HDR Supervision and Academic Support Procedure

Contents

Purpose

This procedure documents the University of Tasmania's processes associated with the provision of academic support for HDR candidates including supervision and graduate research coordination, and provides detail on:

    a.   the fundamentals of supervision, supervisor registration and re-registration, and establishing and changing supervisory teams to ensure all HDR candidates receive high quality supervision during candidature, and

    b.   managing candidature, supervisor-candidate relationships and developing the skills needed by the academics involved.

It applies to all higher degree by research (HDR) candidates, registered supervisors or those seeking to be registered, Graduate Research Coordinators (GRC) and heads of academic units (HoAU)

Applicable governance instruments

Instrument	Section	Principles
Research Training Ordinance		
Research Training Policy	1 Admissions and enrolment	1.1
	3 Academic support, resources and intellectual climate	3.1 – 3.2
	4 Candidature progression, development, and completion	4.1 – 4.4
Research Policy	2 Responsible conduct of research	2.1 – 2.2
Compliance Policy	2 Conflict of interest	2.2
People Policy	2 Inclusion, diversity, and equity	2.2
Behaviour Policy	1 Behaviour	1.1
Data and Information Governance Policy	1 Privacy	1.1
Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act (2000) *The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)* *ACGR Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships* *Higher Education Support Act (2003)* *Australian Qualifications Framework* *University of Tasmania Act (1992)*		

Procedure

1. Supervisors

1.1. Supervisors will be responsible for guiding and encouraging a candidate to develop a thesis to a standard consistent with the *Australian Qualifications Framework* and in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance* relevant to the discipline and appropriate for the degree.

1.2. Supervisors will be the primary sources of support and expert guidance to HDR candidates.

1.3. Supervisors and GRCs will be expected to understand and comply with all relevant University delegations, ordinances, policies, procedures, and codes of conduct relating to research, research supervision and candidature management.

1.4. All supervisors will be responsible for guiding candidates conduct in accordance with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and for supporting opportunities for:

a. the production of high-quality research outputs based on the candidates' research

b. professional development, and

c. end-user engagement.

1.5. Supervisors will be responsible for maintaining the quality of supervision at the standard outlined in the *HDR Responsibilities guideline* and are bound by the *University Behaviour Policy*.

1.6. The roles and responsibilities of supervisors and GRCs are set out in *HDR Responsibilities guideline*.

2. Supervisor role types

2.1. A *primary supervisor* is an academic employee of the University, who will be responsible for ensuring a candidate is aware of and understands all academic, administrative, and regulatory requirements they must meet. A primary supervisor will provide leadership to the HDR supervisory team. They will ensure a candidate receives appropriate guidance in their project and support toward successful completion of their thesis and its examination.

2.2. A *co-supervisor* is an academic employee of the University or adjunct or clinical title holder who will work closely with a primary supervisor to support, guide, and advise a candidate in the conduct of their research project drawing on their specific research expertise.

2.3. An *experienced supervisor* is an academic employee of the University or adjunct or clinical title holder who will fulfil a mentoring role to less experienced supervisors on the supervisory team. They will have at least two years supervision experience and have been on a supervisory team that has supervised at least one HDR candidate to submission of a pass grade thesis within the maximum degree period.

2.4. A *research advisor* will provide specialist knowledge and/or expertise to a candidate, although they may not be active in research. A research advisor may be internal or external to the University (such as an industry partner), is not a registered supervisor and is not required to meet the supervisor registration eligibility criteria.

3. Primary supervisor qualifications and other requirements

3.1. As a primary supervisor, a person will be all of the following:

   a. a permanent or contract academic employee of the University whose tenure is reasonably expected to exceed the duration of candidature[1] for all students under their supervision

   b. meet the eligibility conditions specified in the Research Training Ordinance and be an active registered supervisor

   c. have relevant research expertise, be active in research in the same or related discipline as the candidate's project, and have reportable research outputs in the relevant disciplinary area at the time of appointment as supervisor of a candidate, and

   d. be informed and trained on the Australian standards for research integrity, ethics, and safety relevant to their field of research in accordance with the University's Responsible Conduct of Research Framework.

3.2. A supervisor will normally not be permitted to be the primary supervisor for more than the equivalent of seven (7) full-time candidates[2].

