Higher Degrees by Research Supervision - Procedures

1. Purpose of procedures

1.1 These procedures provide the structure for HDR supervision at the university and support the university's compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework as relevant to research training.

2. Scope and application

2.1 These procedures apply to all Doctoral degrees and Research Master degrees. They apply to all candidates enrolled in, or proposing to enrol in, a HDR program.

2.2 These procedures apply to all staff working in the HDR environment at the University.

2.3 These procedures, together with the Higher Degree by Research Thesis Submission and Examination – Procedures and the Higher Degree by Research Candidature – Procedures support the Higher Degree by Research – Academic Policy.

2.4 These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Higher Degrees by Research - Academic Policy, and the following associated procedures and guidelines:

- Higher Degree by Research Candidature – Procedures
- Higher Degree by Research Thesis Submission and Examination – Procedures
- Higher Degree by Research Admission– Guidelines
- Higher Degree by Research Confirmation of Candidature – Guidelines
- Higher Degree by Research Thesis Presentation – Guidelines
- Higher Degree by Research Thesis Review – Guidelines
- Higher Degree by Research Examiners – Guidelines

3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures.
Terms and definitions identified below are specific to these procedures and are critical to its effectiveness:

Candidate means a person admitted to a higher degree by research (HDR) program at the University.

Candidature means duration of enrolment in a HDR program. A HDR candidate is a "candidate" for the HDR program in which they are enrolled. All research and related work towards fulfilment of the requirements for a HDR must be completed during enrolled candidature.

Confirmed candidature means period of enrolment in a HDR program after the successful completion of the Confirmation of Candidature milestone, up to the date of expiry of candidature for that program.

Co-Supervisor means a UniSC academic staff member who meets the eligibility criteria for and has been approved for registration as a UniSC HDR supervisor but has not yet supervised research candidate to successful completion of their degree and has not formalised a Mentor Supervisor. A registered co-supervisor may join an individual candidate's supervision panel as a co-supervisor only (i.e., may not be appointed to a candidate' panel as their principal supervisor).

Consultant Supervisor means a person appointed to a candidate's supervision panel who does not meet the criteria for registration as a UniSC HDR supervisor. Consultant supervisors are usually external to the university.

Creative work means an original product designed, created, or constructed by a candidate during candidature deriving from one or more of the creative arts including graphical and new media techniques.

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Exegesis means a scholarly, critical commentary on the original creative work in dialogue with, and informing that original work or collection of works, resulting from research undertaken and produced during candidature. The exegesis also includes explicit reference to the research methodologies employed in the creation of the original creative work.

Higher degree by research (HDR) means a supervised research program that requires original research in an area.

Head of Enrolling Unit means the Head of School or Director of Institute of a candidate's enrolment.

Mentor Supervisor means a senior UniSC academic holding an appointment at Level C or above (Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor or Professor) who meets the criteria for principal supervisor and who has supervised a minimum of three HDR candidates to successful completion. The Mentor Supervisor serves as a mentor for a Mentee supervisor. Refer to Appendix 2

Mentee Supervisor means a UniSC academic who meets the eligibility criteria for registration as a co-supervisor and who , under the guidance of a Mentor Supervisor, has applied and been approved for registration as a principal supervisor until the successful completion of their first HDR candidate.

Line manager means a staff member who has delegated authority on behalf of the university to give lawful instruction to staff. The Line manager is usually a Head of enrolling unit but may be a Director of a Research Institute or other.

Principal Supervisor means a UniSC academic staff member who meets the eligibility criteria for and has been approved for registration as a UniSC Principal HDR supervisor. A registered principal supervisor may join an individual candidate's supervision panel as the candidate's principal supervisor or as a co-supervisor.

Probationary candidature means period of enrolment in a HDR program up to and including the successful completion of the Confirmation of Candidature milestone, or the date of expiry of probationary candidature for that program (whichever comes first).

Reportable research activity means Higher Education Research Data Collection or the Excellence in Research Australia reportable research publications or grant income.

Significant research component means a substantial research project undertaken with appropriate research methodology.

Thesis means an original substantial piece of scholarly writing resulting from research undertaken by a candidate and produced during candidature to meet the requirements of the degree.

