Higher Degree Research Candidate and Supervisor Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

Purpose

(1) This Policy specifies the principles and responsibilities that underpin the supervision of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Professional Doctorate and Masters by Thesis Candidates at Southern Cross University.

(2) The University expects a professional relationship between Supervisors and their Candidates that is characterised by mutual respect and trust.

(3) Respect and trust are the critical foundations of the high quality, supportive and safe learning environment that will enable a high standard of research activity and output.

(4) This Policy supports compliance with Section 4.2 of the [Australian Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021](#).

(5) This Policy supports compliance of research activities with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (Code)](#)and adopts the following:

   a. [NHMRC Supervision Guide](#)
   b. [Australian Council of Graduate Research Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships](#).

(6) This Policy should be read together with the following:

   a. [Australian Research Council Research Integrity Policy](#)
   b. [AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research 2020](#)
   c. [National Health and Medical Research Council's Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for Researchers and Stakeholders](#)
   d. [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#)
   e. [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#)
   f. [Rules Relating to Awards, Rule 7 Masters by Thesis Awards](#)
   g. [Rules Relating to Awards, Rule 8 Professional Doctorate Awards](#)
   h. [Rules Relating to Awards, Rule 9 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)](#)
   i. [Higher Degree Research Register of Supervisors Policy](#)
   j. [Research Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy](#)
   k. [Research Integrity Procedures - Staff](#)
   l. [Research Integrity Procedures - Higher Degree Researchers (Students)](#)
   m. Higher Degree Research Candidature and Supervision Procedures
   n. [Academic Integrity Guidelines](#)
   o. Research Integrity Advisors Procedure

p. Southern Cross University [Code of Conduct](#)

q. [Work Health Safety Policy](#)

r. [Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Prevention Policy](#)

s. [Sexual Misconduct (Prevention and Response) Policy](#)

t. [Joint Doctoral Enrolments (Cotutelle) Policy](#)

Scope

(7) This Policy applies to Higher Degree by Research (Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Professional Doctorate and Masters by Thesis Candidates, Supervisors, Faculties, Colleges and Special Research Centres involved in Higher Degree by Research candidacy.

Section 2 - Definitions

(8) The following definitions apply to this Policy:

a. Associate Supervisor is a supervisor of a Higher Degree by Research Candidate who may or may not be a staff member of Southern Cross University, who has relevant expertise to the project but has not been appointed to an Adjunct position.

b. Author means an individual who has made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output and who has agreed to be listed as an author.

c. Candidate is a person who has been accepted for admission to, or is enrolled in a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD), Professional Doctorate or Masters by Thesis offered at, or in conjunction with, Southern Cross University.

d. Close Personal Relationship is one which gives rise to a real or potential conflict of interest and includes relatives, spouses (including de facto spouses), romantic and sexual partners, and financial relationships.

e. Code means the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#).

f. Conflict of Interest exists in a situation where an independent observer might reasonably conclude that the professional actions of a person are or may be unduly influenced by other interests. This refers to a financial or non-financial interest which may be perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest.

g. Co-Supervisor is a University 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 fulfill the role of Principal Supervisor. The criteria for appointment as a Co-Supervisor is detailed in the [Higher Degree Research Register of Supervisors Policy](#).

h. Director, Higher Degree Research is the individual appointed in each Faculty or College who is dedicated to managing and facilitating the Higher Degrees Research program. Each Director, Higher Degree Research is a member of the University's Higher Degrees Research Committee (HDRC)

i. Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to a category of artificial intelligence algorithms that generate new content. This content can be in various forms including text, images, and code.

j. Higher Degree Researcher means a higher degree by Research candidate.

k. Higher Degrees Research Committee (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.

l. NHMRC means the National Health and Medical Research Council.

m. Principal Supervisor is a University 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

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the majority load of supervision. The criteria for appointment as a Principal Supervisor is detailed in the Higher Degree Register of Supervisors Policy.

n. Research - the concept of research is broad and includes the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative. For the purposes of this procedure, research includes research training.

