Higher Degree by Research
Graduate Research Coordination Policy

CONTENTS

1 Objective ............................................................................................................... 2
2 Scope .................................................................................................................. 2
3 Policy Provisions .................................................................................................. 2
3.1 Graduate Research Coordination ...................................................................... 2
3.1.1 Appointment of Graduate Research Coordinators ....................................... 3
3.1.2 Recommended support for Graduate Research Coordinators ....................... 3
3.2 Roles and responsibilities of Graduate Research Coordinators ....................... 4
3.2.1 In relation to prospective Higher Degree by Research Candidates ................ 4
3.2.2 In relation to Scholarships ............................................................................. 4
3.2.3 In relation to enrolled Higher Degree Research Candidates ........................... 5
3.2.4 In relation to Thesis Examination .................................................................. 5
3.2.5 General ......................................................................................................... 6
3.3 Professional Doctorate Course Coordinators ...................................................... 6
3.4 Misconduct ....................................................................................................... 6
3.4.1 Academic Misconduct .................................................................................... 6
3.4.2 Research Misconduct ..................................................................................... 6
3.5 Complaints, grievances and resolving difficulties ............................................. 7
3.5.1 General ......................................................................................................... 7
3.5.2 Prevention of Inappropriate Behaviour, Harassment and Discrimination ....... 7
1 Objective

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Outline the roles and responsibilities of Graduate Research Coordinators in the research training and management of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Candidates enrolled at the University
- Outline good practices that support the highest quality HDR Candidature experience and outcomes and ensure consistency and best practice across the University.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all:

- University staff members appointed or acting in the role of Graduate Research Coordinator
- Executive Deans and Heads of Academic Units of the University.

3 Policy Provisions

3.1 Graduate Research Coordination

The Graduate Research Coordinator (GRC) serves a critical role in the overall experience of higher degree by research (HDR) candidates. The GRC is expected to be an exemplar of graduate research good practice, with advanced knowledge of rules, policies and procedures related to HDR candidature, and experience in HDR supervision. As the central point of contact for research candidates within an academic unit, the University recognises this as a significant role with the following core responsibilities:

- making recommendations to the Dean of Graduate Research on higher degree by research resource and candidature matters
- signing off on candidature milestones and issues pertaining to candidature management and
- providing guidance to and/or mediation between candidates and supervisors on issues related to HDR candidature.

The GRC is normally a senior academic member of staff who is an experienced supervisor of HDR candidates and competent to act as the Head of Academic Unit’s delegate in making academic and administrative decisions across the range of disciplines covered by the Academic Unit.
The GRC advises the Head of Academic Unit on all higher degree research matters and is the Head of Academic Unit’s point of contact with the Graduate Research Office. In addition, the GRC will typically have responsibility for reviewing and advising the Head of Academic Unit (HoAU) on the Academic Unit’s higher degree research profile, formulating Academic Unit higher degree research policy, establishing appropriate procedures for monitoring research candidates’ progress, and advising on facilities and appropriate levels of resources. The GRC will work with the Executive Dean Director and relevant Associate Dean/Director Research (ADDR) to support high-quality research training strategy and objectives for the College.

3.1.1 Appointment of Graduate Research Coordinators

The Head of Academic Unit, in consultation with the College Executive Dean will nominate to the Dean of Graduate Research a person who demonstrates the capacity to undertake the role of Graduate Research Coordinator; normally a senior academic staff member within an Academic Unit (or equivalent) and:

1. is a current supervisor or has been a supervisor within the 2 year period immediately preceding the nomination to be appointed as a GRC.
2. has significant supervisory experience as demonstrated by:
   - the number of candidates successfully supervised to completion and
   - their research performance as measured by University research performance indicators.

The Dean of Graduate Research will appoint the Head of Academic Unit’s nominee where the Dean of Graduate Research is of the view that the nominee has an adequate level of supervisory experience and is otherwise capable of fulfilling the role.

Where a less senior academic is nominated for the position of GRC, the Head of Academic Unit must also nominate a mentor to provide guidance to the GRC.

If the Dean of Graduate Research does not appoint the Head of Academic Unit’s original nominee, the Head of Academic Unit will nominate alternative nominees for the Dean of Graduate Research’s consideration until the Dean of Graduate Research appoints a Graduate Research Coordinator from the Head of Academic Unit nominees.

