



Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) Supervision procedure

Section 1 - PREAMBLE

(1) This Procedure is effective from 29 April 2019.

Section 2 - PURPOSE

(2) This Procedure outlines the processes involved for Academic staff in the supervision of students for higher degrees by research (HDR) awards.

Section 3 - SCOPE

(3) This Procedure applies to students for HDR, their supervisors (including associates of the University), faculties, institutes and University administrators. It does not apply to degrees by coursework or higher doctoral degrees.

Section 4 - POLICY

(4) This Procedure is pursuant to the [Higher Degrees by Research \(HDR\) policy](#).

Section 5 - PROCEDURE

Supervisors

(5) Heads of Academic Units will ensure that supervisors are suitably qualified to supervise HDR students in accordance with clauses 41-49 and are registered with the Graduate Research Academy.

(6) Only members of Deakin Academic staff or approved co-supervisors or external supervisors who are registered as supervisors may supervise HDR students. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Researcher Development may remove a member of Academic staff from a supervision team where they are not registered.

(7) Heads of Academic Units will ensure that all supervisors have the workload capacity to take on the role, and will not exceed the supervision load limits specified in clauses 35-39.

(8) The Head of Academic Unit will ensure that a team of at least two suitably qualified supervisors is established and maintained for all HDR students. Supervision teams will include either a principal or an executive supervisor, and have one of the following compositions:

- a. Principal supervisor plus at least one associate supervisor. One or more external supervisors may also be included but not as a principal supervisor.
- b. Two co-supervisors, one of whom will be the executive supervisor, plus one or more associate supervisors and

possibly external supervisors. Where one co-supervisor is external to Deakin, an associate supervisor must be included in the team.

(9) All relevant supervisors must complete ongoing professional development activities as described in clauses 41-49.

(10) Where a principal, executive or co-supervisor has not supervised a student throughout their candidature to successful completion, the Head of Academic Unit will ensure that at least one supervisor who has supervised a student to completion is included in the team.

(11) The Faculty Executive Dean or Pro Vice-Chancellor Researcher Development or their nominee will approve the supervision arrangements for each student.

(12) If the Head of Academic Unit is proposed as either a principal, executive or co-supervisor, their line manager or the line manager's nominee will take over the responsibilities normally allocated to the Head of Academic Unit in matters concerning HDR candidature, supervision and examination.

Supervisor team management

(13) The principal or executive supervisor will ensure that each supervisor on the team is involved in a substantive way in the student's program from the commencement of that supervisor's appointment.

(14) Where a student is enrolled in a joint degree or course involving an HDR partnership, the principal or executive supervisor will assure themselves of the quality of the student's supervision where the student is located with the partner organisation.

(15) The responsibilities of each of the supervisors, and the team as a whole, in the research will be established with the student.

Planning and management of candidature

(16) Principal or executive supervisors (or associate supervisor/s if they are absent) will meet with the student at least once a month (physically or electronically) and document the meetings.

(17) Supervisors will engage with students to ensure that they have met the compulsory requirements of candidature including:

- a. the Candidate Engagement form
- b. academic and research integrity training
- c. research ethics training (where relevant)
- d. safety training (where relevant)
- e. the Individual Learning Plan
- f. confirmation of candidature
- g. the annual reviews.

(18) Supervisors will give detailed advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of work, so that the thesis may be submitted on time.

(19) Supervisors will ensure that students 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.

(20) Supervisors will advise the student on, and monitor, productive use of the student's time.

(21) Supervisors will ensure students provide them with written work on a pre-arranged, regular and agreed basis and

will return such work with constructive criticism within one month or less as appropriate.

Managing student research integrity

(22) Supervisors are responsible for ensuring students are aware of the research integrity requirements of Deakin's [Research Conduct policy](#) and associated procedures, including but not limited to the [Research Authorship procedure](#), [Publication and Dissemination of Research procedure](#), [Research Data Management procedure](#), and the reporting and management of research integrity breaches.

(23) Supervisors are responsible for providing students with guidance in all matters relating to responsible research conduct and overseeing all stages of the research process, including:

- a. identifying the research objectives and approach
- b. obtaining ethics and other approvals prior to the commencement of research and ensuring that all conditions of any approvals are adhered to during the course of the research
- c. ensuring that research methods and outcomes are appropriate and valid
- d. obtaining funding if applicable
- e. conducting the research
- f. reporting the research outcomes in appropriate forums and media.

(24) Supervisors will inform themselves of the risks involved in their student's research and carry out appropriate risk assessments as required by law or University policy.

(25) Supervisors are responsible for all aspects of safety under their control, including supporting and encouraging a safe learning and work culture for their students according to the [Health, Wellbeing and Safety policy](#).

Monitoring student progress and research

(26) Supervisors will monitor tangible evidence of progress from the student according to a pre-arranged and agreed schedule.

(27) Where a supervisor has not been able to contact a student for more than two weeks following a scheduled meeting, they will advise the HDR Coordinator.

