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Purpose

This Policy describes the responsibilities of Higher Degree by Research candidate supervisors and the requirements for registration on the Register of Research Higher Degree Supervisors.

Scope

This Policy applies to all persons with supervisory responsibilities for higher degree by research candidates.

Legislative Context

• Regulation 5.1 – Higher Doctorates, The Doctoral Degree (Research), The Doctoral Degree (Professional), and The Masters Degree (Research).

Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Supervisor (AS)</td>
<td>A person who is an employee of the University and provides support to the student and to the Principal Supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQF</td>
<td>Australian Qualifications Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co Supervisor (CS)</td>
<td>A person who provides support to the student and to the Principal Supervisor but is external to the University and is not an employee of the University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVC(RI)</td>
<td>Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDR</td>
<td>Higher Degree by Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Supervisor (PS)</td>
<td>A person who is an employee of the University and has prime responsibility for guiding the progress of a designated higher degree by research student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisional Principal Supervisor (PPS)</td>
<td>A person who, under the direction of an appropriately experienced mentor, has responsibility for guiding the progress of a designated higher degree by research candidate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHDSC - Research Higher Degrees Sub-committee</td>
<td>A Sub-committee of Research Committee, handles all operational matters requiring Committee approval that relate to HDR students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory Panel</td>
<td>is a panel consisting of at least two members (including the principal supervisor and at least one associate supervisor) which oversees the planning and execution of the project and preparation and submission of the thesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy Statement

At Federation University Australia, all higher degree by research candidates are allocated a supervisory panel consisting of a Principal Supervisor and at least one Associate Supervisor(s). Supervisory panels may also include one or more external Co-Supervisors. All Supervisors must be approved and be on the University Register of Supervisors.

Eligibility for Supervision

In adherence with the TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework requirements higher degree by research candidates (doctoral and masters degrees) must be supervised by a Principal Supervisor who holds a doctoral degree. Applicants to Register of Supervisors should hold an AQF level 10 research qualification. Where an applicant to the Register of Supervisors does not hold the required AQF level qualification, but can demonstrate that they have the equivalent research expertise, experience and achievement they may be eligible for registration subject to the approval of Research Higher Degree Committee.

A staff member not holding the equivalent or higher qualification may contribute to supervision as part of a supervisory panel but may not undertake the role of principal supervisor.

A staff member on a term contract may be a principal supervisor provided that they meet the conditions above and the term of their contract meets at least the minimum funded term for the degree (18 months for a masters degree and 3 years for a doctoral degree).

A person must not be appointed nor remain as a supervisor (Principal, Associate, or Co-supervisor) of a candidate if that appointment or its continuation could be reasonably expected to give rise to a conflict of interest that could affect the progress or standing of the candidate.

A person must not be appointed nor remain as a supervisor (Principal, Associate, or Co-supervisor) of a candidate if that appointment or its continuation gives rise to a situation in which the candidate feels harassed, bullied, intimidated, humiliated, ignored or isolated as described in the University’s Harassment, Equal Opportunity and Bullying Prevention policies.

Supervisor Categories and Requirements

Principal Supervisor

The following requirements must be met to qualify for registration as a principal supervisor:
1. The applicant must hold at least a 0.5 time fraction academic position within the University. This requirement may be waived in specific cases by the DVC (RI) or approved nominee. Fractional full-time staff holding an appointment of less than 0.5 time fraction, provided they can demonstrate that they have the workload capacity to manage HDR supervision within their workload, can meet the other requirements for being a principal supervisor, and with their Dean’s approval may be approved as principal supervisors.

2. The applicant must hold an academic position within the University. Other staff of the University may be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) or approved nominee.

3. A Principal Supervisor will normally be a member of the School in which the candidate is enrolled, unless otherwise approved by the Dean or nominee, and will have administrative responsibility for the candidate.

4. Under exceptional circumstances where appropriate, and with the approval of the DVC (RI), honorary or adjunct staff can meet the requirements for being an associate supervisor with their Dean’s approval. Such staff must be able to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to HDR supervision for the period of candidature, that they can meet the other requirements for being a principal supervisor, a record of research achievement, and be research active under the University’s definition (see the Schedule). The conditions under which an honorary or adjunct appointee can become a principal supervisor and the expectations of supervision will be discussed with the Dean.

5. The applicant must be able to demonstrate a record of research achievement and be research active under the University’s definition (see the Schedule).