The Dean of Graduate Research will undertake an annual review of the effectiveness of Graduate Research Coordination and report the outcomes to the Research Degrees Committee. Any recommendations arising from this review will be provided to Heads of Academic Units and Executive Deans.

Where an Academic Unit has more than one GRC, each GRC acts as an alternate for the other. Where an Academic Unit has only one GRC, the Head of Academic Unit must nominate an appropriately qualified member of academic staff to act as an alternate GRC.

3.1.2 Recommended support for Graduate Research Coordinators

The Dean of Graduate Research recommends that:
• the Executive Dean and Head of Academic Unit should consider the workload implications of this appointment in the assignment of teaching and other administrative duties to Graduate Research Coordinators in their College
• Academic Units, in conjunction with the Office of the Dean of Graduate Research and the Graduate Research Office, provide Graduate Research Coordinators with the necessary training required to fulfil the role
• the Head of Academic Unit consider the Graduate Research Coordinator’s role in performance and career development meetings and the Head of Academic Unit accounts for the role of the Graduate Research Coordinator in academic workloads. As a guide to workload allocation decisions, Executive Deans and Heads of Academic Unit should recognise the significant time required to serve as effective GRCs which is generally recognised as between 10-20% depending on the number of HDR candidates.

Graduate Research Coordinators will be supported by Candidature Management Advisors in the relevant Research Hubs.

3.2 Roles and responsibilities of Graduate Research Coordinators

Graduate Research Coordinators are expected to perform a range of tasks in the following broad categories. At all times Graduate Research Coordinators must act in accordance with University Rules, Policies and Procedures relevant to higher degrees by research and the social and emotional wellbeing of Candidates and Supervisors.

3.2.1 In relation to prospective Higher Degree by Research Candidates

• provide advice to Supervisors on the recruitment of high-quality applicants with support and guidance from the College and assist with recruitment activities as required
• provide applicants with advice on eligibility requirements, possible research topics, available resources, Academic Unit research strengths, and supervisor expertise
• make formal recommendations to the Head of Academic Unit on applications for admission, including any special conditions of candidature
• identify possible cross-Academic Unit collaborations with relevant GRCs
• identify potential commercial-in-confidence issues with specific projects and/or funding arrangements and bring these to the attention of supervisory teams, Head of Academic Unit and the Dean of Graduate Research
• Monitor recommendations on the approval of admission of candidates to ensure adherence to policies relating to admission, supervision and provision of resources.

3.2.2 In relation to Scholarships

• Be familiar with the conditions for UTAS Research Scholarships and able to advise scholarship holders about these, or guide candidates to appropriate and up-to-date resources
• Make recommendations to the Head of Academic Unit and Executive Dean on scholarship applications (including justification of academic or sector-based experience)
• Make recommendations to the Dean of Graduate Research on applications for scholarship extension, leave of absence, leave of absence (medical)
• Where required, score scholarship applications (including justification of cases for equivalence) for domestic and international scholarship rounds in consultation with Executive Deans.

3.2.3 In relation to enrolled Higher Degree Research Candidates

• coordinate annual reviews of progress (including confirmation of candidature) in consultation with supervisory teams
• recommend variations to candidature to the Dean of Graduate Research in consultation with the supervisory team and Head of Academic Unit
• identify and manage potential conflicts of interest in supervisory teams
• facilitate the appointment of supervisors with the Head of Academic Unit and Dean of Graduate Research
• monitor progress towards timely completion by all candidates
• be aware of and keep candidates and supervisors informed of applicable University policies, procedures, due dates and other relevant information
• coordinate the dissemination of information about relevant workshops, seminars, scholarships and other opportunities
• coordinate and/or conduct Academic Unit Induction programs for HDR Candidates
• ensure that College guidelines, including space, resources and facilities meet minimum standards in accordance with the Higher Degree by Research Minimum Infrastructure and Resources Policy
• provide pastoral care to candidates; mediate between supervisors and candidates in the first instance and identify situations where more specialist support is warranted
• act as the initial point of contact for the Executive Dean and the Dean of Graduate Research in resolving candidature problems and formal grievances (including those related to academic or research misconduct)
• provide advice to the Head of Academic Unit to assist with assessment of supervisory practices within the Academic Unit and any problems or grievance (including those related to academic or research misconduct) that may arise and may need to be reported to the Dean of Graduate Research.
• Report to the Executive Dean of the College via the Head of Academic Unit any proposed changes to candidature that may impact on the allocation of supervisory and/or project resources.

