

## Code of Practice - Supervision

### For Higher Degree Research (HDR) Candidates

Policy Directory Ref. No.	
Approved By:	Academic Senate
Date Approved:	28 July 2004
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Related Policies:	<a href="#">Code of Practice - Research</a> <a href="#">HDR Course Rules</a>
Contact Officer:	<a href="#">Policy &amp; Governance Unit</a> (ARD)

#### 1. Preamble

This Code of Practice applies to supervision of candidates enrolled for Masters by Research and Doctorate by Research degrees only. Research training at a University involves the active participation of both staff and students. The responsibility to ensure that research is conducted in the most beneficial, efficient and effective manner is shared by the University collectively, its Academic Units, its staff, and its students. All four parties are expected to work towards completion of the thesis within the time frame of DEST funding.

The primary responsibility for carrying out research and writing the thesis rests with the HDR candidate. The primary responsibility of the supervisor is to supervise the work of the candidate. This includes providing help, support and mentoring to enable the candidate to complete the research and produce a thesis to the best of the candidate's ability.

The primary responsibility of the Academic Unit\* within which the candidate is registered is to provide suitable academic infrastructure for the research to be undertaken and successfully completed. The primary responsibility of the University is to provide a framework of policies and procedures within which postgraduate research and research supervision are carried out efficiently and effectively.

Enrolment of HDR candidates take place within the Faculties, under the jurisdiction of the Dean. However, faculty structures differ, lines of responsibility for research and research candidates vary from one faculty to another, and the supervision of HDR candidates will frequently involve research units that cross faculty boundaries.

#### 2. Definitions

An HDR candidate is a person:

2.1 who has been accepted for admission to or enrolled in any Postgraduate research degree offered at, or in conjunction with, the University of Wollongong; or

2.2 who was enrolled as an HDR student and whose body of HDR work (eg. a research thesis) is incomplete or still under examination; or

2.3 who was enrolled as an HDR student and whose body of HDR work (eg. A research thesis) was examined as part of their HDR candidature.

A principal supervisor would be the supervisor who takes the lead in terms of accountability/administration of the process of supervision (e.g. taking carriage of annual reports etc).

A co-supervisor would normally have approximately equal responsibility in terms of research and research supervision to the principal supervisor and would contribute to annual reports, proposals etc.

Associate supervisors would normally take less responsibility in terms of the candidates' research. They may act more in a consultative than a supervisory capacity. Both supervisors and student would need to be clear on the amount of contact time and input that an associate supervisor would be expected to contribute. Academics who act as a local supervisor, 'support person', for offshore candidates will also be known as associate supervisors. This category includes supervisors who are external to the University e.g. those from industry or at other Universities.

### **3. Responsibilities of the University**

3.1 To specify clear minimum entry standards for each level of award;

3.2 To ensure that a reasonable share of space and resources are made available to HDR candidates;

3.3 To take measures to protect the intellectual property arising from the work of HDR candidates in accordance with the University's Intellectual Property Policy (attached as Attachment E);

3.4 To administer annual reporting requirements and monitor their effectiveness;

3.5 To set out clear guidelines for examiners outlining the University's expectations for the particular award;

3.6 To provide procedures by which either the HDR candidate or the supervisor may make representations as appropriate should significant difficulties arise (see HDR Student Academic Grievance Procedures attached as Attachment D);

\* Definition of and responsibilities within Academic Units may vary between Faculties. Academic Unit responsibilities noted in this document should be interpreted along the lines of responsibility clarified within each Faculty according to its structure.

- 3.7 To provide each HDR candidate with a copy of the relevant policies at enrolment, including: a copy of this document and the Rules governing the appropriate degree;
- 3.8 To provide each supervisor with a copy of the relevant policies at the start of their employment, including: a copy of this document and the Rules governing the appropriate degree.

