Schedule B: Code of Good Practice in HDR Supervision

## CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE IN HDR SUPERVISION

### Introduction

Supervision of candidates for higher degrees by research (HDR) is a complex teaching task. Like all teaching tasks, supervision can be approached in a variety of ways depending on the personalities of the supervisor and the candidate, and on the nature of the discipline. Nevertheless, there are common principles and responsibilities that apply to good supervision practice.

The University policy of non-discriminatory practice applies to all facets of supervision of HDR.

The degree is awarded for a substantial original contribution at the best contemporary international standard as judged by disinterested experts. The role of the supervisor is to guide the candidate through the process of making this contribution. Supervision involves providing advice and instruction, assistance, a sounding board for ideas and plans, and review and criticism of written material—all in a way which is consistent with the original contribution being made by the candidate rather than the supervisor.

Supervision is a shared experience in which both the supervisor and the candidate have an intellectual investment. Supervisors must have the theoretical and practical expertise to offer the candidate proper supervision, an interest in the research project, and adequate time for supervision.

Supervision also involves concern and a measure of pastoral care for the candidate. In the best cases, the relationship between the supervisor and the candidate develops during the candidature from one of teacher and student at the outset to one between research colleagues at the end.

This Code of Good Practice in Supervision of Higher Degrees by Research describes the standard of conduct and performance required of all those involved in supervision of higher degree research candidates.

### Responsibilities of the Research and Research Training Committee

The Research and Research Training Committee (RRTC) approves supervision arrangements on the advice of the Head of the Academic Unit in which a candidate is enrolled. The RRTC seeks assurance that those nominated can provide proper supervision by virtue of their qualifications and experience, their research interests and their personal qualities.

The RRTC must also seek assurance that those involved in the supervision together have sufficient time for supervision. The RRTC must be satisfied that continuity in supervision can be maintained for the duration of candidature regardless of staff leave and other absences from the University.

When associate or external supervisors are recommended, the RRTC must be satisfied that their agreement has been sought to conform to the Higher Degrees by Research operational policy and related procedures, as well as this Code of Good Practice in Supervision of Higher Degrees by Research and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

The RRTC is responsible for encouraging good supervision practices, for monitoring the supervision of candidates across the University, and for taking action as appropriate to ensure that high-quality supervision is achieved in each case.

### Responsibilities of the Dean of Research Training

The Dean of Research Training will provide training and professional development opportunities for current and prospective supervisors of HDR candidates.

The Dean of Research Training is available to all higher degree research candidates and their supervisors for discussions or advice on HDR matters.

## Schedule B: Code of Good Practice in HDR Supervision

### Responsibilities of Pro Vice-Chancellors

The Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty is responsible for academic leadership and general administration of the Faculty, including the coordination of research and research training and provision of leadership in these activities.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor is responsible for the observance of this code within the Faculty and for the provision of high quality supervision by staff members.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor may delegate authority to act in his or her place in higher degree by research matters.

### Responsibilities of Heads of Academic Units

The Head of Academic Unit is responsible for the management of all HDR candidates within the School and for monitoring supervisory arrangements for those candidates. He or she must be thoroughly familiar with the Higher Degrees by Research operational policy and related procedures, as well as this Code of Good Practice in Supervision of HDR, the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and the Student Charter.

The Head of Academic Unit is responsible for the observance of this code within the School and must ensure that appropriate mechanisms exist to facilitate high-quality supervision, including on-going support and training for supervisors. A Head of Academic Unit may appoint a school postgraduate committee or HDR coordinator to assist and advise on supervision, progress and pastoral care of candidates.

The Head of Academic Unit must consult with appropriate members of the School before providing advice to the RRTC.

The Head of Academic Unit must ensure that supervisors are fully aware of the HDR policy and related procedures, as well as this Code of Good Practice in Supervision of HDR, the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, and the Student Charter.

### Prospective candidates

The Head of Academic Unit must ensure that prospective candidates are advised on all matters relevant to higher degree research candidature in the school, including the range of research expertise of academic staff, the availability of resources and facilities, and requirements such as approval where necessary by an ethics committee. The candidates should also be advised of limitations to resources available for the research programs. The Head of Academic Unit should clearly articulate the school's expectations, practices and standards with respect to supervised research, including the need for the candidate's commitment to intensive work and the time-frame for completion of the degree. Conditions of scholarships and awards should be discussed.

Before recommending admission to candidature, the Head of Academic Unit must be satisfied that each prospective candidate is adequately prepared for candidature, and should identify any additional requirements such as coursework. These requirements should be discussed with the prospective candidate.

When recommending a research project in an application for candidature, the Head of Academic Unit must certify that it is appropriate for the school in terms of the resources and facilities required, the expertise available for supervision, and the suitability of the project for the degree sought.