3.2.4 In relation to Thesis Examination

• coordinate requests for confidentiality agreements in examination, and coordinate nomination of examiners prior to submission
• liaise with supervisors regarding the nomination of examiners and recommend examiners to the Dean of Graduate Research on behalf of the Head of Academic Unit
• when appointed by the Head of Academic Unit as a Chair of Examiners,
  • consult with the supervisor on the examiners' reports and make an appropriate recommendation to the Head of Academic Unit after examination
  • coordinate checking of corrections to the thesis or exegesis as applicable
  • provide advice to the Dean of Graduate Research that the candidate has satisfied the conditions for the award of the degree.
3.2.5 General

- attend and participate in GRC Days, workshops and professional development activities relevant to the GRC role
- liaise with Candidature Management Advisors in the relevant Research Services Hub and
- advise the Head of Academic Unit about supervisory performance within the Academic Unit.

3.3 Professional Doctorate Course Coordinators

Are responsible for the coordination of the coursework component of the Professional Doctorate including

- ensuring appropriate quality and compliance with AQF standards
- preparing course and unit proposals for review and approval by the College Learning and Teaching Committee, Research Degrees Committee and University Research Committee
- oversight and management of the candidate’s coursework study plan and progress.

At all times the Graduate Research Coordinator retains responsibility for monitoring the academic research progression of candidates as per sections 3.1 and 3.2 of this policy.

3.4 Misconduct

The University is committed to upholding its obligations under the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018). The University is also committed to high standards of professional conduct in all activities and holds its commitment and responsibilities to candidates as being of paramount importance. Likewise, it holds expectations about the responsibilities candidates have as they pursue their research training within the special environment the University offers.

3.4.1 Academic Misconduct

The University Guide to Academic Integrity for Students details the expectations of scholarship and defines academic dishonesty. Breaches of academic integrity resulting in allegations of academic misconduct will be investigated according to the procedures in Ordinance No 9 – Student Discipline, section 3.1.

3.4.2 Research Misconduct

The definition of research misconduct and the process for submitting an allegation of research misconduct are detailed in the University’s Managing Allegation of Research Misconduct Procedure. Where the preliminary assessment of an allegation of research misconduct involving:

- an HDR Candidate determines that further investigation is warranted, the investigation will be conducted in accordance with Ordinance 9 – Candidate Discipline
- a supervisor(s) determines that further investigation is warranted, the investigation will be conducted in accordance with the University Staff Agreement.
3.5 Complaints, grievances and resolving difficulties

3.5.1 General

Where possible, candidates should work with their supervisor(s) to resolve difficulties as soon as they arise during their candidature.

Where a Candidate has been unable to resolve a problem(s) with their supervisor(s), they should continue to seek to resolve the problem(s) by working with the following people in the order presented:

1. Graduate Research Coordinator
2. Head of Academic Unit
3. Executive Dean

If a Candidate is still unable to resolve the problem(s) they can make a formal complaint under Ordinance 8 – Student Complaints through the Dean of Graduate Research following the procedure outline on the student complaints website.

3.5.2 Prevention of Inappropriate Behaviour, Harassment and Discrimination

The University is committed to the provision of a working, research and learning environment that is free from harassment and unlawful discrimination, and a culture where all members of the University community are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. The University Behaviour Policy outlines these commitments and expectations. Contact Officers (CO’s) are appointed and trained under this policy to provide a first point of contact for persons wishing to discuss how to have a complaint dealt with in accordance with University policy and procedures. For more information refer to the University Behaviour Policy and Procedure.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 The Dean of Graduate Research is responsible for:

- reviewing and approving nominations received from Heads of Academic Units on the appointment of Graduate Research Coordinators
- providing Graduate Research Coordinators with the necessary training required to fulfil the role in conjunction with the Office of Research Services and
- ensuring the quality of graduate research coordination across the University; and
- maintaining a register of approved Graduate Research Coordinators.