#### **4. Responsibilities of the Academic Unit**

The Dean shall be responsible for ensuring that areas of responsibility for HDR candidates between research units and Academic Units are clear. In general the Academic Unit will have the following responsibilities:

- 4.1 To ensure that the HDR candidate meets the minimum requirements set down by the University for admission to candidature and is capable of undertaking the proposed project;
- 4.2 To ensure that the proposed research project is appropriate for the award;
- 4.3 To ensure that each research project is situated in the most appropriate discipline area;
- 4.4 To prepare and distribute postgraduate material that sets out the conditions, milestones, and monitoring procedures for undertaking postgraduate research within their unit;
- 4.5 To foster a supportive environment for HDR candidates including liaison with research units where appropriate;
- 4.6 To ensure that procedures are in place to select the most appropriate supervisor(s) or supervisory panel for the research project;
- 4.7 To ensure that high quality supervision is provided continuously throughout the research period;
- 4.8 To provide appropriate opportunities for students to develop their presentational skills;
- 4.9 To ensure compliance with all University's policies relevant to HDR candidature;
- 4.10 To provide adequate resources, space and facilities to support the HDR candidate through to the completion of their higher degree;
- 4.11 To appoint a co-supervisor for off-shore research HDR candidates at the off-shore location. (It is also the responsibility of the academic unit to ensure that the remote

co-supervisor is informed of the University's rules and policies governing HDR candidature)

## **5. Responsibilities of the Supervisors**

The overriding responsibility of supervisors is to provide continuing support to HDR candidates in researching and producing a thesis to the best of the candidate's ability. Specific responsibilities are:

- 5.1 To advise HDR candidates of their responsibilities in relation to OH&S, Ethics and Bio-safety
- 5.2 To advise HDR candidates of their procedural and substantive rights and responsibilities contained in this Code of Practice at their first meeting or within a month of this meeting (see First Interview Checklist attached as Appendix A);
- 5.3 To negotiate an agreement/contract of work to be done and schedules to be adhered to, and which is to be reviewed regularly see Commencement of Candidature Form attached as Appendix B)
- 5.4 To identify any shortcomings in a HDR candidate's background and to suggest appropriate remedial studies;
- 5.5 To support HDR candidates in developing a formal thesis proposal for review within the first year of candidature (see First Year Research Proposal Review Guidelines attached as Attachment B);
- 5.6 To maintain regular contact with the HDR candidate and to ensure that a reasonable timetable is set to permit the degree to be completed within DEST funding limits (see Appendix C);
- 5.7 To require contact with and feedback from the HDR candidate on a pre-arranged basis and agreed schedule so that the development of the candidate can be assessed at regular intervals;
- 5.8 To provide appropriate, helpful, and explanatory feedback to the HDR candidate on any submissions, to return such feedback in reasonable time, and to assist candidates to develop solutions as problems are identified;
- 5.9 To monitor carefully the performance of the HDR candidate relative to the work agreement and the standard required for the award, and to ensure that the candidate is made aware of whatever the supervisor may regard as inadequate progress or work below the standard generally expected;
- 5.10 To complete progress reports as scheduled by current University policy, including the assessment of any required written material in sufficient time to allow for

comments and discussions before proceeding to the next stage (see Progress Review and Probation Guidelines attached as Attachment C);

- 5.11 To provide accurate feedback on the progress of the HDR candidate in relation to the milestones established for the award by the Faculty, as required by the University and scholarship authorities;
- 5.12 To counsel HDR candidates to enrol for a lower award if progress has been unsatisfactory. Alternatively HDR candidates may choose to go on probation for the higher award by meeting certain goals as agreed between candidate, supervisor and a person appointed by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) as the probation overseer (see Progress Review and Probation Guidelines attached as Attachment C);
- 5.13 To refer problems which cannot be resolved to the Head of the Academic Unit\*, in the first instance; and if further resolution is necessary to the Dean or the designated Faculty staff member (eg. Head of Postgraduate Studies, Sub-Dean or Associate Dean) as appropriate, and as a last resort to the PVC Research (see HDR Student Academic Grievance Procedures attached as Attachment D);
- 5.14 To advise the Head of Postgraduate Studies\* of the names and credentials of suitable examiners;
- 5.15 To advise the HDR candidate as to when and whether the thesis is suitable, in form and content, for submission;
- 5.16 To ensure knowledge of and compliance with all University policies relevant to HDR candidature, including Occupational Health and Safety, Biosafety, Human Research Ethics and Animal Ethics.