In the application for candidature, the Head of Academic Unit must nominate a member of the staff of the University to be the principal supervisor or executive supervisor. The Head of Academic Unit will arrange a supervision team that may include a co-supervisor, associate supervisor and/or external supervisor to provide additional expertise or assistance with supervision. Iin some cases inclusion of a research adviser will be appropriate. When recommending supervision arrangements, the Head of Academic Unit must be satisfied

that those nominated can provide proper supervision by virtue of their qualifications and experience, their research interests, their personal qualities, their workload and other responsibilities.

New candidates

The Head of Academic Unit must provide appropriate induction for new candidates. This should include a guide to the nature of research in the particular field, a description of the facilities available in the school and elsewhere in the University (including library services, computing facilities, Deakin Research and student support services), and the school program of seminars. The resources and facilities available for the project should be discussed, and the procedures to be followed in accessing or utilising them should be explained.

a) The nature and process of supervised research in the discipline should be discussed, and the role of the supervisor explained

b) There should be written information on the characteristic stages towards completion of theses in the field, and typical examples of time-frames

c) The responsibilities and rights of the candidate should be discussed

d) The Head of Academic Unit should ensure that:

   i) each candidate is advised of relevant administrative structures and committees of the University and their roles in relation to the candidate

   ii) each candidate is provided with written documentation setting out any formal requirements of the school and faculty, guidelines concerning ethics in research, and safety procedures, as appropriate to the discipline

   iii) each candidate is informed about general practice regarding authorship of publications within the discipline

   iv) copies of the Code of Good Practice in Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research are available to each candidate.

e) The Head of Academic Unit should ensure that each new candidate is informed of the complaint procedures under which he or she may make representation if significant difficulties arise

f) The Head of Academic Unit should outline opportunities for a candidate to participate in marking, tutoring or demonstrating in the school, and the remuneration that would result. Any restrictions which apply to the hours or the nature of such paid employment should be discussed, together with the advantages and disadvantages of taking part.

The Head of Academic Unit should be familiar with any special conditions which apply to a candidate, such as restrictions on disclosure of research outcomes associated with sponsorship of the candidature or the research project. The Head must ensure that the Executive Officer HDR and the principal or executive supervisor are fully informed of special conditions, and must ensure that the conditions are met.

During candidature

It is the responsibility of the Head of Academic Unit to ensure that adequate space, facilities and resources, including specialist library resources, are available for the candidate and the project. Appropriate and equitable access to facilities and resources must be provided for all candidates.

The Head of Academic Unit should encourage candidates to become an integral part of the School and the discipline, and to participate in research seminars and develop their skills at presenting their work.

The Head of Academic Unit should create an environment which encourages high standards in the conduct of research, and where matters of research integrity and ethical conduct in research are discussed and adhered to.

## Schedule B: Code of Good Practice in HDR Supervision

The Head of Academic Unit must ensure that proper supervision can be maintained until the end of candidature. If a principal to executive supervisor takes study leave or is out of contact with the school for more than six weeks, formal arrangements for supervision replacement must be made. Any proposed changes in supervision arrangements should be discussed with the candidate. The new supervision arrangements must be acceptable to the candidate, the School, the Faculty and the RRTC.

The Head of Academic Unit, in consultation with advisers and supervisors, should monitor progress of all candidates in the School. It is the responsibility of the Head of Academic Unit to ensure that the report of the annual review of progress of each candidate is returned to the Executive Officer HDR by the due date.

### Resolving difficulties

The Head of Academic Unit must make every effort to resolve any difficulties arising during candidature. If necessary the Pro Vice-Chancellor or senior staff of the faculty, the Dean of Research Training, or the Chair of the RRTC should be approached for assistance in resolution of a problem. If resolution is not achieved, the Head of Academic Unit must arrange for a written submission to be made to the RRTC for formal consideration.

If the supervisory relationship breaks down, the Head of Academic Unit must recommend other arrangements which are satisfactory to the candidate and the RRTC.

### Responsibilities of supervisors

#### General

Some responsibilities described in this section apply to the principal supervisor or executive supervisor. When the term “supervisor” is used on its own, it applies to all members of the supervisory team including co-supervisors, associate supervisors, external supervisors and research advisers.

Each supervisor should be thoroughly familiar with the HDR policy and related procedures, as well as this Code of Good Practice in Supervision of HDR, the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and the Student Charter.

The supervisors should provide guidance in all matters relating to good research practice.

Each supervisor must be sensitive to any special needs of individual candidates and provide appropriate support and advice.

The principal supervisor or executive supervisor is responsible for the supervision process in all cases.

#### Prospective candidates

The principal supervisor or executive supervisor should be acquainted with the candidate's academic background and should inform the candidate and the Head of Academic Unit at an early stage if coursework or other studies are necessary.

