

Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy outlines the principles for supervision of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates at the University of Canberra (University).

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to University staff or affiliates (including Adjunct and Emeritus Professors) involved in the supervision of HDR candidates, and to HDR candidates at the University.

(3) This Policy does not apply to supervision of students in undergraduate (including Honours) or postgraduate coursework courses.

(4) This Policy is supported by the [Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedure](#), which outlines the requirements for supervisor registration and the role and responsibilities of those involved in HDR supervision at the University.

Section 3 - Principles

Supervisor Registration

(5) To ensure quality of supervision for all candidates enrolled in an HDR course at the University, Supervisors must comply with the requirements for Supervisor registration.

(6) Staff who wish to engage in HDR supervision are required to:

- a. be research active to ensure a sound understanding of current scholarship and/or professional practice in the discipline;
- b. hold a relevant qualification or have recognised equivalent research experience;
- c. gain approval of the Faculty Associate Dean, Research (ADR) for registration as a Supervisor; and
- d. complete the mandatory training requirements for registration as specified in the [Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedure](#).

(7) Registered Supervisors must engage in approved professional development opportunities at least every two years to maintain registration.

(8) Supervisors who fail to maintain the professional development requirements will be restricted from taking on new HDR candidates until they have met the requirements.

(9) Supervisors overseeing research involving the use of animals must be authorised to conduct experiments using animals in accordance with animal welfare legislation and are expected to have completed the University's mandatory Animal Ethics Training Course.

Supervision Conduct

(10) Supervisors must comply with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#) and the University's [Charter of Conduct and Values](#), and [Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](#), in addition to the Rules, policies, procedures and guidelines relevant to the supervision of HDR candidates.

(11) Supervisors must also comply with the [Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships](#), which have been developed jointly by Universities Australia, the National Tertiary Education Union, the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations and the Australian Council of Graduate Research, and aim to protect the safety and wellbeing of both HDR candidates and University staff.

(12) When a Supervisor is appointed as Primary Supervisor on a panel, either through the admission process (see [Higher Degree by Research Admission Policy](#)) or change of panel process (see [Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Changes to Candidature Policy](#)), they must sign a Statement of Agreement, to confirm and acknowledge their commitment and responsibility as a Supervisor and their agreement to comply with the Rules, policies and procedures relevant to the supervision of HDR candidates.

Managing Supervision Capacity

(13) Supervisory workload and capacity are managed by the Faculty, in line with the following principles:

- a. Supervision should be appropriately attributed and recognised as a workload-bearing academic function that has educational and research benefits.
- b. Appointment of Supervisors to a panel should take into consideration the expertise of the individual Supervisor, the duration of their appointment, other workload commitments, and any conflicts of interest (see clause 19).
- c. Supervisors should maintain a maximum load of six (6) HDR candidates as Primary Supervisor, with a maximum of five (5) FTE total supervision load (maximum 500% load across all supervisions), taking into account disciplinary norms, supervisory experience and level of appointment.
- d. Consideration should be given to the additional time commitment required to supervise HDR candidates for whom English is a second or additional language.

Supervisor Panel Composition

(14) Supervisor panels must meet the following minimum standards:

- a. A panel must consist of a Primary and at least one Secondary Supervisor.
- b. A panel should have at least two University staff.
- c. The Primary Supervisor will hold the majority supervision load.
- d. The Primary Supervisor should have an ongoing academic appointment with the University (not sessional), with an appointment at least the length of the candidate's candidature.

(15) A panel may be supplemented with additional registered Supervisors and/or advisors as dictated by the needs of the research being pursued.

(16) A panel should comprise a balance of experienced Supervisors and less experienced Supervisors.

(17) A panel must have an agreed contingency plan in place for planned leave of panel members or other unexpected absences (temporary or permanent), agreed to at the candidate's admission to the degree. An alternate Primary Supervisor must be nominated in the contingency plan, who is a University registered supervisor.

(18) Education Focused (EF) academic staff and Professional staff are not permitted to supervise as Primary Supervisor. An exception to this may be approved by the Dean, Graduate Research School, for EF or Professional staff

who can, as endorsed by their Faculty ADR, demonstrate they are research active.

Conflict of Interest

(19) Consideration must be taken to ensure real or perceived conflicts of interest are avoided or addressed when supervisory panels are established, or when changes are made to the composition of panels during candidature. Such conflicts include, but are not limited to:

- a. Personal relationship between two Supervisors on a panel or between candidate and Supervisor.
- b. Employment relationships between Supervisor and candidate.
- c. Relationship between industry/sector Supervisors (employer or research supervisor) and candidate.
- d. Financial or organisational conflict.

(20) A sexual, romantic, or familial relationship between a Supervisor and their student, or between two Supervisors on a panel, is never appropriate. Alternate supervision arrangements must be made to replace the Supervisor on the panel.

(21) If changes are not made to supervisory arrangements, on discovery of the relationship it may be dealt with as a breach of conduct under the University's [Enterprise Agreement](#) and [Student Conduct Rules](#).

Changes to Supervisory Panels

(22) It is the responsibility of the Faculty to ensure continuity of high-quality supervision throughout candidature.

(23) Changes to a supervisory panel should consider the minimum standards at clause 14, must be in the candidate's best interests and must be discussed and endorsed by the candidate prior to being implemented.

