HDR Supervision Procedure

Policy code:	RS2090
Policy owner:	Dean, Graduate Research School
Approval authority:	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Approval date:	05 October 2026
Next review date:	05 October 2029

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Purpose

This procedure 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 procedure applies to all Higher Degree by Research candidature applicants, candidates, and persons with supervisory or administrative responsibilities for HDR candidates and candidature applications.

Legislative context

- Federation University Australia Act 2010
- The Tertiary Education Quality and StandardsAgency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act)
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines Research 2017

Definitions

Term	Definition
Candidate	Student enrolled in a higher degree by research program.
Confirmation of Candidature (CoC)	Milestone by which a candidate confirms that their research project is viable and is approved by the CoC panel to continue their project.
Deferment	A period of up to 12 months, normally covering the academic year, before a student, who has been offered a place in a higher education course, enrols in that course.
Designated Cohort	An approved group of potential applicants, identified as having common characteristics (such as completion of a particular qualification) for the purposes of gaining special entry.
Dean, GRS	Dean, Graduate Research School – academic staff member responsible for overseeing HDR programs, HDR candidates and supervisors.
EFTSL	Estimated full time study load.

Employee	Any staff member employed by FedUni to undertake academic activity, including permanent, fixed term contract, casual, honorary and adjunct appointments.
Enrolment	The process by which a person, having received a written offer of a place, shall register their program and course of study with FedUni by submitting a form of enrolment signed by both the applicant and the program coordinator or person of equivalent authority.
GRS	Graduate Research School
GRSB	Graduate Research School Board
HDR	Higher Degree by Research
HDR Program	One of the following courses of study: Masters Degree Research, Doctoral Degree (Research), or Doctoral Degree (Professional).
HDR candidate	A Federation student enrolled in a Masters Degree (Research), Doctoral Degree (Research), or Doctoral Degree (Professional).
HDRC	Higher Degree by Research Coordinator
IELTS	International English Language Testing System.
Institute	Academic unit of FedUni
Leave from studies	Period of either six or 12 months, covering a normal teaching period(s), where an enrolled student is excused from formal study.
Offer	Offer of Admission to Candidature – The written offer provided to an applicant for admission to a HDR program.
Off-campus candidate	Where a candidate studies from a location other than on campus or an approved external facility.
Principal Supervisor	A staff member of FedUni who meets the requirements of and has been approved for inclusion to the Register of Supervisors as a principal supervisor and has primary oversight of an HDR candidate's research.
Associate supervisor	A staff member of FedUni who meets the requirements of and has been approved for inclusion to the Register of Supervisors as a supervisor and provides support to an HDR candidate and to the Principal Supervisor.
External supervisor	An individual who is external to FedUni who meets the requirements of and has been approved for inclusion to the Register of Supervisors as a supervisor and provides support to the candidate and to the Principal Supervisor.
Probationary candidate	A FedUni student enrolled in a Masters Degree (Research), Doctoral Degree (Research), or Doctoral Degree (Professional) who has not yet completed the confirmation of candidature process.
Provisional principal supervisor	A staff member who does not meet the requirements to be listed as a principal supervisor on the Register of Supervisors but has the support of their School to act as a principal supervisor under the guidance of a mentor who is registered as a Principal Supervisor.

RTP (Research Training Program)	Federal Government funding scheme that enables the provision of higher degree by research fee offset and stipend scholarships.
Stipend	A fortnightly scholarship paid to a candidate to cover living expenses.
Scholarship Program	A scholarship or cluster of scholarships that share attributes, strategic alignment, and/or industry engagement.
Candidate / Supervisor agreement	Formal written agreement outlining meeting methods,
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency

1. Supervision categories

Meeting the requirements for registration as a supervisor is only part of the criteria for allocation to a supervisory panel. Relevant research expertise, supervision track-record and available workload are taken into consideration when forming supervisor panels.

Federation University has five higher degree supervision categories, as described below:

- Mentor supervisor
- Principal supervisor
- Provisional principal supervisor
- Associate supervisor
- External supervisor

1.1 Mentor supervisor

Mentor supervisors work with supervisory panels or individual supervisors, such as provisional principal supervisors, that require support.

1.2 Principal supervisor

Principal supervisors have overall responsibility for the coordination of the supervision panel. The principal supervisor has responsibility for ensuring that appropriate academic and research support is available to the candidate and for the project, providing advice and guidance through all stages and milestones of candidature, including the examination process, and monitoring the progress of the candidate's project. The principal supervisor also has academic and administrative responsibilities for the candidate as described in the Research and Research Training Policy, associated procedures and guidelines. It is also the responsibility of the principal supervisor to lead the supervisory panel in supporting the candidate.

