

Higher Degrees by Research Supervision - Procedures



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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 higher degree by research program. A Research student is considered to be a "student" for the higher degree by research program in which they are enrolled. All research and related work towards fulfilment of the requirements for a higher degree by research 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 USC academic staff member who meets the criteria for and has been approved for registration as a USC HDR supervisor, but has not yet supervised a research student to successful completion of their degree. A registered co-supervisor may join an individual student's supervision panel as a co-supervisor only (i.e. may not be appointed to a student's panel as their principal supervisor).

Consultant supervisor means a person appointed to a student's supervision panel who does not meet the criteria for registration as a USC supervisor. Consultant supervisors are usually external to the university, but may also be USC staff who do not meet the criteria for registration as a supervisor.

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.

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 School means the Head of School of a candidate's enrolment.

Mentor Supervisor means a senior USC 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 less experienced HDR supervisor.

PPR Supervisor means a staff member who has delegated authority on behalf of the university to give lawful instruction to staff. The PPR Supervisor is usually a Head of School, but may be a Director of a Research Centre or other.

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

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Dean, Graduate Research

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29 July 2014

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1. Purpose of procedures

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

They 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 and Enrolment – 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

2. USC Register of HDR Supervisors

2.1 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 students throughout their candidature.

2.2 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 'USC Register of HDR Supervisors' at the time of appointment as supervisor and be admitted to the Register prior to commencing supervision of the candidate.

2.3 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.

2.4 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 students.

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

2.5.1 Applications will be assessed and may be approved by the PPR supervisor 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 students.

2.5.2 The Graduate Research School will advise the applicant of admission to the Register, with a copy to the relevant staff PPR supervisor, and the relevant record.

2.6 The Research Degrees Committee or Chair, acting on behalf of committee will monitor admissions to the Register to ensure registered HDR supervisors meet the supervisor eligibility criteria.

2.7 PPR Supervisors will ensure staff whose registration has lapsed are notified, and where required, will make alternative supervision arrangements for continuing candidates.

3. Supervisor eligibility criteria

3.1 The following criteria must be demonstrated for registration as a principal supervisor of HDR students at USC:

3.1.1 An academic appointment at the university for a duration of at least the expected duration of the HDR supervisions they are appointed for;

3.1.2 A doctoral qualification (AQF level 10), or demonstrated equivalent research experience as approved by the Research Degrees Committee or Chair, acting on behalf of the committee;

3.1.3 Minimum of five reportable research publications or one reportable book (or produce an equivalent body of non-traditional research outputs such as original creative works and curated public exhibitions/events); and or be a named recipient awarded a minimum of \$150,000 of HERDC research income in the previous three audited collection years (research income). Supervisors must maintain this minimum level of research activity in order to retain registered status;

3.1.4 Prior to applying for registration complete USC's HDR supervisor induction, USC's Research Ethics and Integrity Training and sign the HDR Supervisor Statement of Expectations.

3.2 Demonstrate 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 formal appointment of a mentor supervisor for the duration of their first principal supervision (see 3.4).

3.3 The following criteria must be demonstrated for registration as a co-supervisor of HDR students at USC:

3.3.1 An academic appointment at the university;

3.3.2 A doctoral qualification (AQF level 10), or demonstrated equivalent research experience as approved by the Research Degrees Committee or Chair, acting on behalf of the committee;

3.3.3 Minimum of three reportable research publications or one reportable book (or produce an equivalent body of non-traditional research outputs such as original creative works and curated public exhibitions/events); and or be a named recipient awarded a minimum of \$150,000 of HERDC research income in the previous three audited collection years (research income or publications). Supervisors must maintain this minimum level of research activity in order to retain registered status;

3.3.4 Prior to applying for registration, complete USC's HDR supervisor induction, USC's Research Ethics and Integrity Training and sign the HDR Supervisor Statement of Expectations.

3.4 A mentor supervisor is a senior academic holding an appointment at Level C or above (Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor or Professor) who meets the criteria for principal supervisor under 3.1 and who has supervised a minimum of three HDR candidates to successful completion. The role of the mentor supervisor is outlined in the mentor supervisor role statement.

3.5 Exemptions to supervisor eligibility criteria can only be granted by the Research Degrees Committee or Chair, acting on behalf of the committee, on the recommendation of the relevant staff PPR supervisor. An exemption may be granted where the researcher has not met all of 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.

4. Supervision panel

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

4.1.1 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.

