



PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKSHOP ON  
POSTGRADUATE STUDIES AND SUPERVISION IN  
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY ZARIA



EDITED BY

ZAKARI MOHAMMED  
AND  
UMAR IBRAHIM

PUBLISHED BY RESEARCH AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT,  
CARNEGIE CORPORATION'S PROJECT, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

2006

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ZARIA

March, 2006

## FOREWORD

Most of our Postgraduate Students do not graduate on time. This could be due to poor supervision, unseriousness on part of the students, poor research facilities, inadequate funding of postgraduate programmes, financial status by the students, non release of students by their employers, involvement of students in other activities that take a lot of their time. Also there is a problem of poor quality of some of the theses and dissertations that are received in the Postgraduate School.

In order to look into these problems, the Postgraduate School organized a Workshop on *Postgraduate Students Supervision*. The workshop was attended by Deans of faculties, Directors of Institutes and Centres, Heads of Departments, Deputy/Assistant Deans in charge of Postgraduate students, Departmental postgraduate Coordinators and other senior academics. The problems were thoroughly discussed. Observations were raised and resolution made. Some of the resolutions are now being implemented.

The book is a product of that workshop. It contains the papers presented, gives details of the observations and a list of resolutions.

I expect all academic staff involved in postgraduate supervision to read this book and to try to facilitate the implementation of the resolutions.

I thank the Vice-Chancellor immensely for supporting the programmes of the Postgraduate School especially this workshop. I thank all stakeholders, who participated in the workshop, for contributing to improving the quality of our postgraduate training.

I thank the Carnegie Corporations of New York for funding the publication of this proceedings.

Prof. J.U. Umoh  
Dean, Postgraduate School  
August 2006

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are most sincerely grateful to the Carnegie Corporation Project for its financial support and keen interest in academic pursuit. Your support has no doubt rekindled the intellectual tradition of which this great University is known for. The publication of this book is evidence.

We are also grateful to the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Shehu U. Abdullahi, mni for his concern and support not only to Research and Curriculum Development Unit (RCDU) but to the overall programmes of donor agencies and the University.

To our resource persons and keen participants at the various workshops held, we most sincerely appreciate your zeal and contributions.

Lastly, we thank all members of the various sub-committees of the Research and Curriculum Development Unit (RCDU) for your untiring commitments to the realization of the Carnegie Corporation Project despite your tight schedule and other engagements.

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# **1. REGULATION GOVERNING HIGHER DEGREES STUDIES**

## **I INTRODUCTION**

1 Postgraduate School is empowered by Senate to enforce minimum requirements and maintain standards of Postgraduate Studies in Ahmadu Bello University and to co-ordinate Postgraduate Programmes of its various Faculties.

The individual Faculties and Departments shall be charged with the detailed operations of Postgraduate Programmes. The Postgraduate School Board shall execute policies related to Postgraduate Studies and associated research.

2 Each Faculty may, consistent with these Regulations, make further regulations for the detailed organization of Postgraduate work and research within the Faculty, subject to approval by Senate.

3 Matters requiring approval by Senate from the various Faculties shall first be considered by the Postgraduate School Board and if approved, shall be recommended to Senate.

## **II APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION**

4 A student wishing to read for Postgraduate Diploma, Masters or Doctoral degree of Ahmadu Bello University (Appendix I) shall apply for provisional admission, through the Postgraduate School, to the Postgraduate Admissions Committee.

5 Application for admission for Postgraduate Studies shall be made in duplicate, using prescribed forms available at the Postgraduate School.

6 All candidates shall supply the names of at least two academic referees.

7 Applications for admission shall be addressed to the Dean, Postgraduate School, and

must be accompanied by the appropriate application fee.

8 Candidates seeking admission for Postgraduate studies must, in addition, fulfil the general University requirements in English Language.

9. The Postgraduate School shall forward the application of each candidate to the Dean of the relevant Faculty for consideration and recommendation.

### **III REGISTRATION**

10. Upon acceptance of the offer of provisional admission, each candidate shall be given a three month provisional registration by the Postgraduate School.
11. Tuition and other fees shall, except where exemption has been granted by the University, be payable by all candidates provisionally registered for Postgraduate studies at rates prescribed from time to time by the University Council.
12. Before the expiration of the three months of provisional registration for each candidate, the appropriate Faculty shall apply, through the Postgraduate School, to Senate for approval of the registration for the Postgraduate Diploma, Masters or Doctoral degree.
13. Once approved and in order to remain a bona fide Postgraduate student, each candidate shall renew his/her registration with the Postgraduate School at the beginning of each academic year until he/she is examined on the project report/thesis/dissertation, and has submitted copies of hard-bound Thesis and earned the Completion of Regulations Certificate (CRC) of the School.
14. Neither the Postgraduate School nor the University Senate shall be obliged to give reasons for rejecting the candidature of any applicant for Postgraduate studies.

### **IV. POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA REGULATION**

15. Courses of study leading to various Postgraduate Diplomas may be organized either on full-time or part-time basis, depending on the nature of the programme. Postgraduate Diplomas are based on essentially on course work and a project report.



16. Entry qualifications are detailed under appropriate Faculties/Institutes, but invariably holders of first degree with minimum of second class honours are preferred.

#### **V. MASTERS DEGREE REGULATION**

17. Courses of study and research leading to Masters degree may be organized on a full-time or part-time basis by Faculty Boards as approved by Senate.

18. Candidates with the following qualifications may seek admission and registration for Masters degree programmes:

- (a) Holders of first degrees of Ahmadu Bello University, with first or second class honours of a good pass for unclassified degrees.
- (b) Holders of equivalent qualifications from other Universities; where first degrees are expressed in terms of a grade point system, the minimum grade point average acceptable for admission shall be 2.50 on a 4-point scale (or 1.75 on a 3-point scale or 3.00 on 5-point scale).
- (c) Holders of any other qualifications which, together with relevant experience, are deemed by the Faculty Board, Postgraduate School Board and Senate to be equivalent to (a) or (b) above.

19. Whenever necessary, a Faculty Board may require a student to sit for a qualifying examination either before approval of his/her registration or at an appropriate stage of the course work or research.

20. The candidate's broad field of research shall be required for the purpose of registration in the first instance. The specific title of research shall, however, be made available to the Postgraduate School Board and Senate by the candidate's Department during or after course work.

21. After registration every full-time candidate for the Masters degree shall pursue the programme for not less than twelve (12) calendar months and

not more than thirty-six (36) calendar months before being examined for the degree.

22. However, in exceptional circumstances and on the recommendation of the appropriate Faculty Board and the Postgraduate School Board, Senate may grant an extension of time totalling not more than eighteen (18) calendar months.
23. Full-time Masters Candidates who fail to complete their degrees within the total period permissible in paragraphs 21 and 22 above shall be considered withdrawn from the programmes.
24. After registration, every part-time candidate for the Masters degree shall pursue the programme for not less than twenty (20) calendar months and not more than sixty (60) calendar months before being examined for the degree.
25. However, in exceptional circumstances and on the recommendation of the appropriate Faculty Board and the Postgraduate School Board, Senate may grant an extension of time totalling not more than thirty (30) calendar months.
26. Part-time Masters Candidates who fail to complete their degrees within the total period permissible in paragraph 24 and 25 above shall be considered withdrawn from the programmes.
27. Masters thesis/project report shall consist of the candidate's own original work and formulation, subject to the following conditions:
  - (a) That references to published and/or unpublished works should be made within reasonable limits and appropriately acknowledged in the body of the thesis/project report.
  - (b) That the formulations and subject matter of the thesis/project report shall not have been presented for a higher degree at this or any other University.

28. Candidates for Masters Degrees shall be examined by the following procedures:

- (a) Written examinations on course work and seminars;
- (b) An examination on the thesis by a panel of External and Internal Examiners, including an Oral defence;
- (c) In the case of a project report, an internal oral defence followed by its external moderation.

#### **VI DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY REGULATION**

29. Courses of study and/or research leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy may be organized on a full-time or part-time basis by the respective Faculty Boards of the University as approved by Senate.

30. The following shall be eligible to seek registration for the degree of Ph.D.

- (a) Candidates who hold Masters Degrees of Ahmadu Bello University;
- (b) Graduates of other recognized Universities who hold higher degrees considered by the Faculty Board, Postgraduate School Board and Senate to be equivalent to (a) above;
- (c) Candidates with any other qualifications which, together with relevant experience, are deemed to be equivalent to (a) above;
- (d) Transferred candidates under paragraph 43.

31. Candidates for the Ph.D. programme may be required to pass a qualifying examination and/or undergo a probationary period not exceeding twelve (12) calendar months.

32. After registration each full time candidate for the degree of Ph.D. shall pursue the programme for not less than twenty-four (24) calendar months and not more than sixty (60) calendar months before being examined for the degree.

33. Where a full-time candidate for the degree of Ph.D. transfers from the status of registered Masters student under paragraph 43 the effective date for the transfer shall be the original registration for the Masters degree, provided that such a candidate does not submit himself/herself for final examination in less than thirty-six (36) calendar months altogether.
34. After registration each part-time candidate for the degree of Ph.D. shall pursue the programme for not less than thirty-six (36) calendar months, nor more than eighty-four (84) calendar months, before being examined.
35. Where a part-time candidate for the degree of Ph.D. has transferred from the status of a registered Masters student under paragraph 43, the effective date for the transfer shall be the original registration for the Masters degree, provided that such a candidate does not submit himself/herself for final examination in less than forty-eight (48) calendar months altogether.
36. At the expiration of the period allowed under paragraphs 32 and 34, Senate may, in exceptional circumstances and on the recommendation of the Faculty Board and the Postgraduate School Board, extend the period of registration by not more than a total of twenty-four (24) calendar months for both full-time and part-time Ph.D. candidates.
37. Full-time and part-time Ph.D. candidates who fail to complete their degrees within the total period permissible in paragraphs 31, 33 and 35 above shall be considered withdrawn from the programme.
38. Candidates for the degree of Ph.D. shall be examined by:
  - (a) Written examination on course work where applicable;
  - (b) Presentation of at least two seminars;
  - (c) An examination on the thesis before a panel of External and Internal Examiners based on the materials of the dissertation, the general knowledge of the field in which the subject for

research has been chosen shall also form part of the overall examination.

39. The dissertation which shall consist of the candidate's own original work and must comply with the following conditions:

- (a) It must form a distinct contribution to knowledge and afford evidence of originality shown by the discovery of new facts, techniques or by the exercise of independent critical power.
- (b) It must be satisfactory as regards literary presentation and must comply with Ahmadu Bello University "Approved Guidelines for the Preparation of Project/Thesis and Dissertations". (APPENDIX II)
- (c) It must not have formed the part of a dissertation presented for a higher degree at this or any other University.

## **VII DOCTOR OF MEDICINE REGULATION**

40. Candidates seeking admission for the degree of Doctor of Medicine are required to have:

- (a) Obtained the degree of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery of Ahmadu Bello University or any other University, at least six (6) calendar years prior to the time of admission.
- (b) Obtained other qualifications which are considered by the Faculty Board, Postgraduate School Board and Senate to be equivalent to (a) above.
- (c) Registered with the Nigerian Medical Council at the time of admission for the M.D. programme.

41. After registration every M.D. candidate shall pursue the programme for not less than twenty-four (24) calendar months and not more than eighty-four (84) calendar months before being examined.

42. The M.D. dissertation must comply with the guidelines stipulated for Ph.D. candidates in paragraph 39 above.

## **VIII CHANGE OF STATUS**

### **A. Transfer from Masters to Doctoral Registration**

43. Candidates recommended by their Faculties for up-grading from Masters to Doctoral registration must comply with the following requirements:

(a) The candidate shall have been registered for at least eighteen (18) calendar months, and at most twenty-four (24) calendar months and not more than forty (40) calendar months, if part-time.

(b) The candidate shall have successfully completed the prescribed course(s), with a minimum average letter of 'B'.

(c) The candidate must also present evidence of outstanding research work in the form of a written report that gives:

- (i) a full account and discussion of the research undertaken during the relevant period, and
- (ii) an appropriate review of the relevant literature.

44. The report called for under paragraph 43(c) above shall be evaluated by at least three (3) Assessors approved by the Faculty Board, and comprising the Chairman of the candidate's Supervisory Committee, one staff member of the relevant Department and a third person appointed from outside the Department (but not necessarily external to the University).

45. Recommendation from the Faculty Board to the Postgraduate School and Senate must be accompanied by the report of the Assessors as well as any other documents considered relevant in supporting the transfer.

46. The effective date of the transfer shall be the date on which Senate approves the recommendation, provided that the minimum period required by the relevant sections of the Regulation for Doctoral candidates shall apply. In this regard, the period of registration for the Doctoral degree shall take effect from the date of the original (Masters') registration.

### **B. Change from Full-time to Part-time or Vice-Versa**

47. Subject to the approval of Senate, a Postgraduate candidate may transfer from full-time to part-time or vice versa. On approval of the transfer, the period of registration shall be calculated using the approved formula. (APPENDIX III).

## **IX OTHER GENERAL REGULATIONS**

### **A Extension of Registration**

#### **Full-time Candidates**

48. Candidates may apply for extension of registration not later than three (3) calendar months before the expiration of their current registration. Upon the lapse of the registration, the candidate will be deemed to have withdrawn.

#### **B. Part-time Candidate**

49. In addition to other requirements, candidates for part-time postgraduate registration must also comply with the following conditions:

- (a) Part-time candidates on full employment must present their employers' written permission to undertake the course.
- (b) Each candidate must present evidence to the effect that sufficient time is at his/her disposal to undertake the course to completion.

50. For the purpose of these regulations, members of staff of Ahmadu Bello University who wish to read for higher degrees shall be regarded as part-time candidates, except those who are either Graduate Assistants or who hold study Fellowships.

### **C. Course work**

51. The Faculty Board shall, on the recommendation of the appropriate Department, prescribe a course of study and/or research for each candidate.



52. Each candidate shall normally be expected to pass all prescribed written examinations before presenting his/her project report/thesis/dissertation for examination
53. Each Faculty shall determine which of its courses are core/specialization or optional/elective courses.
54. Course work, which will be examined and graded, shall be mandatory at Masters level and desirable at doctoral level. The extent of course work or the total number of courses required of each candidate shall be determined by each Faculty Board.
55. Written examinations for course work shall be conducted in accordance with the following procedures:
  - (a) Faculty Boards shall appoint the time and place for all written examinations.
  - (b) Continuous assessment marks shall be included in the total examination marks and shall account for 30-50% of the aggregate marks in a course.
  - (c) The final result of any re-sit examination shall include marks already accumulated for continuous assessment.
  - (d) Candidates who fail more than 50% of all the courses taken within one academic year shall be required to withdraw from the Postgraduate programmes for which they are registered.
  - (e) Candidates who fail 50% or less of the courses taken within a calendar year shall be required to re-sit the particular course(s) only once and within a period of six (6) months.
  - (f) Candidates who fail in a re-sit examination may, at the discretion of the Faculty Board, be allowed to repeat the particular course(s) only once.



- (g) Candidates who fail a repeat course shall be required to withdraw from the postgraduate programmes for which they are registered.

56. The pass mark for all written examinations shall be 50%. The grading system applicable to all Faculties shall be as follows:

Marks Awarded (%)	Letter Grade	Equivalent
70 and above	A	Excellent
60 – 69	B	Good
50 – 59	C	Pass
Less than 50	F	Fail

57. Transfer of credits for course work from other Universities shall be allowed only on the prior approval of Faculty Board, Postgraduate School Board and Senate. In all such cases, the appropriate Faculty Boards shall determine whether or not any special written examinations are necessary in respect of the transferring candidates.