1.3 Provisional principal supervisor

Provisional principal supervisors have similar responsibilities as principal supervisors; however they will be supported by a mentor supervisor. Provisional principal supervisor status may be granted where inexperienced supervisors have demonstrated a commitment to HDR training and the application is supported by their line manager.

1.4 Associate supervisors

Associate supervisors, in coordination with the principal supervisor, have responsibility to provide academic and research support to the candidate and project and may be required to provide specialist knowledge or skills training to the candidate. The associate supervisor should support the principal supervisor and contribute to the continued progress of the candidate and project. The associate supervisor may act as the principal supervisor for a period of up to three months where the principal supervisor is absent or unavailable.

1.5 External supervisors

External supervisors work with the supervision panel to support the candidate through the provision of academic, research or specialist advice while abiding by University candidature and supervision requirements. Registration is normally approved on a candidate-by-candidate basis for this category.

2. Supervisor register

All supervisors, including external supervisors and supervisors who are Federation University staff members must be listed on the Register of Supervisors to be allocated to a supervisory panel.

2.1 Eligibility for registration

Principal, provisional principal and associate supervisors must:

- Be a staff member of Federation University, and
- Meet the Minimum Research Threshold for Supervisor Registration as outlined in the HDR Supervision Guidelines, and
- Meet and maintain the professional development training requirements for supervisors, as determined by the University.

Inclusion on the Register of Supervisors does not guarantee the allocation of HDR candidates to a supervisor or inclusion of the supervisor on a supervision panel. Appointment to supervisory panels is outlined in Section 6. Supervisory panels.

2.2 Principal supervisors

In addition to the requirements in Section 2.1 Eligibility for registration, for registration as a principal supervisor, applicants must;

- Hold an AQF 10 qualification or equivalent, as determined by TEQSA.
- Hold an academic position within the University.
- Have supervised at least one HDR completion at the level for which they intend to supervise.

Applicants may request appointment to supervise a PhD candidate at the level of principal supervisor where they do not meet the completion requirement but can demonstrate equivalent experience through at least two research masters completions as principal supervisor.

2.3 Mentor supervisors

Mentor supervisors must meet the requirements of section 12.2 for principal supervisors and have a demonstrated track record of success in HDR supervision, as evidenced by at least five HDR completions.

2.4 Provisional principal supervisors

In addition to the requirements in Section 2.1 Eligibility for registration, to be registered as a provisional principal supervisor, the applicant must be able to demonstrate:

- commitment to professional development in research training, and
- active participation in supervision panels at the associate supervisor level.

Provisional principal supervisors must be allocated a mentor supervisor. On completion of their first HDR candidate, provisional principal supervisors will be automatically transferred to full principal supervisor registration.

A provisional principal supervisor would not normally supervise more than one candidate in this role.

2.5 Associate supervisors

In considering the requirements in Section 2.1 Eligibility for registration, where an applicant for registration as an associate supervisor completed their HDR program within the last 12 months or has had a significant interruption to their academic career, the requirement to meet Minimum Research Achievement threshold may be waived.

2.6 External supervisors

External supervisors are normally registered to supervise a specific candidate or identified cohort of candidates. Where an external supervisor is appointed for a specific candidate, they will be removed from the Register once their candidate/s complete.

- Where an external supervisor is appointed to a panel to provide academic and research support, the external supervisor must:
  - Be external to the University,
  - Hold an AQF 10 qualification or equivalent, as determined by TEQSA, and
  - Have a record of research achievement.
- Where an external supervisor is appointed to a panel to provide industry, cultural or other specialised knowledge and support for technical, cultural, or other specific skill sets, the external supervisor must:
  - Be external to the University,
  - Demonstrate that they have relevant expertise or experience
    - Examples may include formal or informal recognition as a cultural, industry or community leader; a history of employment in a relevant industry setting,
  - Have a record of achievement and/or obtained a significant level of esteem within their industry or community setting.

2.7 Training requirements for registration and continuing professional development

Prospective supervisors are required to undertake professional development activities, as outlined in section 5. Supervisor training and professional development.

2.8 Admittance to the Register of Supervisors

Application to the Register of Supervisors must be endorsed by the applicant's workload supervisor and organisational unit and approved by the Dean, Graduate Research School, or nominee. Initial admittance to the register is for a four-year period from the date of approval.

