



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**

## **Policy on Postgraduate Supervisory Practice**

### **Introduction**

The supervision of research is a complex process for a number of reasons. For many students, the research project they undertake at Rhodes is the first time they have been required to work at the level of independence appropriate to the qualification at which they are aiming. The divergent nature of students' academic backgrounds then means that the level of guidance and support which has to be provided can vary enormously. Students' and supervisors' expectations and understandings of what constitutes supervision are often very different also and the one-on-one relationship of student to supervisor can compound the difficulties resulting from these differences. The need to assure the quality of the supervision gives rise to the following principles.

### **Principles**

- The roles to be played by both supervisor and student should be made as clear as possible and should preferably be arrived at through a process of mutual consensus.
- The supervisory process should be documented so that a clear record of responsibilities and whether or not these responsibilities have been complied with is created.

The Rhodes University *Higher Degrees Guide* details responsibilities of both students and supervisors in considerable detail. Discussion about the roles of student and supervisor should be informed by the guide.

Supervisors may choose to record the supervisory process in whatever form most suits their disciplinary context. Access to the record must be provided to students on a regular basis, however, and the record should be signed by both student and supervisor to indicate agreement with its contents. As a minimum, Masters and Doctoral students should submit a formal written report to the supervisor at the end of each year detailing progress in the research project. The supervisor should comment on this report and submit the report and comment to the Head of Department and Dean of the Faculty for consideration.