4. Register of HDR Supervisors

4.1 The aim of HDR supervisor registration is to establish, maintain and continually build upon a standard for quality supervision across the university and to support the ongoing involvement of HDR supervisors in professional development around supervision. Furthermore, registration of supervisors aims to ensure that academic staff have the skills and knowledge to successfully supervise candidates throughout their candidature.

4.2 To be appointed as principal supervisor or co-supervisor of a HDR candidate in the university, a person must meet the criteria for inclusion in the 'UniSC Register of HDR Supervisors' at the time of appointment as supervisor and be admitted to the Register prior to commencing supervision of the candidate.

4.3 People who do not meet the supervisor eligibility criteria may participate on supervision panels as consultant supervisors in addition to at least two registered supervisors.

4.4 The 'Register of HDR Supervisors' is maintained in the relevant university system. An academic staff member's registered status is also updated on their staff profile webpage to facilitate searching by prospective research candidates.

4.5 For admission to the 'Register of HDR Supervisors', UniSC researchers are required to complete the relevant form, providing evidence that each criterion has been met.

4.5.1 Applications will be assessed and may be approved by the line manager for a period of up to four years, after which time the staff member will re-apply for admission to demonstrate their continued eligibility to supervise HDR candidates.

4.5.2 The Graduate Research School will advise the applicant of admission to the Register, with a copy to the relevant staff line manager, and the relevant record.

4.6 The Dean, Graduate Research will monitor admissions to the Register to ensure registered HDR supervisors meet the supervisor eligibility criteria.

4.7 Line Managers will ensure staff whose registration has lapsed are notified, and where required, will make alternative supervision arrangements for continuing candidates.

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5. Supervisor eligibility criteria

5.1 The following criteria must be demonstrated for registration as a co-supervisor of HDR candidates at this University:

5.1.1 An academic appointment at the university;

5.1.2 A doctoral qualification (AQF level 10), or demonstrated equivalent research experience as approved by Dean, Graduate Research;

5.1.3 Satisfy research active definition stated in the UniSC employment contract;

5.1.4 Completion of UniSC's Research Ethics and Integrity Training and read the HDR Supervisor Statement of Expectations (Appendix 1). Submission of an application for registration as a supervisor indicates acceptance of the HDR Supervisor Statement of Expectations and the responsibilities of HDR supervisors described in these Procedures and in the HDR Supervisor induction.

- • • For registration as a Principal supervisor, one of following additional criteria must be demonstrated:Supervision of at least one HDR candidate to the successful completion of their HDR program at an Australian university either as a co-supervisor or principal supervisor; or

5.2.2 The formal appointment of a Mentor Supervisor for the duration of their first principal supervision (see definition for Mentor Supervisor in section 3)

5.3 Exemptions to supervisor eligibility criteria can only be granted by the Dean, Graduate Research, on the recommendation of the relevant staff line manager. An exemption may be granted where the researcher has not met all the criteria for inclusion in the Register, but where there is clear evidence of research capability. The Graduate Research School will maintain a record of granted exemptions.

6. Supervision panel

6.1 HDR candidates must have a minimum of two registered supervisors: a principal supervisor and a co-supervisor.

6.1.1 Registered Principal Supervisors can participate on supervision panels in either role of Principal or Co-Supervisor.

6.1.2 Registered co-supervisors can only participate on supervision panels as a Co-Supervisor.

6.1.3 Researchers and other advisors who do not meet the supervisor eligibility criteria may participate on supervision panels as consultant supervisors in addition to at least two registered supervisors.

6.2 When a candidate is located partly at an external organisation, a consultant supervisor who is a member of the external organisation is appointed.

6.3 The Head of enrolling unit will approve supervisors for each candidate. The supervision panel must be approved at the time of accepting an application for admission to candidature.

6.3.1 If the Head of enrolling unit is not the line manager to members of the supervision panel, the Head of enrolling unit will liaise with the relevant line manager(s) to seek approval for workload commitment required for the proposed supervisor's participation on the supervision panel.

6.4 The supervision panel arrangements will be reviewed and confirmed in conjunction with confirmation of candidature.

6.5 Exemptions to supervision panel requirements can only be granted by the Dean, Graduate Research. The Graduate Research School will maintain a record of granted exemptions on the relevant candidate record.