58. The transfer of credits shall be allowed only in respect of course work.

59. Except where an exemption has been approved by the Postgraduate School Board and Senate, all written examinations shall be externally moderated.

60. No Postgraduate candidate shall proceed to the project stages of the programme without having completed a substantial part of the course work requirement, comprehensive examination (where applicable), and successfully defended his/her research/project proposal.

**D. Supervision**

61. Not less than two Supervisors shall be appointed to constitute a supervisory Committee for each postgraduate candidates; one of the Supervisors shall be designated the Chairman.

62. Supervisors shall be appointed by the relevant Department from the teaching/research staff of the University. Where it is necessary to use

expertise external to Ahmadu Bello University for student supervision, at least one member of the supervisory committee must be a staff of the relevant Department.

63. The appointment of Supervisors is subject to approval by the relevant Faculty Board, Postgraduate School Board and Senate.
64. Each Supervisor must possess the higher degree for which his/her candidate is registered, unless the Supervisor has attained the position of a Professor.
65. Supervisors for Doctoral candidates must be people of the rank of Senior Lecturer/Senior Research Fellow or above.
66. Irrespective of his/her academic position, a staff member of the University who is himself/herself a postgraduate candidate cannot serve as a Supervisor.
67. Each Supervisor shall be required to supervise not more than six (6) full-time or eight (8) combined full-time and part-time or ten (10) part-time postgraduate candidates. Every joint supervision shall be regarded as equivalent to one half, one third, etc. candidates, depending on the number of Supervisors involved. However the Chairman of the Supervisory Committee shall be regarded as carrying one full supervision load in each case.
68. Among their other duties, Supervisors, at the invitation of the Chairman, shall:
  - (a) be conversant with the nature of the student's registration status so as to effectively guide his/her studies to a successful end within the allowable period of time;
  - (b) advise and give guidance on the overall planning of the students' course work and research/project, and make themselves readily available to the student for consultation at regular intervals throughout the duration of the programme;

(c) submit written reports to the Postgraduate School Board, through the Faculty Board, in March and September of each year on the progress of the student(s) being supervised. The format for such periodic progress reports shall be provided by the Postgraduate School;

(d) inform the Postgraduate School, through the Department and the Faculty Board, if and when any member of the Supervisory Committee is compelled by absence, illness or otherwise to relinquish his/her Supervisory role; and

(e) initiate action, through the Department and the Faculty Board, in keeping the Postgraduate School Board informed, if, at any time the student's health, behaviour or work deteriorates or if his/her circumstances change in such a way as to adversely affect the postgraduate programme for which he/she is registered.

69. The Head of Department must at all times take full responsibility for ensuring the competency of Supervisors.

## 2. THE ROLE OF DEPARTMENTAL AND FACULTY POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEES.

### Departmental Postgraduate Committees

If the Departmental Postgraduate Committee is to effectively play its coordinating and supervising role, it should have the following composition;

(I) The Head of Department who shall be the Chairman.

(a) In the event that the Head of department is below the rank of a Senior Lecturer or he/she is a Postgraduate Student, the most senior academic staff will assume

the Chairmanship of the Departmental Postgraduate Studies Committee.

(b) If the Head of department is not a Senior lecturer and there is no Senior lecturer in the Department, the Head of Department shall chair the committee on an acting capacity provided he or she is not a Postgraduate Student.

(II) The Departmental Postgraduate Coordinator (of the rank not below Senior Lecturer and must not be a Postgraduate student) who shall be the Secretary of the Committee. In case he or she is below the rank of Senior Lecture, he shall serve in an acting capacity.

(III) All Professors and Readers in the department. In cases where there are no Professor or Reader in the Department, the Head of Department shall co-opt the most senior academic members of staff.

(IV) The leaders (or Heads) of the various subject sections or groups in the Department (for example in Chemistry, the leaders of Inorganic, Physical, Organic, Analytical etc. sections provided they are not Postgraduate students. If their rank is below Senior Lecturer, then their membership will be in acting capacity.

(V) The Chief Technologist, for Science-based departments or equivalent for non- Science-based departments.

### ***Duties of the Department Postgraduate Committee***

These will include:

- (1) The conceptualization, articulation and development of relevant, viable Postgraduate programme for approval by the Departmental and Faculty Board.
- (2) The review and updating of existing approved programmes on a biennial basis to ensure conformity and compliance with contemporary standards and needs.
- (3) Ascertaining that there are adequate facilities (within and without the Department) for running approved programmes and for proposed programmes. Such facilities should include qualified academic and technical staff, equipment and materials, availability of classrooms, laboratory space. Studios etc.
- (4) Recommending the admission quota to the department for approval and forwarding through the Faculty to the Postgraduate School.
- (5) Scrutinizing applications for higher degrees and diploma- and recommending admission into approved programmes in line with established guidelines and admission requirements.
- (6) Setting up the machinery for the constant monitoring of Postgraduate students performance through quarterly assessment of progress reports, consideration of coursework report at the end of each semester etc.
- (7)
  - (i) Vetting the adequacy and appropriateness of research topics.
  - (ii) Ensuring the availability of supervisor especially for Ph.D. students especially before admission).
  - (iii) Ensuring the proper allocation of students to supervisors for research projects.
- (iv) Close monitoring of students supervision to ensure that:
  - (a) Students conscientiously work on their projects.

- (b) Supervisors do not unnecessarily delay students due to the lack of effective supervision.
  - (v) Working with the supervisors to ensure that draft thesis or dissertations are read and returned to students within specified periods.
  - (vi) Working with the supervisor to recommend appropriate external examiners through Faculty Committees to the Postgraduate School.
  - (8) Ensuring that students comply with the rules and procedures stipulated for higher degrees by the Postgraduate School Board University (i.e. such compliance should be in respect of Seminars, Fieldwork etc. format of thesis, dissertation presentation etc.)
  - (9) Preparing Annual Reports of Postgraduate Work for submission to the Department for approval and forwarding to the Postgraduate School Board.
  - (10) Reviewing from time to time the performance of supervisors and making recommendations as appropriate to departments.
- Carrying out other functions assigned to it by the Postgraduate School.

#### **FACULTY POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE**

Each Faculty offering a postgraduate degree must have a Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee. The Committee shall be responsible for the conduct and management of postgraduate programmes in its Faculty.

The Committee shall consist of:

- (i) Deputy Dean or Assistant Dean (Postgraduate) as Chairman
- (ii) All Departmental Postgraduate Studies Coordinators.
- (iii) Faculty Officer (Or Representative) as Secretary.

This Committee shall

- (i) Formulate rules and procedures relevant to the Faculty higher degree programmes within the policies established by the Postgraduate School Board and the University.

(ii) Publish and make available to staff and students the policies, rules and procedures regarding postgraduate studies as may be enunciated from time to time by the Postgraduate School.

(iii) On behalf of the Faculty Board be responsible for all postgraduate matters in the Faculty.

(iv) Consider all the matters from the Departmental Postgraduate Studies Committee

and make appropriate recommendations to the Postgraduate School Board i.e.,

consider and approve submissions from Departmental Committee on admission, examiners' reports, approval of supervisors, external examiners, approval of new programs and of the review of old ones for onward transmission to the Postgraduate School.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Committee Report on the Autonomy of the Postgraduate School, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria - 2001.

New Draft Postgraduate School Prospectus, A.B.U. – 2001

**3. GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROJECT REPORTS, THESES AND DISSERTATIONS**

**A. GENERAL REGULATIONS**

1. All reports, theses and dissertations must be written in English or any other approved language. If written in another language, the declaration, certification, acknowledgement and abstract must be in English.
2. Candidates pursuing Postgraduate studies by research and thesis/dissertation shall be examined orally by a panel of external and internal examiners approved by the Senate.
3. Regarding candidates submitting project reports, their oral defence shall be internally arranged within by the Department/Faculty, followed by the Department/Faculty, followed by a moderation of the results by approved external assessors.
4. At least ten (10) weeks before the expected date of the oral examination, each candidate shall write an application to the Dean of the Faculty, through the Chairman of his/her Supervisory Committee and the Head of Department, indicating his/her desire to submit himself/herself for oral examination.
5. At the time of submission of names of examiners each faculty shall ensure that definite and appropriate titles of project reports/theses/dissertations are provided.
6. At least four (4) weeks prior to the oral examination, a candidate must present loose bound copies of his/her draft report/thesis/dissertation to the Department for transmission to internal examiners and through the Dean of the Faculty to the Dean of Postgraduate School for transmission to external examiners.
7. A covering letter written by the Head of Department concerned and the Dean of the Faculty to the Dean of the Postgraduate School should certify



the project report/thesis/dissertation conforms to all conditions stipulated in the approved Guidelines for the Preparation of Project Reports/Theses/Dissertations.

8. At the end of each oral examination the examiners shall, in particular, jointly recommend clearly whether or not, in their opinion, the work, in all parts of the examination, is of sufficient merit to justify the award of the relevant higher degree, or whether the candidate is required to resubmit all or part of the work for re-examination.

9. Within three (3) calendar months after each oral examination, the Head of Department shall present to the Senate, through the Faculty Board and the Postgraduate School Board, the result of the examination.

10. A candidate who is required to resubmit a project report/thesis/dissertation shall be required to present himself/herself for re-examination as determined by the examiners within a period of three (3) calendar months for minor corrections or twelve (12) calendar months for major corrections.

11. A candidate who fails the examination shall be withdrawn from the postgraduate programme.

12. Candidates submitting themselves for oral examination for higher degree shall be required to pay an examination fee at a rate to be determined from time to time; the examination fee is payable before the oral examination.

13. Where a candidate is required to resubmit a project report/thesis/dissertation, the examination fee shall be payable a second time.

14. The Dean of the Postgraduate School shall append his signature to the appropriate number of copies of completed project reports/theses/dissertations only after the Senate has approved the results of the oral examination.

## **B. ORGANIZATION SEQUENCE**

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Fly leaf

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Declaration

Certification

Acknowledgement

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Abbreviations, Definitions, Glossaries and symbols

Introductory Chapters

Main Chapters

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

References

Appendices (if any)

### **1. Cover Page**

The following shall be on cover page (written in capital letters):

\* Title of thesis/project report/dissertation

\* Name of the student

\* Department/Faculty/University

\* Month/year of defence

### **2. Fly Leaf**

This is a blank page. The white paper used must be of good quality and of the same quality as that on the inside cover.

**3. Title Page**

The following shall be on the title page (written in capital letters)

\* Title of thesis/project report/dissertation

\* Name of the student with qualifications

\* Registration number

\* A thesis/project report/dissertation submitted to the Postgraduate School,

Ahmadu

Bello University in partial fulfilment for the award  
of \_\_\_\_\_

\* Department/Faculty/University

\* Month/year of defence

**4. Declaration**

I declare that the work in the project report/thesis/dissertation  
entitled \_\_\_\_\_ has been performed by me in the Department of  
\_\_\_\_\_ under the supervision of \_\_\_\_\_  
acknowledge in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this project  
report/thesis/dissertation was previously presented for another degree or diploma  
at any university. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**5. Certification**

This project report/thesis/dissertation entitled (Title in capital letters)  
\_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ meets  
the regulations governing the award of the degree of  
\_\_\_\_\_ of Ahmadu Bello University, and is  
approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

(Name and Signature) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman, Supervisory Committee

(Name and Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Member, Supervisory Committee

(Name and Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Member, Supervisory Committee

(Name and Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Head of Department

(Name and Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dean, Postgraduate School

**6. Acknowledgement**

This should contain a brief note of appreciation to all those who contributed to the success of the study.

**7. Abstract**

The abstract should not exceed 500 words. It must be typed double space and not indented. It should briefly indicate the statement of the problem, the objective, data collection and analysis, major findings and conclusion.

**8. Contents.**

This is a list of sections and subsections of the project report/thesis/dissertation and indicating the pages they occur. If the title of a section or subsection runs more than one line, the second line is single-spaced and not indented.

**9. Lists of Tables/Figures/Plates/Appendices**

In lists of tables, figures, plates or appendices where the title runs more than one line, the subsequent lines must be single-spaced and not indented.

**10. Abbreviations, Definitions, Glossaries and Symbols**

Explain all abbreviations and symbols. Define terms or give glossaries.

**11. Main Chapters**

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3 : Materials and Methods

Chapter 4: Results

Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

**Introduction**

This chapter should consist, at least, of the following sections: (a) statement of the problem, (b) significance of the study/justification for the study, (c) theoretical framework, (d) objectives of the study and (e) statement of research hypotheses/research questions.

**Literature Review**

This chapter reviews the studies of another on the subject matter. It should be focused, logically arranged and up to date.

## **Materials and Methods**

This chapter should describe the methodology of research and should take into consideration the study design, sampling methods, techniques used in data collection and in analysis of the data.

## **Results**

The chapter presents the results and interpretation of analysis of the data collected, observations made or information gathered in the material and methods Chapter.

## **Discussion**

This chapter presents explanations for the results obtained in the study. Published works on the subject matter should be consulted and acknowledged.

## **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

The summary will present highlights of the major findings. The conclusion gives the inferences drawn from the findings. The recommendation shall list possible ways of solving the problems identified by the research and areas for further research.

## **Possible Modifications in the Main Chapters**

Departments may modify the above format. It is permissible to write each component of the study as a chapter consisting of abstract, introduction, materials and methods (methodology), results, discussion, conclusion and references.

However the format for writing chapter 1 (introduction), chapter 2 (Literature Review) and the chapter on Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations.

All modifications should be sent to the Postgraduate School.

### **C. WRITING INSTRUCTIONS**

#### **Language and style**

- a. the project report/thesis/dissertation must be written in English or such other

Language as Senate may approve.

- b. Great care should be taken to make the project report/thesis/dissertation a scholarly contribution to knowledge, including language usage and accuracy of expression. A project report/thesis/dissertation must be accurate, its language precise, formal and objective. Expression should normally be in the third person.
- c. Proper attention should be paid to such skills as correct spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, capitalization and the proper use of italics. Students are advised to consult a good handbook on language usage, a dictionary, a thesaurus and manual of style for further details.

### **D. TYPING INSTRUCTIONS**

- (a) Size

Use A4 paper (21.0 lx 29.7cm):

- (b) Typing

The following points should be noted:

- (i) Type on one side only
- (ii) Use double spacing throughout the text, except for indented quotations

and footnotes which should be typed in single spacing. In case the Tables cannot fit into these requirements, appropriate adjustments may be made. In the list of reference single spacing may be used between the lines of references. Use double spacing to separate any two different references.

- (iii) Leave one extra line space between paragraphs.
- (iv) Provide adequate margins of 3.5cm, on the left hand side margin,  
approximately 2.5cm, on the right side margin, and 2.5cm, on top and bottom of each pages.
- (v) Try not to break words at the end of lines; but where this is unavoidable, use a hyphen and break the word at the end of a syllable.
- (vi) Use the same type-face to ensure a standard page throughout the text.

(c) Footnotes

Keep footnotes, elaboration of concepts, etc. in footnotes to a minimum. As much as possible, such items should be integrated into the text where relevant. Footnotes should be presented at the end of the relevant chapter and numbered consecutively or at the foot of the relevant pages. Whichever of the two methods is adopted there should be consistency in presentation.

(d) Quotations

- (i) A quotation comprising fewer than fifty words should be integrated into the text, using double quotation marks at the beginning and the end of the quotation.
- (ii) Use single quotation marks within double quotation marks to set off materials that were enclosed in double quotation marks in the original source.

Example: Smith (2002) uses double quotation marks around "Placebo effect". You must now use single quotation marks around 'Placebo effect' when quoting Smith (2002), thus: "Smith (2002) found that 'the Placebo



effect', which had been verified in previous studies, disappeared when behaviours were studied unobtrusively".

