

SUBMISSION IDENTIFIERS:

Title	Revised Student Feedback Questionnaire on Research Supervision
Author and position	Ms R Chunder; Dr T Moodley (QPA) Prof R Vithal (DVC: T&L)

APPROVAL HISTORY

Structure consulted	Target date for discussion	Outcome
RSG/TLSC	Mar 2015 / 3 Feb 2015	Supported and inputs provided
EDF	2 April 2015	Supported and inputs provided
SRHDC	April-June 2015	Inputs provided
CAABs	July/August 2015	Supported
Senate	19 Aug 2015	

SUBMISSION CONTENT

Proposal

To consider and support

1. the revised questions and format of the Student Feedback Questionnaire on Research Supervision, which adds a numerical dimension to the narrative evaluations; and
2. the Student Feedback Report format for Research Supervision, (which is aligned with the Student Feedback Reports for Modules) as follows:
 1. Below 70% - requires attention (Red)
 2. Between 70% and 79% – requires monitoring (Yellow)
 3. Between 80% and 89% – meets expectations (Green)
 4. Between 90% and 100% – exceeds expectations (Blue)

Motivation

Student feedback on research supervision is one among several measures that should be considered to assess the quality of research supervision provided to students. It complements other sources of information and should be considered together with: supervisor reports; student performance, throughput and completions for the supervisor concerned; external examiners' reports and other appropriate evidence to ensure a holistic evaluation (also see the criterion of postgraduate supervision in the academic promotions guidelines for teaching portfolios).

The evaluation obtained from student responses about their experiences of supervision for a particular supervisor can be considered individually or aggregated for all students being supervised by the supervisor.

As the University's postgraduate enrolments have increased, the need for multiple measures that are an efficient and effective means for evaluating the quality of the supervision students receive for their research has become urgent, particularly since these evaluations are used in academic promotions, performance evaluations and the assessment of teaching portfolios for awards such as the Distinguished Teacher's Awards. In addition, research conducted by QPA on student experiences of postgraduate research supervision in the University further emphasises the need for improved and more detailed information and monitoring of supervision quality.

A main criticism of the current supervision evaluation questionnaire is that all feedback is provided in a narrative form only making it difficult to evaluate and differentiate the quality of supervision provided by different academics to identify, for example, excellence in supervision practice as opposed to those requiring assistance.

The revised questionnaire retains most of the questions in the existing questionnaire and continues to provide opportunities for students to make narrative comments while adding a quantitative dimension. This format is standard practice in obtaining student feedback on educational provisions offered by higher education institutions. It should be noted that the questions refer to the minimum or basic aspects that should be found and reflected in the relationship between supervisors and their students as set out in the University policy and guidelines for research supervision. The questionnaire has been amended to cater for supervision of research projects in 4th year undergraduate programmes as well as all levels of postgraduate supervision. The quality of the questionnaire has also been improved by reformulating the questions to require responses to a single aspect at a time rather than multiple aspects in one question.

The overall assessment of supervision by students is critical to Schools, Colleges and the University to determine the need, if any, for interventions or action, especially in view of how supervision quality eventually impacts postgraduate enrolments, dropout, throughputs and graduation rates. There is also a need to set some targets that are realistic and take cognisance of our aspirations as a nationally and globally competitive institution that values high levels of performance in all areas of teaching and supervision.

This proposal complements and aligns with the early warning system for student feedback on modules (as approved by Senate, 6 November 2013) that enables prompt action to be taken, where warranted, and operates as a "colour-coded robot system" for ease of reference.

