

Higher Degree Research Candidate and Supervision Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to specify the responsibilities of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Professional Doctorate and Masters by Research Candidates and Supervisors, and to provide a clear set of parameters within which Supervisors and Candidates may negotiate the details of research and supervision.

Scope

(2) This Policy applies to Higher Degree by Research (Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Professional Doctorate and Masters by Research) Candidates, Supervisors, and Schools and Special Research Centres (SRC) involved in Higher Degree by Research candidacy.

Section 2 - Definitions

(3) For the purposes of this Policy:

- a. Associate Supervisor:
 - i. a supervisor of a Higher Degree by Research Candidate who may or may not be a staff member of this university, who has relevant expertise to the project but has not been appointed to an Adjunct position;
- b. Candidate:
 - i. a person who has been accepted for admission to, or is enrolled in a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD), Professional Doctorate or Masters by Research offered at, or in conjunction with, Southern Cross University;
- c. Close Personal Relationship:
 - i. one which gives rise to a real or potential conflict of interest and includes relatives, spouses (including de facto spouses), and financial relationships;
- d. Co-Supervisor:
 - i. an SCU registered supervisor of a Higher Degree by Research Candidate who shares workload responsibility, in terms of the research and research supervision, with the Principal Supervisor. Co-Supervisors are involved in, and contribute to, the administration of supervisory process. A Co-Supervisor may have a greater supervisory contribution than the Principal Supervisor if they are more appropriate for the supervision of the project but cannot fulfil the role of Principal Supervisor;
- e. Higher Degrees Research Committee (HDRC):
 - i. the HDRC is the advisory committee to the Academic Board on issues of Higher Degrees Research Rules, Policy, Procedures and Guidelines and training across the University;
- f. Principal Supervisor:
 - i. an SCU registered supervisor of a Higher Degree by Research Candidate who is responsible and accountable for the Candidate's supervision, and for the administration of supervisory process (e.g.

completion and submission of progress reports, recommendation of examiners, etc), and who normally has the majority load of supervision;

- g. School or Special Research Centre Director of Higher Degrees Research Training (SDHDRT):
 - i. a School or Special Research Centre (SRC) Director of Higher Degrees Research Training is the individual appointed in each School/SRC who is dedicated to managing and facilitating the Higher Degrees Research program. Each SDHDRT is a member of the University's Higher Degrees Research Committee (HDRC);
- h. Supervisor:
 - i. an Associate Supervisor, Co-Supervisor, or Principal Supervisor.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(4) The University will ensure appropriate supervision for all Higher Degree by Research Candidates in all Schools and Special Research Centres.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Responsibility of the University

Graduate School

(5) The Graduate School will:

- a. adhere to the University's standards for admission and requirements for the particular degree as established by the Academic Board;
- b. ensure adequate and accurate information is provided prior to enrolment;
- c. ensure induction and orientation procedures are followed by Supervisors and Candidates;
- d. make available to each Candidate at enrolment:
 - i. the relevant policies, including this document and the [Research Responsible Conduct Policy](#), and Specific Award Rules governing the appropriate degree; and
 - ii. general guidance for all aspects of candidature, including the thesis examination process, and outlining in particular the University's expectations for research higher degrees;
- e. make available to each Supervisor, a copy of the relevant policies, including this document, [Research Responsible Conduct Policy](#), and the Rules governing the appropriate degree;
- f. ensure all Supervisors are aware of the necessity to implement the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#), and are aware, where applicable, of the working procedures of the ethics committees;
- g. ensure provision is made for professional development of Supervisors and potential Supervisors;
- h. provide reasonable opportunities for Candidates and Supervisors to make representations as appropriate;
- i. subject to Academic Board approval, ensure there are appeals procedures setting out the grounds on which, and means whereby, Candidates may appeal against the conduct and outcome of the examination and evaluation of their candidature;
- j. take measures to protect the intellectual property arising from the work of Candidates in accordance with the University's [Intellectual Property Rights Policy](#);
- k. administer progress reporting requirements and monitor their effectiveness, with additional care taken for international candidates;
- l. ensure the views of both the Candidate and Supervisors may be represented adequately through progress

- reporting;
- m. provide clear guidance for examiners, outlining the University's expectations for the particular award;
 - n. maintain confidentiality of the examination process;
 - o. ensure no person is appointed as a Principal Supervisor or Co-Supervisor unless they appear on the [SCU HDR Supervisor Register](#); and
 - p. where the Candidate is an international student, ensure at least one Supervisor is located at the campus where the Candidate is undertaking the majority of their study.

