

**Te Kura Toi Tangata  
School of Education**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

## Outline

The directed study allows students to pursue a specific interest under the guidance of an academic supervisor. Because of the limited time of a directed study, we strongly recommend that it does not involve research that requires ethical approval.

The recommended forms for the directed study could include, but are not restricted to:

- a literature review
- a document analysis
- a reflective journal
- a position paper
- 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.

If a student is enrolled in the MEd with a subject or specialisation, MEdLeadership, or MDInS, it is expected that the directed study, as the research component of the degree, focuses on the specific area related to the qualification.

A directed study is normally 7,000-10,000 words (excluding references and appendices). It has individual start and finish dates and students may enrol at any time during the academic year. The directed study is a 30-point paper and should normally be completed within 26 weeks.

## First steps

Students should begin by contacting a proposed supervisor – normally a lecturer from one of their taught postgraduate papers. Academic staff employed in an ongoing position are eligible to supervise a directed study.

If a student is unable to find a supervisor they can approach the Programme Administrator Postgraduate and Research [educ\\_grad@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:educ_grad@waikato.ac.nz). As finding a supervisor can take time, students are encouraged to start this process at least a month before their intended directed study start date.

Entry into a directed study paper normally requires:

- completion of an approved research methods paper;
- approval by the proposed supervisor; and
- approval by the Programme Leader.

## **Enrolment process**

- The student submits a one-page proposal (see below) and the completed EDUCA590 Directed Study Application Form to the supervisor.
- The student applies online for EDUCA590 Directed Study.
- The supervisor agrees to supervise the student and signs the Directed Study Application Form.
- The supervisor forwards the form and proposal to the Programme Administrator Postgraduate and Research to obtain final approval and to complete online processing.
- Both the supervisor and student are advised when formal approval for enrolment has been granted.

## **The proposal (one page, references additional)**

The proposal should contain:

- a working title
- a statement of issue, problem, or topic area
- an academic justification for the proposed issue, problem, or topic
- a description of the scope of the directed study supported by citations (preferably national and international) indicating familiarity with the topic
- a supporting reference list

Note: Directed studies involving a performance will require a brief proposal to indicate to a potential supervisor how the study will be undertaken.

## **Submission and marking**

The directed study should be submitted as a digital copy in PDF format to the supervisor by 4pm on the due date.

## Extension

A student who expects their directed study will not be ready for submission by the due date may apply for a 21 day grace period for submission. It is not possible to suspend a directed study enrolment, or extend enrolment by re-enrolment and payment of extra fees.

A grace period for submission of 21 days does not require re-enrolment or payment of additional fees. To request a 21 day grace period a student should:

- confirm the 21 day grace period with their supervisor; and
- ask their supervisor to contact the Programme Administrator Postgraduate and Research to request the grace period. The Programme Administrator Postgraduate and Research will notify the student and supervisor of the new submission date when the grace period has been granted.

## Withdrawal

A student wishing to withdraw from EDUCA590 should do so prior to the end of the enrolment period by:

- consulting with their supervisor; and
- completing a withdrawal through MyWaikato. Failure to do this may result in an Incomplete Grade (IC) on the student's academic record once the enrolment period is complete, which may prevent the student from re-enrolling in their degree. A refund of fees will be given only if the withdrawal is made within the free withdrawal period.

## Medical or compassionate extensions and withdrawals

### Application for an extended grace period on medical/compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to complete their directed study on time due to circumstances outside their control, they should contact the Programme Administrator Postgraduate and Research [educ\\_grad@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:educ_grad@waikato.ac.nz) who will advise how to apply for an extended grace period.

Requests for an extended grace period on medical/compassionate grounds are considered by the Associate Dean Academic.

### Application to withdraw on medical/compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to complete their directed study due to circumstances outside their control, they should make a medical/compassionate application to withdraw from EDUCA590 through MyWaikato. Applications to withdraw on medical/compassionate grounds are decided by the Associate Director Student Administration, not by the School of Education.

## **Advice for supervisors and students**

### **Starting out**

Beginning researchers may only have a vague idea of their research topic. It is important that the supervisor:

- emphasises the creation of a realistic time-line and scope for the directed study;
- clearly articulates marking criteria (negotiates these if expectations differ from those outlined) to the student at the commencement of the paper; and
- helps the student to finish a good quality project in the required time.