#### New candidates

The principal or executive supervisor should advise the candidate on the tasks, processes and standards expected in higher degree research projects in the particular field. This is a useful framework for helping the candidate develop and refine a topic which can be researched and written up within the required time-frame. The principal or executive supervisor should ensure that the candidate has been advised of relevant aspects of University regulations, policy and procedure, and other information as appropriate.

The principal supervisor or executive supervisor should be aware of University policies on intellectual property. At the beginning of the candidature, the principal or executive supervisor should discuss arrangements regarding intellectual property including patents and authorship of any publications arising from the

candidate's work. The principal or executive supervisor should ensure that the candidate is informed of any special conditions, such as restrictions on disclosure of research outcomes associated with sponsorship of the candidature or the research project.

Supervisors should encourage the candidate to participate in appropriate support networks and to establish professional linkages.

Supervisors should provide advice on publication of work arising from the research project.

**Planning the research**

Once the research topic is refined to the satisfaction of the candidate and the principal supervisor or executive supervisor, this supervisor should assist the candidate to formulate a framework for the research, with intermediate objectives and time estimates for completion of various phases. Having such a framework, which may be modified as the research proceeds, gives a sense of focus, helps the candidate and supervisors to check progress, and is often a useful early orientation to writing the thesis. The framework should be used to guide the candidate, but should not constrain the development of the research.

It is the principal or executive supervisor's responsibility to obtain approval from the appropriate ethics committee for any project involving human or animal subjects before the project commences. Where possible the candidate should assist in the preparation of the application.

The principal or executive supervisor must advise the candidate on their rights and responsibilities in accessing and using facilities and resources available in the school. The resources and facilities available to the project should be discussed in detail.

**During candidature**

The principal supervisor or executive supervisor should ensure that discussions with the candidate are held at appropriate and frequent intervals throughout the candidature. The principal or executive supervisor should establish a pattern for these meetings at an early stage in the candidature, explain their purpose and structure them in a way which encourages the exchange of ideas.

Supervisors should ensure that a high standard of ethical conduct and integrity is maintained in the project and ensure, as far as possible, the validity of data obtained by the candidate.

The candidate must observe the requirements for the conduct of the research including safety, ethical, and confidentiality issues. The principal or executive supervisor should monitor compliance with these requirements, the Code of Good Practice in Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

The principal or executive supervisor should work with the candidate to complete a formal candidature agreement within three months of commencement.

Supervisors are expected to read any written work thoroughly in advance of meetings, and to provide regular feedback on the candidate's work. However a supervisor is not obliged to read an excessive number of drafts of the same document. Any criticism should be given in a constructive, supportive and sensitive fashion.

Supervisors should inform the candidate as soon as possible of any expected absences, and discuss alternative arrangements to be made for supervision during absences.

The supervisory team should arrange regular reviews of the project (at least once a year) so that the candidate's work can be assessed within the overall context of the research program, the standard expected and the time-frame for completion. Supervisors and candidates should then be in a position to report on progress when required and to judge when some intervention or additional support may be desirable. Supervisors should provide guidance in developing solutions to problems as they are identified.

Schedule B: Code of Good Practice in HDR Supervision

**The annual review**

It is the responsibility of the principal supervisor or executive supervisor to discuss the report on the candidate's progress with the candidate. Where applicable the report should include a statement of coursework and other requirements completed.

**The thesis**

The principal or executive supervisor should explain the procedures for the online submission and examination of the thesis to the candidate, including the requirement for an abstract eight weeks before submission. Attention should be drawn to the *Higher Degrees by Research Assessment procedure* and the *Higher Degrees by Research website*, under which the candidate may request that specified people be not appointed as examiners.

The supervisory team should discuss the choice of possible thesis examiners with the candidate. The principal supervisor or executive supervisor is responsible for contacting potential examiners and nominating them, through the Head of Academic Unit to the RRTC, according to the process set out in the HDR Assessment procedure.

The principal or executive supervisor should provide guidance on the content and length of the thesis before the candidate embarks on writing it. He or she should comment critically on content and length of the completed thesis before it is submitted for examination. The need for care in proof-reading the thesis should be impressed on the candidate.

In the case of candidates who are presenting a body of published work for a research degree the supervisors should advise on the integration of the material into a coherent thesis encapsulating the collected work.

**Resolving difficulties**

Supervisors should consider candidates' personal needs. Progress may be impeded by personal issues, to which supervisors should be sympathetic. Where appropriate, candidates should be directed to support services within the University and advised on procedures for applying for intermission.

If the supervisory relationship breaks down, the principal or executive supervisor must advise the Head of Academic Unit or HDR Coordinator.