2.9 Maintenance of the Register of Supervisors

The Graduate Research School maintains the supervision register and records the relevant supervisor training activity undertaken.

3. Renewal, review, and removal of supervision status

3.1 Renewal

Each supervisor's registration status will be periodically assessed by the Graduate Research School. Supervisors who continue to meet the requirements outlined in Section 2. Supervisor registration and Section 4. Responsibilities and conduct will retain their status, or their supervision category upgraded where they have achieved the requirements of another category (ie, upgraded from associate supervisor to principal supervisor).

Where a staff member with principal supervisor status has not supervised a candidate in three or more years, their status may be transferred to that of associate supervisor. If a supervisor has not supervised a candidate for more than four years, they may be removed from the register and may apply to be readmitted.

Where the supervisor has not maintained their professional development hours but meets all other requirements, their supervision status would normally be suspended until training has been undertaken. Where a supervisor has been suspended due to this clause for a period of 90 days, their supervisor status will be reviewed, as per section 3.2 Review.

Where a staff member no longer meets the requirements outlined in Section 2. Supervisor registration or Section 4. Responsibilities and conduct, their status will be reviewed.

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3.3 Review.

Where a supervisor no longer meets the requirements outlined in Section 2. Supervisor registration or Section 4. Responsibilities and conduct, their supervision status will be subject to review. The Dean, Graduate Research School, in consultation with the supervisor's line manager(s), will consider the supervisor's status and activity. The recommendations following a review may be one or more of the following:

- Management of the issue via the relevant organisational unit(s)
- The GRS and/or the relevant organisational unit(s) will continue to monitor the supervisor's activity over the next 12-month period
- Change of supervision level from principal to provisional principal supervisor and the supervisor will be assigned a mentor, as per section 2.3.
- Change of supervisor level from principal or provisional principal to associate supervisor,
- Revocation of supervisory registration via the process of suspension and removal described below.

3.4 Suspension and removal

If, on review, a supervisor is found to no longer meet the requirements for registration, their supervisor status may be suspended. Supervision status may also be suspended due to serious candidate complaints, academic

misconduct, or research misconduct processes. Where supervisor conduct falls into one of these categories, it will be dealt with under the related procedure or process.

If a supervisor does not contest a suspension decision, or the decision to suspend the supervisor is upheld following contest, they will be removed from the register.

Where a principal supervisor is suspended, the associate supervisor may act in the role of principal supervisor for a period of up to three months. Where a supervisor is removed from the register, or where the period of suspension is for greater than three months, the supervisory panel must be reviewed by the Graduate Research School in consultation with the relevant organisational unit (e.g. Research Centre or discipline area) to ensure that it meets Federation university supervision requirements.

3.5 Contesting review outcome

Where a supervisor has been suspended from the Register of Supervisors and they contest the decision, they may do so by writing to the Chair, Research Committee, or nominee within 10 business days of receiving notification of their suspension.

4. Responsibilities and performance

4.1 Responsibility and conduct

The roles and responsibilities for HDR supervisors are described in detail in the HDR Supervisor Toolkit. All supervisors have a responsibility to ensure they adhere to University policies in performing their supervision duties, including undertaking the administrative duties associated with supervisory practice, such as completing progress reporting and responding to candidates within a reasonable timeframe.

All Supervisors, including external supervisors, are expected to act with the highest standards of conduct and integrity and in alignment with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. All supervisors should be particularly mindful of the power imbalance that exists between candidates and supervisors. Supervisors are expected to actively work to ensure that this is not abused, and that all candidates are provided with an appropriate and supportive professional environment in which to undertake their program of research and study. Supervisors are strongly encouraged to set clear boundaries in their professional relationships with candidates and to communicate these early in candidature. Supervisors should refer to the Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships Guidelines for guidance.

4.2 Performance

Where a supervisor is not performing at the required standard (for example, not supporting the candidate to complete their research in a responsible manner, or to meet their responsibilities under the HDR Candidate Procedure) their supervisor registration may be subject to review.

5. Supervisor training and professional development

The Graduate Research School provides induction, orientation and continued professional development training for supervisors via the Skills for Supervisors program.

5.1 Initial registration training

Prospective supervisors are required to participate in 8 hours of internal or approved external supervisor training prior to their admittance to the Supervisor Register. Up to six hours of recognition of prior learning is available for experienced supervisors who are joining Federation from another Institution. External supervisors are not required to participate in supervisor training.