3.3. A primary supervisor will not normally be an adjunct or clinical title holder.

3.4. In exceptional circumstances where deemed in the best interest of a candidate, an academic unit may request approval from the Dean for an adjunct or clinical title holder to act as primary supervisor. This request will:

   a. be made in writing by the HoAU, and

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[1] The University is supportive of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) becoming primary supervisors, where their expertise aligns with that of the candidate's research, and that they are appropriate supported with an Experience supervisor. Supervisory team constructs are the remit of the Academic Unit, and it is the Head of Academic Unit that approves those teams, endorsing a contact ECR to be primary supervisor fits within that remit.

[2] Equivalent of seven (7) full-time candidates means, for example, if all primary supervised candidates were at a 50% load, this totals 14 candidates, or if candidates were at a load of 70%, this totals 10 candidates. This calculation does not formally include co-supervisions, however the HoAU should take the full load (primary and co-supervisions) of an academic into account.

b.   include a statement of support and justification.

4.   Supervisor registration and re-registration

4.1.   Academics who seek to supervise HDR candidates must apply to be admitted to the Register of Supervisors (Register) by submitting the Supervisor Registration form.

4.2.   A supervisor registration or re-registration application will be endorsed by the HoAU and approved by the Dean.

4.3.   When determining eligibility to be registered or re-registered as a supervisor the Dean will, in accordance with the Research Training Ordinance, consider:

a.   the nature of the person's association with the University

b.   academic qualifications

c.   research activity, and

d.   supervisory performance (for re-registration).

4.4.   Applications to waive any of the criteria set out in Section 4.3 will be recommended by the HoAU based on evidence of research and supervisory performance and/or capability, and be approved by the Dean.

4.5.   Professional staff and external research advisors who seek to become formal, registered supervisors of HDR candidates will be required to apply for adjunct or clinical title status prior to registering as a supervisor in accordance with the *Adjunct and Clinical Title Holders Procedure*.

4.6.   A supervisor will be registered for a maximum period of five years, at which time registration will lapse.

4.7.   A supervisor with a lapsed registration will need to apply for supervisor re-registration.

4.8.   Where a supervisor with lapsed registration does not re-register within four weeks of registration lapsing, and the supervisor has actively enrolled candidates, the GRC will advise the supervisor to re-register. Where a supervisor does not act on that advice the HoAU will make arrangements to find alternative supervision for affected HDR candidates.

4.9.   The Dean will regularly monitor and review supervision performance.

4.10.   The Dean, on advice from the HoAU, will consider a report of unsatisfactory performance of a supervisor and take action in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance* and *Schedule A: Potential consequences of unsatisfactory supervision performance*.

5.   Supervision workload and load distribution

5.1.   The HoAU will be accountable for the workload allocation for supervision of all candidates enrolled within their academic unit of enrolment.

5.2.   Supervisor load distribution within a supervisory team (totalling 100 percent for each HDR candidate) will be negotiated amongst the supervisory team and endorsed by the HoAU and should reflect percentage contribution to supervision of the HDR candidate.

5.3.   The primary supervisor will have a load of a least 50 percent with the remaining load being split with the other member(s) of the supervisory team.

5.4.   Except where approved by the Dean, no supervisor will have less than 20 percent load share.

6. Allocation of supervisors and conflict of interest considerations

6.1. The HoAU will be responsible for assessing the suitability of and approving an HDR candidate's supervisory team.

6.2. The candidate and primary supervisor will be from the same academic unit of enrolment.

6.3. Where the primary supervisor has not supervised a candidate throughout their candidature to successful completion, the HoAU will ensure that at least one experienced supervisor is included in the team as a co-supervisor to provide mentoring, guidance and support.

6.4. Members of a candidate's academic support structure (ie supervisory team members including Research Advisors and the GRC) will not include anyone that is a spouse, partner, family member or other close associate deemed to have a major actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest that may influence the supervisory practice.

6.5. If a close personal or intimate relationship develops between a staff member and a candidate, it will be declared in accordance with the *Behaviour Policy* and *Conflict of Interest Procedure*. Appropriate management strategies will be required to be put into place to avoid or mitigate the risks of power imbalance or other consequences.

