It is the norm for a student conducting research for a masters thesis to require regular contact with their supervisor. Off-campus registration for the duration of the thesis is thus an unusual circumstance requiring careful management, but some students may need to work off-campus for a period, for example to conduct field work, use laboratory facilities or access special library collections.

Any period of off-campus activity exceeding two months requires approval by the Board of Graduate Studies, and authority for such approvals is normally delegated to the Associate Dean (Postgraduate) of the relevant faculty. For each masters candidate for whom off-campus activity or registration exceeding two months in duration is planned, supporting information should be supplied to the relevant Associate Dean (Postgraduate), including a statement from the supervisor describing why they feel confident that the candidate can successfully accomplish the off-campus masters research.

The criteria that are used when considering an application for off-campus activity are:

1. The main supervisor must be a University of Auckland staff member.

2. The candidate should normally be located/working in an environment conducive to their area of research. This may be a research-oriented institution or another tertiary educational institution, in which case the candidate should ideally have either a co-supervisor or an adviser within the host institution. In such cases, a letter must be provided indicating that the masters candidate’s employer/host institution is aware of and supports the candidate’s masters studies/research.

3. The candidate should have access to the internet, to ensure adequate communication as well as access to The University of Auckland library facilities and other web resources, and to other resources needed for research in their host institution.

4. There must be an agreed, regular schedule of email and face-to-face supervisory contacts between the candidate and the Auckland supervisor (see Guidelines).

(Please see the next page for implementation guidelines)
The following guidelines will assist academic units in making recommendations.

- Only very able and highly motivated candidates should be allowed to undertake extended off-campus masters research.

- Masters candidates working off-campus must be, not just able and motivated, but also highly organised. Obstacles such as intractable data, writer’s block or disillusionment pose greater challenges in the absence of regular face-to-face contact with the supervisor and the support of peers. Judging which candidates will perform successfully off-campus is not easy and decisions should be taken by Departmental Postgraduate/Research Committees rather than individual supervisors.

- It is essential to have regular and effective communication between supervisor and off-campus candidate. A good communication strategy is necessary and it is recommended that the schedule of communication requires both supervisor and candidate to take the initiative to restore any gaps in communication.

- Face-to-face communication is superior to video conference or phone communication, which in turn is more efficient than email communication. Email communication is vital, particularly when discussing complex issues or exchanging written material for evaluation, but is time consuming.

- The student should be encouraged to develop support networks in situ.
Some suggestions for off-campus students

Useful information and links can be accessed using the *Postgraduate Support* link from The University of Auckland webpage for current postgraduate students:

http://www.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/home/for/current-students/cs-current-pg

Several aspects are highlighted in the following.

**IT Services**

Students should ensure they have received their NetID and UoA Password (known as “UoA Credentials”) to allow them to log in to the University’s web-based services such as the Library, Student Services Online, Cecil, email etc, and to access computing, photocopying and printing services when on campus. The Information Commons (IC) Helpdesk can assist with password problems: phone (09) 373 7599 ext 82333, or email ichelpdesk@auckland.ac.nz. Supplying a full description of the problems along with full name, student ID number, NetID (e.g. jblo001) and date of birth will speed up the process.

**Library Services**

The Library website ([http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz)) provides access to support services and extensive electronic research resources, including bibliographic databases, e-journals, e-books and theses. Students should contact their Subject Librarian ([http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/contacts/subject-librarian/](http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/contacts/subject-librarian/)) to identify the best resources for their topic and strategies for effectively searching them. Subject Librarians can also advise on keeping up with current research via email alerts and RSS feeds. Access to Library resources while on campus is free to all masters students; students pay only their ISP charges when accessing Library resources off-campus.

Some masters students may also be eligible for the Library Flexible Service ([http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/access/flexible-services.htm](http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/access/flexible-services.htm)). This service enables eligible students to request the delivery of hard copy items, and the electronic delivery of journal articles and book chapters, at no charge. (Students are responsible for the cost of returning borrowed items to the Library.)
Some suggestions for off-campus students (cont’d)

**Student Learning Centre**

The Student Learning Centre (SLC) offers a range of courses to help students acquire skills in a number of areas including writing, examination, presentation, and computer software programmes. It offers group sessions as well as individual tutoring. The latter is particularly suitable for distance students. A newsletter including forthcoming programmes appears regularly. This schedule is available on-line. Registration is also possible on the SLC website. Most of the programmes are repeated ensuring that you have a better chance of attending them.

**Departmental Postgraduate Advisers**

Potentially, advisers are useful contacts and someone other than your supervisor to talk to about the general progress of your research. They may also have information about departmental changes, forthcoming conferences, and available research funding. They may be able to arrange for you to meet other departmental postgraduate students when you are on campus.

**School of Graduate Studies**

As well as administering postgraduate study, the School of Graduate Studies, located at the Graduate Centre, provides information on courses and regulations, most of which is conveniently accessed on their website. You are encouraged to use the website link to join the Postgraduate Students’ Association (PGSA) on-line and receive their regular news reports.

**Keep Informed**

Try to keep informed. During your programme it is likely that the University will offer new services and facilities, or change the way that it delivers existing ones. This particularly relates to developments in information technology. Information regarding changes is available through Student Services Online, the Library website, the SLC, or the PGSA.