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

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

4.2.1 If the Head of School is not the PPR supervisor to members of the supervision panel, the Head of School will liaise with the relevant PPR supervisor(s) to seek approval for workload commitment required for the proposed supervisor's participation on the supervision panel.

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

4.4 Exemptions to supervision panel requirements can only be granted by the Research Degrees Committee, or the Chairperson acting on behalf of the Committee. The Graduate Research School will maintain a record of granted exemptions on the relevant candidate record.

4.5 Supervisors must advise the relevant Head of School of any perceivable conflict of interest between themselves and the candidate or other members of the supervision panel. Supervisors must not engage in supervision of candidates with whom they have a close personal relationship.

4.6 The relevant Head of School is required to approve any change of supervisor. If the principal supervisor leaves the university, the Head of School has responsibility for ensuring continuity of appropriate supervisory expertise is maintained throughout candidature.

4.6.1 If the principal supervisor is absent from the university for a period in excess of 4 weeks, the principal supervisor and relevant Head of School organise alternative supervisory arrangements for the period of absence (which must be reported to Graduate Research School) that ensures the student is not disadvantaged in progressing in their degree.

4.7 PPR supervisors 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 PPR supervisors 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.

Supervisors from a different school to the HDR candidate must have approval from their PPR supervisor to participate on the supervision panel, to be formally requested by the Head of School of enrolment prior to approving a supervision panel.

4.8 The Head of School is responsible for ensuring the quality of HDR supervision provided to students enrolled within their school.

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

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

4.9.1 Required to undertake specific professional development,

4.9.2 Excluded from joining any new supervision panels;

4.9.3 Removed from the Register of HDR supervisors by recommendation of the PPR supervisor to the Research Degrees Committee or Chair, acting on behalf of the committee. In such cases, the Head of School will make alternative supervision arrangements for the current candidates whom the de-registered supervisor is a member of the supervision panel.

5. Supervisor responsibilities

5.1 All supervisors are responsible for:

5.1.1 Providing advice to students on the design of their research project to support successful completion of the degree within the allowed timeframes;

5.1.2 Monitoring the quality, scope and presentation of the work as required, and recommending additional skills training as appropriate;

5.1.3 Encouraging and supporting students towards the successful completion of their program;

5.1.4 Complying with, and advising students on all university policy and procedures;

5.1.5 Modelling responsible research and appropriate professional conduct;

5.1.6 Maintaining their eligibility to supervise higher degree by research students, including ongoing contribution to their own and colleague's supervision development;

5.1.7 Ensuring they have sufficient time and resources to be an effective supervisor for the student, including meeting all responsibilities specified in these Procedures, and as may be required for individual candidatures. This includes discussing workload with their PPR Supervisor prior to joining new supervision panels, and updating their PPR supervisor on changes to their participation on HDR supervision panels.

5.1.8 Undertaking supervision related professional development activities in support of the continuous improvement of their supervision practice.

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

5.10 Principal supervisor responsibilities include:

5.10.1 Recommending candidates for admission to a HDR only after careful consideration and in accordance with USC's Higher Degree by Research Admission and Enrolment – Guidelines;

5.10.2 Monitoring the progress of HDR candidates and keeping other supervisors and the relevant school 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;

5.10.3 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;

5.10.4 Maintaining a complete supervision panel to meet the individual student's needs at every stage of their candidature, including formalising interim arrangements for supervision during periods of absence greater than 4 weeks, in consultation with the Head of School;

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

5.10.6 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;

5.10.7 Ensuring students 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;

5.10.8 Ensuring students understand their obligations and complies with University Health, Safety and Wellbeing – Governing Policy

5.10.9 Providing advice and guidance to students in their post-HDR career development;

5.10.10 Providing advice, guidance and mentorship to less experienced co-supervisors as appropriate.

5.11 Specific co-supervisor responsibilities include:

5.11.1 Contributing to the candidate's progression towards successful completion of their degree and to the supervision panel;

5.11.2 Fulfilling the responsibilities of the principal supervisor during short periods of absence in support of consistency of supervision;

5.11.3 Providing input to the candidature milestone progression process.

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5.12 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).

6. Supervision professional development

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

7. Grievances

7.1 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 Head of School for informal resolution.

7.2 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 Head of School in the first instance. Matters that cannot be resolved at the school level may be brought to the attention of the Dean, Graduate Research.

Appendix 1

HDR Roles and Responsibilities

Appendix 2

HDR Mentor Supervisor Role Statement

Appendix 3

HDR Supervisor Statement of Expectations

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
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
Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)
Australian Qualifications Framework
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015