All prospective supervisors must undertake the following training (equivalent to one hour of training for each session):

- S4S Induction
- S4S Policy update

All registered supervisors are expected to complete all mandatory University training, such as but not limited to;

- Research Integrity training
- Privacy and Data protection

5.2 Continued registration training

Staff appointed as Principal or Associate Supervisors are required to participate in at least two hours of research training or supervision related professional development each year, on average over each four-year period.

6. Supervisor panels

6.1 Appointment to a supervisor panel

A supervisory panel will be formed for each HDR candidate. Panels will comprise of at least:

- One Principal Supervisor, and
- One or more Associate Supervisor/s.

Supervisor panels should normally be comprised of two Federation University staff members in the capacity of principal supervisor and associate supervisor. At least one panel member must be a paid University staff member, with a contract that exceeds the period of candidature. Additional supervisors may be appointed as associate or external supervisors. Normally, supervision panels should not exceed five members. Where a candidate or project involves Indigenous peoples, places or knowledge, it is strongly recommended that membership of the supervisory panel reflects this.

To be eligible for consideration for a supervision panel, supervisors must:

- Have the workload capability, and
- Be able to demonstrate expertise in the field of the research project, and
- Have the appropriate registration level.

All individuals on the supervisory panels must be endorsed by their respective manager with delegated authority for the workload of the members of the supervisory team.

Adjunct staff members appointed to panels as a Principal or Associate Supervisor must also provide evidence of workload availability to meet this requirement.

All panels and panel membership are subject to the approval of the Dean, Graduate Research School.

6.2 Panel Chair

A panel chair will be allocated to each supervisory panel to assist in matters such as Confirmation of Candidature. This would normally be the Higher Degree by Research Coordinator for the discipline of the principal supervisor. This role may be filled by another academic staff member on a case-by-case basis on request of the HDRC in conjunction with the principal supervisor. Where a conflict of interest does arise another senior staff member for the academic area will perform this role.

7. Resignation of a Supervisor

Where practicable, all members of the supervisory panel, as well as the candidate, should be consulted prior to the resignation of a panel member.

Resignation from a supervision panel will be facilitated where:

- the candidate's topic has changed substantially, such that the supervisor's expertise area no longer matches with the proposed area of study, or
- the supervisor experiences a change in role or availability (e.g., takes up a new role within the University, transfers to another institution, resigns or retires from the University).

When circumstances arise whereby the professional relationship between the candidate and/or supervisor/s becomes no longer tenable, supervisors are expected to work with the candidate and/or other supervisors to resolve the issue(s) in the first instance. Where an issue cannot be resolved, formal notification must be made to the relevant HDR Coordinator, who will then work with the candidate and supervision panel either to resolve the matter or so that alternative supervisory arrangements can be made.

8. Workload and Supervision limits

8.1 Workload

The University's Enterprise Agreement sets out key principles for the calculation of workload allocation for HDR supervisors. This includes information about workload for employees undertaking roles as principal and associate supervisors, noting that:

- a part-time candidate shall attract half the workload allocation of a full-time candidate
- a candidate who is under examination or on leave does not attract workload for workload calculation purposes.

The relative proportion of workload that is allocated across the supervisory team is standardised, unless the Graduate Research School is notified in writing via the Candidate / Supervisor Agreement or Change of Supervisor form to an alternative arrangement agreed by members of the supervision panel. The standard division of workload for the supervisory panel is described in the HDR Supervision Guidelines.

All workload associated with supervision must be approved by the staff member's line manager.

8.2 Supervision limits

The number of supervisory panels on which a supervisor may participate is limited, consistent with ACGR best practice principles. Any registered supervisor will not normally supervise more than:

- For full-time staff holding 'Research Only' positions:
  - six FTE candidates as a principal supervisor, and
  - six FTE candidates as an associate supervisor,
- For full-time staff holding 'Teaching and Research' positions:

- four FTE candidates as a principal supervisor, and
- four FTE candidates as an associate supervisor.

In formulating these limitations, each Principal Supervisor is appointed on the assumption they will take 60% of the panel workload, and each Associate Supervisor with 40% of the panel workload. In recognition that this is not always the case, supervisors may be appointed to additional panels up the equivalent of these workloads. Supervision limits for part-time staff should be commensurate according to their fraction.

A supervisor may apply to increase the total number of candidates they supervise, and/or the mix of principal and associate supervisions, by submitting a request in writing to the Dean, Graduate Research School, with support from the relevant line manager or Research Centre Director (or equivalent). Any supervisory workload is subject to the approval of the supervisor's line manager.

