**Ethical guidelines for supervision at the University of Agder**

Adopted by the University Board, 17 June 2019

**Introduction**

Ethical guidelines at the University of Agder (UiA) will apply to academic supervisors and students in bachelor’s and master’s programmes as well as candidates in PhD programmes (below, the common term ‘students’ will be used).

UiA expects the individual supervisor to carry out their activities in accordance with the university’s overall ethical guidelines. The relationship between the supervisor and the student requires particular attention. UiA has overall responsibility for providing high-quality supervision, but at the same time, it is the responsibility of the individual supervisor to manage and to carry out this supervision. Management at all levels has a special responsibility if anything undesirable takes place, or if the quality of the supervisory relationship is unsatisfactory, and leaders are made aware of this.

1. **Joint responsibility**

Supervision must as far as possible satisfy both the academic and personal needs of the individual.

It is expected that the supervisors have the required competence and continuously acquire knowledge, skills and qualifications to be able to carry out their duties as professional support for the student’s work in the best possible manner.

The supervisor/team of supervisors will facilitate for professional academic dialogue and be open to feedback concerning both the academic content and the structure of the supervision. The supervisor is obliged to provide feedback within a reasonable period of time.

It is also expected that the student contributes towards the optimal function of the supervision, this includes investing in the time and effort required by the study programme, to be open and receptive to the supervisor’s proposals and to give the supervisor complete access/insight to the work and its progression.

1. **Attitudes and values**

The supervisor and the student should show respect for each other. This means not doing or saying anything that may seem discriminating and /or offend the integrity or the dignity of the other[[1]](#footnote-1). The supervisor has special responsibility for being attentive and considerate.

1. **The asymmetry of the supervisory relationship**

The supervisor must be aware of the asymmetrical quality of the supervisory relationship. The supervisor should not use his/her professional knowledge and authority to offend or oppress, or to gain academic or personal advantages at the expense of the student. The student has a right to address issues that he/she considers as problematic., see item 8. Students shall not experience retaliation if they make use of this right.

Because of the asymmetrical nature of the supervisory relationship, the supervisor should make every effort to facilitate constructive, academic dialogues.

1. **Professionality**

The supervisor and the student must have a professional relationship, and they should not establish relations that go against this professionality. The supervisor has a particular responsibility for not placing the student in a vulnerable situation and /or taking advantage of such a situation. If a relationship that goes beyond the professional should arise[[2]](#footnote-2), the management of the faculty-/department should be notified, and the formal supervisory relationship brought to an end.

1. **Trust and confidentiality**

The supervisor must be careful and exercise the utmost discretion when talking about colleagues and other supervisors. This also applies if the supervisor confides his/her own personal problems to the student. The supervisor should be open and attentive to aspects of the personal situation of the student that may impact on the supervisory relationship and refer the student further, if necessary.

1. **Research ethics**

The supervisor and the student should be respectful of each other’s works and mutually exercise good reference practices in accordance with the Vancouver - convention. If the supervisor wishes to use the student’s data or research results in his/her own publications or research, the supervisor must obtain the student’s permission and inform the student about possible consequences. Similarly, the student needs to clarify and get permission from the supervisor in advance. Also, the student must adhere to the rules of the current academic field and research ethical regulations concerning source references and giving credit[[3]](#footnote-3). The supervisor should act in accordance with best practice concerning co-authorship as described in the national research-ethical guidelines and the Vancouver – convention[[4]](#footnote-4).

1. **Gifts and remuneration**

In the course of the supervisory relationship, the supervisor shall not receive remuneration or gifts. In cases of doubt, the advice of the manager should be obtained[[5]](#footnote-5).

1. **Conflicts between the supervisor and the student**

Both parties must deal with problems relating to cooperation or progress and make the necessary efforts to reach a constructive solution. If the supervisor or the student finds a supervisory relationship so difficult that further cooperation seems impossible, both parties should consider involving a third party to clarify whether the supervisory relationship should be terminated or renegotiated. Contacting the Head of Department, possibly a third party, is always an option should circumstances arise that could be considered as problematic. To students on the bachelor’s and master’s level, this may be the study programme manager, the student representative, the student ombudsperson or executive officers in the Division of Student and Academic Affairs. To PhD – students, this may be the Head of Department, the student representative, HR – advisers or the Faculty Director.

1. **Termination of a supervisory relationship**

If a supervisory relationship for various reasons needs to be terminated before the agreed time, both the supervisor and the student have an obligation to contribute to this taking place in an orderly fashion. The supervisor is normally not allowed to resign before a new supervisor has been appointed. For bachelor’s and master’s students, the decision to terminate a supervisory relationship is taken by the Head of Department. At the PhD level, the decision is made by the Dean, based on a proposal from Head of Department.

1. This includes discrimination in relation to gender, religion and ethnicity, sexuality and disability. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Examples here include economic dependencies, close friendships, family – and sexual relations [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Fundamental Principles Related to the Treatment of Academic Dishonesty (forthcoming) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.icmje.org/icmje-recommendations.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Veileder om gaver i tjenesten <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/Veileder-om-gaver-i-tjenesten/id757296/sec5> (Norwegian only) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)