6. The applicant must normally hold an equivalent AQF level research qualification for supervision of a doctoral candidate, or a research qualification one AQF level higher than the degree of the candidate to be supervised for supervision of a masters candidate. In exceptional circumstances this condition may be met if the applicant does not hold a Doctoral degree but can demonstrate evidence, to the satisfaction of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) or approved nominee, that they are appropriately credentialed and have substantial research achievement at a level higher than the degree level of the candidate to be supervised.

7. The applicant will have supervised at least one higher degree by research candidate to successful completion at the degree level of the candidate to be supervised and, in the case of applicants seeking to make the transition from associate supervisor, provide evidence of roles performed as an associate supervisor.

8. The applicant will have ability and willingness to undertake the roles and responsibilities of a supervisor.

9. The applicant will have research and/or professional expertise appropriate to the candidate’s research topic.

10. The applicant will be listed on the Register of Higher Degree Research Supervisors.

11. The applicant will attend supervisor training as specified by the University or provide evidence of prior training.

**Associate Supervisor**

The following requirements must be met to qualify for registration as an associate supervisor:

1. The applicant must hold at least a 0.5 time fraction academic position within the University. This requirement may be waived in specific cases by the DVC (RI) or approved nominee. Fractional full-time staff holding an appointment of less than 0.5 time fraction, provided they can demonstrate that they have the workload capacity to manage HDR supervision within their workload, can meet the other requirements for being an associate supervisor, and with their Dean’s approval may be approved as associate supervisors.

2. The applicant must hold an academic position within the University. Other staff of the University may be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) or approved nominee.

3. Under exceptional circumstances where appropriate, and with the approval of the DVC (RI), honorary or adjunct staff can meet the requirements for being an associate supervisor with their Dean’s approval. Such staff must be able to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to HDR supervision for the period of candidature, that they can meet the other requirements for being an associate supervisor, a record of research achievement, and be research active under the University’s definition (see the Schedule). The conditions under which an honorary or adjunct appointee can become a principal supervisor and the expectations of supervision will be discussed with the Dean.

4. The applicant must normally hold an equivalent AQF level research qualification for associate supervision of a doctoral candidate, or a research qualification one AQF level higher than the degree of the candidate to be supervised.
supervised for associate supervision of a masters candidate. In exceptional circumstances this condition may be met if the applicant does not hold a Doctoral degree but can demonstrate evidence, to the satisfaction of the DVC (RI) or approved nominee, that they are appropriately credentialed, and that they have substantial research achievement at a level higher than the degree level of the candidate to be supervised.

5. Within three months of initial registration, or when offered, the applicant must participate in a formal induction session and the University’s supervisor development program or approved equivalent training.

6. Participation in the equivalent of 16 hours of supervisor training or development (internal or external training, or relevant/equivalent experience) is a requirement for Associate and Provisional Principal Supervisors to be eligible for initial registration on the Register of Higher Degree by Research Supervisors.

7. The applicant will have ability and willingness to undertake the roles and responsibilities of a supervisor as defined in this policy and in the Code of Practice for Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Candidates Procedure.

8. The applicant will have research and/or professional expertise appropriate to the candidate’s research topic.

9. The applicant will agree to be mentored by a registered Principal Supervisor.

10. The applicant will be listed on the Register of Higher Degree Research Supervisors.

11. Participation in, and contribution towards, a successful completion is normally a prerequisite for an Associate supervisor to become a Principal supervisor (except where the Provisional Principal Supervisor category is employed, see below).

12. The evidence that an Associate Supervisor who has contributed towards a successful completion is required to provide to support the case for transition to Principal Supervisor on the register will be a statement of: a) the role played in the supervisory panel and the degree of contribution to the supervisory process; b) the key learnings that the Associate has gained during the period of participation in the supervisory process; c) the ability and willingness of the Associate to undertake the roles and responsibilities of a supervisor.

13. This statement must be countersigned by the Principal supervisor and be provided to Research Services to enable the Associate Supervisor to be transferred to Principal Supervisor status on the Register of Supervisors.

Provisional Principal Supervisor

The following requirements must be met to qualify for registration as a provisional principal supervisor:

1. Use of this category is considered exceptional, is intended for small disciplines lacking supervisory capacity, and is to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Participation in supervision training is a mandatory requirement for Provisional Principal Supervisors if training has not already been undertaken or equivalence cannot be established.

2. Provisional Principal Supervisors take a more active and leading role in supervision than is the case for Associate supervisors but do so under formal mentoring.