At the start of the directed study, the student and supervisor should together:

- negotiate a timetable and the assessment schedule/marketing criteria if different to those outlined; and
- establish expectations around the frequency, mode, duration, and content of meetings.

### **Meetings between the supervisor and the student**

It is important that the supervisor and student maintain regular meetings to monitor progress and ensure timely completion of the directed study. Students should aim to keep a written summary of these meetings and email the summary to the supervisor 1-3 days after the meeting. This ensures that:

- the student has understood the supervisor's guidance and expectations; and
- the student and supervisor are both monitoring progress.

### **Weekly workload**

The anticipated workload for a full-time postgraduate student is 40 hours a week and a part-time postgraduate student 20 hours a week. This means that students are expected to devote an appropriate amount of time to their directed study.

### **Reading drafts**

An important part of most research in education 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 usually in the form of a report.

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 and grammatically correct written drafts, with correct referencing. This way, supervisors can comment on content which should be their major area of focus and support.

It is important for students to be aware of how much time is required to comment on a draft, and 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. Drafts should normally be presented at least seven days before a meeting.

## Writing drafts

Students may find it demanding to write 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 Academic Liaison Librarians and to Student Support Services for additional help.

## Marking the directed study

Directed studies are marked by the supervisor and are moderated by an academic staff member with appropriate expertise. The moderator's role is to write a brief report and to ensure that the supervisor's mark and grade matches the criteria, and that the supervisor and moderator are in agreement.

Supervisors and moderators should provide the mark and grade on a separate page to the report. The agreed mark and grade will be forwarded to the Programme Administrator Postgraduate and Research.

The supervisor will inform the student of their provisional mark and grade and send the student copies of the reports.

If there is a discrepancy between the supervisor's mark and grade and the moderator's assessment, and agreement cannot be reached, the Associate Dean Academic (in collaboration with the supervisor and moderator) will make a final decision.

## Marking criteria

These marking criteria can be used for most directed studies as appropriate.

Grade Range	Description
A	<p>A directed study in the A range is an <b>excellent and coherent</b> piece of work that includes all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a well-articulated explanation of the issue, problem, or topic</li> <li>an excellent level of critique of the issue, problem, or topic</li> <li>a sound academic justification for the study</li> <li>a critical and comprehensive review and synthesis of relevant national and international research, including any seminal studies as well as current work in relation to the issue, problem, or topic</li> <li>explicit and sound links between theoretical issues and educational practices</li> </ul>

	<p>a well-formulated conclusion and if appropriate poses research question(s) to address any identified gap(s) in the field</p> <p>a consistently high level of academic writing including a sound and logical structure, few errors in spelling and grammar, correct use of citations and referencing, and adherence to the latest APA writing conventions</p> <p>Note: The student might also demonstrate a scholarly stance that includes independent thought or creative ideas.</p>
B	<p>A directed study in the B range is a <b>sound</b> piece of work that addresses each of the following:</p> <p>a clearly articulated explanation of the issue, problem, or topic</p> <p>a sound understanding of the issue, problem, or topic</p> <p>an academic justification for the study</p> <p>a reasonably comprehensive review and synthesis of relevant national and international research, including any seminal studies as well as current work in relation to the issue, problem, or topic</p> <p>sound links between theoretical issues and educational practices</p> <p>a conclusion, and if appropriate poses research question(s) to address any identified gap(s) in the field</p> <p>a very good level of academic writing including a clear structure, a low proportion of errors in spelling and grammar, correct use of citations and referencing, and adherence to the latest APA writing conventions</p>
C	<p>A directed study in the C range is an <b>adequate</b> piece of work that addresses most of the following:</p> <p>an adequate explanation of the issue, problem, or topic</p> <p>a reasonable understanding of the issue, problem, or topic</p> <p>a justification for the study</p> <p>a good review and synthesis of relevant national and international research in relation to the issue, problem, or topic</p> <p>tentative links between theoretical issues and educational practices</p> <p>a conclusion, and if appropriate poses research question(s) to address any identified gap(s) in the field</p> <p>an adequate level of academic writing but may contain weaknesses in structure and noticeable errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, and referencing</p>

D	A directed study in the D range demonstrates major <b>deficiencies</b> in key expectations, or deficiencies in many of the expectations outlined above.
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