

# Higher Degree by Research Supervision and Student Support Procedure



## 1 Purpose

To establish the process, standards and responsibilities for accrediting, appointing, assigning, reviewing and re-accrediting Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Supervisors and to establish the minimum level of support to be provided to HDR Students at the University.

## 2 Scope

This procedure applies to the supervision of all HDR Students at the University. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Work Allocation Procedure.

## 3 Procedure Overview

This procedure establishes the process, standards and responsibilities for accrediting, appointing, assigning, reviewing and re-accrediting HDR Supervisors, and establishes the minimum level of support to be provided to HDR Students at the University.

## 4 Procedures

### 4.1 Supervisory Team

Each HDR Student will have a minimum of two HDR Supervisors; normally a Principal HDR Supervisor and at least one Associate HDR Supervisor.

The Principal HDR Supervisor is responsible for directing the HDR Student's academic work, monitoring the submission of reports, and meeting other administrative responsibilities. The Principal HDR Supervisor is not required to hold the majority of the supervisory load within the HDR Supervisory Team.

Each HDR Supervisor would normally receive a minimum of 20% allocation of supervisory workload.

A Supervisory Team may consist of two or more HDR co-Supervisors of equal supervisory load, although for administrative purposes one must be nominated as the Principal HDR Supervisor.

Students will normally identify proposed HDR Supervisors from the Find a Research Supervisor, or Find a Research Thesis Topic pages of the University website prior to applying for Admission or requesting a change to their Supervisory Team. Proposed HDR Supervisors will indicate their willingness to accept the HDR Student when assessing the application for Admission or when

assessing a change of Supervisory Team request. HDR Supervisors are approved by the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School) during Admission. HDR Students will be notified of their Principal HDR Supervisor in their letter of offer.

Should a proposed HDR Supervisor have a real or perceived conflict of interest in relation to the supervision of an HDR Student, a different person will be appointed as the HDR Supervisor. All conflicts of interest are to be declared and assessed in accordance with the University's Policies on conflicts of interest.

An Associate HDR Supervisor would normally assume the role of Principal HDR Supervisor if the Principal HDR Supervisor is on an extended leave (i.e. greater than 20 University Business Days). The Principal HDR Supervisor will notify the Graduate Research School if the Associate HDR Supervisor is not able or eligible to assume the role so a replacement can be organised.

## **4.2 Change of HDR Supervisor**

In extenuating circumstances an HDR Student or HDR Supervisor may request for a change to the Supervisory Team, using a Change of Supervisory Team Form. Such requests will need to be approved by the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School). The Associate Dean will consult with the Student and/or supervisory team and reserves the right to decline any proposed changes.

The University will accommodate requests for changes to the HDR Supervisory Team wherever possible. If no other suitable HDR Supervisor is available within the University, the HDR Supervisory Team may need to remain the same, or the HDR Student may need to withdraw from the Academic Program and seek transfer to another institution.

## **4.3 Eligibility of an HDR Supervisor**

HDR Supervisors will normally:

- hold a qualification equal to or higher than the level at which they will be supervising;
- have demonstrated achievement in research and an appropriate record of scholarly publications;
- have relevant knowledge and appropriate experience in the topic area and/or methodology;
- have completed any mandatory supervisor training courses and engaged in recommended training opportunities; and
- have sufficient time and access to adequate resources, taking account of total workload, including the supervision of other HDR Students.

## 4.4 HDR supervisory load limit

To ensure that HDR Supervisors are able to fulfil their function adequately, a maximum of 430 hours per annum of HDR supervision will normally apply.

## 4.5 Principal HDR Supervisors

A Principal HDR Supervisor would normally have successfully supervised to completion at least one HDR Student at an equivalent level (Master or Doctoral), as a Principal or Associate HDR Supervisor (with a minimum supervisory load of 20%) in the past five years at the University or another recognised higher education provider.

Subject to the approval of the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School), eligible University Employees may act as a Principal HDR Supervisor providing they are:

- a University Employee having a continuing or fixed-term academic appointment of appropriate duration; or
- a University Employee holding a research appointment, provided that the duration of such research appointment is appropriate; or
- a University Employee holding a professional appointment and whose professional activities relate significantly to research.

In exceptional circumstances, where the above criteria have not been met, the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School) may approve the appointment of a Principal HDR Supervisor.

Individuals applying to be appointed as a Principal HDR supervisor under the exceptional circumstances rule must be:

- Academic Level B or above;
- currently engaged in doctoral level supervision as an Associate Supervisor (including at least one current student who has completed Confirmation of Candidature); and
- able to supply evidence of expertise in the research area via 3+ publications in the past 5 years.

Supervisors holding adjunct or honorary positions can be appointed as Principal HDR Supervisors at the discretion of the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School).

