



FACULTY OF EDUCATION
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Guidelines for a Directed Study

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The University regulations allow students to complete a 30 point Directed Study under supervision of a member of staff. These include DSOE590, SPLS590, and STER590.

This document provides guidelines and parameters for the Directed Study. It is intended that these guidelines be referred to by both supervisors and students. These guidelines contain:

1. A description of the nature and scope of a Directed Study;
2. Information on the processes for enrolment and the requirements to complete a Directed Study; and
3. Advice for supervisors and students.

1. The nature and scope of a Directed Study

The Directed Study provides an opportunity for students to pursue a specific interest under the guidance of a suitable supervisor. Generally students work independently but the possibility exists for a directed study to be taught to a cohort of students.

The Faculty of Education Postgraduate Programmes Committee has recommended that a Directed Study be between 7- 10,000 words.

The Directed Study is a 30 point paper and therefore it should be completed within one semester (or equivalent if part-time or enrolled in a paper outside normal semester times).

2. The processes for enrolment and the requirements to complete a Directed Study

First steps

Students may make an initial approach to the departmental Postgraduate Studies Advisor, the Postgraduate Programmes Co-ordinator or the departmental Chairperson. However, the application process is dependent

on the student having identified and having received the agreement from a potential supervisor. Academic staff employed in an on-going position are eligible to supervise a Directed Study.

Process for enrolling

1. The potential supervisor and student correspond or meet.
2. The student indicates an intention to enrol and completes the Faculty of Education Dissertation/Directed Study Application Form available at:
http://edlinked.soe.waikato.ac.nz/departments/index.php?dept_id=3&page_id=3613
3. The student submits a 1-page proposal to the potential supervisor (see below).
4. The supervisor makes the decision as to whether or not they are able to supervise the student and signs the Dissertation/Directed Study Application Form. This form is submitted to the Faculty's Postgraduate Studies Office.
5. The Postgraduate Studies Administrator will check with the supervisor named on the enrolment to ensure that they have agreed to supervise this student¹.
6. Both the supervisor and student will be advised when formal approval for enrolment has been granted by the Postgraduate Programmes Co-ordinator.

The proposal (1 page)

The proposal should contain:

- A working title
- Statement providing the reason why a Directed Study is appropriate
- Statement of issue, problem, or topic area
- Brief list of literature consulted to indicate some familiarity with the topic
- Brief description of the scope of the Directed Study

Directed Studies involving a performance will still require a brief proposal to indicate to a potential supervisor how the study will be undertaken.

The form of a Directed Study

The Directed Study provides an opportunity for students to pursue a specific interest under the guidance of a suitable supervisor. Because of the limited time and focused nature of a Directed Study it is *strongly recommended* that it does not involve research that would require ethical approval. Thus, it might be more constructive to advise students to engage in a theoretical project or one that examines data/material already in the public domain. For example, content analysis of media coverage or comparison between curricula documents. The text forms for a Directed Study could include, but are not restricted to:

- a literature review
- a report
- a reflective journal
- a position paper
- an oral presentation (note for some departments this is a requirement)
- a performance

The Directed Study can also be a combination of the above, as long as it falls within guidelines for time and/or length. (See above).

Submission for marking

Students should submit the final version of the Directed Study to their supervisor for marking within the time allocated. It is expected that this be presented toward the end of the semester.

¹ Formal approval is made by the Postgraduate Programmes Co-ordinator.

Oral presentation

Investigations in Sport and Leisure Studies student require an oral presentation in addition to written assignments. This would normal consist of a 20-25 minute presentation with the requirement to respond to questions raised during the presentation. The supervisor must include this oral presentation as a part of the marking schedule for the paper. The oral presentation should be marked by the supervisor and one other Sport and Leisure Studies staff member. The presentation should account for between 20-30% of the final mark.

The supervisor awards the overall mark in this paper. The marking should be completed according to the time line for the semester in which the student is enrolled.

Marking of a Directed Study

Directed Studies are marked by the supervisor and returned to the student. Marking criteria should be clearly articulated to the student at the commencement of the paper and should be included in the Directed Study Paper Outline.

Should the student wish to contest the grade awarded they can request that the Directed Study be moderated by another staff member (within the Faculty of Education if possible). The moderator's role is to ensure that the supervisor has marked fairly and that the grade awarded is reasonable. If there is a disagreement between the supervisor's grade and the moderator's assessment, the moderator will provide a report to the Postgraduate Programmes Co-ordinator who will discuss the grading with the supervisor.

A copy will be retained by the supervisor. An electronic copy should also be submitted to the supervisor. A Directed Study may be published on-line if it is of excellent quality.

3. Advice for supervisors and students

Starting out

Beginning researchers often have only a vague idea of their research topic. Therefore, it is important that the supervisor emphasises the creation of a realistic timeline and scope for a Directed Study and thus helps the student to finish a good quality project in the required time.

In the beginning of the semester the supervisor and the postgraduate student should negotiate a timetable and assessment schedule for the semester. The supervisor may require a number of different outcomes for assessment, or may require drafts to be presented. In most cases the assessment is based on written submissions, and in addition, for Sports and Leisure Studies, an oral presentation. Students pursuing a Directed Study in dance should consult their supervisor to determine the format for assessment, which will differ from that described above. It is expected that assessment will include some aspect of performance or practical activity.

The supervisor should include the Policy on Assessment in the course information given to the student as soon as practicable after this meeting.

Meetings between the supervisor and the student

It is important that the supervisor and the student keep in contact regularly to ensure the progression of the Directed Study. Early in the process it might be helpful to establish a detailed timeline. Because people have difference working habits, it is difficult to determine the frequency, duration or content of the meetings. While some prefer weekly meetings, others like to report on their progress in longer intervals. The *Thesis Handbook* suggests that student and supervisor draw a contract between them regarding the details of contact. It offers guidelines for such a contract.

It is suggested that the student keeps a written summary of these meetings and emails them to the supervisor to ensure that the student has understood the supervisor's guidance, and that the student and supervisor are both monitoring progress.

Reading drafts

An important part of any research process is writing. Often undergraduate students write their assignments only once before handing them in. At the postgraduate level, however, it is important to emphasise that part of any research process is to write several drafts before the research is ready to be presented.

While a supervisor should guide students and assist them to structure their research in a coherent manner, it is not the supervisor's responsibility to write it for them. Supervising postgraduate students is only one part of a supervisor's workload and therefore, students should provide, as far as possible, well organised, grammatically correct written drafts, with correct referencing. This way, supervisors can comment on content which is their major area of expertise.

It is important for students to be aware of how much time is required to comment on a draft, and for students to take this into account when submitting drafts and waiting for feedback. Students may point out specific aspects that they would like supervisors to comment on with their drafts.

Writing drafts

Students may find it demanding writing a longer and more sustained argument than in their previous papers. They may also find that the Directed Study requires a greater level of information literacy skills. Supervisors should direct students to the support of subject librarians in the Faculty of Education library, and to Student learning support in Pathways College for additional help.

Socialisation into the research culture

The Directed Study is very much a bridge into the research environment. Where possible a supervisor should encourage their students to participate in the wider intellectual life of the university. For example, they should encourage students to attend seminars and conferences, present aspects of their work, attend workshops that help students to develop necessary research skills, introduce students to visiting scholars, and encourage students to publish in appropriate journals. It is also important to keep in mind that postgraduate students have not necessarily been exposed to conferences and research publication, and it is the supervisor's responsibility to aid the student's introduction to these parts of the research culture.