Responsibility of the Dean, Graduate Studies

(6) The Dean, Graduate Studies will be responsible for:

- a. approving the appointment of Supervisors prior to the commencement of a degree; and
- b. appointing appropriate supervision if the Principal Supervisor is to be temporarily absent in excess of a period of four weeks, or if the Principal Supervisor leaves the University.

Responsibility of the School/SRC:

(7) Schools and Special Research Centres will:

- a. ensure that reasonable space, facilities, and resources are made available to Candidates, as appropriate to the field of study;
- b. maximise the likelihood of the Candidate's success by ensuring that:
 - i. the applicant is eligible and qualified for admission to candidature;
 - ii. the applicant has demonstrated capacity to undertake the program in the required amount of time;
 - iii. the proposed research is appropriate and feasible for the degree;
 - iv. information is available to prospective Candidates about the research interests and academic experience of academic staff;
 - v. the Candidate has appropriate supervision (including a minimum of one Principal Supervisor and one Co-Supervisor) at all times; and
 - vi. Principal Supervisors, and those Co-Supervisors with greater supervisory loads than Principal Supervisors, are actively carrying out research and publishing in the Candidate's relevant discipline area, and that there is a clear relationship between the proposed project and the proposed Supervisors.
- c. ensure the workload of Supervisors allows sufficient time for adequate supervision of the Candidate, and the allocation of other workload and obligations are taken into consideration;
- d. address unsatisfactory progress or delays in progress reporting or confirmation of candidature promptly and appropriately, in consultation, where appropriate, with the Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) and Director SCU International;
- e. recommend to the Dean, Graduate Studies appropriate supervision arrangements if the Principal Supervisor is to be temporarily absent in excess of a period of four weeks, or if the Principal Supervisor leaves the University;
- f. ensure confirmation of candidature committees are established to assess the performance of the Candidate against the compulsory criteria and within the required time period;
- g. ensure mechanisms are in place to promote regular consultation, interaction, and development of productive intellectual relationships between the academic unit's staff and Candidates;
- h. address any conflicts that may arise between Supervisors and Candidates, and ensure they are resolved in an appropriate and timely manner; and
- i. ensure a positive research culture and scholarly environment within Schools and SRCs is promoted for the benefit of Candidates;

- j. when the Candidate is an international student, adhere to the requirements of the [Education Services for Overseas Students \(ESOS\) Act](#) and associated legislation, including the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007;
- k. in accordance with the [Code of Conduct](#), declare and minimise any potential conflicts of interest between candidates and supervisors by ensuring:
 - i. no supervisor is in a Close Personal Relationship with the candidate;
 - ii. no Principal Supervisor is a direct manager of a candidate who is a permanent employee of the university;
 - iii. any supervisory panel consisting of supervisors who are in Close Personal Relationships must have a third supervisor appointed; and
 - iv. if any circumstances arise during the candidature relating to the above potential conflicts of interest, ensure that consequential changes are made to the supervisory team.

Responsibility of the Supervisors:

(8) Supervisors of Candidates will:

- a. be approved by the Dean, Graduate Studies prior to the commencement of the degree;
- b. have a thorough understanding of the University's current Rules, Policies, Procedures and Guidelines so that accurate advice and appropriate support is given to the Candidate;
- c. in accordance with the [Code of Conduct](#), declare the existence of, or the potential for, a conflict of interest, in relation to any candidate under their supervision or proposed for supervision;
- d. participate in Supervision workshops as required by the University;
- e. as their main role, provide academic support throughout the candidature to enable the Candidate to achieve a high standard of research activity and output;
- f. establish and maintain an agreement for the frequency of meeting with the Candidate. This Supervisor Candidate Agreement will be negotiated prior to enrolment, and should be reviewed throughout the duration of the candidature. If a new Supervisor is appointed, or Supervisory roles change, the Supervisor Candidate Agreement must be reviewed and a new Agreement signed and submitted. If a Supervisor will be away for an extended absence, or if a Supervisor is retiring, he or she must advise the Candidate and School/SRC Director Higher Degrees Research Training;
- g. monitor the performance of the Candidate relative to the standard required for the degree, and ensure that inadequate progress, or work below the standard expected, is brought to the Candidate's attention and documented, and the Candidate is given an opportunity to improve. Where international candidates are involved, the ESOS and National Code requirements must be met, or reported to the Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) and Director of the International Office. The Supervisors will help with developing solutions to problems as they are identified. Continuing unsatisfactory progress must be reported to the School/SRC Director Higher Degrees Research Training, and formally advised to the Candidate; and
- h. support Candidates to develop the Graduate Attributes as appropriate to research degrees, and should strongly encourage, where appropriate, the publication of the results of the Candidate's research.

