to proposed time and date should be communicated to the supervisor at least xxx days before the original scheduled time. If the meeting is cancelled, the person cancelling the meeting has the responsibility to arrange an alternative time as soon as possible after the original scheduled meeting. The number of times postponed as well as reasons for postponements should be recorded on the minutes of the meeting.*

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**In addition to scheduled meeting, how often can we expect to see each other, what are our thoughts and expectations about *ad hoc* discussions?**

*Example: The student is very welcome to contact the supervisor at any time to discuss something or just to chat, as long as he or she is available OR  
Because we work in the same lab we will see each other daily. The student is expected to report to supervisor every morning OR  
the student is welcome to come and talk any time, but please schedule a meeting*

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### Is there an expectation regarding regular email communication?

*Example: Student will make contact via email at least once a week /month/fortnight with update on activities.*

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### Other issues regarding contact (e.g. after hours, mobile phone, home telephone)

*Example: We both prefer not to be contacted after hours/on our mobile phones except ....etc.*

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## 2. Timelines and progress reports:

### Expectations regarding a project plan or timeline

*Examples:*

*A work programme (time chart) must be compiled by the student, in collaboration with the supervisor, within 60 days after the start of the project*

*This programme must indicate the following:*

- deadline for the submission of a project proposal/protocol,*
  - deadline for the completion of a literary survey,*
  - deadline for the completion of specific chapters*
  - deadline for the submission of progress reports.*
  - an indication of the time to be spent on each phase of the research project*
  - times of absence (study leave, university vacations, etc.)*
  - The student must indicate any matter(s), which may have an impact on the time chart he/she provided (e.g. external work pressure).*
  - The supervisor must set out, where applicable, his/her plans for providing supervision in terms of the time chart (developed by the student).*
  - The supervisor must indicate any expected absence, such as leave/sabbaticals (providing alternative arrangements for supervision if away for more than two months in any one year).*
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### Expectations regarding progress reports

*Examples:*

- The project should be completed as soon as possible within the time period as allowed by the University. Ideal date of submission of final assignment: xxxx*
  - Quarterly written reports from the student on his/her progress in relation to the indicated time frame/time chart.*
  - Written feedback regarding the progress of studies must be given annually by the supervisor to the head of department/postgraduate coordinator/dean.*
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### Expectations regarding submission and examination

*Examples:*

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- *When the project nears completion, the student must make the necessary submissions according to the specific requirements for graduation (see yearbook/policy guidelines ...) Note main points here...*
  - *Supervisor expects to see final product xxxx days before submission*
  - *Student may not submit for examination without supervisor agreement*
  - *The student may not communicate with examiners directly*
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### **3. Submission of work to supervisor, feedback and revision**

#### **Expectations regarding written submission of chapters and drafts**

*Examples:*

- *Student will ensure that all written work is submitted according to the agreed deadlines.*
  - *Submissions must happen via email/dropbox/on.track planner/by hand (printed)*
  - *While the focus, especially initially, should be on developing content and argument, there is an expectation that it should be written in an acceptable standard of English or Afrikaans (so that it can be read easily).*
  - *Towards the end of the project, and in particular the final draft, the work should be free of language-, typing- and layout errors.*
  - *It is the student's responsibility to have final drafts and final submission proofread, technically edited and where necessary, to arrange for professional copy editing of the final submission.*
  - *Written work will be/may be submitted in English/Afrikaans/both.*
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#### **Nature of the feedback**

*Examples:*

- *Supervisor will make comments on an electronic copy of the submission/use track changes/prefers to write by hand.*
  - *Comments will cover content, argument, structure using highlighted areas of the submission text as examples.*
  - *The supervisor will not do language editing, except to perhaps highlight the fact that the document needs to be proofread/better edited.*
  - *Supervisor will make comments in English/Afrikaans/both*
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#### **Agreed feedback response rate by all parties**

*Examples:*

- *The supervisor aims to return all chapter draft submissions with comments within 1 month of receiving it.*
  - *The supervisor aims to return the final draft of the full thesis with comments within 2 months of receiving it/as agreed on the timeline.*
  - *The student will resubmit revisions of chapter only after receiving comments from the supervisor and aims to resubmit within one month of receiving comments.*
  - *The student will submit the previous version with supervisor's comments together with the new version with changes.*
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- The supervisor again aims to review second and further submissions within...
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#### 4. Expected Outputs

**What are the expected outputs the student needs to deliver through the course of his or her candidature and thereafter?**

*Examples:*

- The student is expected to write at least xxx journal article(s) and submit for publication to a peer reviewed journal during the course / after completion of his or her candidature.
  - The student is expected to present at least xxx academic paper(s) at an international/local academic conference during the course / after completion of his or her candidature.
  - The student is expected to register at least xxx patent(s) during the course / after completion of his or her candidature.
  - Should the student not complete the task(s) within the time agreed upon, the university reserves the right to appoint a writer to prepare the project for publication – in such a way so as not to disadvantage the student.
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#### 5. Expectations around intellectual property and patents

**What are the expectations regarding intellectual property?**

*Where applicable, the student and the supervisor must acquaint themselves with the regulations applicable to intellectual property within the relevant environment. Give an indication here of which regulations decisions will be based on, e.g. provide a link to relevant documents and how you see this affecting your specific case.*

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**What are the expectations regarding authorship?**

*Both the student and supervisors will acquaint themselves with the conventions regarding authorship relevant to the specific discipline. Then write down how this will apply to you, examples:*