(28) Principal or executive supervisors, supported by the supervision team, will:

- a. establish agreed timelines and milestones by which to measure performance
- b. read any written work thoroughly in advance of meetings. A supervisor is not obliged to read an excessive number of drafts of the same document
- c. comment critically, constructively, sensitively and within a month on the work forwarded by the student and monitor the student's performance relative to the standard required for the degree
- d. monitor the student's presentation of their research to ensure it is appropriate and that safeguards are used to avoid breaches of academic or research integrity, including plagiarism
- e. discuss the progress of the student's work, and any impediments to maintaining the agreed schedule, with the student at regular intervals
- f. ensure the student is promptly made aware of inadequate progress or insufficient work by providing detailed written feedback that identifies problems. Notes should be kept of such discussions and actions taken
- g. provide open, honest and constructive comment in the six-monthly and annual progress reviews.

(29) Supervisors will oversee:

- a. the student's work to ensure that the design of research and the processes of acquiring, recording, storing, examining and interpreting data and preparing material for publication have been undertaken properly by the student
- b. the student's development as evidenced through the progression and completion of their Individual Learning Plan and all other aspects of their candidature.

Managing conflict

(30) The supervision team will immediately address any conflict that arises between supervisors and the student on an informal basis.

(31) Where conflict between the supervisor and student cannot be resolved, the supervisor will seek assistance:

- a. first from the HDR Coordinator (or their line manager if the supervisor is the HDR Coordinator)
- b. if the HDR Coordinator cannot resolve the matter then they will refer the matter to the Head of Academic Unit (or their line manager or the line manager's nominee if the supervisor is the Head of Academic Unit). The Head of Academic Unit or line manager may arrange independent mediation if required.

Changes to the supervision team

(32) The Head of Academic Unit or nominee may recommend the addition or removal of members of the supervision team at any stage of candidature. Proposed changes must be discussed with the student, agreed to by the new appointee and approved by the Faculty Executive Dean or Pro Vice-Chancellor Researcher Development or their nominee. Changes must be made according to the processes stipulated by the Graduate Research Academy.

(33) The Head of Academic Unit or nominee can recommend the removal of a person from the supervision team if that person does not meet the requirements of the [Higher Degrees by Research \(HDR\) policy](#) or this Procedure.

(34) If the principal or executive supervisor is unavailable for more than six weeks, the Head of Academic Unit or nominee must appoint a replacement, either temporarily or permanently, according to the circumstances.

(35) Normally the student is enrolled by the Graduate Research Academy in the Academic Unit of which the principal or executive supervisor is a member. If a change in the supervision team results in a new principal or executive supervisor being appointed from a different Academic Unit the student's enrolment will normally be transferred to that Unit.

(36) Where a supervisor is removed from the supervision team and the HDR student has only one supervisor, an appropriate second supervisor must be appointed. The matter will be escalated to the Head of Academic Unit, or their line manager if the omission of a second supervisor is not rectified within one month.

Supervision load limits

(37) Principal, executive and co-supervisors will be limited to a supervisory load not exceeding seven full-time equivalent HDR students, and not more than ten individual HDR students.

(38) Co-supervisors (including executive supervisors) share the supervision load between them and count 50 per cent toward the supervision load limits specified above. Workload recognition and recognition of successful completions are also shared.

(39) A principal supervisor who has not yet acted in the role of principal, executive or co-supervisor of a student who has successfully completed their HDR will be limited to a supervisory load not exceeding three full-time equivalent HDR students, and not more than five individual HDR students.

(40) In addition to the above limits, an associate supervisor will be limited to six full-time equivalent HDR students, and not more than ten individual HDR students.

Qualifications and other requirements

(41) To be a principal or executive supervisor of an HDR student, a person must meet all of the following conditions:

- a. be a member of Deakin University academic staff whose tenure is reasonably expected to exceed the duration of candidature for all students under their supervision.
 - i. Honorary or adjunct staff may not be principal or executive supervisors.
 - ii. Deakin conjoint and emeritus staff may be principal or executive supervisors provided they meet all the relevant conditions.
- b. be recognised by the Graduate Research Academy as eligible to supervise HDR students through the University's supervisor certification process.
- c. hold a doctorate or have equivalent research experience and outputs as determined by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Researcher Development with reference to the [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#).
- d. have relevant research expertise and be active in research in the same or related discipline as the student's project and have reportable research outputs in the relevant disciplinary area at the time of appointment as supervisor of a student.
- e. have HDR supervision experience, either as:
 - i. a member of the supervision team of a student who has successfully completed a higher degree by research at the same level, whether at Deakin or elsewhere; or
 - ii. a participant in a number of HDR supervision activities meeting the criteria of the supervisor Fast-track program that is described below.
- f. have participated in at least one HDR supervision professional development activity in the past three years as well as have completed approved or equivalent training in resilience and maintaining mental health. Appropriate activities are listed in clause 47.
- g. not be an HDR student.
- h. not exceed the supervision load limits specified in the [Higher Degrees by Research \(HDR\) Supervision procedure](#).
- i. be informed and trained on the Australian standards for research integrity and safety relevant to their field of research.

