1. Background

These guidelines, endorsed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) outline the process for dealing with off-shore Higher Research degree applications.

The University will normally only consider applications for off-shore candidates in exceptional circumstances. Those circumstances are:

1.1 Applications from members of academic staff at the Dubai campus; or

1.2 Where the candidature is part of a larger strategic international alliance and where there is clear evidence of a suitable academic environment in the host institution.

Off-shore candidature normally applies to overseas full-fee paying students who:

- are applying for a research higher degree, AND
- are applying as individuals (rather than under a group or program initiative), AND
- are undertaking research which will require an overseas location with input from an overseas institution, which may include co-supervision, facilities, equipment, and library access, AND
- wish to pursue most or all of their research overseas.

Domestic students (Australian citizens or permanent residents) who meet these criteria are also covered by these guidelines.

Academic units are advised that under the DEST funded Research Training Scheme (RTS) no Commonwealth funding will flow from overseas full-fee paying off-shore completions. Deans should thus consider carefully the comparative costs and benefits of Off-shore candidature in terms of supervisory load. NB: Domestic students admitted under the Off-shore guidelines would be identified as ‘Distance Education On-shore students’ for the purposes of DEST load reporting and their completion would thus be counted.

The purpose of this document is to give guidance to academic units and UniAdvice in relation to:

- setting appropriate fee structures; and
- ensuring provision of adequate supervision and resources.

These procedures do not relate to those internal (on-campus) students who need to be absent from the University in order to undertake research or fieldwork either in Australia or overseas.

2. Application Process

2.1 Academic Unit Assessment (Applicants from Dubai Campus will follow standard processes for HDR Applicants)

(i) In its initial assessment of the application, the academic unit should consider the following:
• Does the applicant possess the appropriate educational background, qualifications and research potential to pursue a higher research degree?
• Does the applicant’s proposed area of research match the research interests of the academic unit and its affiliated research units?
• Does the academic unit have appropriate supervision in the proposed research area?
• Is there an external person with appropriate expertise to work with the student?
• Does the applicant have access to an appropriate research library at the off-shore location?
• Does the applicant have access to appropriate research facilities (including laboratory facilities) at the off-shore location?
• What are the financial implications associated with the University of Wollongong supervisor’s travel and other costs?

(ii) Having assessed the application, if the Head of academic unit believes that the applicant should be considered for admission, they should advise the Dean. Applicants other than those from Dubai the Dean will determine a recommended fee structure.

(iii) The Dean will then initiate a formal agreement between the University, the applicant and any external parties (eg. external supervisor, overseas institution). Section 4 (below) outlines the information that should be included in such an agreement. The Dean must notify the Office of Research once the agreement has been signed.

All Offshore Higher Research Degree applications that the Faculty has assessed and agreed to accept must be sent in the first instance to the Research Student Centre for approval by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). If approved by the PVC(R) applications will then be follow the normal admissions process through UniAdvice. Unsuccessful applications will be sent directly to UniAdvice for normal processing.

3. Off-shore Agreement

An agreement with institutions other than the University of Wollongong (Dubai) should be signed between the Dean and the applicant in relation to Off-shore candidature.

Candidates admitted to the University of Wollongong Dubai will follow normal admission processes and do not require a separate agreement.

All agreements must contain information on the following aspects of candidature:

3.1 Location of research

The academic unit must be assured that the remote location provides an adequate research environment, infrastructure and expertise to enable the student’s project to proceed smoothly. If another institution is involved, an agreement must be in place detailing any cost-sharing in the pursuit of the research as well as cost-sharing and ownership of any intellectual property that may arise from the research. Occupational health and safety standards and ethical clearance procedures must be within accepted University of Wollongong practice.
3.2 Supervision

The Principal Supervisor will be at the University of Wollongong unless specifically exempted by the DEAN of the Faculty. A co-supervisor must be appointed at the off shore location. It is the responsibility of the academic unit to ensure that the remote co-supervisor is informed of the University’s rules and policies governing PhD candidature, as outlined in the University Course Rules and the Code of Practice – Supervision and any other relevant Course Rules. A Memorandum of Understanding should be drawn up between the University and the co-supervisor.

3.3 Residency requirement

Academic units should make a determination on the period of local residency (if any) required. In addition, they should determine the frequency and mode of direct supervisor-student interaction; attendance at research training seminars; and preparation, discussion and presentation of research proposals. Such factors should also be considered in the preparation of an appropriate fee schedule.