The QPA student evaluation of supervision quality will be given ratings based on the quantitative scores and that are aligned with the performance management system as follows:

- Performance rating 4: (Blue) is for supervision that is rated by students in the range from 90% to 100%. This is an assurance that students are more than satisfied with their supervision and exceeds expectations set out in institutional policies and guidelines. Consistent evaluations at this

level may be recognized for rewards/awards. • Performance rating 3: (Green) is for supervision that is rated by students at 80% to 89%. This is an assurance that students are satisfied with almost all aspects of their supervision and that it meets expectations of quality supervision being experienced by students as required by the University. • Performance rating 2: (Yellow) is for supervision that is rated by students in the range of 70% to 79%. This is an indication that there are some aspects of the supervision that need attention and the supervisor and appropriate line manager should engage with those issues urgently to safeguard supervision quality. • Performance rating 1: (Red) is for supervision that is rated by students below 70%. This is a sign that there might be serious challenges with some or all aspects of the supervision and urgent and prompt action needs to be taken by the supervisor concerned, Academic Leaders and Dean. Feedback from all students supervised by the Supervisor may need to be solicited. Supervisors who are evaluated in this range will need to be monitored, and referred for appropriate intervention and support to address concerns until they have progressed to yellow and green status to protect students and university interests. The student feedback on supervision will be included in the online system.
Financial implications To be determined to facilitate on-line evaluation of supervision
Attachment 1. STUDENT FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE: Research Supervision (Revised) 2. STUDENT FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE Postgraduate Supervision (Current)

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

QUALITY PROMOTION AND ASSURANCE

STUDENT FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE: Research Supervision (Revised)

In this questionnaire you are asked to evaluate various aspects of the supervision you have been receiving for your research. Student evaluation is one of the methods used for improving the quality of research supervision at the University. The questionnaire outcomes will provide your supervisor with valuable feedback about his/her supervision.

You do not need to sign your name and all information is confidential.

Supervisor's Name: _____

School: _____

The supervisor I am evaluating is the (mark with an X)

1. **Sole** supervisor of my research (if only one supervisor)
2. **Main** supervisor of my research (if more than one supervisor)
3. **Co-Supervisor** of my research

This evaluation is for the supervision of my (mark with an X)

1. Bachelor 4th year/ Honours/ PG Diploma Research Project
2. Masters by Coursework Dissertation
3. Masters by Research Dissertation
4. Doctoral Thesis

For each of the statements below you are requested to respond on a five-point scale:

1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, or 5=strongly agree.

Please mark with an **X** your choice and responses as accurately and honestly as possible. Thereafter, you may provide further comments on the statements below in the space provided.

1. My supervisor established clear and explicit mutual expectations of the supervision process with me.

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

2. My supervisor and I worked out a timeframe for my research project with target dates for completing the various stages of the research.

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

3. My supervisor and I established a compatible working relationship.

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

4. My supervisor was readily accessible for consultation or advice during the agreed consultation times.

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

5. My supervisor has a good knowledge of the research I am undertaking.

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

6. My supervisor always assisted me in addressing any problems that I encountered in my research.

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

7. My supervisor always provided prompt feedback on my work.

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

8. My supervisor always provided constructive feedback on my work.

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

9. My supervisor always encouraged my research and helped me to maintain enthusiasm for my work.

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

10. I would recommend my supervisor to other students.

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

11. Complete the following:

11.1 The best aspect(s) of the supervision I have received are:

11.2 The aspect(s) of supervision that could be improved are:

12. Any other comments:

Thank you for your cooperation

**THE STUDENT FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE ON RESEARCH SUPERVISION
CAN BE COMPLETED ONLINE OR PAPER-BASED.**

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO YOUR SUPERVISOR
TO ENSURE CONFIDENTIALITY.**

**COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES SHOULD BE EMAILED OR HANDED IN TO THE
ADMINISTRATOR AS IDENTIFIED BY YOUR SUPERVISOR OR IF NONE HAS BEEN
IDENTIFIED THEN SEND TO RANI CHUNDER AT QUALITY PROMOTION AND
ASSURANCE chunderm@ukzn.ac.za (INTERNAL MAIL ADDRESS: QPA,
INNOVATION CENTRE, HOWARD COLLEGE CAMPUS).**