

# HDR Supervision Policy and Procedure

## 1. Purpose

This policy and procedure specifies the fundamental principles underpinning the appointment and provision of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Supervisors and their roles and responsibilities, including the expectations of candidates of the supervisors. It should be read in conjunction with the *Research and Research Training Policy Framework*, its associated policies, and the *HDR Examination Policy and Procedure*.

## 2. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all individuals engaged in the provision of supervision and support of Higher Degree by Research including the candidate, Institute staff, and individuals appointed to adjunct or advisory positions.

## 3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Candidate	a student enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research course.
the Code	<i>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research</i> , Australian Government (2018)
associated policies	the associated policies to <i>Research and Research Training Policy Framework</i> and this policy: Responsible Conduct of Research Policy; HDR Candidature Management and Support Policy.
Associate Supervisor (AS)	A person who is an employee of the Institute and who provides support to the student and to the Principal Supervisor to guide the progress of a designated higher degree by research student.
Co-Supervisor (CS)	A person who provides support to the student and the Principal Supervisor but is external to the Institute and is not an employee of the Institute.
HDR Committee (HDRC)	provides leadership for the delivery of postgraduate research training and reports to the Academic Board via the Research Committee. It is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overseeing rules, policies, and procedures for candidates;</li> <li>• Overseeing the confirmation and thesis assessment processes;</li> <li>• Monitoring candidate performance;</li> <li>• Promoting quality research training environment and</li> </ul>

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Term	Definition
	outcomes; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Overseeing new and reviewing current HDR programs.</li></ul>
research training	is a formal course of postgraduate study, currently Masters (Research) degrees, that lead to the acquisition of advanced skills, techniques, and knowledge in the conduct of research, and requires the production of substantial original research output, such as a thesis. Also known as higher degree(s) by research (HDR).
<b>Principal Supervisor (PS)</b>	A person who is an employee of the Institute and has prime responsibility for guiding the progress of a designated higher degree by research student.
<b>Provisional Principal Supervisor (PPS)</b>	A person who, under the direction of an appropriately experienced mentor, fulfills the role of an Associate Supervisor, whilst gaining experience towards qualifying as a Principal Supervisor.
<b>Schedule(s)</b>	Is the schedule to this policy and procedure, Supervision Load Limits.
<b>Supervisory Panel</b>	A minimum of two appropriately registered and accredited academic supervisors appointed by the Institute who collectively provide support to a higher degree by research student, led by the Principal Supervisor, including at least one Associate Supervisor, possibly including a Co-Supervisor, and possibly including academic staff members who may assist with supervision responsibilities, but do not meet the requirements to be designated as a "Supervisor" (Principal or Associate).

## 4. Policy Statement

4.1. This policy is written to ensure the Institute's supervision of research students meets the required standards of the relevant governing bodies:

- TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015, Standard 4;
- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)

4.2. All HDR candidates are allocated a Supervisory Panel consisting of a minimum of two registered and accredited academic supervisors: a Principal Supervisor and an Associate Supervisor (who may be an External Associate Supervisor). Supervisory Panels may also include one or more external Co-Supervisors. The Principal Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the HDR candidate meets all administrative and academic requirements of their

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course. All Supervisors must be approved and be on the Institute Register of Supervisors.

- 4.3. The Institute will provide HDR candidates with a supervisory panel that has an appropriate mix of expertise in the discipline(s) of the candidate's research, the relevant research methods, and in supervising students to successful research degree completions. The processes for supervision will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the HDRC.

The Institute will maintain a Register of Supervisors, listing staff who are qualified to be supervisors (at either or both Principal and Associate Supervisor levels).

## 5. Appointment of Supervisor(s)

When determining suitability for supervision duties and appointing supervisors, the following factors will be taken into consideration by the Institute:

- academic qualifications;
- research productivity, including research income, publications, and/or successful research degree completions within the last five years;
- supervisory experience;
- potential conflicts of interest;
- attendance at mandatory supervision training;
- current supervisory load.

The following requirements must be met for appointment as a Supervisor.

- A nominee for Supervisor of a candidate must at the time of appointment be able to demonstrate a contemporary record of research achievement and be research active as defined by the Institute. The applicant will have ability and willingness to undertake the roles and responsibilities of a supervisor.
- A Supervisor will have research and/or professional expertise appropriate to the candidate's research topic.
- A Supervisor will normally be a member of the School in which the HDR student ("the candidate") is enrolled, unless otherwise approved by the Executive Dean, and will have administrative responsibility for the candidate.
- A staff member on a term contract may be appointed as a Principal Supervisor of a HDR candidate provided that they meet the conditions above and the term of their contract meets at least the minimum funded term for the research component.