6.6. In accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance* and *Schedule B: Conflicts of Interest in Supervision*, actual, perceived and potential conflicts of interest within and between supervisors and/or the candidate will be:

a. avoided where possible, or

b. declared and managed appropriately, in accordance with the *Conflict of Interest Procedure*.

6.7. Where such actual, perceived or potential conflict exists on a candidate's supervisory team:

a. a supervisor who is free of any conflict of interest will be a part of the supervisory team

b. the proposed supervisory team, in consultation with the candidate and GRC, will complete the University Conflict of Interest Declaration Form and a Supervision Conflict of Interest Management Action Plan, and

c. supervision by a supervisor who has declared a conflict of interest will only continue where the candidate has agreed to the supervision arrangements and the terms of the Supervision Conflict of Interest Management Action Plan.

6.8. When approving an HDR candidate's supervisory team, the HoAU will ensure that:

a. each member of the proposed supervisory team:

   i. is registered as supervisor

   ii. has a workload and terms of employment that allow them to supervise HDR candidates, and

   iii. has no candidates' overtime, unless with good cause[3], and

b. the HDR candidate's supervisory team will:

   i. meet the eligibility criteria in accordance with the Research Training Ordinance

   ii. be willing to supervise the candidate

   iii. have sufficient and relevant experience in the candidate's research topic, and

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[3] 'with good cause' – i.e. you do not want to penalise supervisors who have taken on complex candidatures, you do however want to ensure the supervisors who are not adequately monitoring candidates do not take any further on until they are resolved.

iv. not have a conflict, or if so, declare and complete a Conflict of Interest Declaration form and put in place an action plan to manage any conflict of interest, as set out in Section 6.4 and 6.5 of this procedure.

6.9. Allocation of a candidate's supervisory team will be finalised before an offer of admission can be made.

6.10. If, between offer and commencement, a primary supervisor is no longer available to supervisor a HDR candidate, the academic unit will ensure suitable arrangements for ongoing supervision are in place and that they are agreed to by the applicant before they commences.

6.11. where a new supervision arrangement is agreed to, a new letter of offer will be issued in accordance with the *HDR Admissions, Selection & Enrolment Procedure*.

6.12. where the academic unit is unable to provide suitable supervision arrangements, the letter of offer may be withdrawn in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance*.

7. Changes to the supervision team

7.1. A candidate may request a change to their supervision arrangements, by submitting the [Change Supervisory Team](#) form.

7.2. To support continuity of supervision through the Confirmation of Candidature milestone, a request to change supervisory arrangements in the three months prior to, and during the Confirmation of Candidature period will not normally be approved.

7.3. The HoAU, on advice from the GRC, may instruct GRO to action a change in supervision arrangements in cases where:

a. poor performance or concerns regarding staff conduct are identified

b. after attempts to resolve difficulties have been exhausted and there is an irrevocable breakdown in a candidate-supervisor relationship

c. a supervisory team of a candidate is no longer fit-for-purpose

d. a supervisor ceases their employment with the University before the candidate completes their HDR degree

e. a primary supervisor is unavailable for two or more consecutive months and a temporary primary supervisor is required to ensure ongoing management of candidature, or

f. a supervisor has been removed from the Register by the Dean.

7.4. A change in primary supervisor may be permanent or temporary.

7.5. An application to change the supervisory team arrangements will be required to be endorsed by the new primary supervisor, GRC, and HoAU.

7.6. Where supervisors from multiple academic units of enrolment are nominated, the HoAU for each nominated supervisor will provide their endorsement before the change is made.

7.7. If a permanent change in a supervision team results in a new primary supervisor being appointed from a different academic unit of enrolment, a candidate's enrolment will be transferred to that academic unit as set out in the *HDR Candidature Management and Enrolment Variation Procedure*.

8. Planning and management of candidature

8.1. The responsibilities and expectations of each supervisor, and the team collectively, will be discussed and established with the candidate as early as possible in candidature, with reference to the *HDR Responsibilities Guideline*.

8.2. A primary supervisor, or co-supervisor/s, if they are absent, will meet with the candidate regularly (physically or electronically) and document the meetings.

8.3. Where a supervisor has not been able to contact a candidate for more than two weeks following a scheduled meeting, they will advise the GRC, who will attempt to contact the candidate. If after a further week, the GRC has not been able to contact the candidate they will advise the HoAU and GRO. GRO will then advise the candidate that their enrolment is at risk of cancellation in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance*.