6.6 Supervisors must advise the relevant Head of enrolling unit of any perceivable conflict of interest between themselves and the candidate or other members of the supervision panel using the relevant form. Supervisors must not engage in supervision of candidates with whom they have a close personal relationship. For further information, refer to Appendix 3 and to the Conflict of Interest – Governing Policy.

6.7 The relevant Head of enrolling unit is required to approve any change of supervisor. If the principal supervisor leaves the university, the Head of enrolling unit has responsibility for ensuring continuity of appropriate supervisory expertise is maintained throughout candidature. If the principal supervisor is absent from the university for a period more than four (4) weeks, the principal supervisor and relevant Head of enrolling unit organise alternative supervisory arrangements for the period of absence (which must be reported to Graduate Research School) that ensures the candidate is not disadvantaged in progressing in their degree.

6.8 Line managers will give proper recognition of the workload required for supervisors to carry out their duties, taking overall workload into account. Supervisory loads will be monitored by the relevant line managers and by the supervisors themselves. The ratio must be low enough for effective intellectual interaction. A supervisor whose other duties have not been reduced (for example teaching, administrative duties) should not normally be permitted to have a total supervisory load greater than the equivalent of five full-time candidates.

6.8.1 Supervisors from a different enrolling unit to the HDR candidate must have approval from their line manager to participate on the supervision panel, to be formally requested by the Head of enrolling unit prior to approving a supervision panel.

6.9 The Head of enrolling unit is responsible for ensuring the quality of HDR supervision provided to its candidates.

6.9.1 Regular appraisals of the quality of supervision should be undertaken, e.g., during the annual staff Performance Planning and Review process. Indicators of quality supervision may include:

(a) time to completion

(b) attrition

(c) progress (e.g., overdue milestones)

(d) examination reports

(e) complaints and grievances

(f) prizes and awards

(g) contributions to HDR supervisor practice

(h) leadership in supervision

6.9.2 If the Head of enrolling unit is not the direct line manager to members of a HDR supervision panel, the Head of enrolling unit will liaise with the relevant line manager(s) to report any concerns regarding quality of supervision. The line manager is then responsible for taking action in support of improvement to quality of supervision.

6.10 Supervisors who are found to be lacking in the provision of any aspect of quality HDR supervision may

be:

(a) required to undertake specific professional development,

(b) excluded from joining any new supervision panels;

(c) removed from the Register of HDR supervisors by recommendation of the line manager to the Dean, Graduate Research. In such cases, the Head of enrolling unit will make alternative supervision arrangements for the current candidates whom the de-registered supervisor is a member of the supervision panel.

7. Supervisor responsibilities

7.1 All supervisors are responsible for:

(a) providing advice to candidates on the design of their research project to support successful

completion of the degree within the allowed timeframes;

(b) monitoring the quality, scope and presentation of the work as required, and recommending

additional skills training as appropriate;

(c) encouraging and supporting candidates towards the successful completion of their program;

(d) complying with, and advising candidates on all university policy documents;

(e) modelling responsible research and appropriate professional conduct;

(f) maintaining their eligibility to supervise HDR candidates, including ongoing contribution to their own and colleague's supervision development;

(g) ensuring they have sufficient time and resources to be an effective supervisor for the candidate, including meeting all responsibilities specified in these Procedures, and as may be required for individual candidatures. This includes discussing workload with their line manager prior to joining new supervision panels and updating their line manager on changes to their participation on HDR supervision panels.

(h) undertaking supervision related professional development activities in support of the continuous improvement of their supervision practice.

(i) supervisors of international HDR candidates are required to participate in Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) legislative framework awareness training prior to joining a supervision panel for international HDR candidate. The module must be completed every 24 months.