The appointment of Principal and Associate Supervisors must meet the following criteria:

- a) A Supervisor will hold a Ph.D. or other relevant doctoral degree and experience required, including discipline-specific knowledge in a field relevant to the candidate's proposed research, or have an equivalent record of scholarly

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- achievement. Supervisors are required to ensure that HDR candidates receive adequate and timely support throughout their candidature.
- b) Be approved at the appropriate level on the Supervisors' Register of the Institute. The Institute will maintain a Register of Supervisors, listing staff who are qualified to be supervisors (at either or both Principal and Associate Supervisor levels).
  - c) Show evidence of an acceptable level of research activity over the past five years in the form of publications, research grants, and/or HDR completions, and specified in the *Research and Research Training Policy Framework* or have relevant industry, government, or professional experience at an executive level.
  - d) Agree to carry out the duties and responsibilities of a Supervisor at the appropriate level.
  - e) A Supervisor will complete an induction process on the first appointment as Supervisor and undertake regular mandated Supervisor professional development activities. A Principal Supervisor will provide formal mentoring and induction to Associate Supervisors who are staff members of MIT.

#### Co-Supervisor

Co-Supervisors must meet criteria a), b) and c) above.

#### Supervision load limits

See Schedule 1, Supervision Load Limits.

## 6. Conflict of Interest

In all cases where a real or perceived conflict of interest in HDR supervision exists or develops, the academic member of staff involved should declare this at the earliest opportunity to the relevant Head of School.

*The Australian Code for The Responsible Conduct of Research* (2018) requires researchers to identify, manage and declare circumstances and associations that may give rise to a conflict of interest. A conflict of research interest arises where an individual's preferences or perceived interests gain preference to their duties or responsibilities as a researcher. Conflict of interest may be actual, potential, or perceived and involve financial and non-financial benefits. A person must not be appointed nor remain as a supervisor if their appointment and term could be reasonably expected to give rise to a conflict of interest relating to the candidate or gives rise to a situation in which the candidate feels harassed, bullied, intimidated, humiliated, ignored or isolated as described in the Institute's policies.

A conflict of interest may exist where a supervisor has a personal relationship with a candidate (e.g., a spouse, partner, close friend, or family member), or a financial relationship with a candidate (e.g., a business or employment relationship, including employment of the candidate as a research assistant).

If a conflict of interest is deemed to exist, the member of staff should withdraw from supervising that student and every effort should be made to find an alternative supervisor.

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A research supervisor must be guided by the *Academic Freedom and Responsibility Policy* to ensure that academic freedoms and freedom of speech are defining values in their supervisory work.

## 7. Register of Supervisors

The Institute maintains a Register of HDR Supervisors ("the Register"). To be registered on the Supervisors' Register a person must:

- apply for registration by completing the relevant application form; and
- attach evidence of their qualifications and research activity over the past five years.

Applications are assessed by the HDRC.

Responsibility for maintenance of the Register sits with the HDRC. When supervisors are appointed for a candidate, the Head of School or nominee is responsible for ensuring compliance with supervisor registration requirements.

### 7.1. Roles and Responsibilities of the Principal Supervisor

The Principal Supervisor has a primary obligation for oversight of the candidate's progress and takes a leadership role in managing the panel and candidature including:

- a) advises and assists the candidate to complete an original and feasible research program;
- b) monitors the quality of the research being conducted;
- c) advises the candidate on any additional skills training they may require; and
- d) supports the candidate in timely completion of the research.

Responsibilities of the Principal Supervisor include the following:

- a) Abiding by all relevant legislation and Institute policies and operating in accord with the code of supervisory practices adopted by the Academic Board, including professional development and performance review.
- b) Ensure the candidate is aware of the relevant policies, procedures, and guidelines for their candidature, and the rights and obligations of HDR candidates. In particular, candidates should be referred to the Research Code of Practice, Intellectual Property Policy, Procedures for Alleged Research Misconduct, and other relevant policies.
- c) Providing appropriate administrative and academic support throughout the candidature including accessing resources and information necessary to pursue the research project.
- d) Suggesting ways that the candidate can make the most effective use of their time. This will involve discussing the nature of research with the candidate and the standard expected for particular degrees, the choice of the research topic, the planning of the research program, and the

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availability of library resources in the field, and bibliographical and technical assistance.