8.4. A primary supervisor will ensure the candidate is aware of and understands the compulsory requirements of candidature and when they must be completed including:

    a. the Candidate Induction module

    b. research integrity and ethics module

    c. work health and safety module

    d. human/animal ethics training (where relevant)

    e. the research plan

    f. relevant coursework

    g. confirmation of candidature, and

    h. the annual reviews of progress.

8.5. Supervisors will give advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of work and will monitor tangible evidence of a candidate's progress against agreed project milestones, so that the thesis may be submitted within the maximum degree period, consistent with the *HDR Academic Progress Procedure*.

8.6. Supervisors will ensure that candidates have received appropriate training in safe working practices relevant to the field of research and that they adhere to the relevant guidelines established by the University.

9. Managing candidature research integrity

9.1. Supervisors will ensure candidates are aware of the [research](#) and [academic](#) integrity requirements of the University and assist candidates to understand the application of those requirements to their research.

9.2. Supervisors will be responsible for providing candidates with guidance in all matters relating to responsible research conduct in accordance with the *Research Policy*, the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and the *HDR Responsibilities guideline*.

9.3. Supervisors will inform themselves of the risks involved in their candidate's research and assist candidates to carry out appropriate risk assessments as required by law or University ordinance, policy, and procedure.

10. Graduate Research Coordinators

10.1.   Graduate Research Coordinators (GRC) will be appointed in each academic unit in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance*.

10.2.   A GRC will have advanced knowledge of University delegations, ordinances, policies, procedures, and codes of conduct relating to research, research supervision and candidature management.

10.3.   The roles and responsibilities of GRCs are set out in the *HDR Responsibilities guideline*.

10.4.   The nomination of a GRC will be made using the GRC Nomination form, and endorsed by the HoAU.

10.5.   The Dean will appoint the HoAU nominee where the conditions are met in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance* and they are of the view the nominee is otherwise capable of fulfilling the role.

10.6.   If the Dean does not appoint the HoAU nominee, the HoAU will nominate another suitably qualified academic in accordance with *Research Training Ordinance*.

10.7.   Where an academic unit has more than one GRC, each GRC will act as an alternate for the other.

10.8.   Where an academic unit has only one GRC, the HoAU will nominate an appropriately qualified member of academic staff to act as an alternate GRC.

11. Pastoral care, managing conflict and resolving difficulties

11.1.   Supervisors will provide broad pastoral care and support to manage conflicts and resolve difficulties in accordance with the *HDR Responsibilities guideline*.

11.2.   Where possible, candidates should work with their primary supervisor to resolve issues of concern as soon as they arise during their candidature.

11.3.   Candidates may also take advice and seek support from the Postgraduate Advocate of the Tasmania University Student Association and the Safe and Fair Community Unit. Student support resource contact details and information is available from the Safety, Health and Wellbeing website.

11.4.   An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidate may access advice and support from the Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor of Aboriginal Leadership for any matters concerning their candidature.

11.5.   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 in the order presented:

   a.   GRC

   b.   HoAU

   c.   Associate Dean Research.

11.6.   If a candidate is still unable to resolve the issues of concern, they may make a formal complaint through the Safe and Fair Community Unit portal.

12. Professional development activities for supervisors and GRCs

12.1.   A person new to supervision will complete a supervision training program within 12 months of their entry on the Register.

12.2.   Registered supervisors will participate in at least one supervision professional development opportunity per annum.

12.3.   Registered supervisors who are not employees of the University are encouraged to participate in professional development activities offered at the University.