3. Provisional Principal Supervisors will be assigned to a school ADR, HDR coordinator, or member of the professoriate for mentoring and guidance for a minimum period of 12 months. Such a mentor may or may not be a member of the supervisory panel of the candidate to be supervised.

4. The same requirements for Principal Supervisor must be met to qualify for registration as a Provisional Principal Supervisor, with the exception that the applicant may not have experience as an HDR candidate supervisor and normally will not have supervised a HDR candidate to successful completion at the degree level of the candidate to be supervised.

5. Provisional Principal Supervisors must be actively involved in contributing to supervision in addition to receiving mentoring. There is a requirement for Provisional Principal Supervisors to provide evidence to the DVC (RI) or nominee of the roles performed as Provisional Principal Supervisor in order to transition to Principal Supervisor (as outlined above for Associate Supervisors).

6. ???

Co-supervisor

The following requirements must be met to qualify for registration as an external Co-supervisor:
1. The applicant will be external to the University.
2. The applicant will have a record of research achievement or professional experience.
3. The applicant will have an equivalent or higher degree to the degree being supervised; this requirement may be waived where the co-supervisor is from an industry partner or has specific expertise of benefit to the candidate’s project.
4. The applicant will have research and/or professional expertise appropriate to the candidate’s research topic.
5. The applicant will be listed on the Register of Higher Degree Research Supervisors.

Appointment of Supervisors

Appointment of Supervisory Panel

All higher degree by research candidates are allocated a supervisory panel consisting of a Principal Supervisor and at least one Associate Supervisor(s). Supervisory panels will be nominated by the School on the HDR Application form and then endorsed by the Chair, RHDSC. Supervisory panels may also include one or more external Co-Supervisors. All Supervisors must be approved and be on the University Register of Supervisors. Where possible, Schools may collaborate with potential candidates regarding the appointment of their supervisory panel.

Each approved supervisory panel will, where possible, include at least one new (less experienced or "trainee") Associate Supervisor. This ensures that new members of staff and developing supervisors have the opportunity to become Associate supervisors. Exceptions to this may occur in some disciplines under exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the DVC (RI). Formal mentoring for Associates Supervisors is a requisite part of joining a supervisory panel.

Register of Higher Degree by Research Supervisors

The University maintains a Register of Higher Degree by Research Supervisors ("the Register"). All staff members involved in the supervision of Higher Degree by Research candidates must meet the requirements of and apply for registration and be listed on the Register.

Responsibility for maintenance of the Register sits with Research Services. The Dean or nominee is responsible for ensuring compliance with supervisor registration requirements.

Registered Supervisors are entitled to view their supervision registration status at any time upon written request to Research Services. Any request for changes to the Register must be made in writing to the DVCRI or nominee for assessment and recommendations for action.

Registration is for a period of four years. Supervisors are required to maintain their registration by reapplying using the prescribed process as outlined in the Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Students Procedure.

The equivalent of four hours of refresher or update training or development (internal or external training, and/or relevant/equivalent experience) is a requirement for re-registration of all supervisors in addition to an evaluation/recommendation by the Dean

Revocation or Non-Renewal of Registration

Supervisors may face non-renewal of registration at the end of the normal four year period, or loss of registration at any time during the normal four year period under the following circumstances:

a) Failure to provide quality supervision as evidenced by:
   • candidate complaints which can be verified after investigation, and/or,
   • candidate requests for a change in supervisor, and/or,
   • candidate withdrawals from candidature, and/or,
• a low rate of completions, and/or,
• a lack of timely completions;

b) Failure to adhere to the University’s codes of practice, legislation, policy or procedures, including participation in the required supervisor training/development;

c) Failure to maintain “active” researcher status as defined in the Schedule.

In the event that the Dean, DVC (RI) or Nominee becomes aware of any of the circumstances listed above a review of supervisor registration may occur. This review will be conducted by the Dean or nominee in conjunction with the RHDS and Research Services, and will include consultation with the supervisor and previous/current candidates as appropriate. Where the nature of the circumstances leading to non-renewal or revocation investigation are a breach of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, matters will be dealt with in accordance to the Research Integrity Policy.

The outcomes of such a review may be a recommendation to the DVC (RI) for one of the following:
• No further action required;
• Continued supervision with mediation between the supervisor and candidate(s);
• Continued supervision with the addition of a performance development plan, including mentoring, and a School approved supervisory plan for current candidates;
• A change in the category of supervision with the addition of a performance development plan, including mentoring, and a School approved supervisory plan for current candidates;
• A temporary freeze on new supervision with the addition of a performance development plan;
• Temporary suspension of supervision registration with the addition of a performance development plan, and a School approved supervisory plan for current candidates;
• Discontinuation of registration with appropriate intervention which may include putting in place a performance development plan or other measures, and a School approved supervisory plan for current candidates.