(42) A co-supervisor of an HDR student should meet conditions 41a-i. Co-supervisors who are external to the University are not required to meet 41a and 41i.

(43) An associate supervisor of an HDR student should meet conditions 41a-d and 41f-j.

(44) An external supervisor of an HDR student should meet conditions 41g and 41i.

(45) A support supervisor should meet conditions 41a-c, 41g and 41i.

(46) In exceptional circumstances, a person may apply to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Researcher Development for exemption from one or more of these criteria.

Professional development activities for HDR supervisors

(47) Appropriate professional development activities to satisfy clause 41f include, but are not limited to:

- a. Participation in one of the supervisor training workshops presented by the Graduate Research Academy.
- b. Participation in a designated supervision development activity organised by the Graduate Research Academy,

Faculty, Academic Unit or Strategic Research Centre.

- c. Presenting by invitation at an HDR skills development workshop.
- d. Completion of an approved online supervisor professional development program.
- e. Attendance at a conference on research training.
- f. Participation in external seminars or workshops on research training and supervision.
- g. Participation in supervisor training programs offered by other universities.

(48) The Graduate Research Academy will keep a record of participation in these activities. Where a supervisor has participated in an external activity (e.g. a workshop or conference attendance) or another activity that they feel constitutes appropriate professional development, they can make a case to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Researcher Development.

The fast-track program for qualification as a supervisor

(49) A staff member who wishes to complete a fast-track program must meet all of the following requirements and have their qualification approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Researcher Development or nominee:

- a. Active participation in S1 Supervising at Deakin and at least two of the other three supervisor training workshops; or successful completion of the HDR Supervision unit offered by the School of Education as part of the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education.
- b. Completion of the HDR Supervisor Online Professional Development program and the Research Integrity training.
- c. Significant involvement (typically five to ten hours) with an HDR student from Deakin or another university in at least three experiential activities which are certified by the principal supervisor. The activities must include at least one from each of the candidature stages below:
 - i. Early-stage activities including preparation of a research proposal; involvement in the scholarship ranking process of the Academic Unit; Academic Unit induction activities for commencing HDR students; completion of a candidature agreement; development of a clearly-defined research question; assistance with ethics applications; preparation for confirmation of candidature; serving on confirmation panels, etc.
 - ii. Middle-stage activities including data analysis; discussing the interpretation of results; preparing publications; drafting thesis chapters; preparing and delivering conference papers; preparing internal seminar presentations, etc.
 - iii. Late-stage activities including advice on thesis structure and preparation of thesis chapters; critiquing chapters; discussing the choice of examiners; planning a career after graduation; responding to examiners reports, etc.
- d. A brief written reflection on the activities undertaken including what has been learnt (approximately one third to one page each).

Section 6 - DEFINITIONS

(50) For the purpose of this Procedure:

- a. Academic Unit: as defined in the [Research Conduct policy](#).
- b. HDR coordinator: A member of Academic staff who satisfies the qualification to be a principal supervisor, who is not a higher degree by research student and whose role is to support HDR students in their unit.
- c. Head of Academic Unit nominee: a senior member of Academic staff who is qualified as a principal supervisor.
- d. Higher degrees by research (HDR): a doctoral degree or a research masters degree in which an approved program of research leads to an original contribution to the field of research and/or practice.

e. Supervisor

- i. associate supervisor: a member of the University's Academic staff who plays one or more of the following roles in the supervision team: providing assistance to the other team members in guiding and supporting the student, acting as a back-up in case of absence or non-availability of the principal supervisor, and/or bringing particular research expertise to the team to assist the student.
 - ii. co-supervisor: a person who shares the role of principal supervisor more or less equally with another co-supervisor. A co-supervisor may be external to the University. One co-supervisor must be an executive supervisor.
 - iii. executive supervisor: a co-supervisor who is a member of the University's Academic staff and is responsible for ensuring that the University's administrative requirements such as training, annual reviews, coursework and ethics approvals are met.
 - iv. external supervisor: a person who plays a comparable role to an associate supervisor, but is not a member of the University staff.
 - v. principal supervisor: a member of the University's Academic staff who is the leader of an HDR supervision team, and has the responsibility of ensuring that the student receives appropriate guidance in their project and support toward successful completion of their thesis and its examination.
 - vi. support supervisor: a member of the University's staff who is not active in research but who can provide expertise to the student and to other supervisors.
- f. supervisor active in research: has reportable research outputs commensurate with the quality and quantity expectations of their discipline and in the same disciplinary area as the student's project, as determined by the Head of Academic Unit. For supervisors who are Deakin staff members, research outputs are reportable publications as per the Excellence in Research for Australia guidelines, and must be recorded in the Deakin Research Online (DRO) reportable collection.

Status and Details

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