Related procedures

HDR Admissions & Enrolment Procedure

HDR Candidature Management & Enrolment Variation Procedure

HDR Academic Progress Procedure

Adjunct and Clinical Title Holders Procedure

Conflict of Interest Procedure

University Behaviour Procedure

Research ethics Procedure

Authorship of research Procedure

Management of research data Procedure

Open access Procedure

Managing allegations of research misconduct Procedure

Versions

Version	Action	Approval Authority	Responsible Officer/s	Approval Date
1	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Dean of Graduate Research	1 Dec 2020

Definitions

Candidate Management Advisor | overtime

Schedule A: Potential consequences of unsatisfactory supervision performance

Unsatisfactory performance indicators	Potential consequence
Supervisor has had a number of candidates request transfer to another supervisor and the subsequent investigation confirms issues with supervision practice that must be resolved	May be required to undertake profession development in supervision practice, May have load capped, or May be removed from the register
Supervisor has had a number of candidate withdrawals to completions and the subsequent investigation confirms issues with supervision practice that must be resolved	May be required to undertake profession development in supervision practice, May have load capped, or May be removed from the register
Supervisor has had a number of candidates who are regularly overtime in a way which demonstrates lack of effective progress monitoring and the subsequent investigation confirms issues with supervision practice that must be resolved	May be required to undertake profession development in supervision practice, May have load capped, or May be removed from the register
Supervisor has been identified as ineligible to supervise due to not meeting one or more of the eligibility criteria	May be removed from the register
Supervisor has been found in serious breach of research misconduct	May be removed from the register
Supervisor has been found guilty of staff misconduct	May be removed from the register

Schedule B: Conflicts of interest in supervision

A. Conflict of interest with the candidate

Category of Conflict	Type of Conflict	Level of Conflict
Working relationship	• Supervisor has employed the candidate or been employed by the candidate within the last five years	Minor
	• Supervisor is the direct line manager of the candidate (or vice versa)	Major
	• Supervisor is in negotiation to directly employ or be employed by the candidate	Major
Personal relationship	• Supervisor is a relative of the candidate	Major
	• Supervisor is a friend / associate / mentor of the candidate	Minor
	• Supervisor and the candidate have an existing or previous emotional relationship of de facto, are co-residents or are members of a common household	Major
Legal relationship	• Supervisor is or was married to the candidate	Major
	• Supervisor is legally family to the candidate (eg a stepfather, sister-in-law etc)	Major
	• Supervisor is either a legal guardian or dependent of the candidate or has power of attorney for the candidate	Major
Business, professional and/or social relationship	• Supervisor is currently in or has had a business relationship with the candidate in the last five years (eg a partner in a small business)	Major
	• Supervisor is in a social relationship with the candidate, such as co-Trustees of a Will or godparent	Major
	• Supervisor has a current professional relationship with the candidate, such as shared membership of a Board or Committee (including editorial and grant decision boards) with the candidate	Minor

B.   Conflict of interest with another supervisory team member (including Research Advisors)

Category of Conflict	Type of Conflict	Level of Conflict
Working relationship	• Supervisor A was a candidate of Supervisor B within the past five years (or vice versa)	Minor
	• Supervisor A has directly employed or was employed by Supervisor B in the past five years	Minor
Personal relationship	• Supervisor A is a relative of Supervisor B	Major
	• Supervisor A and Supervisor B have an existing or previous emotional relationship of de facto, are co-residents or are members of a common household	Major
Legal relationship	• Supervisor A is or was married to Supervisor B	Major
	• Supervisor A is legally family to Supervisor B (eg a stepfather, sister-in-law etc)	Major
	• Supervisor A is either a legal guardian or dependent of the supervisor or has power of attorney for Supervisor B	Major
Business, professional and/or social relationship	• Supervisor A is currently in or has had a business relationship with Supervisor B in the last five years (eg a partner in a small business)	Major

C.   Conflict of interest with the Graduate Research Coordinator

Category of Conflict	Type of Conflict	Level of Conflict
Working relationship	• GRC is also a Supervisor of the candidate	Major
	• GRC is the direct line manager of the candidate (or vice versa)	Major
Personal relationship	• GRC is a relative of the candidate or the supervisor	Major
	• GRC and the candidate or supervisor have an existing or previous emotional relationship of de facto, are co-residents or are members of a common household	Major
Legal relationship	• GRC is or was married to the candidate or supervisor	Major
	• GRC is legally family to the candidate or supervisor (eg a stepfather, sister-in-law etc)	Major
	• GRC is either a legal guardian or dependent of the candidate or supervisor or has power of attorney for the candidate or supervisor	Major
Business, professional and/or social relationship	• GRC is currently in or has had a business relationship with the candidate or supervisor in the last five years (eg a partner in a small business)	Major
	• GRC is in a social relationship with the candidate or supervisor, such as co-Trustees of a Will or godparent	Major