

**March 13, 2015**

## **POLICY ON THE DIRECTED RESEARCH COURSE**

### **Introduction**

Thompson Rivers University, Faculty of Law encourages its students to pursue original doctrinal, inter-disciplinary, clinical or empirical research during the course of their study. To this end second and third year students may gain academic credit by taking in the Directed Research Course (hereinafter “DRC”).

The DRC involves a faculty directed and supervised independent study culminating in a final paper. The DRC requires close and sustained faculty supervision and it is recommended that a Faculty member act as a Directed Research Supervisor for one student only per semester. Faculty members are not obliged to take on Directed Research students.

Whereas there is no formal class scheduling for the DRC, the course should correspond to regular starting and finishing dates of Fall or Winter semester.

The topic selected by a student for the DRC must make conceptual sense, have sufficient academic content and, the final paper founded on the topic must be amenable to completion within one semester. The final paper must reflect serious independent research and analysis on the part of the student and, generally, should be of a publishable quality. The paper produced by a student through a DRC is the student’s own product, and must be acknowledged as such.

The final paper shall be at least 10,000 to 12,000 words in length (including footnotes but excluding bibliography) and may be used to satisfy the Upper Year Writing Requirement.

The faculty member supervising the DRC will set the expectations and requirements for the course, in consultation with the student, before agreeing to act as Supervisor. As general guidance, it is expected that the student and Faculty Supervisor will communicate at least twice per month for the purpose of discussing the Directed Research Course; that the student will provide the Faculty Supervisor with an outline and drafts of their final paper at appropriate intervals; and that the Faculty Supervisor will provide appropriate feedback to the student.

### **Eligibility**

- A member of the Faculty of Law must have agreed to act as the student’s DRC Supervisor for the proposed research that is the subject of the proposal
- Only students in the second and third years of the JD programme may submit a DRC proposal.
- Students are required to have taken and passed the Advanced Legal Research and Writing course prior to submitting a DRC proposal. Students must have taken courses offered in the Faculty of Law relating to the subject matter of the proposed DRC prior to submitting a DRC Proposal. The Associate Dean may make an exception to this requirement in extraordinary circumstances.

A student shall register for a maximum of one DRC per semester. A maximum of 2 DRCs in total (6 credits) may be taken by a student in the JD programme at the Thompson Rivers

University Faculty of Law. The Associate Dean may make an exception to these requirements in extraordinary circumstances (extraordinary circumstances may include insufficient credits for graduation at the conclusion of a student's third year).

## **Directed Research Proposal Requirements**

Students considering a DRC are encouraged to approach potential DRC Faculty Supervisors as early as possible in the semester preceding the semester for which a DRC proposal will be submitted. Supervisors must be faculty members with a research interest in the subject area of the proposed DRC. If a Faculty member agrees to act as a student's DRC Supervisor, the student is encouraged to work closely with his or her proposed Supervisor in developing a DRC proposal. The DRC proposal must be submitted to the Associate Dean for approval in accordance with the time-lines set out below ("Submission Process").

The proposal submitted to Committee must consist of the following:

- An abstract;
- A 3-5 page description of the proposed research project (to include a research question, methodology, and preliminary bibliography/literature review);
- A statement of support from the proposed Directed Research Supervisor;
- A brief (one paragraph) description of any relevant student experience (relevant to the proposal)
- A statement of courses taken to date and/or courses for which the student is registered in the term for which the DRC is proposed which relate to the subject matter of the proposed DRC; and
- An indication of the student's current GPA.

The Associate Dean will submit a Report to the Academic Planning Committee at the conclusion of each semester's submission process. The Report shall include the names of students whose DRC proposals have been accepted, the names of their Faculty Supervisors, and the titles of the DRC projects accepted.

## **Submission Process**

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure adequate time to discuss and finalize his/ her proposal with his/her Faculty supervisor, and to obtain the Faculty supervisor's agreement to supervise and statement of support before the deadline for submission of the proposal to the office of the Associate Dean. DRC proposals must be submitted two weeks following the final day of classes of the preceding semester (preceding the semester for which the DRC is proposed). Proposals must be submitted by 4:00 pm on that day.

In extraordinary circumstances, the Associate Dean may extend the deadline for the receipt of proposals.

The preceding timelines are designed to ensure that proposal approval can be determined before the deadline for adding and dropping courses so that students' course schedules can be finalized in a timely and orderly fashion.

The deadline for submission of the final paper shall not exceed the last day of classes of the Fall or Winter semester, as the case may be. Only the Associate Dean (and not the Supervising Faculty Member) may grant an extension in extraordinary circumstances. The Associate Dean will provide this information to each student whose DRC proposal is accepted, and to his/her Faculty supervisor.

### **Principles to Guide Acceptance/Rejection of DRC Proposals**

Three credits are allocated to the DRC. Accordingly, the Associate Dean shall take into account the nature of the research proposed and whether it merits that credit allocation.

The Associate Dean will take into account a student's Faculty of Law GPA.

The Associate Dean shall take into account quality of the proposal, the thoroughness of the research plan, the challenge of the issue to be addressed, the presentation and coherence of structure of the proposal, the feasibility to complete the project in one semester, and the nature of the statement of support.

The Associate Dean shall not approve a proposal that does not include a statement of support from the DRC Supervisor expressly indicating an agreement to supervise the student's work.

The Associate Dean shall take into account the relationship between the subject matter of the DRC proposal and the area of research expertise of the proposed DRC Supervisor. The Associate Dean shall not approve a proposal where there is no connection between the subject matter of the DRC proposal and the area of research expertise of the proposed DRC Supervisor.

A limited number of DRCs will be approved in each semester.

### **Expectations**

#### *Expectations for Directed Research Supervisor*

- Provide research guidance by identifying key resources in the field of research, key research tools, or other research instruction;
- Set timelines with the student for achieving defined tasks; and

- Set a meeting schedule with the student to allow for discussion and check-ins on how the research is progressing.

*Expectations for students:*

- Be self-motivated in choosing a topic and conducting research on that topic;
- Research the topic to their own, and to their supervisor's satisfaction;
- Complete intermediate tasks, as set out by the supervisor, on time;
- Attend meetings with the supervisor as agreed upon;
- Meet supervisor's expectations with respect to citations, writing quality, etc;
- Obtain Ethics approval, where relevant.
- Adhere to academic integrity standards and policies.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Hall, Chair, Academic Planning Committee