Head of Postgraduate Studies is a generic term used by the Research Student Centre to identify the primary contact for all matter relating to HDR candidates within the Academic Unit. Depending on the Faculty structure, this can include the Associate Dean (Research), Head of Department, Director of Postgraduate Studies, or other staff member nominated by the Academic Unit

## **6. Responsibilities of HDR Candidates**

The primary responsibility for the undertaking, active pursuit and completion of the research rests with HDR candidates. Specific responsibilities are:

- 6.1 To become familiar with the procedural and substantive rights and responsibilities of HDR candidates at the University of Wollongong and the requirements outlined in Appendix A: First Interview Checklist (First formal meeting between Supervisor(s) and HDR Candidate);

- 6.2 To negotiate an agreement/contract of work to be done and schedules to be adhered to with the supervisor(s), which is to be reviewed regularly in the course of the candidature;
- 6.3 To discuss with the supervisor(s) the most useful type of help required for successful completion of the degree;
- 6.4 To undertake appropriate remedial work identified by the supervisor(s) should this be necessary;
- 6.5 To complete and present within the first year of candidature the First Year Research Proposal Review (see First Year Review Proposal Guidelines attached as Attachment B);
- 6.6 To maintain regular contact with the supervisor(s) and to ensure that a reasonable timetable of meetings and submitted work is agreed and maintained;
- 6.7 To present required written material in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussions before scheduled meetings;
- 6.8 To negotiate with the supervisor(s) appropriate ways of documenting meetings including agreed actions arising from supervision sessions;
- 6.9 To complete progress reports as scheduled by current University policy (see Progress Review and Probation Guidelines attached as Attachment C);
- 6.10 To accept responsibility for the final copies of the thesis and to submit a thesis which meets the University's requirements on presentation and content (see General Course Rules 10 - Higher Degree Research Rules attached as Attachment A);
- 6.11 To comply with University policies on Plagiarism (Attachment G), Authorship (Attachment F) and Code of Practice – Research (Attachment H).

## **7. General Issues Relating to Supervisors**

- 7.1 The Academic Unit should take care to avoid situations where there is a conflict of interest between the supervisor and the HDR candidate. In appointing supervisors, ensure that they are not engaged in assessing or supervising the research of HDR candidates with whom they have a close personal relationship, which could give rise to undue advantage or disadvantage. Supervisors, both actual and potential, must advise their Head of Unit of any such relationship. (refer to the University of Wollongong policy on Close Personal Relationships).
- 7.2 Supervisors will be responsible to the Head of the Unit and to the Dean for the supervision of HDR candidates in their charge.

- 7.3 The University recommends co-supervision, where two or more supervisors may take differing roles and responsibilities depending on their expertise and experience with supervision. The principal supervisor has primary responsibility for coordinating communication between the supervisors and the candidate. Where a supervisor is inexperienced, co-supervision with an experienced supervisor is mandatory.
- 7.4 In general all members of the academic staff are eligible to become principal supervisors of candidates for higher degrees if they have at least a degree equivalent to or higher than that being supervised; and one or both one of the following: a) they are currently active researchers; or b) they have recent successful experience in supervision of HDR candidates.
- 7.5 Members of the academic staff who are themselves HDR candidates for higher degrees should not normally have major responsibility for HDR candidates undertaking degrees at the same level. They can be co-supervisors provided there is no conflict of interest with their topic and that of the candidate.
- 7.6 Co-supervisors should (generally) be appointed at the outset of the program, particularly if any lengthy absences of the supervisor are planned or if expertise additional to that provided by the supervisor is required; this could be a staff member or members from the University or from another institution or from industry.
- 7.7 Co-supervisors should be involved as soon as practicable in the development of the HDR candidate's research plan and should maintain an appropriate level of communication with the candidate and the other supervisors to allow adequate supervision whenever necessary. Where an Off-Shore HDR programme has been approved, co-supervision arrangements should also be made as early as practicable.
- 7.8 In some cases, e.g. where the topic is multi-disciplinary or staff inexperienced, a panel could be formed to advise the HDR candidate; again, the site of primary responsibility must be made clear.
- 7.9 The University and its Academic Units should provide opportunities to assist academic staff in improving their understanding and skill in the supervision of HDR candidates. All staff who supervise or expect to supervise HDR candidates should work to improve their skills by using these opportunities.
- 7.10 The Academic Unit will ensure that each supervisor is provided with a copy of the relevant policies at the commencement of candidature: including a copy of this document and the Rules governing the appropriate degree.

## **8. Supervisor Absences**

Supervisors should ensure where possible that HDR candidates have advanced notice about any planned, long leave (or retirement) during the candidature. Suitable alternative

supervisory arrangements should be negotiated with the Dean and communicated to the candidate.

## **9. Reports**

Written reports from the HDR candidate and the supervisor are an important and formal means to monitor the progress of the candidate. Each report should be a frank appraisal of the candidate's progress by both the supervisor and the candidate. The annual report is the means by which the University assesses whether the candidature will continue into the following year. (Problems arising mid year should

be recorded and acted upon at the time they arise) (see Progress Review and Probation Guidelines attached as Attachment C).