- (iii) For a quotation over fifty words, indent in typescript 1.5cm. from the left-hand margin. No quotation marks are necessary for indented passages.

Example: Smith (2002) found the following: The "Placebo effect" which had been verified in previous studies, disappeared when behaviours were studied unobtrusively. Furthermore, the behaviours were never exhibited again, even when real drugs were administered. Earlier studies were clearly premature in attributing the results to a placebo effect. This is not to deny that in small sampling studies, there is always a possibility that the control group will contain a larger number of placebo reactors than the experimental group.

- (iv) Direct quotations must be accurate, i.e. you must follow exactly the original source. If any incorrect spelling, punctuation, or grammar in the source might confuse readers, insert the word *sic*, underlined and bracketed (i.e.) (*sic*), immediately after the error in the quotation.

Example: Smith (2002) found that "the behaviours were never exhibited again, even when real (*sic*) drugs were administered"

- (e) Headings

A maximum of four-tier system should be adopted for the headings in the text. Arabic numerals should be used appropriately to number the headings. The chapter headings should be centralized with all letters in capitals and bold. The number of the chapter should be typeset to the left in bold. The second sub-headings should also be centralized and in bold with first letters of each main word in capital, while third tier the sub-headings should be in italics and also be set to the left with the first letter in capital only. The fourth-tier of headings should not be numbered and should start as paragraphs but in italics.

Example:

### Chapter 3 RESEARCH PROCEDURES

#### 3.1 Experimental Sites

Two field experiments were conducted at the irrigation site of the Institute for Agricultural Research.....

#### 3.2 Data Collection (bold)

##### 3.2.1 Meteorological Data (*italics*)

The meteorological data collected at Samaru included air temperature

##### 3.2.2 Weed and Crop Data (*italics*)

Weed and crop data were collected from net plots in Samaru, using the following method:

Weed cover scores: Visual observations taken on weed cover on a scale of 0 – 10, were .....

Interview of Local Farmers: Altogether 76 local farmers were interviewed for thirty minutes each, using structured guidelines and competent Hausa speakers

The headings should be numbered in the Table of Contents as shown in Appendix A.

#### Tables, Figures and Plates

##### (a) Tables

Tables should be so constructed that they can be read and understood without reference to the text of the thesis/dissertation/project report. A Table should therefore, be simple, presenting only one general kind of data or relationship. A good Table should contribute to the processes of analysis and valid generalization of findings inherent in the original data.

Tables within the text should be brief and clear. Such Tables should be typed as near as possible after the paragraph in which these have been mentioned for the first time. Fully-page Tables should be inserted immediately

after the page in which they have been mentioned for the first time. Tables based on data other than those collected directly from the investigation and/or very long Tables should normally be inserted as Appendices at the end of the thesis.

Each Table should have a clear and self-explanatory title. Table should be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals throughout the thesis/dissertation/project report or numbered according to chapter, e.g. Table 2.1 denoting chapter 2 Table 1. The text should include useful reference to all tables. Larger Tables types length-wise along the page should have their options at the end of the bound copy. All Tables should be discussed within the text.

When typing Tables, you should use the minimum number of cross-line. The Title should be set to the extreme left with the second line, where applicable, starting under the first letter of the title. The data should be set to the left under the column headings. The column headings should also be set to the left. Then the number of lines vary among the column headings, these should be adjusted from bottom to the top (Appendix B).

#### (b) Figures and Plates

Figures include graphs, charts, drawing, diagrams, maps and some kind of computer print-outs. The term "figures" thus refers to any type of graphic illustration other than a Table. Figures should be clear, elegant and simple to interpret. Arabic numerals should be used in numbering Figure.

Mounted illustrations such as photographs are usually referred to as plates. The recommended practice is to use Roman numerals to identify plates: e.g. Plate III, Plate V., etc.

Each Figure or Plate must have a concise but comprehensive caption. The caption should be typed below the figure or plate. These should be set to the left as in the case of headings for Tables. Avoid the use of such superfluous as "Graph Showing..." Or "Map illustration ..." and the like.

Large Figures may either be neatly folded or photographically reduced to the required size. If the system of folding is selected, a large Figure should be so folded as to facilitate ease of reference to it. In using photographic reduction techniques, it should be noted that such reductions may cause distortion of relationships.

(c) Data Presentation

The Data used in drawing graphs and charts should not normally be re-presented in form of Tables. However, if their representation would provide additional information, then these should be given as appendices.

Numerals and Units

(a) In the descriptive text, numerals are usually spelt out if under 10, except where they denote a unit of measurement. All other numbers should appear in Arabic numerals

Insert comma in numerals over 1,000 or space out as recommended by the International System of Unit. Use "first", "second", not "1st", "2nd", etc.

(b) Dates should take the form of 10 March, 1982 and not 10th March, 1982; i.e. omit "th". Decades should be referred to without the apostrophe, e.g. 1940s, 1960s and not 1930's, 1950's, 1970's.

(c) If you choose to use the percentage sign %, do not mix with spelt figures or vice versa.

(d) Units of measurements should be spelt out when appearing alone in the text, but abbreviated according to standard abbreviations when used in Tables and Figures and when qualified by numbers.

(e) Metric Units should be used.

Operational Definitions/Nomenclature

(a) Definitions

Define the significant terms that:

(i) are specific to the field in which the study is being conducted;

(ii) have every-day language counterparts with which they might be confused; and

(iii) are related substantively or methodologically to your project/report/thesis/dissertation. Such terms should be listed and defined carefully in the introductory chapter in.

(b) Nomenclature

(i) Organisms: At their first mention, species names should be in full and backed with authorities in accordance with the appropriate international rules of nomenclature. For example: *Aphis creccivbora* Kock, *Echinochloa colona* (L) link., etc. Common names should be defined by the full Latin names at the first mention: e.g. maize (*Zae mays* L.). The names of the authorities should not be given subsequently. Taxa above the rank of genus should be spelt with the first letter in capital and not under lined: e.g. Aphididae, Homoptera, etc. In the case of fungi, if two names are commonly used, the perfect stat name should be given with imperfect stat name in bracket; e.g. *Mycosphaerella arachidis* (Dighton) *Ceroospora arachidicola* (Hori).

(ii) Pesticides and Drugs: Common names of pesticides and drugs which have been accepted by either International Organization of Standardization or British Standard Institution should be used wherever possible. If necessary, proprietary names may be given in brackets: e.g. Benomyl (Benlate F, Dupont Ltd., U.S.A.). Where there are no accepted common names, the proprietary name (spelt with initial capital letter) or code number may be used, with the name of the manufacturer given in brackets. Chemic names of the pesticides and drugs mentioned in the text should be given in an appendix.

## Abbreviations

(a) Explain all acronyms and abbreviation. A term to be abbreviated must, on its first appearance, be spelt out completely and followed immediately by its abbreviation in parentheses. Thereafter, the abbreviation may be used in the text without further explanation.

Example:

The results of studies of simple reaction time (RT) to a visual target have shown a strong negative relationship between RT and luminance. Abbreviations in a Figure or Table must always be explained in the figures caption or table note. An abbreviation that is used in Figures or Tables must be explained in each figure or Table in which the abbreviation is used.

(b) Latin abbreviations

Use standard Latin abbreviation only in parenthetical material. In non-parenthetical material, use the English translation of the Latin terms.

Example

### Latin Abbreviations

### English translation

cf

Compare

e.g.

for example

etc

and so forth

i.e.

that is

viz

namely

vs

versus; against

Example:

Use the abbreviation "vs" (for 'versus') in references and text citations to court cases, whether parenthetical or not

In the references text, use the Latin abbreviation et al., which means "and others," in non-parenthetical as well as parenthetical material. Note that where the abbreviation et al., is written in italics type-face, it should not be underlined.

References:

(c) All publications cited in the text should be presented in a list of references at the end of the project report/thesis/dissertation in alphabetical order.

(d) Text Reference: A reference in the text should give only the author's surname without the initials, followed by the date of publication in the brackets: e.g. Abubakar (2000) or Madziga and Sanda (2000) or Mensah, 2001. in cases where there are more than two authors, the use of "et al", should apply. All such reference should be given in full in the list of references.

(e) Book References: References to books are given as follows:

(i) If one author:

Danjuma, W.K.D. (2005). Economics of Nuclear Defence System.  
Ahmadu Bello University Press, Zaria, Nigeria, pp. 360-390.

(ii) If two authors:



Musa, J.T. and audu, R.W. (2004). The Political Economy of Nigeria  
Pergamon Press, Oxford, England, pp. 242-259.

(f) Journal References: These should be written in the following forms:

Ayoade, J.O. (2005). On Climate budgeting procedures. The Nigerian  
Filani, M.O. and Richards, P. (1976). Geographical Journal, 19(2): 157-  
178. Periodic market system and rural development. Savanna, 5(2): 149-  
162.

(g) For reference to articles, collected papers or chapters in a book, the  
following should be used:

(i) When the book is edited Schatz, S.P. (2001). The capital shortage  
illusion: Government lending in Nigeria. In: Livingstone, L. (Ed)  
Development Economics and Policy, George Allen and Unwin,  
England, pp. 138-147.

(ii) When a chapter is written in a book authored by another person:  
Sauders, J.H. (1972). The cytogenetic of Gossypium. In: Prentice,  
A.N. (Ed), (Cotton With Special Reference to Africa). Longman  
Group Limited, London, England, pp. 57-58.

(h) For other materials (e.g. thesis, occasional papers, speeches, letters,  
mimeographed material, etc.), Surname of author followed by the initials, year,  
title of materials, nature of material and where it is available or presented.

Example:

Orwor, G.C. (2005). Studies on weed control in irrigated onions (*Allium*,  
*cepa* L.) in Northern Nigeria. Unpublished M.Sc. Thesis. Ahmadu Bello  
University, Zaria, Nigeria.



Lagoke, S.T.O., Kateria, O.P. and Ogungbile, O.A. (2001). Potential for improved weed control practices in field crop production in the Nigerian Savanna zones. Paper presented at the First National Seminar on 'Green Revolution in Nigeria', held at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, 1-4 September.

Anonymous (2002). Minutes of the sixth meeting of Cereals Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria., 5-9 March (Typewritten).

Anonymous (2002). Maize in Upper Volta. Results from research, Institut de Recherches Agronomiques Tropicales (RAT), Upper Volta (Mimeograph).

(i) For Proceedings: Those proceedings which are edited and published in the form of a book should be listed the same way as for a book; e.g.

Ladokun, M.O.A. (2003). Comparison of two methods of estimating percentage frequency of weed species. In: Proceeding of the Ninth Annual Conference, Weed Science Society of Nigeria. pp. 25-31.

(j) For Articles in a Newspaper: Name of the writer should be indicated – if it is known; otherwise it should be listed as Anonymous; e.g.

Bello, J. (2002). Devaluing the Kenyan Shilling. New Nigerian, Feb. 3, P.7.

Anonymous (2002). Editorial New Nigerian, Jan. 2, P.1.

(k) Annual Reports: the following form should be used: Egharevba, P.N. (2001). Effect of row spacing on yield and other agronomic characters in pearl millet. In: sixth Annual Report, pp. 29-30 Department of Agronomy, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.

Anonymous (2002). Groundnut Pathology, In: Annual Report 1980-81, p.18, Institute for Agricultural Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.

- (l) When the original publication is not seen: In case the original publication is not seen, the source should also be quoted: e.g.

Dill, T.T. and Danford, S.W. (2001). Metolachlor as a pre-emergency herbicide. In: Proceedings of the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting Southern Weed Society. P. 120 (Weed Abstracts, 28(9): Abstr. 3022. (2002).

- (m) Where several publications cited together in the text, they should be listed in Chronological order e.g. (Higgins, 1998; Jeathcote and Hassan, 2000; Norman et al., 2004).

- (n) The list of References should be arranged alphabetically on authors' name if the list is also mentioned with co-authors, the following order should be used:

- (a) Publications with single author arranged according to publication dates;

- (b) Publications of the same author with one co-author.

- (c) Publications of the author with more than one co-author.

Publications by the same author(s) in the same year should be listed as (2000a), (2000b), etc.

- (n) For those Departments or Faculties in which the standard practices for Reference citation differ in a material sense for the pattern suggested by the above examples, modification may be adopted, provided that:

18-0801 (a) The proposal modification are made by the Faculty and submitted for prior approval by the Postgraduate School Board; and

(b) The alternative format is used uniformly and consistently within each project report/thesis/dissertation in that Department or Faculty.

(E) SUBMISSION OF PROJECT REPORT/THESIS/DISSERTATION

(a) Prior to Examination

Loose-bound copy of the project report/thesis/dissertation signed by the supervisors should be given to the Head of Department by the major supervisor with a covering letter indicating that the project report/thesis/dissertation is ready for external examination. The Head of Department will then send the project report/thesis/dissertation through the Dean of the Faculty to the Dean, Postgraduate for transmission to the external examiner.

(b) After Examination

(i) Binding

a) Project reports/thesis/dissertations should be permanently bound only after the oral examination and making all necessary corrections and alterations.

b) The spine of each project report/thesis/dissertation should be lettered boldly in gold to indicate the degree, month and year, and name of the candidate.

c) Ph.D. dissertation should be in Maroon colour and Master Project report/thesis in Black colour.

- d) The title and name of the candidate should appear boldly on the front page.

(ii) Number of copies,

Five copies of the approved project/thesis/dissertation should be submitted through the Head of Department to the Postgraduate School for the signature of the Dean. Signed copies are distributed as follows:

- a) University Library (i.e. KIL)
- b) Departmental Library
- c) Postgraduate School
- d) Chairman, Supervisory Committee
- e) Candidate

In addition, two diskettes each containing the entire work must be submitted along with project report/thesis/dissertation to the Postgraduate School.

## **4. GUIDANCE IN THESIS/DISSERTATION PREPARATIONS AND ORAL DEFENCE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

I have been asked to speak on "Guidance in Thesis Dissertation preparation and oral defence. My understanding is that I am expected to present a paper on guiding students in the preparation of their thesis/dissertation and for oral defence. It is with this understanding, that I am presenting this paper.

In a university set up, there is always an interaction between different academic traditions because academic come to the university with different backgrounds and from different traditions. Some of us, for example, have come from the British tradition, some from the American tradition, and yet some from the Canadian, Russian tradition and German traditions. Whatever tradition we come from, the logical method we follow in supervising students has to answer four fundamental questions (Day, 1983; Venkateswarlu 1971), which constitute the parts of a typical research report, whether it is a thesis or a dissertation. These questions are: L

- (a) What is the problem? The answer is the introduction
- (b) How did you study the problem? The answer is methodology or materials and methods
- (c) What is/are the findings? The chapter on results answers this question
- (d) What do these findings mean? Discussion is the answer

### **(A) The Problem:**

#### **(i) Identifying the Research Problems:**

One of the most primary problems facing a Postgraduate Student is the identification of a research problem. Many students approach the supervisor with research problems based on the knowledge of the area of

interest, experience in the field, or sometimes discussion with other professors. The supervisor finds it very difficult to comprehend the relevance of the problems in relation to the capability and background of the student and may even find the problem presented as trivial, lacking a theoretical base and perhaps replicating earlier research. The supervisor at this level has to understand the area of interest of the student and direct him to follow a few simple steps, in order to identify an academically researchable problem. The student should be guided to become aware of the research efforts/outputs of other researches (Snyder and Abernethy, 1992). Secondly, the student should be advised to be alert for any controversial issues in the area of interest. It is here that the student can discuss the topic with the fellow Postgraduate students and professors in the area of interest in order to use their suggestions to focus on a topic. The student should be advised to prepare a list research questions on the basis of the information he has thus collected. Two problems may arise here: The student either expects the supervisor to spoon-feed him because of one reason or the other or to help him locate materials for his research. Both of these expectations are unethical. They constitute a part of training of the student. The best the supervisor can do is to help him with materials if has any or inform him where he can get the required information. The other problem is that most often the supervisors don't even bother to remember the research he/she is supervising. As a supervisor, he has a moral responsibility to look out for any sources of information related to the problem being supervised. Unfortunately, in most cases, the supervisor glances through what is presented and makes a few uncritical remarks that are not crucial to the research.