4.2 Executive Deans are responsible for:

- the strategic management of College financial, supervision, and infrastructure resources as per the Academic Structures Policy, Delegations Policy and Schedules.
4.3 Heads of Academic Unit (or equivalent) are responsible to College Executive Deans for:

- the administration of the Academic Unit including planning, budget, strategy, human resources and performance as per the Academic Structures Policy, Delegations Policy and Schedules.

4.4 The Graduate Research Office is responsible for:

- providing advice to Graduate Research Coordinators on any administrative matters relating to higher degree research training at the University.

4.5 Candidature Management Advisors are responsible for:

- providing administrative assistance to the Graduate Research Coordinators
- providing support to the Graduate Research Coordinators and the Associate Dean in developing high-quality research training strategy and objectives for the relevant College
- providing support and first line advice to academic staff, candidates and prospective candidates on all candidate matters including, but not limited to: HDR scholarship application processes, enrolment and academic progress, HDR skilling & support programs, information and offered through the Institution
- liaising with potential candidates who have applied for candidature and
- sourcing all supporting documentation from applicants and acting as the conduit between the applicant and the GRCs in the relevant Academic Unit.

5 Definitions and Acronyms

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<th>Term/Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Unit</td>
<td>The secondary organisational unit in the academic structure of the University, reporting directly to the College Executive Deans, as per Ordinance 14 – Academic Structure.</td>
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<td>Annual Review of Progress</td>
<td>An annual meeting to review a HDR candidate’s academic progression against agreed milestones.</td>
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<td>Candidate</td>
<td>A person enrolled at the University as a candidate for a Degree.</td>
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<td>Candidature</td>
<td>The status conferred on a person who is enrolled as a Candidate under Rule 4.</td>
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<td>Candidature Management Advisors</td>
<td>a designated member of Research Services staff tasked with providing administrative assistance to the Graduate Research Coordinators.</td>
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<td>Chair of Examiners</td>
<td>An academic staff member appointed by the Head of Academic Unit to act as an independent Chair throughout the examination process of a Candidate’s Thesis.</td>
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<td>College</td>
<td>means (a) the primary organisational unit in the academic structure of the University, as per Ordinance 14 – Academic Structure (b) the University College; or</td>
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(c) in relation to courses administered through the Academic Division, College means that Division.

**Dean of Graduate Research** The Dean of Graduate Research is the person who has responsibility for:
- establishing the academic framework for research training at the University; and
- for working with Faculties and Institutes to ensure the University maintains appropriate standards for research training at the University (including admission, appropriate infrastructure, supervision and examination).

**Executive Dean**
- means:
  - (a) the Executive Dean of the relevant College, or
  - (b) in relation to the University College, the Principal of the University College

**Experienced Supervisor** An experienced supervisor is the identified supervisor/s who has at least two years’ supervision experience and who has been on a supervisory team that supervised a candidate to submission of a pass grade thesis within the Maximum Degree Period or acceptable time period based on international standards.

**Graduate Research Coordinator** an academic staff member who oversees Candidature supervision within an Academic Unit in consultation with the Head of Academic Unit.

**Head of Academic Unit** means the head of the relevant Academic Unit

**Supervisory Team** As defined in the HDR Supervision Policy a supervisory team consists of
- a Primary Supervisor;
- at least one co-supervisor; and
- a maximum of four supervisors.

**University** Unless otherwise stated all references to the University mean the University of Tasmania.

6 **Supporting Documentation**
- Authorship of Research Policy
- Authorship of Research Procedure
- Management of Research Data Policy
- Higher Degree by Research Admissions Policy
- Higher Degree by Research Admissions Procedure
- Higher Degree by Research Candidature Policy
- Higher Degree by Research Candidature Procedure
7 Acknowledgements

This policy has been developed with reference to the DDOGs Principles of Graduate Research and the CAPA report on the Research Education Experience.

Candidate policies and procedures from a range of Australian universities were reviewed and related policy documents from the following universities are gratefully acknowledged:

- University of Canberra
- RMIT
- University of Melbourne

8 Versioning

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<tr>
<th>Former Version(s)</th>
<th>Current Version</th>
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<tr>
<td>Version 2 – <em>Higher Degree by Research Graduate Research Coordination Policy</em>, approved January 2015, amended in December 2017 to reflect College structure and nomenclature</td>
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