3.4 Communication

The agreement should detail the effective means and frequency of regular and interactive communication between the candidate and the internal supervisor.

3.5 Research Proposal Review

As with internal PhD candidature, Off-shore candidates must complete a formal Research Proposal Review. Academic units should detail how the research proposal will be presented, including provisions for the oral presentation, in line with the Code of Practice – Supervision and relevant Course Rules.

3.6 Annual Progress Report

As with internal PhD candidature, Off-shore candidates must complete an Annual Progress Report. Failure to complete this review may result in a suspension of candidature. Continuation of enrolment is subject to satisfactory progress reported in the Annual Progress Report. The Annual Progress Report include an additional section for the co-supervisor to report on the progress of the student. Academic units may request more regular reports if required.

3.7 Full-time candidature

If the candidature is to be full-time, the academic unit must be satisfied that the candidate is able to devote full attention to the research project. Documentation should be sought to support the applicant’s claim to be studying full-time.

3.8 Student Representation

The academic unit should give due consideration to issues of student representation in relation to the needs and interests of Off-shore candidates. In particular, the academic unit should demonstrate how
adequate student representation will be provided in relation to the presentation of the research proposal and disciplinary action (including probation).

3.9 Ethics Clearance

As with all on-campus research candidates, Off-shore research candidates who undertake research involving animals must complete an application for ethical clearance under the University’s Animal Ethics Committee. Similarly, research involving humans or genetically manipulated organisms must not proceed without University Human Ethics or Biosafety Committee approval. Off-shore institutions may impose additional ethical requirements.

3.10 Intellectual Property

The University's Intellectual Property Policies set out guidelines for determining ownership and exploitation of intellectual property. The onus is on the supervisor to inform the student fully, in writing before enrolment, of any aspects of the research which are likely to result in the generation of intellectual property. As part of the annual review process, students and supervisors should also report on whether there have been any changes to the research program which may have resulted in commercially viable intellectual property. When the University asserts its proprietary interest in intellectual property developed by staff in the course of their employment, and by students enrolled in the University and using its resources, it will offer a range of services to assist with commercialisation of that intellectual property.

3.11 Access to Data and Authorship

The University’s Code of Practice – Research, Research Misconduct Policy and Authorship Policy set out guidelines for determining access and retention of data, and authorship in relation to research publications. Academic units should ensure that Off-shore candidates are aware of their obligations in relation to these policies, and should endeavour to retain a copy of research data within the Academic Unit.

4. Fee Setting

The financial implications of the student’s research project must be negotiated, clarified and agreed upon before an offer is made. The following guidelines should assist Deans in setting an appropriate fee structure for Off-shore applicants.

The financial implications of the student’s research project must be negotiated, clarified and agreed upon between the Faculty and the applicant.

4.1 Australian citizens and permanent residents studying offshore

Australian citizens and permanent resident students undertaking their research full-time at an offshore location, admitted under the Off-shore guidelines, are identified as non-RTS fee-paying students. There is no tuition fee (HECS exempt) for such students, but Deans should determine an appropriate fee structure for the cost of supervision, including:

- Airfares for supervisor to visit student at off-shore location;
- Local transportation, meals, incidentals, sundries, accommodation at off-shore location for supervisor during visit; and
• Estimated salary cost of supervisor’s time to travel to off-shore location.

4.2 **International students studying offshore**
The fee structure for international overseas students should remain flexible, so that Deans can decide on an appropriate tuition fee depending on the proportion of funds to be allocated between the overseas partner (if applicable) and the University. The decision would be based on the services and resources provided at each location, including supervision.

Deans should consider carefully the comparative costs and benefits of Off-shore candidature in terms of supervisory load.

In setting an appropriate fee for overseas off-shore candidates, the Dean should include:

• Current on-shore international student tuition fee for that course (or part-time equivalent if appropriate);
• Airfares for supervisor to visit student at off-shore location;
• Local transportation, meals, incidentals, sundries, accommodation at off-shore location for supervisor during visit; and
• Estimated salary cost of supervisor’s time to travel to off-shore location.

4.3 **International academic staff employed at the Dubai Campus**
These students must have a principal supervisor at the Wollongong Campus. They are granted a Tuition Fee Exemption Scholarship.

5. **Approval Process**

Once an application has been assessed by the Academic Unit, it must be sent to the Dean for approval. Final approval for Dubai admission of an Off-shore candidate rests with the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Research).