## 4.6 Associate HDR Supervisors

An Associate HDR Supervisor will play an active role in the supervisory process including, as a minimum, providing relevant advice about the research project. An Associate HDR Supervisor may be external to the University. External Associate HDR Supervisors normally will:

- have specialist skills and appropriate professional experience; and
- be provided with details on how to access the Policies and Procedures relating to University HDR candidature by the Principal HDR Supervisor.

In exceptional circumstances, the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School) may approve the appointment of an Associate Supervisor where the above criteria have not been met.

## 4.7 HDR Supervisor accreditation

The University seeks to ensure high quality supervision for all of its HDR Students, which will lead to successful learning outcomes. As part of this process the Graduate Research School will maintain a register of University Employees who are accredited HDR Supervisors. Accreditation will be:

- provided at the doctoral and/or research masters level(s) and will be in relation to the Principal HDR Supervisor or Associate HDR Supervisor role; and
- for a period of five years, after which time an application for reaccreditation will be required.

Employees who are accredited as HDR Supervisors will remain on the register unless the following occurs:

- employment or affiliation with the University ceases; or
- the Employee's role as an HDR Supervisor is suspended; or
- the Employee fails to gain re-accreditation.

The Associate Dean (Graduate Research School) is responsible for ensuring that accredited HDR Supervisors meet the HDR Supervisor accreditation requirements.

## 4.8 Accreditation

In order to gain accreditation, HDR Supervisors will normally meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 4.3, Eligibility of a HDR Supervisor. In addition HDR Supervisors are required to

complete any mandatory supervisor training such as the Policy and Procedures Relating to HDR Supervision online presentation. On completion of the Policy and Procedures Relating to HDR Supervision online presentation, Employees can seek accreditation by submitting a Supervisor Accreditation and Re-accreditation form to the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School).

In exceptional circumstances the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School) may approve accreditation (with supporting documentation) where the above criteria have not been met.

## **4.9 Re-accreditation**

Re-accreditation normally occurs every five years following the accreditation process as outlined in Section 4.8, Accreditation.

## **4.10 Review of accreditation**

The Associate Dean (Graduate Research School) will take the following factors into consideration prior to a decision to review and/or suspend HDR Supervisor accreditation:

- a record of HDR Students failing and/or not completing owing to poor supervision, as substantiated by the relevant organisational unit or by the Graduate Research School;
- substantiated concerns regarding supervision raised by the relevant organisational unit or the Graduate Research School;
- evidence of multiple requests to change HDR Supervisor by HDR Students where the standard of supervision is cited as a significant factor;
- evidence of a pattern of non-compliance with the University's Policies and Procedures;
- concerns regarding supervisory practices that have been substantiated after investigation by the Graduate Research School;
- request by the HDR Supervisor to relinquish the supervisory role and the associated workload allocation.

Prior to a decision being made the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School) will provide the HDR Supervisor with an opportunity to respond to the concerns.

Following consideration of the above factors the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School) may:

- suspend HDR Supervisor accreditation; or

- continue HDR Supervisor accreditation with conditions; or
- continue HDR Supervisor accreditation with no changes.

In cases where HDR Supervisor accreditation is suspended a suspension notice will be issued to the suspended supervisor, with copies provided to the relevant line manager and Associate Dean (Graduate Research School). The suspension notice would normally include the reasons that led to the suspension, what actions are required to lift the suspension and what arrangements will be made for their existing Students. Concerns raised may be addressed, as appropriate, under other University policies and procedures.

A suspended supervisor may seek a review of the decision from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

Where a decision is made by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) to uphold the suspension, the suspended supervisor may lodge a Grievance in accordance with University's Employee Complaints and Grievances Policy.

#### **4.11 Student contact**

HDR Students will be expected to be in regular and frequent contact with their HDR Supervisors, normally at least once every 10 to 20 University Business Days.

At the commencement of the Academic Program, HDR Students and their HDR Supervisors are expected to discuss and reach agreement regarding On-campus attendance requirements (if appropriate) and mode and frequency of interaction.

#### **4.12 Minimum level of student support**

Admission to an HDR Academic Program will depend on the availability of resources.

Once accepted into an HDR program, all HDR Students Enrolled on a Full-Time, On-campus basis will be given access to an appropriate work environment. Access will be made available for the duration of candidature, except for extended absences, and, if appropriate, until the Student has been provisionally awarded the degree.

HDR Students studying Part-Time and/or externally will not normally be provided with access to an On-campus work environment. Requests for access to such facilities will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the HDR Student's Principal HDR Supervisor. If supported, the HDR Supervisor will provide a recommendation to the Associate Dean (Graduate Research School) who, subject to availability, can approve access.

### **5 References**

Nil.