- The student will be first author of any papers written if main contribution (xxx%) from article/paper is theirs;
  - Supervisor and or co-supervisor will be first and second co-authors depending on relevant contribution (xxx %)
  - etc.
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**What are the expectations regarding ownership of data**

*Both the student and supervisors will acquaint themselves with the regulations and conventions regarding ownership of data relevant to the specific discipline, then write down how this will apply to your specific case.*

## What are the expectations regarding registration of patents

*Both the student and supervisors will acquaint themselves with the regulations and conventions regarding registration of patents relevant to the specific environment, then write down how this will apply to your specific case.*

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## 6. Expectations regarding Skills and Knowledge

**What knowledge or skills does the student have the responsibility to acquire before or during the study period?**

- The student must ensure that (s) he has the necessary computer skills or the appropriate support to complete the project satisfactorily. Indicate actions (planned or completed) by student to ensure this.
  - The student (with the necessary input from the supervisor) undertakes to remain up to date with regard to the infrastructure and related rules of the Department and ..... University. In particular, ...
  - The student is should acquaint him or herself with the **Code of Research Ethics of ..... University** (Available at xxx) and agrees to abide by this code.
  - The student is should acquaint him or herself with the **Plagiarism Policy of ..... University/Faculty xxxx/Department xxxxx** (Available at xxx) and agrees to abide by this policy.
  - The student should acquaint him or herself with the **Guidelines for keeping research records Faculty/Department xxxx** (Available at xxx) and agrees to abide by these guidelines.
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**The student has identified the following skills or knowledge areas that he or she wants to develop**

*Give the skills and knowledge areas and agree priorities with regard to this as well as to what extent supervisor will be able to assist in these areas. Discuss possible alternatives.*

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**The supervisor has identified the following skills or knowledge areas that he or she wants the student to develop**

*Give the skills/knowledge areas with suggestions for when and how to develop these.*

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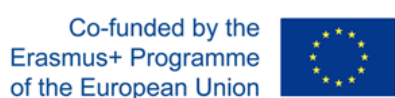
## 7. Expectations regarding funding

**Who will cover the costs related to studies and research? Indicate any scholarships and bursaries with timeframes, and how this might affect studies and research. Indicate any obligations or responsibilities in terms of scholarships and bursaries should these not be**

*Examples –*

- *Registration costs – Bursary from xxx, when available? When is registrations payment due, interim funding?*
  - *Living and Accommodation Costs – the student has arranged for funding to cover*
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*living and accommodation.*

- *The bursary is awarded subject to the following terms: academic progress by the bursary-holder (indicate how progress will be demonstrated)*
  - *Indicate how the bursary will be paid. The recommended schedule is quarterly but it depends on the amount of the full award.*
  - *Indicate the consequences of non-compliance with the terms of the bursary: failure to comply with the aforementioned terms will entitle the award body to forthwith cancel the agreement, in which event the bursary-holder will be liable to refund the bursary in full, or in part, or awarded to date (whichever is applicable)*
  - *Research Infrastructure and Equipment – what is available and what needs to be found elsewhere*
  - *Research consumables and materials – who is responsible for costs, for making sure it is available*
  - *Conference attendance – is there any funding, what are the guidelines – for number and type of conference attended*
  - *Reading material, statistical services, other resources– who should pay, what is available*
  - *Skills development – who pays for generic workshops, research methods, special equipment training*
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## **8. Expectations regarding work in the Department/Faculty/University**

### **Academic work**

- *Discuss opportunities and/or expectations for other academic work for the student– e.g. teaching, supervision, committee work, lab work, etc. How many hours per week on average? Will this be optional or compulsory? Is any of the work paid?*
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### **Career plans**

- *Discuss student's own future plans, reasons for pursuing a postgraduate degree and Departmental work that might fit with aspirations.*
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### **Outside work**

- *Discuss expectations around student taking on outside work, elsewhere in the university or further afield.*
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## **9. Ground rules and regulations**

### **List any specific rules or regulations that the student should be aware of**

*Examples –*

- *Communication with Examiners*
  - *Lab and Office rules*
  - *Confidentiality of student data*
  - *Communication with the press*
  - *Permission for publication by the student*
  - *Disciplinary procedures*
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- *Ethical compliance\**

*\*Indicate where above policies and guidelines can be found (or attach here).  
Also indicate which are policy /compulsory and which are only guidelines/good practice.*

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### **Discuss and agree on any other specific ground rules for your working relationship**

- *Especially things the supervisor has through experience learned about his or her preferred way of working and personal expectations from his or her students could be shared here.*
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## **10. Mechanisms for dealing with disputes**

### **List any official dispute resolution mechanisms applicable to your faculty or department**

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### **Discuss and agree on ways to deal with potential disputes or differences of opinion**

*Examples –*

- *e.g. both student and supervisor agree to raise any current or anticipated concerns as early as possible, and to inform each other if any personal circumstances arise which will affect the work.*
  - *e.g. in the case of disagreements or differences of opinion about dissertation work, students and supervisor will first try to resolve them between themselves.*
  - *If this does not resolve the issue, either the student or the supervisor may approach the departmental chair or postgraduate studies co-ordinator of the faculty.*
  - *The student may also approach their Faculty Postgraduate student representative.*
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## **11. Managing co-supervision**

**Discuss the role of the co-supervisor and expectations about communicating with the co-supervisor. Include the co-supervisor in this part of the MoU.**

*Examples – Should student meet separately with supervisor and co-supervisor?*

- *Are there specific roles for each of the supervisors and how does this affect communication, meetings, feedback and timelines*
- *What are the expectations regarding communication, feedback*
- *How will differences of opinion be dealt with?*
- *Are there expectations about co-authorship?*