If the research is to be successfully supervised, the supervisor and the supervisee should work together as a team. This can happen especially when the research problem is derived from the ongoing research of the

supervisor. Ironically, the situations we are in and the conditions under which we operate make it almost impossible for us to have a long time impacting research project. After all when did we get our last research grant?

I have been working in this great university for more than a quarter of a century. The only time I got a research grant was in 1994, which was about N10,000 (Ten thousand Naira only). After I got the first installment of N4,000 only, I bought the instruments required for my research and applied for the next installment. I wrote several reminders about this. Till today, my request for the release for the remaining research grant has yet to receive a response. I am sure there are many cases like this. The point I am driving home is that we can not expect complete supervisory support unless the supervisors themselves are taken care of.

I am sorry for this compelling deviation from the main argument. I want to take you back to the real issue of review of related literature. The student should be made aware of the real purposes of the review. The critical review helps the student to achieve three very basic purposes, which are identifying the problem, developing the hypothesis and developing the method. The student can benefit a lot of the review in all these aspects of the research. The pit-falls of the methods used in previous research can be avoided.

#### **Guidance in Reviewing Literature**

In reviewing literature, I normally advise my students to follow six fundamental steps so that they can consistently focus on their problems. These include:

i. They should first of all write the problem statement so that they can keep this in their view throughout the literature search.

ii. As it is very difficult and not impossible to find primary sources for literature review under the conditions we are in, I advise my students to consult secondary sources, like encyclopedias, and research review,

where several cross-references for preliminary sources can be found. In case the student is using computers, descriptors should be used. These are terms that help to locate sources relating to a topic.

iii. The third step involves locating preliminary sources. These include abstracts,

bibliographical, and library information systems.

iv. The fourth one includes computer searches.

v. The fifth one is to read and record the literature and the final step is to critically

write the literature review.

#### **PRESENTING THE PROBLEM:**

In a thesis or dissertation, the first chapter is written to introduce the problem. That is what it is often called the introduction. Its purpose is just to inform the reader about the problem being studied. This chapter is presented normally under the following sections:

- (a) introduction
- (b) Statement of the
- c) Research questions
- (d) Basic assumptions
- (e) Hypothesis
- (f) Significance of the problem
- (g) Delimitations
- (h) Limitations
- (i) Operational definitions

In writing the introduction, the student should be helped to understand how a good introduction can be written. Normally a good introduction has three important parts, which include general or global introduction, background information and lead - in referring to the immediate antecedents to the problems.



.....In the statement of problem, the student has to clearly explain the purpose of the study, identifying the different variables involved. This should be followed by specific research questions that the research attempts to answer, which should be related to the hypothesis. The basic assumptions are the fundamental premises without which the research cannot proceed. In other words, it is assumed that certain conditions will exist and that particular abilities and behaviours can be observed and measured. The possible contribution of the study to knowledge and professional practice should relate to the research questions and the hypothesis. In fact, the reasons given for taking up the problem will contribute a lot to this aspect.

This should be followed by a brief explanation on the scope or delimitations and limitations of the study. At the end of this section, the technical terms used in the research should be operationally defined under the sub-title, operational definitions.

#### **Formulating the Method:**

After identifying and specifying the research problems, the researcher must describe the methodology for the research. The main purpose of methodology is to explain how the study is conducted. The standard rule is that the description of methodology should be thorough enough for any competent researcher to replicate the study. Normally, in a thesis or dissertation greater methodological details are provided than in a journal format.

#### **Why is it Important for Planning the Method?**

The main purpose of this planning is to avoid or eliminate any alternative or rival hypothesis. In real work, this means when the student designs the study correctly and the results are as predicted; the only explanation is what the study has done in the research. This is possible only when the MAXICON principle is followed, in order to maximize true variance, minimize error variance and control extraneous variance, or to

ensure that rival hypotheses are not the real explanations of whatever relationships are found.

There are two fundamental principles that should be followed when planning experiments (Cohen, 1990). The first one is less is more. Of course, this hardly applies to the number of subjects for the study. However, it does apply to other aspect. Postgraduate students; for example, want to conduct meaningful studies, involving multivariate problems with many independent and dependent variable. From one perspective, this is good, but the complexity of many variables makes the study very cumbersome that often fails. It is therefore necessary to carefully evaluate the number of variables that are important to the study and thus the total number of variables can be restricted.

This principle leads to the second principle, which is simple is better. This statement is true from the design to the treatment, to the analysis and to the interpretation of results. Therefore, the student should be advised to keep the study straightforward so that whenever something is found, it can be understood and interpreted appropriately. Although we have all the fancy statistical programmes that are nice and informative, there is no substitute for graphical presentation of the data. These two principles are followed in the different steps we have in the methodology. Broadly speaking, there are four steps in the methodology, which include:

- a. Describing the subjects
- b. Describing the instruments
- c. Describing the procedures
- d. Describing the design and statistical analysis.

There may be differences between different departments in the format followed in describing the methodology. Whatever may be the format; these four steps of methodology are normally followed.

For instance, in the department of Education, we first describe the research design followed by the population, the sample (subjects), sampling technique, instrumentation, and administration of the instrument, collection of data, experimental controls, sequence of tests and tester used, and statistical techniques. In describing the subjects, the number and the demographics are given. In some studies, there are some characteristics that are described which are not relevant to other studies.

#### **Importance of Pilot Work:**

We all know that many research efforts are unpalatable and make no contribution either to theory or practice because of major methodological flaws which could have been easily rectified with a pilot study. Unfortunately, this reflects negatively on the postgraduate students who conduct the research and the academics who supervise it and yet, almost all the problems could have been overcome by a better knowledge of the topic, better research design and pilot study and the procedures. It is therefore very necessary to conduct a pilot study so that the student would become aware of the problems associated with the design, procedure, instruments, testing and analysis. This pilot study would help to overcome the problems while conducting his main research.

#### **Presentation of Results**

In guiding the postgraduate student in the presentation of results after the analysis of data collected, the impression that should be given to the student is that the results are what the students have found and not what the students have not found and that discussion simply explains what the results means. They are normally presented according to the hypotheses either separately from discussion or together with discussion, depending on the tradition of the department.

The introduction and the literature review indicate why the research was conducted, whereas the method explains how it was conducted. It should be emphasized the need for the student to indicate the contribution of the research

to knowledge that is, what has been found, in the results section. The results should be concise and effectively organized with appropriate tables and figures. As there is no one particular correct way to present results, they can be organized in different ways. However, the best way is to address each of the tested hypotheses. Sometimes the results may be organized around the independent or dependent variable of interest.

It has been the experience and perhaps a profitable experience, that *some* items are always reported in the results. Means and standard deviations for all dependent variables under the given conditions should be included. These are very important basic descriptive data that are used by other researcher to assess the results. As far as possible the main descriptive data should be presented in a single table. All the remaining data should be included in the appendix.

Statistical information should be summarized where necessary in the text and complete tables should be given in the appendix. However, the student should ensure that the appropriate statistical information is included in the text. The most important thing is to ensure that the statistics reported are meaningful, and that there is no redundancy or repetition. A common error is to include a table of figures in the results and then repeat it in the text. It is appropriate to describe tables and figures in a general way or to pin-point particular important facts and not to repeat every finding (Day, 1983; Venkateswarlu, 2004).

#### **Discussing the Results:**

The most important part of research report writing is the section on results. But the most difficult part to write is the section on discussion. There are no clear-cut ways to organize the discussion but definitely there are certain rules that define what to include:

- a) Discuss the results not what you wish they were, but what they *are*.
- b) Relate the results to what you have written on the introduction, review of related literature and hypothesis

- c) Explain how the *results* fit within the theory form which you have taken your problem.
- d) Interpret the findings
- e) Suggest applications of the findings.
- f) Summarize and state the conclusions with adequate and appropriate supporting evidence.

The discussion should indicate where data both support and fail to support the hypotheses and important findings. It should point out factual relationship among variable and situations which highlight the significance of the research. There should not be any confusion about cause and effect. These are two different things.

The discussion should end on a positive note, highlighting the most important finding and its meaning and should never end with "more researches needed." The discussion should also point out any methodological problems encountered. Postgraduate students often make claims well beyond what their data indicate through is called inductive leap. Of course, we are not fooled by their claims. We can see the data and the results and know what claims can be made. A much better strategy is to make the points in the discussion effectively and not to *try* to generalize these points into grandiose ideas that will solve the major problems of man-kind. In short, discussion should be written in such a way that it highlights the contribution of research to knowledge. For an effective discussion, the student can be advised to answer

- (a) What have I contributed here?
- (b) How has my study helped to resolve the original problem?
- (c) What conclusions and theoretical implications can I draw from my study?

(AP A 1994).

As there is a format for writing thesis/dissertation prepared by the postgraduate school, I am not going to discuss this particular aspect.

### **Preparing a Postgraduate Student for Oral Defense:**

From the time the day for oral defence is fixed till the time the defence is completed, the student continues to build up tension. Unless the student is adequately prepared to face the oral defence, the defence will not be very satisfactory. It is therefore necessary to find a way of building confidence in the student to face oral defence. The following steps can help to achieve this purpose.

- (a) Advise the student to discuss with his fellow students about the research he has done, how he has done, what he has found, the meaning of what he has found, the conclusions and recommendations he has made from his research.
- (b) After gaining confidence with this initial step, we advise the student to discuss his research and his findings with the faculty staff. We also advise him to follow-up on what he is not very confident about and to study that particular aspect very thoroughly
- (c) A few days before the oral defence, the student can be put through a mock defence of the oral defence three to four times. In this defence, the student is asked to explain the problem he has investigated, the background that led him to take up the problem what he intended to find in that research, what others found on issues relating to his research, what his findings are, what the meaning of the findings is and what conclusions and recommendations he has made. In addition, the student is asked to answer a variety of questions on methodological and design issues. In all this rehearsal, the student answers without any help from any body or from any notes.

### **Summary**

This paper/article has attempted to explain how to guide a postgraduate student in thesis/dissertation preparation and oral defence. The entire content of

this paper has been structured around four important questions these are relating to the identification and definition of the problem, description of the method used, presentation of results and discussing the results.

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## **5. GENERAL PHILOSOPHY OF RESEARCH SUPERVISION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper discusses the general philosophy of research supervision in a standard Postgraduate programme. It thus provides the general framework for effective research supervision an essential component of the research training of students, and supervisors. It has an important role to play in ensuring that students not only make satisfactory progress during the course of their degrees, but complete the programme in a timely manner with little stress.

However, too often, there is the misconception that supervisors are all that it may require in research supervision. This is incorrect. The philosophy of research supervision must of necessity embrace the role of other stakeholders in the student's success at the University. This includes the roles of the University Administration, the Postgraduate School, the student's Faculty and the student's department.

Importantly also, the philosophy must incorporate a code of conduct for research students and supervisors clearly detailing which each can reasonably expect of each other. Postgraduate research work is done within a framework of regulations and guidelines provided by the University. Thus, the University has a very important role to play in the research life of a student. Some of these roles and responsibilities are described below.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY**

The University is responsible for putting in place a policy framework exists within which supervisory processes can be developed through which quality standards can be maintained and enhanced. Specifically, the University shall ensure that:



- I. Requirements and standards for the particular degree are clearly described and communicated. It is customary to provide that in a set of guidelines such as the *Regulations Governing Higher Degree Studies*;
- II. Academic standards and experience levels of potential candidates are defined at entry level to ensure as best as possible that candidates have the capacity to succeed;
- III. Supervisors are listed according to defined criteria and area of expertise in a Register of Supervisors;
- IV. Training and support is available for academic staff who are undertaking supervision;
- V. Candidates have access to adequate financial support, facilities and resources for conducting their research. In relation to this, a recent tracer study carried out using past and present postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University showed that, of all factors that affect the students financial pressure, project funding, inadequate postgraduate facilities, lack of equipment, and poor library and study facilities impact most negatively on the progress of postgraduate students in that order. Similarly, of all the intervention measures recommended, top priority needs to be accorded to provision of modern state-of-the-art equipment and facilities, employing more qualified academic staff to supervise postgraduate research and provision of adequate and up-to-date library facilities.
- VI. Candidates are fully aware of the intellectual property rights and commercial consideration arising from their search project;
- VII. Support in developing appropriate skills is available for candidates;
- VIII. There are clear procedures for the examination process, including clear guidelines for examiners and other parties that describe institutional expectations for the particular degree and any requirements for confidentiality. It is not uncommon these days to see a former student

carrying around his external Examination Examiners Report from office to office;

- IX. Procedures are in place for the resolution of grievances;
- X. There are appeal procedures setting out the grounds on which, and the means whereby candidates may appeal against the conduct and outcome of the examination;
- XI. Quality reviews of research training are carried out on a regular basis and the results of these review incorporated, into ongoing quality improvements.

These are some of the major responsibilities of the University. However, many other responsibilities are carried out, on behalf of the University, by the Postgraduate School and the faculties. Some of these are described below.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

It is the responsibility of the Postgraduate School to ensure that:

- I. The requisite administrative structures for postgraduate research, such as Faculty and Departmental Postgraduate Studies Committees, are in place and functioning properly;
- II. Candidates meet the minimum University and any other entry criteria stipulated in the *Regulations Governing Higher Degree Studies*, and that they have the potential to complete their programme successfully and on time;
- III. The given department is an appropriate location for the research, have the necessary time, space, facilities, equipment, technical and resource staff, source material and funding for the programme;
- IV. The proposed major supervisor is listed on the Postgraduate School Register of Supervisors and is sufficiently informed interested in the area of research to be able to offer the candidate proper supervision. In this regard, closer attention should be given to submission on the appointment of supervisor for candidates by the Postgraduate School Boards;

- V. The workload of the supervisor, in research, teaching, supervision and administration, is such as to allow sufficient time to provide the candidate with appropriate and adequate supervision throughout the period of the candidature. This is the reason why the *Regulations Governing Higher Degree Studies* stipulates the maximum number of student a supervisor can carry;
- VI. Supervisory responsibility is clearly designated and understood by supervisor and candidates; this is particularly important where there are multiple supervisors;
- VII. That every department has an academic staff (of not less than the rank of Senior Lecturer) appointed as PG Coordinator to monitor the general progress and welfare of research students, to monitor compliance with administrative requirements, and to receive complaints and to take appropriate action where necessary;
- VIII. The University requirement for biannual progress reports are met, and supported by procedures appropriate to the discipline.
- IX. Mechanisms are in place to promote regular consultation and development of productive intellectual relationships and professional & ethical behaviour between staff and candidates and among candidates, and which include:
- Induction/orientation programmes at the appropriate level;
  - Courses/seminars/Workshops on research methods and procedures; Training workshops, as appropriate, on health and safety procedures; and
  - Workshops/seminars on thesis/dissertation writing skills and writing for publishing.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACULTY/DEPARTMENT**

It is the responsibility of the Faculty and Department to ensure that:

- I. The proposed research project is of sufficient scope and of an appropriate nature to allow as best as possible the successful and timely completion of the research project;
- II. Due recognition is given to the research interests and ability of candidates in determining the project;
- III. A statement of the facilities and resource is available to postgraduate school within the Department and Faculty;
- IV. If the major supervisor is to be absent for any extended period of time (6 weeks' or more) the minor supervisor must, on a temporary basis, act as major supervisor. If the minor supervisor is also absent, a substitute major supervisor must be appointed;
- V. Tutorship/other employment, if offered, is in the area of research of the candidate and adds value and further supports the candidate's programmes;
- VI. There is a regular programme of postgraduate seminars in the department's research areas.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERVISOR**

In general terms, the supervisor is expected to provide the student with advice at every stage in the planning and conduct research and in the writing of the thesis or dissertation, and to ensure that replacement of supervision is available to the student during any significant period of absence. Within this general responsibility, supervisors are required to:

Give guidance about the nature of research, professional conduct and the requirements of the degree, including,

- choice of research topic;
- planning of the research programme
- presentation of the research proposal, literature and sources

- advice on requisite research methods and techniques.
  - What constitutes a 'significant' contribution in the case of a Masters Thesis project and an 'original and significant contribution' in the case of a Doctoral dissertation
- I. Be familiar with the Regulations Policies and procedures for Higher Degrees and other relevant University policies and regulations;
  - II. Advise the candidate on productive use of the candidate's time especially in the first year of the research work;
  - IV. Provide an availability schedule so that a schedule of regular meetings with the candidate can be negotiated at the outset, and maintained;
  - V. Ensure that the project;
    - falls within the supervisor's area of expertise,
    - can be completed with the resources available,
    - can be completed within the prescribed period of study,
    - is suitable for the degree which the student aims to undertake.
  - VI. Ensure work is received from the candidate on a pre-arranged, regular basis and such work returned with constructive criticism within one month or less as appropriate;
  - VII. Monitor the performance of the candidate and ensure that the candidate is promptly made aware of inadequate progress or of below standard work by specifying the problems and suggesting 'ways of addressing them. Notes should be kept of such discussions and any actions taken.