## **10. Grievance Procedures**

Any problems or any disagreements encountered during the candidature that cannot be immediately or easily resolved between the HDR candidate and the supervisor should be dealt with in accordance with the HDR Student Academic Grievance Procedures (attached as Attachment D).

## **11. Authorship**

Agreement should be reached between the HDR candidate and the supervisor concerning authorship of publications and acknowledgment during and after the candidature. There should be open and mutual recognition of the HDR candidate's and the supervisor's contribution on all published work arising from the project (see Authorship Policy attached as Attachment F).

## **12. Operative Date**

The operative date of this Code of Practice is May 2004.

## **13. Review Date**

This Code of Practice will be reviewed every three (3) years and, should any unintended consequences be identified, amended accordingly. The review will be initiated by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research).

## **Appendix A**

First Formal Meeting Supervisor(s) and HDR Candidate

At their initial meeting or within a month after this the HDR Candidate and supervisor should discuss the Code of Practice - Supervision with particular reference to the sections dealing with the responsibilities of the supervisor(s) and candidate. Where there is more than one supervisor, the candidate is notified of particular responsibilities of each supervisor. The HDR candidate and supervisor(s) should discuss and agree upon or note the items listed below and in conjunction complete a Commencement of Candidature form (a copy of which should be forwarded, via the Head of Postgraduate Studies, to the Research Student Centre to be placed on the candidate's file):

- 1) the duration, location and timing of future meetings;
- 2) the structure of future meetings, including which supervisors will attend and the responsibilities of candidate and supervisor(s) in the event of postponement of meeting;
- 3) timetabling of and completion and presentation of the First Year Research Proposal Review; the details of what is required in the thesis proposal and criteria for an acceptable thesis proposal;
- 4) a broad timetable, taking into account the level of the thesis, the HDR candidate's timetable for the thesis, any foreseen intervening matters (e.g. major conferences) coursework required and the timetable agreed for completion and criteria of such work;
- 5) 'remedial' work required and a timetable agreed for completion and criteria of such work or the possibility that the need for such remedial work may arise;
- 6) processes for submission of work e.g. whether material should be submitted before meetings;
- 7) access to equipment, study space, computer/software, access to email and funds, and where and when these are/will be available and likely resource implications;
- 8) obligations under the University's Annual Reporting system;
- 9) requirements to attend seminars, and how details of these will be communicated;
- 10) Intellectual Property Policy (Attachment E) and the consequences of this for the candidate's research are explained carefully;
- 11) Occupational Health and Safety and Ethics Policies (Human, Animal and Bio-safety) and requirements);
- 12) The question of whether or not to keep a diary of meetings or another method of record keeping.
- 13) HDR Student Academic Grievance Procedures Policy (Attachment D);
- 14) First Year Research Proposal Review Guidelines (Attachment B);
- 15) Progress Review and Probation Guidelines (Attachment C);
- 16) Authorship (Attachment F) and Plagiarism (Attachment G );

17) Code of Practice – Research (Attachment H);

18) Normal progress requirements and other University Course Rules (Attachment A) and where these are available to the HDR candidate.

## Appendix B

See <http://www.uow.edu.au/handbook/codesofprac/appendixb.pdf>

## Appendix C

### DEST Course Completion Time Limits for HDR Candidates

The duration for research higher degree candidatures are specified by minimum and maximum submission dates of the thesis, which are calculated from the first session of enrolment.

<b>Masters by Research</b>	<b>Minimum Submission</b>	<b>Maximum Submission</b>
Full-time	1 year (2 sessions)	2 years (4 sessions)
Part-time	2 years (4 sessions)	4 years (8 sessions)
<b>Doctor of Philosophy</b>	<b>Minimum Submission</b>	<b>Maximum Submission</b>
Full-time	2 years (4 sessions)	4 years (8 sessions)
Part-time	4 years (8 sessions)	8 years (16 sessions)

Candidature may be extended beyond the maximum time period following a satisfactory review of progress.

### Modification History

Date	Ref. No.	Source	Details
28/7/04		Kim Roser	
6/9/05		Michelle Rankin	Update to Appendix B
5/7/06		Leonie Kirchmajer	Update to Appendix B
01/01/08	Council Res 2007/67	Tori Funnell	Clause 5.8 added to reflect Graduate Qualities Policy