Before approaching an academic staff member requesting that s/he become your supervisor, a good strategy is to insert a pause and consider the following questions. Any particular supervisor will bring a different profile of strengths to the supervision of your project. The ‘pause’ is to enable you to consider your priorities.

This list of questions is relevant to both masters and doctoral students but the length of doctoral research means that the supervision is much more enduring.

### Checklist

- Why am I interested in this particular supervisor? Is it the supervisor or is it the project?
- Why am I interested in this particular project? Have I considered whether my past experience is likely to help or hinder my work on it?
- If I were to work with this supervisor, how would I overcome any barriers that might arise from differences associated with gender, age, cultural, language, etc?
- What am I hoping that s/he will contribute?
- What kind of supervision or academic assistance have I found helpful in the past? Do I think this (potential) supervisor will offer me that kind of assistance?
- What do their previous/ other students say about them as a supervisor?
- How many other students is this supervisor currently supervising? What are the pros and cons to this?

If this supervisor says no, ask her/him to suggest alternatives.

### Explore options

- Talk to as many potential supervisors as possible before asking (or nominating) someone.
- While you’re unlikely to get everything you want in one supervisor, at doctoral level all candidates have a main and co-supervisor/s, or a main supervisor and advisory committee. Your supervisory team can be across faculty, e.g. between a department in Business and Economics and one in Arts if your project warrants it.
- You can also have a suitably qualified person who is not on staff at The University of Auckland as a co-supervisor or adviser (see Clauses 4k-m and Guideline 20 of the PhD Statute 2011), but the main supervisor must be a UoA staff member.
- Have an exploratory meeting with prospective supervisors.