If the problems are not resolved, the Department PO Committee should be notified promptly;

VIII. Comment critically and constructively and in reasonable time: on the content and the drafts of the thesis/dissertation and, at the time of submission for external examination, certify that the work is of an appropriate standard, is properly presented, conforms to the Policy and Regulations for Higher Degrees and is, therefore worthy of examination;

IX. Comply with the Postgraduate School and University policies and processes on progress reports;

X. For those students working in a potentially hazardous research environment, ensuring and monitoring that the student possesses adequate technical competence in any relevant research techniques, so that he or she presents no undue risk to themselves, others, and/or University facilities;

XI. Ensure that candidates make presentations of their research work in departmental postgraduate seminars and support them in their preparations;

XII. Ensure that candidates have adequate access to the necessary human and physical resources to conduct their research

XIII. program Oversee the candidate's work to ensure that the design of experiments, and the processes of acquiring, recording, storing, examining and interpreting data and preparing material for publication have been properly and adequately undertaken;

XIV. Ensure that the direction of the research work is under the control of the University and candidate in accordance with University policy, with no undue distraction from any other

work/employment, particularly where funds are externally provided or there is a commercial dimension to the research;

XV. Encourage and support candidates to publish their work where appropriate;

XVI. Ensure that agreement is reached between the candidate and a supervisor concerning authorship of publications and acknowledgement of contribution during and after candidature. There should be open and mutual recognition of the candidate's and supervisor's contribution on all published work arising from their project. There should also be proper attribution of authorship;

XVII. Ensure that original data are recorded in a durable and appropriately referenced form and stored safely for the stipulated period;

XVIII. Advise candidates on how to deal constructively and appropriately with critical review including examiners' comments and recommendations;

XIX. Encourage and support candidates to attend and present papers at seminars and conferences in their areas of research;

XX. Help candidates to create strategic networks by putting them in contact with relevant researchers in their field;

XXI. Encourage and support a candidate's career aspirations and planning and help them develop the personal and professional capabilities that will enhance their career options;

XXII. Ensure, as best as possible, that the candidate, in addition to meeting research requirements, adheres to professional conduct and behaviour during the course of study

and that inappropriate conduct is reported to the appropriate body in time for remedial

XXIII. Maintain the progress of work in accordance with the stages agreed with the supervisor, including especially the presentation of written materials as required in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussion before proceeding to next state;

XXIV. Ensure that within the specified period, normally 6 months from initial registration for full-time and 12 months from initial registration for part-time students) have prepared their research outline containing: a definition of the area of research, a literature review or annotated bibliography, a provision framework for the future progress of the research together with timetable for its completion;

Acquire or improve the skills and knowledge required for completion of the research project;

XXV. Acquire the ability to work as an independent researcher;

XXVI. Acquire or improve the skills and knowledge that will enhance employability or career development after graduation;

XXVII. Inform the supervisor (and the departmental PG Coordinator) of any lengthy absences from the university.

XXVIII. Advise the supervisor of any significant change in their commitments likely to affect the progress of the research course, and if necessary seek advice regarding change of registration to part-time, in the case of full-time student;

XXIX. Ensure that the standard of written English is sufficient for the presentation of a thesis or dissertation;



XXX. Ensure that they seek assistance when advised by a supervisor that they need assistance in 117 communicating orally or in writing in English using the vocabulary and conventions of the discipline;

XXXI. For the safety of themselves and others, take the initiative to ensure that they are competent in any relevant research techniques to be used, especially for students working in a potentially hazardous research environment;

XXXII. Devote at least 30 hours per week (or at least 20 hours per week in the case of part-time students) to their research work;

XXXIII. Inform their supervisor(s) of other people with whom they discuss their work;

XXXIV. Recognize that their supervisor(s) may have many competing demands on their time. The student should and in work in good time and given adequate notice of unscheduled meetings.

XXXV. In conjunction with supervisors, make every effort to ensure that they fulfill all academic and administrative requirements promptly and satisfactorily.

XXXVI. Including the standard of presentation (see *Regulations Governing Higher Degree Studies*); and

XXXVII. In cases where a thesis/dissertation is classified "Resubmit" or is passed subject to corrections, complete the necessary revisions/corrections within the time limit specified and provide any statement addressing the corrections requested by the examiners.

Students' and supervisor must discuss issues of ownership of data and the consequences for early, unexpected or acrimonious end of the supervisory

relationship with regard to the use of these data. A student who considers that his or her work is not proceeding satisfactorily for reasons outside his or her control should discuss the matter with the supervisor and, failing satisfaction, discuss the matter with the PG Coordinator, the Head of Department, Dean of Faculty, and Dean of Postgraduate School, in that order. In particular, the student should ask to meet the Dean of Postgraduate School if the student feels that he or she is not establishing an effective working relationship with the supervisor, bearing in mind:

- a. that should it be deemed necessary or advisable to change supervisor, that there may be difficulties in finding a replacement with expertise in the thesis subject area;
- b. that a change of supervisor almost always results in lost time and delays in completing work and graduation;
- c. that any alleged inadequacy of supervisory or other arrangements during the period of study would not constitute grounds for an appeal against the result of a research degree examination unless there were exceptional reasons for it not having come to light until after the examination, in which case it might be considered.

#### **OTHER IMPORTANT FACTORS**

#### **SUPERVISORY ARRANGEMENTS**

##### **Joint Supervision**

Joint supervision is a requirement of the ABU regulations, and the composition of the Supervisory Committee should be agreed upon before a student commences work. Preferably, the supervisors and student should agree in writing at their initial meeting the respective roles of each supervisor and the arrangements (and timetable) for supervisory support.

### **Supervisory meetings**

There should be regular meetings between student and supervisor(s) at which academic advice is given and through which progress is monitored. This is particularly important at the outset of the research to ensure that the student's project starts well. It cannot be too strongly stressed that the success of a student's research project depends to a large extent on the help and guidance that the supervisor(s) offer. The frequency of meetings will depend on whether the student is full-time or part-time, and on the nature and stage of the research project.

It is important that the following points are considered early on in the supervision:

- role of each supervisor (if joint supervisors)
- frequency and timetable of future meetings
- arrangements for seeing and commenting on written work
- monitoring procedures
- any relevant safety issues
- research infrastructure available
- availability of, and requirements to attend, training programmes or courses
- a general framework for the whole research programme
- a detailed plan for the early stages of the programme.

Regular meetings are essential to monitor progress and agree on timetables for further progress.

As a guide, the research timetable should be committed to paper so that the supervisor(s) can monitor whether deadlines are being met. The length of meetings will vary depending on circumstances and frequency. For full-time students, meetings of an hour or so are normal. For part-time students, where meetings are less frequent, they may well be longer.

Supervisors should keep a written record of supervision meetings, especially noting what has been agreed with respect to subsequent meetings. These records should be available to the student.

#### **CHANGES IN SUPERVISION**

Students have the right to discuss and be critical of the supervision they are receiving. Initially any concerns should be raised with the supervisor(s) at the regular supervision meetings. If these cannot be resolved, the student should discuss the difficulties with the PG Coordinator, Head of Department, Dean of Faculty, and Dean of Postgraduate School, in that order. If the problems cannot be resolved, it is possible for a new supervisor to be appointed. However, it must be borne in mind that there may be difficulties in finding a replacement supervisor with experience of the thesis area.

#### **NUMBER OF STUDENTS**

The *Regulations Governing higher Degree Studies* stipulates a maximum number of research students for any supervisor. The recommended maximum is 6 full-time students, 8 full-time/part-time students or 10 part-time students. The regulation is silent on how joint supervision affects these numbers.

#### **COMPLAINTS AND APPEAL PROCEDURES**

Students should have the right to appeal against decisions of the Academic Boards on such matters as an examination result or a decision to withdraw registration. The new or draft prospectus/regulations governing higher degree studies contain procedures for such appeals. Details of the appeals procedure should be made available to students after approval by the relevant bodies.

#### **Conclusion**

It cannot be overemphasized that effective research supervision is an essential component of the research training of students. Nevertheless, the

responsibility for achieving success is not solely that of the supervisor. All the other major stakeholders must play equally important roles if the desired results are to be obtained at the end. The roles of the University Administration, the Postgraduate School, the student's Faculty and the student's department are therefore equally as important as those of the supervisors and the students themselves. It is only when all these parties appreciate their respective roles that students will complete their research work on time, without undue stress, to the satisfaction of all concerned.

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## 6. THE ROLE OF SUPERVISORS AND SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE IN RESEARCH WORK

### Abstract

*This paper focuses on the essence of research and its place especially in academic environment and in the society at large. It highlights the role of supervisors and supervisory committee to ensure a successful conduct of research as well as writing and presentation of research report. It concludes that the success or otherwise of conducting and writing a standard and qualitative academic research report will largely be a function of the type of relationship that exists between the supervisors and supervisees.*

### Introduction

Traditionally, one of the requirements for the award of academic degree certificate at all levels of university education programmes worldwide is the successful completion of an academic research work. The research report is usually presented or submitted to the university in form of a projector, thesis or dissertation. Depending on the type of degree programme, such research reports may or may not be defended before a panel of internal and external examiners.

The essence of the academic research work embarked upon by the postgraduate students is to advance the frontiers of knowledge in their respective areas of specialization. It is also to bring about positive changes, improvements and advances in the lots of mankind and in the society in general; especially through the application of the knowledge, experience and ideas acquired as by-product of the research. In effect therefore, the postgraduate students are expected and encouraged to conduct researches useful for the enhancement of the socio-economic, political, scientific and cultural well being of the society and the world at large.

It is important that researches carried out by postgraduate students are topical and relevant to the prevailing circumstances and phenomena of the moment. However, in addition to having a direct bearing and impact on our immediate environment the research needs to be conceptualized from either theoretical or realistic backgrounds and predispositions. A research work can be said to be theoretical when it attempts to identify and describe some expectations or develop some hypotheses that could lead to the discovery of or the re-shaping of reality. Conversely, a research work is said to be realistically based when it attempts to discover the phenomena that do really exist in the environment, society; which hitherto have at best been imagined not discovered. A successfully completed a research work when is one that:

- is based on acceptable scientific research procedure – ranging from the choice of topic, review of related literature, to method of data collection, analysis, presentation and interpretation of research results and report writing.
- attempts to find solution to identified problems or gaps needed to be filled
- can successfully be replicated and tested by other researchers especially in similar given environments elsewhere refute to or confirm or dispute the findings.
- is based on observable and empirical scientific evidence and also on accurate observations, analysis and descriptions
- can facilitate predictions of future events and phenomena especially through development of generalizations, principles, theories and strategies.
- is based on research ethics such as objectivity; integrity of the researcher; right to privacy, security, confidentiality; reliability and dignity of information sources/informant; non distortion and misrepresentation of facts; and

presentation of research findings/reports in an acceptable format and manner

- is not based on any form of plagiarism, pretence and deliberate manipulations

Furthermore, depending upon the policy and tradition of the university, faculty or department, a majority of academic research projects, especially at the graduate level, are oral examined or defended by the students before a legally constituted body of internal and external examiners. This is to determine the extent of the student's experience, capacity, ability, proficiency, and knowledge in the chosen area of specialization and in the research conducted before the award of the degree in view.

Nevertheless, whatever is the policy or tradition adopted by an academic institution/establishment, an academic research work or project must comply with at least some basic scientific enquiry methods and procedures to make it acceptable in an academic community or environment. Such expectations include:

- i. Identification of the title or topic of research and the problem(s) it is to address
- ii. Definition of the problem(s) and determination of its extent or scope
- iii. Identification and analysis of relevant and most especially previous and current experiences and ideas related to the area of research so as to determine one of the most viable lines of action
- iv. Identification and determination of the relevant strategies for gathering/acquiring and analyzing the most relevant data and information necessary for finding solutions to the problems hitherto identified and analysed
- v. Analysis of data and information, discussions in order to make inferences and deductions from the findings of the study; and



- vi. To draw conclusions from the findings of the study and to proposed viable ways forward

The above presupposes that, the successful completion of academic research by a student work will largely depend upon both the supervisors' and or the supervisory committee's competence and familiarity with the current trends in the methodology of conducting research. It is also based on the extent of understanding and cooperation among the members of the supervisory committee to effectively collaborate in the supervision exercise. They need to be up – to – date with the current literature in their respective areas of specialization is necessary in order to guide, motivate, lead and support the student in effectively carrying out the research and face – savers. The students' research project supervisors and supervisory committee need to be mindful of the fact that their intellectual capacity, capability, competence and integrity are all put to test whenever the students' research work are subjected to any form of examination or scrutiny

#### **THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISORS AND SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

The fact that the supervisors and supervisory committee, particularly at the postgraduate level need to evolve strategies for ensuring the success of the supervisee towards producing a qualitative work that stands the test of time cannot be over emphasised. Therefore, the supervisor/supervisory committee will need to provide an academic leadership and control necessary for proper supervision of students' academic research work. To achieve this, the supervisors need to be familiar and conversant with the fundamental research terminologies, concepts, techniques, procedures and methodologies. Also, they should be able to play at least the basic roles of advisers, counsellors, motivators, supporters, protectors, defenders, and promoters of the students that they supervise. Above all, there is the need for the maintenance of common

grounds among the members of the supervisory committee in relation to the exercise of objectivity, fairness, sincerity and empathy.

The supervisor(s) and supervisory committee will need to see the student as a client who really needs help and assistance to succeed so long as he/she has taken the courage to seek for knowledge through research, and shows commitment to undergo all the rigors of learning experiences involved and demonstrates the capacity, ability and resilience for self actualization.

In the light of the above, it is essential that the supervisors and the supervisory committees as helpers, facilitators, therapists; models, motivators and benefactors of the research students assigned to them. They are also expected to be sociable, intelligent, accommodative, approachable, empathic, cooperative, enterprising, rational, sincere, fair, stable, objective, calm, receptive, practical, and broadminded. These are qualities that indicate interest in the progress of the research work of the students being supervised to succeed within the specified time frame of the programme. Above all, they need to provide an enabling environment and opportunities to understand the communication processes and channels of each other verbally and in writing empathetically.