A review of supervision registration will adhere to the University’s Guidelines for Fair and Transparent Decision Making. Appeals against outcomes from the review process will be heard by the appropriate DVC in accordance with the University’s Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure. Any matters arising from the review that relate to academic misconduct will be dealt with in accordance with the University’s Staff Code of Conduct Policy and Responsible Conduct of Research Policy.

Role and Responsibilities of HDR Candidate Supervisors

Principal Supervisor

The principal supervisor has responsibilities which include:

1. Abiding by all relevant legislation and University policies and operating in accord with the code of supervisory practices adopted by the Academic Board, including professional development and performance review;
2. Providing appropriate academic support throughout the candidature to enable the candidate to achieve the highest standard of research;
3. Suggesting ways that the candidate can make the most effective use of their time. This will involve discussing the nature of research with the candidate and the standard expected for particular degrees, the choice of the research topic, the planning of the research program, and the availability of library resources in the field, and bibliographical and technical assistance;
4. Maintaining close and regular contact with the candidate and establishing at the beginning the basis on which contact will be made. This will facilitate the supervisor's role in advising the candidate on the pace of progress, and ensuring that a reasonable timetable is set to permit the degree to be completed in the appropriate time;
5. Requiring written work from the candidate on a pre-arranged and agreed schedule so that their progress can be assessed at regular intervals;
6. Providing advice, guidance and support for the candidate in preparation for the confirmation process;
7. Monitoring carefully the performance of the candidate relative to the standard required for the degree, providing an assessment of the candidate's progress via the Annual and Interim Progress report procedures, and ensuring that inadequate progress or work below the standard generally expected is brought to the candidate's attention. The supervisor should help with developing solutions to problems as they are identified;
8. Using the regular progress reporting procedures established by the institution as the minimum means by which any difficulties and problems discussed with the candidate during the year are noted; supervisors should also indicate the action taken or advice given. If the problem is not resolved, the Dean or nominee, in the first instance should be involved; and the Dean or nominee and the Research Higher Degrees Sub-Committee should be notified in writing of continuing problems between reporting periods;
9. Commenting on the content and the drafts of the thesis and, at the time of submission, certifying that the thesis is properly presented, conforms to the Regulations and is therefore, prima facie, worthy of examination;
10. Advising the relevant institutional committee of the names and credentials of suitable examiners;
11. Fulfilling other institution-specific obligations regarding supervision; and
12. Providing career advice and assistance to the candidate as appropriate.

Associate Supervisors

The associate supervisor has responsibilities which include:
1. Abiding by all relevant legislation and University policies and operating in accord with the code of supervisory practices adopted by the Academic Board, including professional development and performance review;
2. Acting as principal supervisor when the principal supervisor is absent for a period of up to 3 months;
3. Participating in annual progress reporting processes;
4. Attending supervisory meetings as agreed to by the principal supervisor;
5. Providing general or specific expertise to broaden the range of expertise available to the candidate;
6. Advising, as agreed with the principal supervisor, on aspects of the research;
7. Assisting the principal supervisor in determining the readiness of the thesis/portfolio for examination;
8. Other duties not defined above.

The role of the associate supervisor should be negotiated with the principal supervisor early in candidature and should be conveyed to the candidate so that all parties understand the associate supervisor's role.

Co-supervisors

The co-supervisor has responsibilities which include:
1. Abiding by all relevant legislation and University policies and operating in accord with the code of supervisory practices adopted by the Academic Board, including professional development and performance review;
2. Agreeing to take direction in respect of supervision from the Dean of nominee;
3. Providing advice in their areas of expertise and taking advice from the Principal Supervisor with respect to the broader aspects of the higher degree by research process

Research Activity

For the purposes of this policy, research activity, as defined in the Schedule, is to be used to determine whether a nominated supervisor meets the ‘research active’ requirement:

Candidate-supervisor Expectations and Agreement on Candidature Arrangements

The mutual responsibilities and expectations of the candidate and supervisor are described in detail in the Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Candidates Procedure and specifically addressed in the Candidate-Principal Supervisor Agreement on Candidature Arrangements Form
The agreement should be completed within 6 months of the commencement of full time candidature, or equivalent, must be appended to the candidate's first Annual Progress Report.