## 6 Schedules

This procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

## 7 Procedure Information

<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Dean (Graduate Research School)
<b>Policy Type</b>	University Procedure
<b>Policy Suite</b>	Research Code of Conduct Policy
<b>Subordinate Schedules</b>	<a href="#">Higher Degree by Research Thesis Submission Schedule</a>
<b>Approved Date</b>	11/2/2021
<b>Effective Date</b>	11/2/2021
<b>Review Date</b>	5/10/2020
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	<a href="#">Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015</a> <a href="#">USQ Enterprise Agreement</a>
<b>Related Policies</b>	<a href="#">Admissions Policy</a> <a href="#">Assessment Policy</a> <a href="#">Code of Conduct Policy</a> <a href="#">Employee Complaints and Grievances Policy</a> <a href="#">Enrolment Policy</a> <a href="#">Handling Personal Student Information Policy and Procedure</a> <a href="#">Performance, Development and Recognition Policy</a> <a href="#">Privacy Policy</a> <a href="#">Records and Information Management Policy</a> <a href="#">Student Complaint and Appeal Policy</a>

<b>Related Procedures</b>	<a href="#">Admissions Procedure</a>  <a href="#">Employee Conflict of Interest Procedure</a>  <a href="#">Employee Grievance Procedure</a>  <a href="#">Enrolment Procedure</a>  <a href="#">Performance Planning and Review Procedure</a>  <a href="#">Work Allocation Procedure</a>
<b>Related forms, publications and websites</b>	<a href="#">Change of Supervisory Team Form</a>  <a href="#">Find a Research Supervisor</a>  <a href="#">Find a Research Thesis Topic</a>  <a href="#">Policy and Procedures relating to HDR Supervision online presentation</a>  <a href="#">Supervisor Accreditation and Re-accreditation Form</a>
<b>Definitions</b>	<b>Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary</b>  <a href="#">Academic Program</a>  An approved Higher Education Award of the University, consisting of a combination of Courses the successful completion of an offering of which, together with any credit transfers and Exemptions in accordance with the relevant requirements, will fulfil the prescribed requirements for that particular Award.  <a href="#">Admission</a>  The process of submission and assessment of applications for entry to study at the University.  <a href="#">Complaint</a>  A Complaint is an “expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the University, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required”.  <a href="#">Employee</a>  A person employed by the University and whose conditions of employment are covered by the USQ Enterprise Agreement and



includes persons employed on a continuing, fixed term or casual basis. Employees also include senior Employees whose conditions of employment are covered by a written agreement or contract with the University.

### [Full-Time Study](#)

A Student will be deemed to be in Full-time Study where they are enrolled in at least 75% of the equivalent full-time load (8 Units) during an Academic Year. A Student enrolled in 3 or more Units in a single Semester may be deemed as full-time for that Semester. Additionally for visa requirements, International Students studying in Australia on a student visa must complete their program within the time specified on their Confirmation of Enrolment (COE) and therefore must maintain a full-time load per Academic Year.

### [Grievance](#)

Typically defined as a concern or Complaint raised by an Employee against a process, action, omission or Decision within the responsibility and control of the University which relates to employment or related internal People Portfolio matters, which has or is likely to have an unreasonable negative impact on the ability of an Employee to undertake their duties, or similar impact on their career.

### [Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\)](#)

A Research Doctorate or Research Masters program for which at least two-thirds of the Student load for the program is required as research work.

### [Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Student](#)

A Student enrolled in an HDR program.

### [Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Supervisor](#)

A member of a Student's HDR Supervisory Team. An HDR Supervisor may hold the position of Principal HDR Supervisor or Associate Supervisor.

### [On-campus Course](#)

A Course, the delivery of which includes regular On-campus activities such as lectures, tutorials, workshops or laboratory/practical sessions. Other Course communication, provision of learning materials and handling of Assessment is normally Online. Students can be expected to attend a Formal Examination at a University approved examination

site.

#### [Part-Time Study](#)

Enrolment in less than .75 EFTSL in any year shall be deemed to be Part-Time Study.

#### [Policy](#)

A high level strategic directive that establishes a principle based approach on a subject. Policy is operationalised through Procedures that give instructions and set out processes to implement a Policy.

#### [Procedure](#)

An operational instruction that sets out the process to operationalise a Policy.

#### [University](#)

The term 'University' or 'USQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.

#### [University Business Days](#)

The days of Monday to Friday inclusive between 9am and 5pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST), with the exclusion of gazetted Public Holidays for the relevant campus location, plus the closure of the University between 25 December and 1 January in the following year inclusive as specified in the USQ Enterprise Agreement, as well as any closure of the University either at one or several campuses in accordance with a direction of the Crisis Management Team.

#### **Definitions that relate to this procedure only**

**Keywords**

**Record No**

15/859PL