



# Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) Supervision procedure

## Section 1 - Preamble

(1) This Procedure is effective from 16 June 2021.

## 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 HDR candidates, 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 45-49 and are registered with the Graduate Research Academy.

(6) Only members of Deakin Academic staff or approved 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 eligible to supervise.

(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 42-44.

(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 must include a principal, a principal and co-supervisor (holding same responsibilities but located in different Faculties/Institutes) or two co-supervisors (holding the same responsibilities but located in different Faculties/Institutes) and at least one but no more than three associate supervisors and may also include an external supervisor. Cotutelle arrangements may have unique panel settings depending on regulations of the partner university.

(9) All supervisors who are employed by Deakin will complete required professional development activities as described in clauses 45-49.

(10) Where a principal 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 associate 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 a principal 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.

(13) Supervisors will declare any potential, perceived or actual conflicts of interest according to the [Declaration of Interest procedure](#). Conflicts of interest involving close personal or financial relationships with the student or with other supervisors on the panel will not be approved (other than in exceptional circumstances and be closely managed according to an approved conflict of interest management plan). The Head of Academic Unit will ensure that supervisory conflicts of interest are appropriately managed.

(14) Where the principal or co-supervisor becomes aware of a potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest between the student's personal or professional interests and their student interests, or conflicts involving the proposed project are declared, they will notify the Head of the Academic Unit who will be responsible to ensure they are appropriately managed.

## **Supervisor team management**

(15) The principal or co-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.

(16) Where a student is enrolled in a joint degree or course involving an HDR partnership, the principal or co-supervisor will assure themselves of the quality of the student's supervision where the student is located with the partner organisation. Assurance includes external supervisors meeting supervision requirements in clauses 45e and monitoring supervisor engagement.

(17) The responsibilities of each of the supervisors, and the team as a whole, will be established with the student and acknowledged in the [Candidature Engagement Form](#).

## **Planning and management of candidature**

(18) Principal or co-supervisors (or associate supervisor/s if they are absent) will meet with the student at least once a month (physically or electronically), with the student to document the meeting and the supervisor to confirm the minutes.

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

- a. the [Candidature 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.

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

(21) 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.

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

(23) 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**

(24) Supervisors are responsible for ensuring students are provided guidance and mentorship on applying the principles of the [Australian Code of Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (the Code), and raising awareness of the research integrity requirements of Deakin's [Research Conduct Policy](#) and associated procedures, including but not limited to the [Research Authorship Procedure](#), [Research Peer Review Procedure](#), [Research Publication and Dissemination Procedure](#), [Research Data Management Procedure](#), and the reporting and management of research integrity breaches.

(25) 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.

(26) Supervisors will inform themselves of the risks involved in their student's research and ensure that appropriate risk assessments have been completed and remain current as required by law and the [Risk Management policy](#) and associated documents.

(27) 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**

(28) Supervisors will monitor tangible evidence of progress from the student according to a pre-arranged and agreed schedule and in accordance with the [Higher Degrees by Research \(HDR\) Academic Progress procedure](#).

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

(30) Principal or co-supervisor, 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. ensure a data management plan is prepared, reviewed and followed in discussion with the student
- d. 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
- e. 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
- f. discuss the progress of the student's work, and any impediments to maintaining the agreed schedule, with the student at regular intervals and in accordance with the [Higher Degrees by Research \(HDR\) Academic Progress procedure](#)
- g. 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
- h. discuss and prepare authorship agreements and acknowledgements relating to planned co-authorship of research outputs
- i. provide open, honest and constructive comment in progress reviews.

(31) Supervisors will oversee the student's:

- a. 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. development as evidenced through the progression and completion of their Individual Learning Plan and all other aspects of their candidature.

## Managing conflict

(32) Supervisors or students can raise any complaints or interpersonal conflicts relating to a supervisory relationship with the supervision team on an informal basis. The supervision team will immediately address any conflict that arises between supervisors and the student.

(33) 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.

(34) Both student and supervisor will be offered support during the conflict resolution process.

(35) The University will maintain records of agreements reached at the outcome of conflict.

(36) Students can seek assistance or make a complaint to the [student complaints team](#).

## Changes to the supervision team

(37) 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.

(38) 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.

(39) If the principal or co-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.

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

(41) 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**

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

(43) A principal or co-supervisor who has not yet acted in the role of principal or co-supervisor of a student who has successfully completed their HDR will be limited to a supervisory load not exceeding 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, three full-time equivalent HDR students in their third year of supervision, and not more than five individual HDR students until the end of their third year of supervision. Judgement at the local level will be applied regarding the actual supervisory load, within the limit stated in this clause.

(44) 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**

(45) To be a principal or co-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 will not be principal or co-supervisor.
  - ii. Deakin conjoint and emeritus staff can be principal or co-supervisor 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 participated in at least one HDR supervision professional development activity or have been a supervisor of a student who has successfully completed a higher degree by research degree. It is recommended that supervisors also complete approved or equivalent training in resilience and maintaining mental health.
- f. not be an HDR student.
- g. not exceed the supervision load limits specified in the clause 42.
- h. be informed and trained on the Australian standards for research integrity and safety relevant to their field of research. For Deakin staff this can be demonstrated by satisfactory completion of the online research integrity training and relevant safety training and inductions.
- i. not have a conflict of interest involving the project, student or other supervisory team members.

(46) An associate supervisor of an HDR student should meet conditions 45a-d and 45f-i.

(47) An external supervisor of an HDR student should meet conditions 45f-g and 45i.

(48) 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**

(49) Appropriate HDR supervision professional development activities to satisfy clause 45e include, either participation in:

- a. one of the supervisor training workshops presented by the Graduate Research Academy; or
- b. a designated supervision development activity organised by the Graduate Research Academy, Faculty, Academic Unit or Strategic Research Centre.

## **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 or co-supervisor, and/or bringing particular research expertise to the team to assist the student.
  - ii. external supervisor: a person who plays a comparable role to an associate supervisor, but is not a member of the University staff.
  - iii. principal supervisor: a member of the University's Academic staff who is the leader or co-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.
  - iv. co-supervisor: a member of the University's Academic staff who is co-leader of an HDR supervision team and has the joint responsibility of ensuring that the student receives appropriate guidance in their project and support toward successful completion of their thesis and its examination. Co-supervisors are appointed to facilitate cross Faculty/Institute/School and cotutelle HDR enrolments. They should not be appointed to resolve work load allocation.
- 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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