Changes to the agreement should ideally be agreed to by both the candidate and the supervisor, however, extenuating circumstances may not facilitate this. Changes to the agreement are approved by the RHDSC.

**Supervision Load**

The normal maximum supervision load that may be carried by supervisors in different categories are presented below. In exceptional circumstances these loads may be subject to adjustment; such adjustment requires the approval of the Dean or nominee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Load</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Supervisor</td>
<td>Where other duties are not reduced, normally not more than 6 equivalent full-time candidates; where the principal supervisor is a full time researcher, normally not more than 12 equivalent full-time candidates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisional Principal Supervisor</td>
<td>Where other duties are not reduced, normally not more than 4 equivalent full-time candidates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Supervisor</td>
<td>Where other duties are not reduced, normally not a member of more than 4 supervisory panels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co Supervisor</td>
<td>Normally not a member of more than 4 supervisory panels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Change of Supervisor**

Requests for changes to a candidate's supervisory panel should be made using the appropriate form.

The student or supervisor may request a change in supervisory arrangements at any time during the period of candidature. The RHDSC approves changes to supervision arrangements.

If a principal or associate supervisor ceases their employment or Honorary/Adjunct appointment with the University prior to the candidate completing their program then a new principal or associate supervisor must be appointed in consultation with the candidate. Such a change in supervision must be approved by the Dean or nominee and the DVC (RI) or nominee.

If, prior to the commencement of candidature, the intended Principal Supervisor becomes unavailable to supervise the candidate for the normal duration of the program, then supervisory arrangements must be changed and agreed to prior to the candidate's commencement.

If a principal supervisor is unavailable for a continuous period of up to 3 months then the associate supervisor may, with the approval of the Dean or nominee, act as the principal supervisor. If the principal supervisor is unavailable for a continuous period in excess of 3 months then supervisory arrangements should be reviewed by the School and, with the approval of the Dean or nominee, adjusted as necessary.

If, at any time during the period of candidature, the Dean or nominee believe that supervisory arrangements have become unsatisfactory they may assign new or additional supervisors in consultation with the candidate.

**Responsibilities for Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Candidates Procedure**

The University’s Responsibilities for Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Candidates Procedure identifies the reciprocal and shared responsibilities of the University, Schools and Schools, HDR candidate supervisors and HDR candidates. The Code is based in part upon the principles outlined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.
Supporting Documents

- Australian Qualifications Framework.
- TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework.
- Higher Degree by Research Candidate Supervision Procedure.
- Higher Degrees by Research Roles and responsibilities Procedure.
- Application form for Admission to the Register of Higher Degree by Research Supervisors.
- Federation University Australia Responsibilities for the Provision of Research Higher Degrees (these details are included in the Higher Degrees by Research Roles and Responsibilities Procedure).
- Federation University Australia - Joint NHMRC /AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice (these details are included in the Higher Degrees by Research Roles and Responsibilities Procedure).
- Attributes Expected Of Higher Degree by Research Graduates of Federation University Australia.

Forms.

- [Schedule - Minimum Research Achievement for Supervision Registration](PDF 117.9kb)

Responsibility

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) has overall responsibility for all matters related to the supervision of Higher Degree by Research students.

Promulgation

The [HDR Supervision Policy](#) will be communicated throughout the University via:

1. an Announcement Notice under ‘FedNews’ website and through the University Policy - ‘Recently Approved Documents’ webpage to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy;
2. inclusion on the University Policy, Procedure and Forms website; and/or
3. distribution of e-mails to Head of School / Head of Department / University staff; and/or
4. documentation distribution, eg. posters, brochures.
5. Other - please describe

Implementation

The [HDR Supervision Policy](#) will be implemented throughout the University via:

1. information Sessions; and/or
2. training Sessions; and/or
3. Other - please describe

Records Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Responsible Officer</th>
<th>Minimum Retention Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application form for admission to the Register of Higher Degree</td>
<td>Research Services</td>
<td>Director, Research Services</td>
<td>Temporary - retain 12 months after application decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Responsible Officer</td>
<td>Minimum Retention Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application forms for appointment as:</td>
<td>Research Services website.</td>
<td>Director, Research Services</td>
<td>Temporary - retain 12 months after application decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor for Provisional Principal Supervisors &amp;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provisional Principal Supervisor.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register of Higher Degree Research Supervisors</td>
<td>Research Services website:</td>
<td>Director, Research Services</td>
<td>Temporary - retain 50 years after last supervision of student</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.federation.edu.au">http://www.federation.edu.au</a></td>
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</table>