(9) The Principal Supervisor has the main Supervisory responsibility for the Candidate, and is responsible for directing the work of the Candidate and for ensuring that the Candidate meets all administrative and academic requirements. The Principal Supervisor located in the School/SRC in which the Candidate is enrolled, must:

- a. undertake administrative roles and general oversight associated with Candidate's academic progression, including comment and sign off of Candidate progress reports and Confirmation of Candidate reports;
- b. be a mentor for any Co-Supervisors, where appropriate;
- c. help the Candidate plan the research program;

- d. provide the Candidate with project management strategies where transparent goals and expectations for the research are articulated;
- e. ensure the Candidate obtains any necessary Ethics approvals to conduct the research;
- f. confirm the thesis is properly presented and conforms to the University's Rules, and that the work is of a suitable standard for examination;
- g. recommend potential Examiners to the Dean, Graduate Studies at least three (3) months prior to the submission of the work;
- h. ensure that the names of the Examiners are not disclosed to the Candidate prior to the submission of the thesis, nor released after the examination process is completed, unless agreed to by the Examiners;
- i. provide support to the Candidate, in consultation with the other Supervisors, to respond to examination reports; and
- j. ensure reports are made regularly as required on the Candidate's progress.

Part B - Responsibility of the Candidates

(10) Candidates have primary responsibility for the undertaking, active pursuit, and completion of the research. Candidates will:

- a. undertake Orientation as soon as possible after commencing candidature;
- b. familiarise themselves with the processes and practices of candidature in particular, and Southern Cross University's Rules, Policies and Procedures more broadly;
- c. in accordance with the Code of Conduct, declare the existence of, or the potential for, a conflict of interest, in relation to any appointed or proposed supervisors;
- d. negotiate an agreement of work to be done and schedules to be adhered to with Supervisors, and to review this agreement throughout the candidature;
- e. maintain regular contact with the Supervisor(s) and ensure that a reasonable timetable of meetings and submitted work is agreed and maintained;
- f. submit, with assistance from Supervisors, any Ethics Applications required for the research to take place;
- g. complete confirmation of candidature and additional requirements as set by the Higher Degrees Research Committee, at the required time;
- h. present required written material in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussions before scheduled meetings;
- i. complete progress reports as required by the University;
- j. accept responsibility for the preparation of the final copies of the thesis, and to submit a thesis which meets the University's requirements on presentation and content;
- k. comply with University policies on academic integrity and academic misconduct, authorship and with the [Research Responsible Conduct Policy](#);
- l. use the resources and facilities available in a timely and responsible manner to facilitate progress on the research project;
- m. participate in activities that will enable the Candidate to acquire or improve the skills and knowledge required for completion of the research project;
- n. adopt safe working practices relevant to the field of research and adhere to the University's [Work Health and Safety Policy](#);
- o. adhere to research practices as set out in the [Australian Code of the Responsible Conduct of Research](#);
- p. follow appropriate ethical practices appropriate to the relevant discipline, and seek further clarification where required;
- q. maintain continuous enrolment, or seek approval for leave of absence or interruptions when necessary;

- r. advise their Supervisors of any significant factors which may affect their progress and, in consultation with Supervisors, initiate any variations to candidature as required;
- s. document the progress of the work and present written or other material for comment, feedback, and discussion in a timely manner to allow for continuity of the research program;
- t. advise the Graduate School of, or apply for in the prescribed manner, any changes to conditions of enrolment;
- u. after consultation with their supervisors, advise the Graduate School three months prior to the intended submission date of intent to submit their thesis;
- v. prepare the thesis for examination, including arrangements for its proofreading, printing and binding;
- w. work with their Supervisors and School/SRC Director Higher Degrees Research Training on Step 1 and Step 2 Tables of Changes following the examination of the thesis, and provide the Graduate School with all requested materials following the recommendation of award of degree;
- x. where the Candidate is an international student, ensure the degree is completed within the timeframe of their Confirmation of Enrolment.

(11) See Also:

- a. The [Australian Code of the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)
- b. The [Education Services for Overseas Students Act](#)
- c. The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (National Code)
- d. The [Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency Act](#)
- e. [Complaints Policy - Students and Members of the Public](#)
- f. [Intellectual Property Rights Policy](#)
- g. [Work Health and Safety Policy](#)
- h. [Research Responsible Conduct Policy](#)
- i. [Specific Award Rules](#)

Section 5 - Guidelines

(12) Nil.

Status and Details

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