

Guidelines for Change of PhD Supervisor at a Late Stage

Guiding PhD students by a supervisor is one of the longest and strongest associations between a student and faculty. It is based on mutual trust and respect, in which a student expects the supervisor to protect his/her interests, and supervisor expects high quality research work. While change of supervisor at early stages is not uncommon and there is a standard process for it, sometimes, due to various reasons, the student-supervisor relationship is formally terminated even at a late stage. This note aims to provide some guidelines if the change of supervisor happens at a late stage when some research has been already done. The guidelines are based on:

- It will be assumed that all research work done by the student and supervisor before the termination of student-supervisor relationship was being done towards the PhD thesis of the student, unless both agree for some work that it was done for some other purposes and was not meant to be included in the thesis.
- Rights of supervisor and student regarding authorship and publications, and rights of supervisor for using the past-works (e.g. for building upon it, using as project deliverables, having another student work on it, etc) and of student for using the past-works (e.g. towards his/her PhD degree) should be protected.

Guidelines

- A. Change of supervisor at a late stage of the student's PhD should be avoided and all attempts should be made to take the relationship to its logical conclusion – namely submission of the thesis. The possibility of having the past supervisor continue as a co-supervisor should also be explored. Change of supervisor at a late stage should happen only as the last resort.
- B. If the student continues in the Institute with some other supervisor and does not want to use previous work (e.g., start on a new problem), then this is like the normal change of supervisor, which can follow existing process.
- C. If the student continues in the Institute with some other supervisor and wishes to use some of the past works in his/her thesis, the following steps will be taken:
 - a. A meeting shall be called between the previous supervisor, new supervisor and the student. They may invite any other faculty member as well. If they can reach an agreement on use of previous work and role of previous supervisor (including, for example, him/her remaining as a co-supervisor without being an examiner for the thesis), that agreement will be recorded and followed.
 - b. If the meeting does not result in any agreement, then in the final thesis certificate, contribution of the previous supervisor will be explicitly recorded (e.g., it may be stated that Prof. X was supervisor from date1 to date2, and Prof. Y from date2). If the previous work included in the thesis is substantial, the previous supervisor can also ask to be a co-supervisor, without any administrative rights and without being an examiner for the PhD thesis.

- D. If the student leaves the Institute, and wishes to use past work in his/her thesis and continue with some supervisor in another university/institute, he/she may seek permission through the new university/institute for use of these works. Institute will take a view based on IP protection and approval of the previous supervisor.
- E. If the supervisor leaves the Institute, then possibility of him/her continuing as a supervisor or co-supervisor should be explored. If such an arrangement is not possible or fails for any reason, the student can use the previous work in the thesis. In this case, it will be explicitly recorded in the final thesis certificate that the outgoing faculty member was the supervisor from Date1 to Date2.
- F. Other cases not covered by the above, or any exceptions to the above, or any disputes in implementing these guidelines, will be brought to the PGC, which will advise the Senate, which will take the final view.