Fundamentally, the roles of the supervisors and the supervisory include the following:

**i. Determination of the title/topic of the research and identification of the problems involved**

One of the first tasks of a supervisor and supervisory committee is to assist the student researcher in shaping of the title/topic of research. This usually involves mutual discussion between the supervisor and the supervisee with the view to identifying the focus of the research in terms of what it seeks to address either from theoretical or realistically (practical) perspectives. The supervisor's knowledge of the types of research becomes very relevant here.

By and large, research could be grouped into basic and applied: Basic research attempts to discover the facts surrounding a given circumstance or

phenomenon with the view to identifying what is really the situation of things. Applied research (explanatory) attempts to investigate why a thing is what it is (based on the premise that problems do exist) with the view to identifying what should be done about it. The supervisor's ability to identify what type of research the student intends to engage in will assist in identifying its focus and what relevant problems it should obviously address and consequently, what should the title/topic read.

#### **ii Definition of the research problems and determination of its extent/scope**

A detailed discourse on the accepted topic or title of research between the supervisor and the researcher is useful in analyzing the problem at sight and what type of research questions should be put forward. In effect the statement of problem of the study, which is usually a scenario building strategy to marshal out the perceived problems, of derivable from introduction or background of the study. It forms the foundation upon which the research questions, objectives hypotheses of the study; including justification of the study are highlighted. Indeed there should be positive and direct relationship among the statement of the problem of the study, the research questions and objectives or purpose of the study, hypotheses, and justification for conducting the research. However, the statement of the justification of the study should be seen as being more of the perceived utility of the findings of the study in realistic terms.

#### **iii. Identification and analysis of the relevant previous and current experiences and**

##### **ideas**

It is often said that 'there is no smoke without fire.' Accordingly, it is generally believed that positive or negative experiences and ideas acquired or perceived by individuals are the prime motivators to conducting research of any sort. Hence, it is important for the researchers to acquaint themselves with the

relevant past as well as current experiences and ideas related to their areas of study with the view to:

- a) avoiding repetition of previous lapses experienced by others;
- b) making room for breaking new grounds and advances in frontiers of knowledge;
- c) justifying actions and steps taken in the conduct of the research
- d) corroborating the findings of the current research with those of other similar types of researches especially on the same type of phenomenon conducted in different environment; and
- e) identifying the state of – the – art of things in the areas of the research; etc.

In view of the above, the supervisor and the supervisory committee need to encourage and support the researcher to rely on both current and retrospective literature so as to be acquainted with these said in term of how he is previous and current and likely to use to them in the course of the research. To achieve this, the supervisors and the supervisory committee should:

- a) endeavour to assist the researcher synthesize the most relevant literature to use and cite;
- b) advise on where to get access to the relevant literature needed easily, especially from institution, libraries and information centres;
- c) where feasible; assist to provide the researcher with the said literature from personal collections, and from collection of friends, colleagues and associates;
- d) assist the researcher to secure relevant literature from within and outside the country including via Internet, etc.

**iv Identification and determination of requisite strategies and skills for conducting**

**research and data and information collection, analysis, discussion and interpretation and presentation**

The supervisor's knowledge of research designs and methods of conducting research is very crucial in advising the researcher on what to do to meet up with the task at hand. The supervisor and supervisory committee therefore, need to be conversant and also familiar with the intricacies of research methods such as: Experimental, Exploratory; Historical; Survey; Case or Clinical studies; Inferential; Descriptive; Ex-post facto researches, etc.

For instance, experimental research is one that it attempts to identify the cause – and – effect relationships, reactions or effects of some treatments given to a set of two or more group members of samples of a given population of study. This is done especially when one set of the samples is controlled during the course of the treatment. There could be instances when none of the sets of the samples would be controlled. Similarly, a research could be considered as survey when it focuses on a given population of a phenomenon where it collects and analyses the data and information gathered from a sample of the said population considered to be massive to deal with intensively as a whole. Usually, the findings of this type of study are used to generalize on the entire population under investigation. Also, a research is said to be systematic or empirical study or rather, *ipso facto* if it deals with a phenomenon that already exists or an has taken place. In this case, the researcher may not necessarily have to control or manipulate any of the variables or subjects of study. But rather, he/she will create an enabling environment for data collection and analysis.

A sound knowledge of research design perceived as a useful outline, guide or scheme for facilitating the researcher's effort to generate and gather the requisite data and information for answering the research questions and testing

the hypotheses of the study, is necessary. It helps in identifying the sources and type of data and information required, as well as in determining the treatments that subjects and variables of the study would receive in order to generate of the needed data and information.

Generally, research designs could be classified into three types: experimental, survey and ex-post facto.

1. The experimental Research design attempts to gather data and information on cause – and – effect relationship between two or among more sets of samples of a given population where one of the sets receives a given treatment (uncontrolled) and the other (controlled) does not. This is applicable to:

- a) pure experimental research designs which characteristically have randomized subjects and the application of the given treatment on the controlled groups does not occur by mere chance, and
- b) quasi-experimental designs which usually have no variations or controlled group. But rather, they are compared by themselves.

2. The survey design does not have any group. It is based on data and information gathered through the observations of the sample of the given population devoid of any manipulation of cause – and – effect relationship. The survey design could be cross – sectional when samples of study are observed at the same period of time in different locations or longitudinal when samples are observed for data and information collection at given intervals of time.

3. An Ex-post factor research design, also referred to as single – case design, aims at gathering data and information from already occurred events or existing phenomenon in forms of evaluative study rather than experimental or survey.

Therefore, the supervisors and supervisory committee need to assist the researcher in determining the population of the study which could comprise all conceivable objects, subjects, elements or members of variables that constitute the phenomenon under study. A population could be finite or infinite depending

on the area of focus of the study. Where the population is massive, the researcher should be assisted to determine the sample of the population under investigation. In relation to size and content the sample, which is literally a subset, should represent part of the population of study, so that the outcome of the finding is used to generalize on the population.

The researcher needs also to be educated and assisted on the methodology and technique of choosing the members and size of the sample of the study. A knowledge of sampling designs helps in determining which sampling method and technique to adopt in drawing the membership of the sample. For instance, when the researcher adopts a probability sampling method (also referred to as random or strategic sampling), the members of the sample would be drawn using say, random, systematic, and stratified or area/cluster sampling method. However, when the researcher adopts the non-probability sampling method (also referred to as purposive, non-random, and non-strategic sampling method), the members of the sample would be chosen using, say, quota system; 'self' judgment, or appraisal, panel or permanent; double or multistage, accidental or convenience sampling method.

It is therefore necessary that researchers are encouraged to improve the quality of the data and information gathered for their research through validation of the instruments of data collection (construct validity) and testing the reliability of the data and information analyzed (content validity) to determine whether they would be able to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses of the research.

The instruments for data collection is said to be valid when it is able to produce correct responses from the subjects of the sample of the study. This expectation also applies to research designs and measuring instruments.

The validation of research designs can be viewed as an attempt and effort to determine its adequacy with respect to its ability to produce or generate the

type of responses expected to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses:

- a) internally (internal validity) through confirmation of the generation of the needed responses from the research design and/or
- b) externally (external validity) through confirmation of the representativeness of the subjects of study especially where experimentation is to take place and subjects are expected to react positively or negatively to the external factors.

The measuring instruments of research are said to be valid when they are able to measure what they are actually expected to measure. This can be conceived from the perspectives of validating:

- a) the content (content validity) to determine the adequacy of the coverage of the scope of the topic of research as highlighted by the research questions and hypotheses;
- b) the criteria, concepts and variables of the study (criterion related validity) to judge the concurrent capacity and predictive ability of the instruments in relation to the existing validated instruments of measurement or established criteria, concepts and variables. The researcher is expected to be assisted to determine the relevant criteria to be measured or compared with the new instruments;
- c) construct (construct validity) to measure the adequacy of the instruments used in measuring the intended meaning of the concept as expressed by the data on the information collected.

It is important to test the stability, accuracy, precision and consistency of the instruments of measurement of data and information collected to determine their reliability. A reliable instrument is repeatedly produce similar or same results from the independent studies of same phenomenon at different times and locations under the same conditions and assumptions.



The reliability of measuring instruments for data and information collection can be tested using multiple forms of tests whereby the same measuring instrument is administered on the same variable in different dimensions to determine the equivalent or level of association among the forms. It could also be through test – re – test method whereby the measuring instrument is administered on, say, two sets of the members of a population or sample at different times to determine the level of correlation between the two measurements. However, the most popular method is the 'split – half' technique whereby the measurement items are randomly split into two halves so that each half is treated as an alternative form of the same measurement to determine the reliability coefficient of the treatment using the formula  $r_{tt} = 1 - v_e/v_t$

Where  $r_{tt}$  = reliability coefficient,  $v_e$  = expected variance between measurements of the forms and  $v_t$  = total variance between measures of the forms.

#### **v. Analysis of data and interpretation of findings**

More often than not, data generated from research instruments such as questionnaires and measurement scales provide quantitative information that need to be and adopt the appropriate statistical method to use for data analysis including tests of hypotheses. The researcher should know, for example, the difference between descriptive and inferential statistics. Statistics is said to be descriptive when it brings some order into the data in form of, tabulation, summarization, measurement of central tendency and dispersion, etc. And, Statistics is said to be inferential when it allows the researcher to infer or draw valid conclusions from the statistical analysis of central tendency and dispersion; estimate the parameter of a population; predict the characteristics of a population; and draw conclusions from the result of the hypothesis tested.

However, it should be noted that inferential statistics could be either parametric or nonparametric. Statistical test is said to be parametric when it is a probabilistic test of significance or it is based on student t – test or distribution, correlation analysis, regression analysis or an analysis of variance (ANOVA). A

parametric test is usually based on normal distribution used in probability distributions or any life phenomenon with variables known to be normally distributed with mean and standard deviation(s).

On the other hand, an inferential statistical test is said to be non-parametric when it can be validated under general statistical assumptions. They are considered to be distribution – free statistics because the distribution of the variables is usually inconsequential and unconcerned with the parameters of the population. This type of statistical method is useful in situations where the assumptions of the normal distribution characteristics are unsustained and where the data for analysis are generated through nominal and ordinal scales of measurements. It is however possible that the non – parametric statistical test is applied to both the normal and seemingly – normal (skewed) distributions. The commonly used non – parametric statistics in theses and dissertations include Spearman Rank Order Correlation, Chi – Square tests, etc.

In the light of the foregoing, the researcher should be guided in constructing statements of hypotheses for the study. A statement of hypothesis is usually considered as an advanced prediction, postulation, or assertion of the likely outcome of the findings of a study on a given phenomenon in real terms when the data gathered are analyzed, especially statistically under a given situation. It tends to serve as a veritable linkage between the statements of prepositions or hypothesis (theory) and the outcome of the result of the hypothesis tested (reality).

Generally, a statement of hypothesis has at least two or more variables to compare or test their relationships or differences under a defined existing or anticipated relationship or differences between or among them in negative ( $H_0$ ) or positive ( $H_1$ ) formation. There are however some instances where a variable is involved and it is tested or measured under two conditions or in two same groups. Thus, the acceptance or rejection of the result of the hypothesis tested is usually anchored at a given level of degree of significance of difference of the

relationships (quantitative assessment) or variation in the kind of relationships (qualitative assessment) of the variables under investigation. In some cases, quantitative assessment of the relationship between or among the variables under study could be in form of cause and effect treatment and outcome or effect on the variables.

Therefore, in the light of the above, especially where decisions or conclusions have to be made based on the outcome of the test of the hypothesis, the researcher needs the assistance of the supervisor especially in:

- a. identifying possible variables in the hypothesis,
- b. determine whether the hypothesis is a correlational, predictive or dependency study
- c. define the mode of the variations in the variables (i.e. degree of difference or level of variability),
- d. specify how the variables (x and y) should relate to each other, and
- e. identify the type of research design that would be useful in gathering the required data and information for the variables under study. The supervisor's assistance in this regard is very necessary because variables could differ in degree of significance, or vary from one kind to the other. Similarly, differences in variables of study could be indirect or inverse relationships.

A hypothesis is said to be in null form ( $H_0$ ) when it is stated in negative perspective using the words, 'No' or 'Not'. For example, "There is no significant difference or relationship between.....and.....". "It is not all the .....that will.....". The outcome of the test is either rejected or accepted at a defined level of degree of significance of difference or relationship and degree of freedom (DF). However, a hypothesis is said to be in alternative form ( $H_1$ ) when it is stated in positive perspectives or assertions starting with the word, "There is.....". "The smaller.....the less....." This is as against the  $H_0$  which usually starts with "There is no .....".

By and large, the  $H_0$  tends to have an inverse relationship with  $H_1$  such that whenever the result of the tested  $H_0$  is rejected, the  $H_1$  is automatically accepted and vice versa. It has been discovered that it is the  $H_0$  that is usually subjected to tests to find out the relationship between or among the variables of study. However, as to the decision on whether a researcher accepts or rejects the outcome of the hypothesis tested, a type II error could be committed when  $H_0$  is rejected when it should be accepted. And a Type 1 Error could be committed when it is in reverse situation. Therefore, the supervisor and supervisory committee have a great role to play at the decision stage when  $H_0$  has to be accepted or rejected.

Hypothesis could be a research hypothesis or statistical hypothesis stated in directional (one sided) or non-directional (two sided) way. Research hypothesis, which is more or less like research question written in comparative form is usually based on assumptions and predictions of some relationships between or among the variables under investigation. However, statistical hypothesis mostly deal with statistical tests of the predicted relationships of the variables of a phenomenon under investigation stated in negative ( $H_0$ ) or positive ( $H_1$ ) formation. Unlike the statistical hypothesis, the research hypothesis has no  $H_0$  and  $H_1$ .

#### **Summarization of findings, making conclusions and proposing recommendations and suggestions**

The supervisors and supervisory committee need to assist the researcher prepare a summary of the important issues raised in the write-up especially within the first 4 chapters (i.e. summary of the study) as well as the major findings of the study (i.e. summary of findings). It is advisable that the summary reflects both the research questions and the outcome of the hypotheses tested. The idea is that such summary should serve to portray what the research is all

about, how it was carried out and the extent of the coverage as reflected by the findings. When properly articulated and presented it could meet the immediate information needs of the would-be readers; assessors; motivate further reading of the entire work; or undertake further investigations in the area of study.

The researcher needs to be guided in drawing the conclusions of the study. Conclusions are better written when they are seen as deductions, conceptions, inferences, perceptions or simply the basic implications of the outcome of the investigation derived from the findings of the study. There should be positive correlation between the conclusions drawn and the findings of the study. Therefore, a quick recollection or rejection of the major issues raised or identified at the literature review and data analysis and interpretation stages will help a great deal.

The researcher need to ensure that recommendations and suggestions proposed are practically – oriented and directly related to the findings of the study. Other recommendations which are relevant but not directly related to the findings of the study could be treated under other recommendations and suggestions. It is also important that the researcher identifies areas for further research so as to take care of some of the obvious shortcomings of the research as a result of the limitations faced by the researcher.

#### **Preparation of Reference and Bibliographic Citations**

Reference and bibliographic citations are integral part of research report. Their main importance includes providing authority to the work; they also serve as channels through which interested readers could gain access to more information on the subject under consideration.

Normally, reference citations should be provided at the end of each chapter of the research report while the bibliography, which is a summation of all the references cited in the report/work, should be provided at the end of the entire work or report. By and large, the difference between the two is that, while

reference citation provides such information as: name of author/editor/compiler; the title of the work and edition (if any); place and date of publication; publishers; year of publication and pagination, the bibliographic citation provides all the aforementioned information contained in reference citations with the exception of pagination.