7.2 Principal supervisor responsibilities include:

- recommending candidates for admission to a HDR only after careful consideration of:

  - their workload over the proposed candidature duration; and
  - their own supervision practice and the level of supervision required to support the applicant to successful completion of the HDR program; and
  - the Higher Degree by Research Candidature – Procedures and the Higher Degree by Research Admission– Guidelines;

(b) monitoring the progress of HDR candidates and keeping other supervisors and the relevant unit of enrolment informed via regular reports on candidature progression including achievement of milestone and obstacles to progress, other updates as required to account for periods of leave, and actively resolves any outstanding candidature milestones;

(c) conducting required risk assessments as may be required throughout candidature, including but not limited to research at external locations, non-compliance with government sanctions law or Defence Export Controls;

(d) maintaining a complete supervision panel to meet the individual candidate's needs at every stage of their candidature, including formalising interim arrangements for supervision during periods of absence greater than four (4) weeks, in consultation with the Head of enrolling unit;

(e) the subject-matter expert with substantial knowledge of the candidate's research topic and recent research activity in the relevant discipline;

(f) maintaining regular communication with the candidate and other members of the supervision panel, and ensures that there is a communication plan between the parties as documented in the candidate's Research Supervision Agreement;

(g) ensuring candidates are familiar with their rights and responsibilities including requirements for compliance with all discipline specific and university policies, including, but not limited to, the Responsible Research Conduct – Governing Policy and associated Procedures and the Higher Degrees by Research – Academic Policy and associated Procedures;

(h) ensuring candidates understand their obligations and complies with University Health, Safety and Wellbeing – Governing Policy

(i) providing advice and guidance to candidates in their post-HDR career development;

(j) providing advice, guidance, and mentorship to less experienced co-supervisors as appropriate;

(k) providing a plan for the ongoing supervision of their HDR candidates to their Head of enrolling unit and the Dean, Graduate Research prior to leaving the university (or not being eligible to continue as a principal supervisor for any other reason); and

(l) where the principal supervisor will be absent for a period of four (4) or more weeks a new principal supervisor must be appointed in consultation with the Head of enrolling unit.

7.3 Specific co-supervisor responsibilities include:

(a) contributing to the candidate's progression towards successful completion of their degree and to the supervision panel;

(b) fulfilling the responsibilities of the principal supervisor during short periods of absence in support of consistency of supervision;

(c) providing input to the candidature milestone progression process.

(d) providing advice and guidance to less experienced supervisors on the panel as appropriate (e.g., where a registered Principal Supervisor joins an individual candidate's supervision panel as a co-supervisor).

7.4 Specific consultant supervisor responsibilities may include:

- providing on-site supervision at external locations including relevant inductions and workplace health and safety briefings
- reporting to the university any incidents or concerns involving its candidates

8. Supervision professional development

6.1 The university will provide supervision professional development opportunities and resources for supervisors. This includes an Induction to Graduate Research Candidate Management at the university.

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9. Resolving Difficulties and Grievances

.1 Supervisors experiencing difficulty with any aspect of their supervision of an HDR candidate should discuss the problems with the candidate and other supervisor(s) in the first instance (if appropriate). Where the issue cannot be resolved within the supervision panel, the matter should be brought to the relevant HDR Coordinator and or Head of enrolling unit for informal resolution.

9.2 Where supervisors do not wish to discuss the matter with the candidate or the other members of the supervision panel (e.g., in the event of a breakdown in the supervisory relationship) they should approach the HDR Coordinator and or Head of enrolling unit in the first instance. Matters that cannot be resolved at the enrolling unit level may be brought to the attention of the Dean, Graduate Research.

9.3 A candidate who has a grievance concerning any action or decision of a supervisor, or any other member of staff, and is unable to reach a satisfactory resolution through informal discussions and conciliation, may lodge a formal grievance under the Student Grievance Resolution – Governing Policy and associated procedures via the Student grievance resolution webpage.

Appendix 1

HDR Supervisor Statement of Expectations

Appendix 2

HDR Mentor Supervisor Role Statement

Appendix 3

Managing Interests Matrix (Australian Council of Graduate Research Good Practice Guidelines – Disclosing and Managing Interests in Graduate Research

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

• Conflict of Interest - Governing Policy

• Higher Degrees by Research - Academic Policy
• Higher Degrees by Research Candidature - Procedures
• Higher Degrees by Research Thesis Submission and Examination - Procedures
• Resolution of Complaints (Staff) - Guidelines
• Responsible Research Conduct - Governing Policy
• Staff Code of Conduct - Governing Policy

LINKED DOCUMENTS

• Higher Degrees by Research - Academic Policy

SUPERSEDED DOCUMENTS

• Higher Degrees by Research - Procedures

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

• Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)
• Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)
• Australian Qualifications Framework
• Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth)

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