- e) Ensure the candidate is aware of important milestones (such as Confirmation of Candidature, and periodic reports) and is prepared to complete such milestones.
- f) Requiring written work from the candidate on a pre-arranged and agreed schedule so that their progress can be assessed at regular intervals.
- g) Using the regular progress reporting procedures established by the institution as the minimum means by which any difficulties and problems discussed with the candidate during the year are noted; supervisors should also indicate the action taken or advice given. If the problem is not resolved, the Head of School or nominee, in the first instance should be involved; and the Head or nominee and the HDRC should be notified in writing of continuing problems between reporting periods.
- h) Commenting on the content and the drafts of the thesis.
- i) Advising the HDRC of the names and credentials of suitable examiners.
- j) Recommend action concerning proposed changes to the candidature, including changes to:
  - the thesis title;
  - supervisory panel membership;
  - mode of enrolment;
  - leave of absence;
  - early submission for examination;
  - extension of scholarship;
  - extension of candidature; or
  - an application to move to doctoral candidature after completion of the research masters.
- k) Ensure regular contact and communication are maintained with the candidate via a mutually agreed, documented mechanism that is reviewed at least annually by the candidate and supervisor.
- l) Ensure that appropriate applications for ethics approval are prepared and submitted by the candidate.
- m) Recommend relevant courses of study (pertaining to important theory and research methodology) as required for successful completion of the research.
- n) Provide constructive, critical, and (where requested) written assessments of the candidate's work to the candidate within one month of the submission of the work.
- o) Provide immediate advice to the Head of School or Director of Research if the candidate is likely to fail to attempt or complete a milestone satisfactorily.
- p) Provide formal advice on the progress of the candidature to the Head of School or Director of Research via the annual review process.
- q) Negotiate agreement between the candidate and members of the supervisory panel concerning the authorship of publications and ensure that contributions are acknowledged during and after candidature.

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- r) Provide advice to the Director of Research on the appointment of thesis examiners as soon as possible after the student has declared in writing their intention to submit.
- s) Certify that the thesis is properly presented, conforms with requirements and is, prima facie, worthy of examination.
- t) Request that the candidate provide a list of examiners who are unsuitable (e.g. due to co-authorship or other professional relationship). (Other than this, the candidate should not have any role in identifying or nominating prospective examiners.)
- u) Comment on examiners' reports and making recommendations to the Research Committee on the examination outcome.
- v) Endorse completion of amendments.
- w) All other relevant administrative actions concerning the candidate's progress.
- x) Fulfilling other institution-specific obligations regarding supervision.
- y) Providing career advice and assistance to the candidate as appropriate.

## 7.2. Roles and Responsibilities of the Co-supervisor

The role of the Co-supervisor (or member of the Supervisory Panel) is to:

- a) be available as an advisor to the candidate during the course of the candidature; and
- b) assist the Principal Supervisor in the monitoring and furtherance of the candidate's research.

Responsibilities of Co-supervisors (or other members of the Supervisory Panel) include the following:

- a) Ensure regular contact and communication are maintained with the candidate via a mutually agreed, documented mechanism that is reviewed annually by the candidate and supervisor.
- b) Provide feedback to the candidate at periodic review and at other times when specifically requested to do so.
- c) Abiding by all relevant legislation and Institute policies and operating in accord with the code of supervisory practices adopted by the Academic Board, including professional development and performance review.
- d) Agreeing to take direction in respect of supervision from the Head of School or nominee, and the Principal Supervisor.
- e) Providing advice in their areas of expertise and taking advice from the Principal Supervisor with respect to the broader aspects of the higher degree by research process.



## 8. Revocation or Non-Renewal of Registration

A supervisor may have their registration revoked in the following circumstances:

- a) Where an employee has engaged in “misconduct” or “serious misconduct” related to the Research Code of Conduct which has been investigated in accordance with Responsible Conduct of Research Policy and Procedure.
- b) Failure to undertake their supervision responsibilities, including professional requirements including as evidenced by:
  - candidate complaints which can be verified after investigation, and/or, candidate requests for a change in supervisor; and/or
  - candidate withdrawals from candidature; and/or,
  - a low rate of completions; and/or
  - a lack of timely completions.
- c) Failure to adhere to the Institute’s codes of practice or policy or procedures, including participation in the required supervisor training/development.
- d) Failure to maintain “active” researcher status as defined by the Institute.

## 9. Process of Revocation of Registration

The Head makes a recommendation to the Executive Dean to revoke the registration of a supervisor. This recommendation is either based on performance or misconduct.

### 9.1. Performance-based matters

- a) The Head of School must have discussed concerns with the supervisor, and together they have developed a plan and reasonable timeline to address concerns.
- b) If the performance-related concerns have not improved following the agreed timeline, the Head of School may make a recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Research that registration is revoked.
- c) The recommendation from the Head of School must include a plan for managing the supervisor’s current candidates.