Thus, it is the responsibility of the supervisors and supervisory committee to guide the researcher on the style of citation to adopt consistently in both the reference and bibliographic citations. Some of the popular citation styles adopted in research reports include the American Psychological Association (APA) style, Association of Modern Linguistic (AMC) style and Kate Turabian (Chicago) style. Whichever style is adopted by the researcher this conforms with that of institution awarding the degree as well as with the internationally accepted standards and styles.

### **Conclusion**

The paper has sought to highlight the essence of conducting research particularly the academic research work. It posits that, the success or otherwise in ensuring that the researcher successfully conducts and produces a standard and qualitative research work largely depends upon the extent of the cooperation that exists between the researcher and the supervisors; how both the supervisor and the supervisee are willing and ready to tolerate each others' shortcomings; the level of understanding and cooperation among the supervisors or members of the supervisory committee; and how the supervisors are willing, capable, and ready to become a role model to the researcher.

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## **7. STUDENTS/SUPERVISORS RELATIONSHIP**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Over the years the Post Graduate School in Ahmadu Bello University has evolved guidelines and a format for conducting and presenting reports by all Post-graduate students. The students involved are required to carry out their research work under the supervision of an academic adviser. The supervisor is to ensure that in this and related activities leading to the completion of the post-graduate study programme, the student complies with the minimum requirements as laid down by the Post-Graduate School.

This way, a working relationship is established between the supervisor and the student. This relationship, which is formal and official, has several dimensions: the technical, political, psychological (or emotional/sentimental), and the moral dimensions.

The purpose of this presentation is to share with participants my experience in the supervision of Post-Graduate students in the Department of Public Administration over in the past twenty five years. The presentation seeks to highlight the key features of the working relationship between the student and his/her supervisor.

#### **II) Commencement of the Relationship**

At a stage in the post-graduate study programme, when the end of course-work examinations is over, students are assigned to lecturers as supervisors. The allocation of students to supervisors is done according to the area of specialization of the prospective supervisor, as dictated by the research subject picked by the approved for the student by the Department. At this point the relationship between the student and his/her supervisor commences.



### III) Salient Features of the Relationship

a. The Relationship is formal and official. Both the student and his supervisor should be mindful of the official nature of their joint assignment, of the rules and regulations guiding their actions or conduct, and of the individual and collective responsibilities and obligations.

b. It is a functional relationship: This means that it is essentially a work-oriented, work-directed relationship. Thus, the two players should be conscious of the fact that they are brought together to operate in a state of shared objective which is best achieved in a state of mutual co-operation. The exchange that takes place should be directed at promoting the completion of the research project and the achievement of the research objective.

c. The Relationship is Human: However, that relationship is also between two human beings. Thus, a successful interaction between the two depends on a (minimum) level understanding, empathy, patience and responsiveness.

### IV) The Role of the Supervisor

a) Although, the role is formal and official, he/she  
- should perceive himself as a father, a guardian to his/her supervisee.

- He/she should patiently listen to the student and try to understand his/her ideas, views and interest in respect of the project.

b) He/she should endeavour to have substantial inputs into the key aspects of the project, especially at the Ph.D. level.

c) The Supervisor should demonstrate genuine interest in and commitment to his student's research project. But, in a situation where the number of post-graduate students is very large (including post-graduate, Masters (Part-time and full-time) and then Ph.D.

students, the capacity of the supervisor is likely to be overstretched. In that case, the patience or interest of the supervisors may frequently snap, especially if the quality of the students' output is so low and boring that the supervisor's time and energy is expended on correcting the English language and editing the write-up.

#### **V) The Role of the Student**

The supervisor-student relationship is also dependent on the character and quality of work of the student. Ideally, a student makes a successful researcher and gets on well with his supervisor if he/she is sufficiently knowledgeable about the subject areas, and about the rules and regulations guiding the conduct of students' research work.

The student should be conscientious and hard working, and he should have the capacity to persevere. He should also be honest, committed to his work, and polite and respectful to his supervisor.

#### **VI) The Politics of Supervision**

The exercise of influence or power may appear in more or less subtle form in supervisor/student relationship. This is a shared phenomenon by Universities across the world. Variations that occur from University to University are tied to local conditions and peculiarities. For example, where students' enrolment into various post-graduate study programmes is large the allocation of students to supervisors should be handled with extra care, avoiding sentiments and other extra-rational factors that may intrude into that process. Other factors that may intrude into the dynamics of the working relationship between the student and his/her supervisor include tribal/ethnic, partisan political/ideological and emotional/gender issues. Students and staff alike may exploit these conditions to advance their interests in ways that are detrimental to quality of output that is desired at the end of the process.

There are instances where supervisors needlessly seek to demonstrate their superiority by their unwillingness to meet their supervisees on weekends,

when ASUU is on strike, or outside "visiting hours" or "visiting days". Rigid adherences to formal time-schedules by some supervisors may create a friction in the supervision process. In many cases, Heads of Department are not fully empowered to intervene promptly in glaring cases of unjustifiable delays when students report this. What more, students tend to be reluctant to report such situations for fear of reprisal by the supervisor.

However, a strong tendency to politicise supervision by the student should not be ignored. Frequently, there are false alarms and wild allegations against supervisors for delays in project completion. In such cases, supervisors are blamed on one or a combination of grounds, including tribal/ethnic, religious, political/ideological, economic/financial grounds or on the basis of sexual harassment. Students tend to resort to this strategy when they feel that they have exhausted their ability/capacity to move on, and that the only alternative is to announce to the whole world that their impending failure to complete the project is the handiwork of their supervisor.

#### **CONCLUDING OBSERVATION**

The issue of supervisor/student relationship may appear to be peripheral; in reality, however, this should not be isolated from the core issues of initiating, planning and implementing the research project at the core of the post-graduate programme, affecting students and their supervisors. It is high time the Post-Graduate School put in place structures for managing students' supervision, to ensure a higher level of effectiveness, efficiency and efficacy. A system should be designed for monitoring the performance of all stakeholders – the students, the supervisor; the Post-Graduate School needs to be more positively involved in ensuring that the relevant rules, regulations and procedures are strictly observed. In applying the rules, the Post-Graduate School should avoid the temptation for slavishness by painful adhering to the rules and thereby transform into serving as a source of anguish and frustration to the student, the supervisor and the academic department.

## 8. ETHICAL ISSUES IN POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION I

KHARISU S. CHUKKOL Ph.D.\*\*

The Oxford Advanced learners' Dictionary defines Ethics as "moral principles that influence a person's behaviour." What are these that relate to PG supervision?

### (1) Payment for work done; But also work for payment made

"Kowa yaci radan kuturu, *dole yayi masa aski.*" *Will there be payment for writing and delivering this paper?* The Postgraduate School must provide a positive response.

- Long delays (exceeding three months) in reading Chapters of Theses by Supervisors despite payment of salaries and Postgraduate Supervision allowance,

- In the present circumstances some delays are inevitable - e.g.

- a) Supervisors teaching courses at undergraduate levels with very large classes - e.g. in Business Admin. etc.
- b) Supervisors having too many masters and doctorate students to supervise.

Being a paper written for and presented at a workshop of Postgraduate Supervision, July 2005. Professor of Law and Director, Institute of Administration

- c) Supervisors themselves "running around" to supplement their meager earnings. However, long absence(s) from supervision are clearly unacceptable.

- d) Small sums paid as Postgraduate Supervision allowance not enough to motivate supervisors in the present day harsh realities.

## **(2) Corruption or "Gratification"**

Section 40 of the EFCC Act; Section 115 of the Penal Code and Section 8 et. Seq. of the seemingly all embracing Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act of 2000.

However, for purposes of this paper "gratification" in form of money (i.e. Bribery) and/or in "sexual favours" are the more relevant.

Lack of actual cases involving Postgraduate Students (but for the undergraduate there have been many including in the writer's own faculty).

What is not in doubt, however, is evidence of "corruptive tendencies", e.g.

(a) In "entertaining" a Supervisor. Entertainment could include granting sexual favours.

(b) In "entertaining" External examiners. For instance in one case brought to the attention of the writer during the Kontagora administration when he chaired a committee on Postgraduate Studies, the external examiner was given a blank cheque to chose his hotel and its location (indeed he later settled for Daula in Kano).

(c) In "extorting" money to pay external examiners etc from prospective Postgraduate viva students. Often PG students are forced to raise large sums of money and the Dean or HOD "ambushes" any refunds made to them after the orals. This is generally the practice throughout the University and for a very long period. Up until toady the University bureaucracy has not be enable to make monies connected with vivas ready so that external examines are paid on the spot immediately after the orals. Possible solution to this problem could be the wholesale implementation of the recommendations of the committee on Postgraduate training in which the writer was member (details are available in Postgraduate School Files).

## **(3) Nepotism/Ethnicity**

This is consistent with the amorphous expression "Nigeria Factor!" Some supervisors may treat the supervisees differently - i.e. for "his own" he can

decide to be fast and helpful while for those 'not his own' he may decide to be officious or down right difficult!

(a) In the Faculty of Law things nearly came to a head when a supervisee - "a Fulani" alleged that he nearly had it rough on that score alone! Also allegations were rife in some Faculties that some Postgraduate Students were treated "softly, softly" because they were considered "sons of the soil." Again allegations were made/are still being made that some Postgraduate supervisors made/make sure that only students of their own ethnic group were/are assigned to them to supervise etc.

(b) Some of us assembled here may also recall the kata - kata in the Faculty of Agriculture some few years back in which the main Supervisor, the then HOD and the External Examiner were the dramatis personae in ugly write-ups leading to the retirement of some of them. Questions of ethnicity were, of course, never brought to the surface for everyone to see but it was clear that these were not completely out of the equation.

(c) Furthermore, where supervisors and/or HODs/Deans are engaged in petty squabbles (as was the case in Public Administration some few year ago) the unfortunate P.G. Students become pawns in situations that they can hardly understand let alone control.

#### **(4) Political Considerations**

In conclusion, it is often said that man is a political animal and since the FGN/ASUU agreement of 1992 democratisation has ensured that popular candidates emerged as Deans or HODs. However, democratization, like everything else, has its price. Young academics in Departments pursuing Masters or Doctorate Programmes better watch how they exercise their freedom to pick their leaders because many of the latter will consider your not voting for them as sentencing yourself to the academic doldrums. This is also the hard fact on the ground that the University as a corporate entity must squarely address.

## 9. ETHICAL ISSUES IN POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION I

### INTRODUCTION

The issue of supervision has featured very prominently among the problems affecting postgraduate training in A.B.U., and particularly the snail speed at which the postgraduate students tend to complete their programmes. The issue was first raised at the political level in the then Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in the early 1980s when the staff-in-training in that faculty presented a formal memorandum to the Faculty Board on the slow pace of their graduation vis-à-vis the fundamental conflict between their role as students and as staff of the university. For those of them who came in as Graduate Assistant, their masters degrees had to be obtained within three years, otherwise they would lose their jobs as staff. As is to be expected, supervision featured very prominently among the list of factors identified by them as being responsible for the slow pace of their graduation.

In February 1988, the staff-in-training, this time drawn from virtually all faculties of the university, met and submitted a memorandum to the Vice-Chancellor on their problems and grievances prominent among which were: the unduly long period spent by postgraduate students before completing their degree, the "politicization" of supervision and examination of Postgraduate work in some faculties, and the need for the authorities to adequately monitor the progress of students and discipline any lecturer who for one reason or the other sits on the work of students they are supervising. Other problems mentioned also include the "staff shortage" and the "non-availability of facilities."

The issue of *supervision* and the *relationship* between supervisors and supervisees is fraught with all kinds of difficulties, sensitivities and ethical problems. Some of the problems are *structural* in nature and can only be resolved through a critical re-examination and the overhauling of existing postgraduate programmes in terms of structure and content, staffing, facilities and realistic time budgeting (i.e. setting realistic and not mere routine time



frames within which certain programmes can be completed given the internal and external environments of the university). Some of the problems are *organizational* in nature and can be addressed through a tightening and the overhauling of rules and regulations, including the adoption of disciplinary measures for erring supervisors and supervisees, on the one hand and the institutionalisation of rewards, incentives and motivations to create the environment for good performance, on the other hand.

Also, some of the problems are *social* or informal in nature and require an atmosphere, not so much in terms of the Postgraduate programme rules and regulations, but of *understanding, respect, vision and the overall good of our actions*. An atmosphere of dialogue and discussion (via workshops, seminars, faculty and departmental discussions etc) provides the needed platform of the emergence of this shared understanding or appreciation of *expectation and concerns among supervisees, and programme coordinators*. Thus, while exploring solutions at the structural and organization levels, the social level (which cannot easily be legislated into being) should not be ignored.

## **2. Supervision: sorting out the Light from the Heat**

The issue of supervision has come up over and over again as one of the major problems delaying the graduation of students from the postgraduate programmes of this university. Given their strength and political clout, it was the staff-in-training who first articulated and brought this issue to the centre-stage of attention in the University. As is the case with most social issues, the generalization and politicization of the issue of supervision has generated more heat than light. The majority of cases where supervision goes smoothly and students graduate on time tend to go unsung. The relatively fewer cases where problems develop tend to attract all the attention and the impression is thus created that supervision is nothing but a "valley of tears". The spirit of good and committed supervisors is dampened, because it is neither appreciated nor motivated. The good students who, through dint of hard work, are able to



complete their programmes and graduate on time are seen, not as models of best practice" from which other should learn, but as exceptions who were merely lucky to escape from the "valley of death". This way, the actual problems of supervision are not put in proper perspective because *irresponsible students* or *supervisors* not clearly spotlighted for who they are such that their actions can serve as learning examples.

To reduce the degree of friction and misunderstanding on this issue, it is important to identify specific areas of problems and discuss them in *specific* and *objective* terms. To do this, it is worthwhile to trace the development of the students from the point of entry to the point of graduation or exit from the programme. This way, it should be possible to delineate the ethical problems of supervision as they presently beset the postgraduate programme in A.B.U.

### **3. Entry into the Coursework Year**

Most postgraduate programmes in A.B.U. have a coursework component lasting, on the average one academic year. This component is highly structured comprising taught courses which are examined through the regular examination system already familiar to the students right from the undergraduate level. Most students tend to get through this component successfully despite interruptions and delays occasioned by the demands of the undergraduate programme, in terms of how this conflicts with the timer and energy of those teaching postgraduate courses.

The major problems arising at this level and which subsequently affect project or thesis supervision include:

- a. The declining levels of performance and competence in the coursework component, especially with respect to the theoretical, methodological and subject-specific skills required for effective performance in the research component.
- b. The inability of students to select relevant and acceptable research topics or to develop and submit researchable project proposals at

the completion or soon after the completion of the coursework. This tends to delay the commencement of the research component, sometimes for months or even years.

- c. The lack of funding or the equipment needed to finance and undertake the research component successful and on time on the part of the students.

Accordingly, the transition between the last stages of coursework and the successful take-off of the research component is not only a major problem but has come to constitute into an ethical issue. Let us examine the discussions of this problem.

#### **4. How do we cope with Weak Students?**

The weakness of students admitted into programmes becomes apparent during the stage of coursework. Students who have a weak grounding in the discipline usually manage to scale through the coursework component, sometimes after repeating or re-doing some of the courses. Regarding the research component perhaps, because it is not as structured as the coursework component and it requires a lot of initiative, creativity, independence and sound grasp of the key cutting-edge issues around which contemporary research revolves, majority of postgraduate students, especially the weak one, run into difficulty. Supervisors and Departments find themselves at the cross-roads: What do you do with students who have passed coursework but do not have the grounding, the capability and the intellectual capacity for the rigorous research component required for the thesis? Flush them out? Or continue to "manage" them until they graduate somehow or fall by the way side on their own? Should the university not begin to think of a reasonable time frame within which students should submit an acceptable, researchable or implementable project proposal or be asked to withdraw from the programme? Or should students simply be left on their own to exhaust their registration period and "earn" a quiet voluntary withdrawal?