The Graduate Research School will maintain a database of the supervisory profile of the University, including the EFSTL being carried out by each supervisor on the Register. This information will be made available to Research Centre Directors, Executive Deans of Institutes, line managers and others by request. It is expected that supervisors will review their supervision registration (including their category of registration) and their membership of current supervisor panels and the supervision limit, prior to discussing supervision opportunities with new applicants or transferring candidates.

9. Respectful Supervisory Relationships and Conflicts of Interest in supervision

Supervisors must adhere to the Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships published by Universities Australia

All parties should consult the Australian Council of Graduate Research's Guidelines for Managing Conflicts of Interest which provides assistance in identifying major and minor types of conflict.

Examples of a conflict of interest in HDR supervision may include (but are not limited to) personal, financial or line management relationships existing:

- between the supervisor/s and the candidate
- amongst the supervisory panel, or
- with other relevant parties, including formal and informal readers, reviewers and examiners.

Where a major conflict of interest is identified as per the Australian Council of Graduate Research's Guidelines for Managing Conflicts of Interest, these must be managed. Information on conflicts of interest will be collected from all members of the supervisory panel, prior to approving the addition of a supervisor to a panel. Where necessary, these declarations will be accompanied by a statement describing how the conflict of interest will be managed.

Examples of how CoIs should be managed will include:

- Appointment of additional paid Federation staff member as a panel member
- Removal or non-appointment of panel member/s
- Appointment of a Mentor Supervisor to oversee the panel
- Including measures in the Candidate / Supervisor Agreement

Where a conflict of interest emerges during a period of candidature, the onus is on the supervisor to report the conflict of interest to the Director of the appropriate Research Centre, where relevant, and the Dean, Graduate Research School.

10. Supervising research projects that incorporate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, practices, places and/or cultural knowledge.

For projects involving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, practices, places, and/or cultural knowledge, candidates and supervisory teams must comply with the most recent version of the following documents, as indicated in the Research and Research Training Policy:

- *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*;
- *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders and Keeping research on track 11*; and
- *CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance*.
- *Chapter 4.7 of the National Statement on the Ethical Conduct in Human Research*

Non-Indigenous Supervisors of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students should engage with cultural competency training, current literature and best practice guides to continue to develop their Indigenous knowledge and cultural understanding, in addition to their research expertise.

11. Supervision of Offshore Candidates at partner locations

Support for offshore supervision can be found in the Guide to Offshore Supervision section of the HDR Supervision Toolkit.

12. Supervision responsibilities and Artificial Intelligence

Supervisors have a responsibility to guide HDR students in the appropriate and ethical use of artificial intelligence in research. Supervisors should be monitoring the use of AI in student research, and providing direction to students on recording how and where AI has contributed to the research project. Further guidance can be found in the Guidelines for HDR candidates on the use of Generative AI and the Federation University Artificial Intelligence Guidelines.

13. Graduate Certificate in Research and supervision of HDR

Graduate Certificate in Research (GCR) students must be supervised by Federation University staff members. Panels may consist of one or two staff members, approved by the Course Coordinator, GCR. Where there are two supervisors, one must be designated as the lead supervisor. Supervisors of GCR students do not have to be listed on the register of HDR supervisors to oversee a research project at this level. Supervisors of this program are expected to adhere to the practices and standards outlined in The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, the Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships and the ACGR Guide to Managing Conflict of Interest.

Supervisors of the Graduate Certificate in Research must adhere to the Fourth Year Honours Program Procedure, Sections F-H in participating in supervisory panels for students at this level.

Supporting Documents

- Research and Research Training Policy
- HDR Admission and Induction Guidelines RS2099

- HDR Candidate Procedure RS2091
- HDR Candidature Guidelines RS2097
- HDR in Partnership Procedure RS1934
- HDR Scholarship Guidelines RS2098
- HDR Supervision Procedure RS2090
- HDR Supervision Toolkit

Responsibility

- The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (as the Approval Authority) is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this procedure.
- The Dean, Graduate Research School (as the Document Owner) is responsible for maintaining the content of this procedure as delegated by the Approval Authority.

Promulgation and implementation

This procedure will be communicated throughout the University community via*:*

1. Announcement posts via FedNews and FedEngage and on the 'Recently Approved Documents' page on the University's Policy Central website
2. Distribution of e-mails to Head of Institute/School / Head of Department / University staff.
3. Staff induction sessions.
4. Notification to Institutes/Schools/Federation TAFE.