### 9.2. Misconduct-based matters

- a) Pending the outcome of an investigation of “misconduct” or “serious misconduct”, the Head of School will liaise with the Dean of Graduate Research regarding the suitability of the supervisor’s ongoing registration.
- b) The Head of School must include a plan for managing the supervisor’s current candidates.

### 9.3. The Executive Dean (ED) has the final decision on deregistration matters. If the decision to revoke registration is made, the supervisor will be notified by the ED. Informing a decision, the ED may consider:

- a) There is a record of candidates failing to complete related to poor

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- supervision, as substantiated by the Head of School.
- b) There is evidence of multiple requests to change supervision by HDR candidates, where the standard of supervision is cited as the main reason.
  - c) Two or more informal and or formal complaints regarding supervision have been substantiated after investigation.
  - d) There is evidence of non-compliance with HDR policies, procedures, and guidelines.
  - e) There is a failure to complete supervisor professional development within the appropriate timeframe.

## 10. Re-registration

A supervisor who has had their registration revoked under Section (above) may apply to the ED for re-registration. The application must demonstrate the following:

- a) That the conditions leading to revoking registration, including training requirements, have now been resolved; and
- b) the Head of School has confirmed that performance is satisfactory.

## 11. Change of Supervisor

Requests for changes to a candidate's Supervisory Panel should be made using the appropriate form.

The student or supervisor may request a change in supervisory arrangements at any time during the period of candidature. The HDRC approves changes to supervision arrangements.

If a Principal or Associate Supervisor ceases their employment or Honorary/Adjunct appointment with the Institute before the candidate completing their program then a new Principal or Associate Supervisor must be appointed in consultation with the candidate. Such a change in supervision must be approved by the Head of School or nominee and the HDRC.

If before the commencement of candidature, the intended Principal Supervisor becomes unavailable to supervise the candidate for the normal duration of the program, then supervisory arrangements must be changed and agreed to before the candidate's commencement.

If a Principal Supervisor is unavailable for a continuous period of up to 3 months then the Associate Supervisor may, with the approval of the Head or nominee, act as the Principal Supervisor. If the Principal Supervisor is unavailable for a continuous period in excess of 3 months then supervisory arrangements should be reviewed by the School and, with the approval of the Head of School or nominee, adjusted as necessary.

If, at any time during the period of candidature, the Head of School or nominee believe that supervisory arrangements have become unsatisfactory they may assign new or additional supervisors in consultation with the candidate.

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## 12. Confirmation Report

The Confirmation Panel (established under the *HDR Candidature Management and Support Policy*) will prepare a confirmation report being a document of no more than 15 pages in total length at a 1.5 line spacing and Times Roman 12 font. It will include:

1. a title, headings and subheadings
2. an introduction providing the project context
3. a research question (hypotheses are not also required for this report)
4. a literature review
5. a description of the methodology to be used for the project
6. any initial findings (it is expected that students will have completed some exploratory work by the time that they present this report, however, this is not compulsory and these findings are only expected to be indicative)
7. plans for future publications from the research
8. conclusion
9. timeline (showing the planned progress of the project)

## 13. Implementation and communication

This policy and procedure will be implemented and communicated through the Institute via:

- Announcement on the Institute's website;
- Staff professional development.

## Supporting documents and References

Australian Government (2018), *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

Australian Government, *The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018)*.

Australian Government, *The Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8<sup>th</sup> edition (2013)*.

Australian National Data Service, *Guide to Data sharing considerations for Human Research Ethics Committees (2018)*.

*Australian Qualifications Framework*

Academic Freedom and Responsibility Policy

Intellectual Property Policy and Procedure

HDR Candidature Management and Support Policy

HDR Theses Examination Procedure

Research and Research Training Policy Framework

Research Policy and Procedure

Responsible Conduct of Research Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Staff Complaint Policy and Procedure

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## Schedule 1:

### Supervision load limits

- Supervisors will normally be limited to a supervisory load as follows, (subject to clause 2):

Supervisor	Load
Supervisors who have not previously acted in the role of principal or co-supervisor of a student	one full-time equivalent HDR students in their first year of principal or co-supervision. two full-time equivalent HDR students in their second year of supervision. After completion of an approved supervision training program and evidence of one successful supervisory completion, new supervisors will be designated as associate supervisor level
Principal and co-supervisor with more than three years' experience of supervision	Not more than seven full-time equivalent HDR students.
Associate Supervisor	Five full-time equivalent HDR students, and not more than seven individual HDR students.

- In special circumstances a supervisory load may be increased following review by the relevant Head of School. The Head of School shall consider the actual load, the Institute workload policies, research disciplinary norms and the supervisor's completion rates of previous students, prior to any determination to approve a higher limit than that stated in clause 1.
- Supervision expectation is one hour per week per student during thesis supervision period.