o. Research outputs communicate or make available the findings of research that may be in hardcopy, electronic or other form. Examples of research outputs include, but are not limited to journal articles, book chapters, books, conference papers, reports, open access repositories, datasets, patents and patent applications, performances, videos and exhibitions

p. Researcher means a person who conducts, or assists with the conduct of, research.

q. Research Integrity Advisor (RIA) is a person or persons with knowledge of the Code and institutional processes nominated by the University to promote the responsible conduct of research and provide advice to those with concerns or complaints about potential breaches of the Code.

r. Staff (for the purpose of this Policy) means all persons who are academic or professional employees of Southern Cross University, including full time, part time, fixed term and casual and all adjunct, visiting, emeritus and conjoint appointees who are engaged in supervisory and other research roles on behalf of the University.

s. University Processes includes references to Rules, Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Standards.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(9) Southern Cross University is committed to effective and respectful supervision for all Higher Degree by Research Candidates in all Faculties, Colleges and Special Research Centres. The University recognises that supervision plays a critical role in the responsible conduct of research. This commitment is underpinned by the University's values of striving for excellence, being bold, and building trust through action.

(10) Academic supervisors who do not comply with this Policy may jeopardise their approval to continue with current supervisions and/or take on new supervisions.

Section 4 - Responsibilities

Part A - Responsibility of the University

Graduate School

(11) 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 no person is appointed as a Principal Supervisor or Co-Supervisor unless they meet the requirements of the Higher Degree Research Register of Supervisors Policy and appear on the HDR Supervisor Register.

c. ensure that Supervisors and Candidates have a good understanding of their responsibilities detailed in this document and the Research Supervision Procedures.

d. ensure all Supervisors are aware of the necessity to implement the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, and have a good understanding of University policies and procedures encompassing research integrity.

e. ensure that provision is made for the professional development of Supervisors and potential Supervisors.

f. provide mandatory Supervisor training on an annual basis.

g. provide access to a comprehensive suite of HDR Candidate training opportunities.

h. 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.

i. take measures to protect the intellectual property arising from the work of Candidates in accordance with the University's Intellectual Property Rights Policy.

j. administer progress reporting requirements and monitor their effectiveness, with additional consideration of the Educational Services Act for Overseas Students 2000 (ESOS) for international candidates.

k. ensure the views of both the Candidate and Supervisors may be represented adequately through progress reporting.

l. provide clear guidance for examiners, outlining the University's expectations for the particular award.

m. maintain confidentiality of the examination process.

n. 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.

o. co-ordinate with the Graduate School or similar body at an external institution with which a cotutelle candidature is being undertaken, and

p. Undertake regular review and evaluation of the support for research supervision.

Dean, Graduate School

(12) The Dean, Graduate School will:

a. approve the appointment of Supervisors prior to the Candidate commencing a degree with consideration of the HDR Register of Supervisors Policy.

b. ensure the effective management of the supervisory team as detailed in the Higher Degree Research Candidature and Supervision Procedures.

c. approve any cotutelle arrangements.

d. Manage concerns regarding breaches of academic integrity by HDR students as detailed in the Academic Integrity Guidelines. This includes the inappropriate use of Generative AI.

Faculty or College

(13) Faculties or Colleges will:

a. appoint Director(s) of Higher Degree Research with authority to enact the responsibilities of the Faculty or College.

b. ensure that reasonable space, facilities, and resources are made available to Candidates, as appropriate to the field of study, facilitate compliance with the University's Work Health and Safety Policy and as required for the scope agreed to in the Supervisor Candidate Agreement.

c. support Supervisors to actively carrying out research and publish in the Candidate's relevant discipline area.

d. 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.

e. support effective management of respectful and productive supervision as detailed in the Research Supervision Procedures.

f. ensure a positive research culture and scholarly environment within Faculties and Colleges is promoted for the benefit of Candidates.

g. 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 Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