(24) Changes to supervisory arrangements must be requested in writing by the candidate and approved by the Faculty ADR.

(25) Changes to supervisory panels should be avoided during the final stages of candidature, during periods of Progress Support or Academic Probation, or during revision to a thesis requiring re-examination.

(26) University staff members who leave the University during the candidature of an HDR candidate may remain on the supervisory panel as an external Supervisor or advisor.

(27) Where one or both Supervisors are unable to carry out their role for an extended period (for example, unexpected extended absence due to illness or injury) one or more Supervisors will be implemented from the contingency supervisory panel.

(28) Contingency panels should be updated each time a change of supervisory panel is approved and implemented.

(29) Where the supervisor-candidate relationship has broken down, despite attempts to resolve conflict (see clause 31), a change of supervisory arrangements is recommended. If the alternate Primary Supervisor in the contingency panel is unable to take over, the existing Primary Supervisor is expected to:

- a. assist the Faculty in identifying and negotiating alternate supervisory arrangements (interim and permanent, internal or external to the University), and
- b. continue to actively supervise during the transition to an alternate Primary Supervisor.

(30) Where alternate supervision arrangements are unable to be put in place in a reasonable timeframe, the HDR candidate will be directed to take leave until appropriate arrangements are identified or may be advised to discontinue from their course.

Dispute Resolution

(31) Should a candidate and Supervisor experience conflict during candidature that is unable to be resolved informally, the candidate is strongly encouraged to refer the issue to:

- a. the relevant Faculty HDR Convener in the first instance;
- b. the Faculty ADR or Faculty Executive Dean, if the HDR Convener is unavailable or there is a conflict of interest; or
- c. the Dean, Graduate Research School where it is appropriate to seek advice outside the Faculty.

(32) If the conflict remains unresolved, a candidate may lodge a formal grievance under the [Student Grievance Resolution Policy](#).

(33) Where the matter relates to inappropriate student or staff conduct, the matter may be dealt with under the University's [Charter of Conduct and Values](#) or [Student Conduct Rules](#).

Section 4 - Responsibilities

(34) As stated in the University's [Delegations of Authority Policy](#), a delegation to approve is conferred on a position, not to an individual occupying the position. A delegated authority extends to any person officially appointed to a position on a temporary basis.

(35) Where the Approving Authority is unavailable to make an academic or administrative decision as required by this Policy, or it is not appropriate to do so (e.g. conflict of interest), authority may only be exercised by a delegate with management responsibility for the functions of the position. In the case of an Associate Dean, Research (ADR), the delegate with management responsibility is the Faculty Executive Dean.

(36) Exceptions to this Policy may be approved by Dean, Graduate Research School, and will be reported to Academic Board biannually.

Role	Responsibility
Associate Dean, Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve changes to a supervisory panel.• Recommend to the Dean, Graduate Research School, that EF or Professional staff be appointed as Primary Supervisor.
Faculty Executive Dean	Advise and assist HDR candidates and Supervisors to resolve conflict, where HDR Convener or ADR are unable to assist.
Dean, Graduate Research School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve exceptions to the Policy.• Advise and assist HDR candidates and Supervisors to resolve conflict, where advice external to the Faculty is sought.
Primary Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sign a Statement of Agreement (see Definitions Section below).• Comply with requirements for registration, including ongoing professional development.• Comply with the Rules, Policies and Procedures relevant to the supervision of HDR candidates.• Actively supervise HDR candidate/s throughout candidature.• Assist to identify and negotiate alternate supervision, if required.
HDR Convener	Advise and assist HDR candidates and supervisors to resolve conflict.
Registered Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comply with requirements for registration, including ongoing professional development.• Comply with the Rules, Policies and Procedures relevant to the supervision of HDR candidates.
Faculty	Manage supervisory capacity to ensure continuity of high-quality supervision.

Section 5 - Procedure

(37) Refer to [Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedure](#).

Section 6 - Definitions

Terms	Definitions
University	University of Canberra ABN 81 633 873 422 13
Higher Degree by Research course	Means a degree of master by research or a degree of doctor by research, see University of Canberra Courses and Awards (Courses of Study) Rules 2023 .
Higher Degree by Research candidate	Means a student enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research course, see University of Canberra Courses and Awards (Courses of Study) Rules 2023 .
Primary Supervisor	An academic staff member registered with the University to supervise HDR candidates, approved as the Chair of a candidates' supervisory panel.
Secondary Supervisor	An academic staff member registered with the University to supervise HDR candidates, approved in a supporting supervisory role on a candidates' supervisory panel.
Progress Support	Early intervention measure required prior to implementation of Academic Probation for HDR candidates.
Academic Probation	Means the imposition of one or more conditions on a student's academic progress, see University of Canberra (Academic Progress) Rules 2022 .
Statement of Agreement	A statement signed by the Primary Supervisor when being appointed as Chair of a supervisory panel acknowledging their commitment and responsibilities and to comply with the University's Rules, policies and other guiding documents relevant to the supervision of HDR candidates.
Education Focused staff	Academic staff with a teaching workload allocation only.
Professional staff	Staff employed on a professional employment contract.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	27th March 2023
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Custodian	Michelle Lincoln Deputy Vice-Chancellor
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