## **5. How Rigorous should the Research or Project Component be?**

One of the major points of controversy surrounding the postgraduate programme in this university is the weight and rigour that the research component ought to attract within the wider context of the requirements for the award of the Postgraduate degree. Students have in the past complained bitterly about the "impossible standards" set by A.B.U, and the undue prolongation of the duration of programmes in "order to maintain the "quality" of A.B.U., degrees" (see communiqué of Staff-in-Training of 20<sup>th</sup> February 1988). Should the standard of the research component be relaxed in order to improve graduate record? Supervisors daily come face to face with this conflicting interpretation of the standard of the research component and the thesis that flows out from it. How should supervisors respond to this conflict? Stick to what they consider the correct standard or water down their demands and expectations in accordance with standards in other universities.

As far back as 1981, the late Kungwai, my colleague, identified two kinds of postgraduate students: the careerists who are more often after the degree than the knowledge and the intellectually, oriented students who are after knowledge and do not mind submitting themselves to the stricture and rigours of seeking such profound knowledge. Should we not evolve specialized programmes which meet the expectations and aspirations of the careerist's whiles retaining the rigours of the intellectually profound programmes needed by those who want to pursue careers in research, lecturing and other knowledge-centred occupations? We appear a little bit too conservative in terms of responding to the market forces and the drive towards specialized or professional programmes that are increasingly being demanded by changes in the socio-economic environment. This leaves the supervisor with the ethical dilemma of forcing career-oriented students into an intellectual mould which they actually do not need and which they resent.

## **6. How much Autonomy should Students Enjoy in the Selection of Topics?**

One of the tenets of academic freedom is that the students should be given the liberty to research into just what he/she chooses, so long as it is feasible and achievable. Two fundamental ethical dilemmas confront supervisors and programme coordinators with respect to the exercise of this kind of academic freedom.

Given increasing staff shortages, especially at the top, supervisors find themselves confronted with growing numbers of supervisees.

## **7. How do Supervisors cope with the Huge Workload?**

It is obvious that most departments in this university are bottom-heavy. The percentage that holds Ph.Ds and has attained the requisite ranks to teach and supervise postgraduate students is not impressive in most departments. In addition, most departments are grossly short-staffed in relation to the number of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the ground. The few senior people are therefore saddled with heavy undergraduate teaching in addition to shouldering the burden of all postgraduate teaching and supervision. Supervisors are not only grossly overstretched but also they face many ethical problems in the course of discharging their supervisory functions.

As the quality of students decline, the amount of attention and time required by each student increases. Yet the number of students keeps increasing (not simply because of new admissions but also because of the backlog of students yet to graduate). The implication is that the amount of time that supervisors can devote to supervision also shrinks because of expanding and competing commitments. What should supervisors really do in the face of this reality: give priority to the more promising students? Favour those students whose topics they enjoy or stand to benefit from more? How do they share out their time and attention without elements of prejudice and unfairness, which may impact negatively on the psychology of the supervisees?

The second ethical issue here relates to the problem of students who are unable to keep up with their work schedules in terms of keeping appointments, submitting assignment or chapters, carrying out planned research activities, presenting seminars etc. There is the need for rules and regulations relating with students who renege on their own side of the supervision contract. While there is the need to cater for certain predicaments that adversely affect the progress of the students, nevertheless some form of rules need to be applied. Students may be counselled or assisted with respect to their predicaments but should not be allowed to blackmail or hold supervisors to ransom.

A last ethical problem that relates to supervision concerns the issues of gifts and favours. Should supervisors accept gifts or favour from their supervisees? This is not a simple "Yes" or "No" matter. To ensure that standards are not compromised, supervisors are advised to be extremely weary or cautious in terms of accepting or even demanding gifts or favour from their supervisees. Ethical propriety and good conscience (instead of a dogmatic ruling) should be the last guide in difficult situational complexities.

#### **8. Should Supervisors Write or Condone Third Parties Writing Projects or Thesis for the Supervisees?**

While the answer appears obvious, it is also a fact that some supervisors have been known to go as low as to write the project or thesis for their affluent students in return for good pay. There are also individuals, consultants and business outfits which have sprung up whose business is to package research proposals, project and thesis for students who can afford their services. What should be the stand of supervisors when he or she suspects or gets to know that a supervisee has adopted that option? Should he/she connive or even coach the supervisee on how to get away with such fraud in return for a good fee or favour?

#### **9. Possible Victimization or Discrimination on Ideological, Ethnic, or other Grounds**

While the victimization of students on ethnic, religious, gender or political grounds may sound quite familiar and may attract unanimous condemnation as something completely unethical, there are other forms of discrimination or victimization which are more subtle. What of victimization on "ideological" grounds which was widely alleged in the 1980s especially in some faculties in this university? Are we sure that this has completely stopped? What becomes of students who have been known to suffer because they did not toe the theoretical or methodological line of their supervisors? Or those who have suffered because of a major academic disagreement between their supervisors? All these are ethical issues which require vigilance and sensitivity on our part as supervisors and programme coordinators.

#### **10. Academic Mentoring or Servitude?**

The last ethical issue I want to raise in this paper relates to the role of the supervisor as intellectual father or guidance. In that position, the supervisor is expected to guide, counsel and mentor the supervisees into an independent and successful intellectual or professional. The role of supervisor demands some level of respect, compliance and obedience on the part of the supervisees. When this respectful and submissive relationship graduates into servitude, it transforms into an unethical and destructive scenario. Safeguards need to be put in place to prevent such abuses especially by those who may use the tradition of respect for elders in African culture to justify such unfair tyranny or servitude?

#### **CONCLUSION**

The essence of the paper was to draw attention to a number of ethical issues in student supervision which we should discuss, take decisions on, and remain ever conscious of in the discharge of our responsibilities as supervisors. There was no pretence in the paper that I had answers to the question I was raising. But since questions are the progenitors of answer I believe that these to

questions will beget the solutions that will see us move forward in handling the ethical problems that confront us as supervisors.

## 10. PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION

### INTRODUCTION

This workshop has been organized in order to improve the quality of supervision of projects, theses and dissertations. The question is why does it take so long for postgraduate students to graduate in Ahmadu Bello University? Many students have abandoned their programmes out of frustration. Some sponsors are withdrawing the students they sponsor in Ahmadu Bello University to other Universities because of the notion that students do not graduate in some departments of ABU. The students have complained that supervisory committees are not formed for them long after they have completed their course work; that some supervisors do not help them to fashion out research topics or help in the planning of research; that some supervisors are not friendly and some are unavailable to students; that some supervisors do not read projects, theses or dissertations and some keep them for months before reading; that external examiners are not appointed in time even after the supervisors have certified that the write-up is adequate.

Other include admission of unqualified students by the departments; some students are lazy and unserious about the programmes; some do not know why they are doing a particular programme some students are combining work with full time studies thus regarding studies as a hobby; some students cannot communicate well in English language.

According to the National Universities Commission (NUC), "revelations from the 2nd edition of the Commissions' postgraduate development project, the Nigerian Universities Doctoral Thesis Award Scheme (NUDTAS) indicate that the theses entries can generally be described as 'poorly supervised'. Weakness identified in the theses by the all professor assessors of the theses range from poor focus, improper documentation, replication of earlier works, inadequate knowledge of appropriate theoretical design requirements to total lack of contribution to



knowledge. The NUC urges "that collective action be urgently taken towards reversing this grave and unacceptable situation".

It is of great concern to us that Ahmadu Bello University has not been taking part in NUDTAS or any other competitions. Is our quality that poor? We have also observed some cases of plagiarism and that findings from many theses and dissertations are not publishable or are not being published in reputable journals. Publication raises the image of the University.

Presented at the Workshop on Postgraduate Supervision, ABU, Zaria July 21 - 22, 2005.

The framework therefore is that admission of good students and good supervision will lead to shortening of completion time, more good students applying to ABU, good quality research out put, publication of research results in reputable journals and thus projecting the image of the University.

### **The Problems**

The problem of postgraduate supervision can be classified into students associated problems; supervisors associated problems and the problems of the environment.

I will just the problems under each category to guide our deliberations during this workshop.

#### **(a) Student associated problems**

- choosing research area in which facilities are not available
- Lack of focus
- Admission of weak students who lack communication skills and sufficient knowledge of the area of study
- Non-release from place of work
- Financial problems which lead to inability to pay fees and purchase materials for research
- Laziness and not being serious

- Not meeting deadlines set by supervisory committee and department

**Abandonment of the programme**

- Being involved in extensive extra curricular activities
- Being unwilling to accept corrections.

**(b) Supervisory associated problems**

- Not guiding students in the choice of research topic
- Giving students research area which facilities do not exist
- Not guiding the writing of research proposals
- Not having time to look at students' proposals
- Supervisory committees not meeting or meeting irregularly
- Not guiding thesis/dissertation writing
- Not reading thesis/dissertation in time
- Not having sufficient knowledge of the research area and not willing to improve his/her knowledge in that area
- Laziness
- Work over load especially those involved in non-academic extra curricular activities
- Not appointing external examiner on time.

**(c) Environment associated problems**

**i) Department**

- No offices for Postgraduate Students
- No facilities ego equipment, reagent etc for research
- Policy of not helping Postgraduate students with materials where they exist.
- Not forming supervisory committee in time
- Appointing incompetent or lazy PG coordinator
- Not making submissions on students to Faculty in time.

- Head of Department being unwilling to call incompetent supervisors to order
- Submission formats not being followed thus causing delays in consideration of the submissions
- Corrections on submissions are not effected and returned to PG School on time
- Irregular organization of departmental seminars
- Not adhering to the structure of each programme
- Departmental postgraduate committees do not meet regularly
- Poor staffing resulting in lack of supervisors in some areas

#### ii) Faculty

- Electing lazy or incompetent Deputy/Assistant Deans
- Postgraduate Committees do not meet or meet very irregularly and thus poor quality submissions are made to PG School Board
- Submissions from departments being delayed in the Deans' offices
- May deans do not take postgraduate programme seriously.

#### iii) Postgraduate School

- Not monitoring adequately the Postgraduate programmes in departments and faculties.

#### iv) University

- Not providing adequate living conditions for PG students
- No specific fund is given to department for postgraduate programmes.
- Delays in promotion of academic staff which affects postgraduate supervision.
- Staff movements.

#### v) Socio-economic environment

- Instability in the University system e.g strikes and frequent closure of the university.

- Unsatisfactory remuneration for supervisors (these and dissertation)
- Retrenchment of supervisors

### Conclusion

These are not all the problems. This workshop will identify more and proffer solutions for all of them. The Postgraduate School has been tackling some of them but the efforts are not adequate. The cooperation of students, supervisors, department, faculties and the university is required. The university is presently making plans to promote to a greater extent than before postgraduate development.

## 11. COMMUNIQUE OF A WORKSHOP ON POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' SUPERVISION

### INTRODUCTION

The Postgraduate (PG) School of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria (ABU) organized a workshop on *Postgraduate Students' Supervision*, from Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> to Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2005 at the Assembly Hall of the University.

Participants included Deans, of Faculties, Directors of Institutes and Centres, Heads of academic Departments. Deputy Deans/Assistant Deans in charge of PG studies, Departmental PG programme co-coordinator and other senior academics. The aim of the workshop was to improve the quality of PG supervision in ABU through an in-depth understanding of the problems encountered by all stakeholders; and to proffer solutions to it.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University, Prof Shehu Usman Abdullahi (mni) declared the workshop open while the Dean of the PG School and Chairman, PG School Board, Prof Jaralath U. Umoh delivered the welcome address. The workshop mode was via ten (10) invited presentations by resource person from within the University in three (3) plenary sessions, each of which was followed by extensive interactive discussions as well as three (3) syndicate working groups.

The workshop examined a wide range of issues relating to PG students' supervision in Ahmadu Bello University, observed and resolved as follows:

#### Observation

- a. That students, supervisors, departments, faculties, postgraduate school and the University are all important in the supervision process.
- b. That PG training and research are major components of University education and contribute significantly to national development.
- c. That PG training in ABU is bedeviled with many problems including poor financial status of students, poor supervision, and un-seriousness on

the part of the students, poor research facilities and inadequate institutional funding.

d. That there is inadequate knowledge and will on the part of the supervisees, supervisors, departments and faculties to existing postgraduate rules and regulations. In some instances, supervisors lacked adequate expertise in the research area.

e. That existing PG rules and regulations are inadequate, ambiguous and in most cases, obsolete.

f. That the PG programme of staff-in-training in the University is greatly hampered by their involvement in University politics and appointments into administrative positions.

a. That the relationship between supervisees and supervisors is not cordial, functional, ethical and productive in some instances.

h. That the role of major and minor supervisors is ill-defined thereby giving room to avoidable occasional frictions to the detriment of the student.

i. That the quality of PG students has degenerated over the years. Consequently, supervisors have become editors of grammar rather than guide in technical and core research issues.

J. That the PG School lacks sufficient autonomy to adequately support and monitor postgraduate supervision.

k. That the PG School lacks sufficient autonomy to adequately support and monitor postgraduate supervision.

l. That most departments are not known for specific areas of specialty thereby limiting their capacity of becoming centres of excellence.

#### **Resolutions**

1. Proper composition and appropriate definition/execution of duties of PG Studies Committees at the departmental and faculty levels would remove

administrative bottlenecks and facilitate the successful completion of PG programmes by students.

2. Supervisees and supervisors need to be more aware of and sensitive to their roles, responsibilities and rights so as to improve on their relationships as this impacts directly on both the progress and outcome of students' supervision.

3. Measures should be put in place to resolve problems arising from supervisory processes and to protect both supervisees and supervisors in the event of abuse.

4. Supervisees should be encouraged and sensitized to be hardworking, information seeking, open minded and develop unwavering interest to learning, good method of approach, capacity to perform under pressure and within regulation time.

5. Nigerian University Doctoral Thesis Award Scheme (NUDTAS) assessment instrument should be employed as a guide – the supervision process so that ABU's

entries for the competition will be focused, adequate in design, properly written and be seen to be making original and significant contributions to knowledge.

6. The existing regulations governing higher degree studies and the guidelines for preparation of project reports, theses and dissertations, should be urgently reviewed to conform to current needs and development.

7. Efforts should be made to improve funding and to provide facilities for PG training and research.

8. Staff-in-training should eschew involvement in local University politics and other distractive tendencies and conscientiously concentrate on their programmes.

9. Deliberate policies should be put in place to ensure adequate staffing and motivation

staff is well motivated so as to eliminate corruptive influences at all levels of the

PG programme and departments adequately staffed.

10. The PG School should initiate an effective mechanism for regular effective monitoring and evaluation of PG work at departmental and faculty levels through

quarterly reports from the supervisees, supervisors and heads of departments.

11. The PG School should be given sufficient autonomy and empowerment to discharge

its responsibilities effectively.

12. The University administration should as a matter of policy encourage academic staff to benefit from research fellowships, sabbatical and post-doctoral programme.

13. The University should explore opportunities for linkages, collaborations and grants from donor agencies as a means of improving the financial base of department offering PG programmes. .

The Workshop concluded that all stakeholders - students, supervisors, departments, faculties. PG School and the University administration - must work in concert with each other to enable students complete their programmes within regulation time and to develop ABU's PG programmes to the highest standards of excellence.