Guidelines on the Supervisory Panel System
(For candidates admitted in or after academic year 2010/11)

1. The Faculty Board approved, at its meeting on May 5, 2011, the recommendation from the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee (FHDC) that a Supervisory Panel system be set up for MPhil/PhD/EdD students admitted in or after the academic year 2010/11.

Membership and Appointment

2. Each Supervisory Panel will consist of a primary supervisor, a co-supervisor, and a convenor.

3. The primary supervisor is appointed during the admission exercise. The co-supervisor is normally nominated by the primary supervisor after the candidate is recommended by the FHDC for admission, and appointed by the FHDC Chairperson in consultation with Division Heads. Consent of the co-supervisor to serve should be sought by the primary supervisor before the nomination is made.

4. The co-supervisor should possess relevant expertise in the candidate’s thesis research project and be a substitute for the primary supervisor if the primary supervisor becomes unavailable (e.g. due to leave or retirement).

5. The convenor will be appointed by the FHDC Chairperson in consultation with Division Heads normally two months before the process of confirmation of candidature or transfer of candidature (for MPhil/PhD candidates), and does not have to be in an area relevant to the candidate’s.

Roles of Primary Supervisor and Co-supervisor

6. Both the primary supervisor and the co-supervisor will play an active role in advising the candidate throughout the candidature and reading the candidate’s written materials, including the documents for confirmation/transfer of candidature and chapters of the thesis for examination. They will both participate in formal biannual progress monitoring and in the confirmation/upgrade seminar. They will also advise the candidate in drawing up an appropriate Action Plan and give feedback in regard to on-time completion of the programme.

7. The primary supervisor will be primarily responsible for liaison with the FHDC and the Graduate School (for MPhil/PhD candidates) for matters related to the candidate and will endorse leave applications and fill in the progress reports, etc.

8. Neither the primary supervisor nor the co-supervisor shall be appointed as Internal Examiner for the candidate.
Roles of Convenor

9. The convenor of a Supervisory Panel is equivalent to the Chairperson of a Thesis Examining Committee, who plays a mediating role, fills in the recommendation form for confirmation/transfer of candidature, and ensures that proper procedures are followed in the process of confirmation/transfer.

10. All correspondence about the confirmation/transfer of candidature between the Supervisor Panel and the FHDC will be conducted through the convenor.

11. The convenor will not be responsible for reading written materials from the student nor giving feedback on the candidate’s research progress, but will have access to progress reports for the probationary period upon request.

Confirmation/Transfer of Candidature

12. The Supervisory Panel will make recommendations on confirmation/transfer of candidature following the guidelines and timetable set by the FHDC.

13. The full Supervisory Panel should participate in the confirmation/upgrade seminar. If the primary supervisor or co-supervisor is unable to attend the seminar physically, participation by tele-conferencing or preferably video-conferencing is required.

14. In the event that consensus cannot be achieved within a panel, the reasons for any different recommendations will be presented to the FHDC Chairperson by each supervisor in writing.

15. Any problems within the Supervisory Panel should be reported in the first instance to the Associate Dean (Research Higher Degrees) for consideration.