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Supervisors

(14) Supervisors of Candidates will:

a. as their, main role, provide academic support throughout the candidature, in accordance with the Higher Degree Research Candidature and Supervision Procedures, to enable the Candidate to achieve a high standard of research activity and output within an appropriate timeframe.

b. maintain a respectful and positive working relationship with the Candidate.

c. have a thorough understanding of the University's Rules, Policies, Procedures and Guidelines so that accurate advice and appropriate support is given to the Candidate. Notably this Policy and the following:

    i. Higher Degree Research Candidature and Supervision Procedures

    ii. Research Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy

    iii. Research Integrity Procedures (Staff)

    iv. Research Integrity Procedures – Higher Degree Researchers (Students)

    v. Academic Integrity Guidelines

    vi. Work Health Safety Policy

    vii. Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Prevention Policy

    viii. Sexual Misconduct (Prevention and Response) Policy

d. support candidates to develop the Graduate Attributes as appropriate to research degrees.

e. strongly encourage, where appropriate, the publication of the results of the Candidate's research

f. attend mandatory Supervisor training at least every three years.

g. participate in additional supervision workshops and training opportunities relevant to research supervision.

h. strongly encourage the Candidate to engage with training opportunities provided by the University relevant to their skill requirements.

i. through education and support, minimise the likelihood of any breaches of Academic Integrity, including the inappropriate use of Generative AI, and

j. take all reasonable steps to maintain an effective working relationship with the Candidate.

(15) 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 Faculty or College in which the Candidate is enrolled must:

a. mananage the supervisory team to ensure a productive and respectful relationship maximising the probability of a successful candidature.

b. ensure that the program of research is managed according to the Research Candidate and Supervision Procedures.

c. be a mentor for any Co-Supervisors, where appropriate.

d. support Supervisors and Candidates in taking advantage of all appropriate training opportunities.

e. develop any cotutelle agreements in consultation with the Director, Higher Degree Research.

f. intervene if the progress of the candidature is becoming a concern and discuss progress and support required with the Candidate concerned.

g. report unsatisfactory progress of the candidature to the Graduate School so that appropriate monitoring and support measures can be put in place.

Part B - Responsibility of the Candidate

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

(17) Candidates will:

a. undertake Orientation and online induction with the Graduate School as soon as possible after commencing candidature.
b. familiarise themselves with the Higher Degree Research Candidature and Supervision Procedures in particular, and Southern Cross University's Rules, Policies and Procedures more broadly.
c. adhere to research practices as set out in the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#).
d. adopt safe working practices relevant to the field of research and adhere to the University's [Work Health Safety Policy](#).
e. comply with University policies on research integrity, academic integrity and academic misconduct, authorship and with the [Research Integrity Procedures - Higher Degree Researchers (Students)](#).
f. follow appropriate ethical practices appropriate to the relevant discipline, and seek further clarification where required.
g. understand and avoid breaching principles of academic integrity as detailed in the [Academic Integrity Guidelines](#). This includes the appropriate and inappropriate use of Generative AI.
h. maintain continuous enrolment, or seek approval for leave of absence or interruptions when necessary.
i. use the resources and facilities available in a timely and responsible manner to facilitate progress on the research project.
j. advise their Supervisors of any significant factors which may affect their progress and, in consultation with Supervisors, initiate any variations to candidature as required.
k. 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.
l. actively participate in the University HDR Candidate training program.
m. participate in other activities that will enable the acquisition or improvement of the skills and knowledge required for completion of the research project.
n. 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.
o. advise the Graduate School of, or apply for in the prescribed manner, any changes to conditions of enrolment.
p. maintain satisfactory academic progress of candidature.
q. complete mandatory candidature milestones at the appropriate times.

Section 5 - Associated Documents

(18) [Supervisor Candidate Agreement Form](#)

(19) [Graduate Attributes Schedule](#)

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Responsible Executive	Mary Spongberg Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor +61 7 55893361
Head of Work Unit	Leslie Christidis Dean, Graduate Studies +61 2 66483901
Enquiries Contact	Helen Wolton Manager, Graduate School +0011 612 66269426 Graduate School