



Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Next full review
1.1	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Training)	18 September 2018	18 September 2018	May 2019
Procedure Statement				
Purpose	This procedure specifies the categories of higher degree research (HDR) supervisor, the eligibility criteria, appointment and replacement procedures and the roles and responsibilities of supervisors			
Scope	This procedure applies to all University appointed supervisors of HDR candidatures, Heads of School, Postgraduate Coordinators and Associate Deans (Research or Research Training) or equivalent roles as well as Faculty Higher Degree Committees or equivalents			
Are Local Documents on this subject permitted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, however Local Documents must be consistent with this University-wide Document			<input type="checkbox"/> No
Procedure Processes and Actions				

1. Categories of supervisor

Every candidate must have a supervisory team consisting of at least two supervisors. The University has two main categories of supervisor, primary and secondary supervisor. A supervisory team consists either of a primary and one or more secondary supervisors, or of two joint supervisors (one of whom is designated the primary supervisor for administrative purposes) or a supervisory panel is appointed (one of whom is designated the primary supervisor for administrative purposes).

1.1. Primary supervisor

The primary supervisor takes primary academic responsibility for the higher degree research (HDR) candidature and is the administrative contact for the Graduate Research School (GRS). The academic appointment of this supervisor will dictate the School and Faculty through which the academic decisions are made on candidature via the relevant Faculty Higher Degree Committee.

1.2. Secondary supervisor

The secondary supervisor has specific expertise that is useful to the candidate's research program and is available as an advisor to the candidate during the course of the candidature.

1.3. Joint supervision

Two joint supervisors who take equal responsibility for the research are appointed when there is a formal equal collaboration and sharing of resources to support the candidature, or where the candidate is working in a multi-disciplinary project and joint supervisors have expertise in different aspects of the project. In the case of a joint supervision:

- (i) one of the joint supervisors must be nominated as the Primary supervisor and must meet the eligibility criteria for Primary supervisor as outlined in Section 2.1.1.; and
- (ii) the designated Primary supervisor must act as the administrative contact for the GRS.; and
- (iii) there is no requirement for a secondary supervisor to be appointed unless appropriate for the research.

1.4. Panel Supervision

A supervisory panel is comprised of three or more supervisors. Panels may be appointed that include a member of industry, or an external person. One of the Panel must be nominated as the primary supervisor and the remainder as secondary supervisors.

The roles of each of the panel members must be agreed by the candidate and PGRC at the start of the candidature. Where a panel is appointed during the candidature the roles must be agreed by the candidate and PGRC prior to the commencement of the new supervisory arrangements.

2. Supervisor Eligibility

2.1. Primary supervisor

2.1.1. Eligibility

A person is eligible to be appointed as a primary supervisor of an HDR candidate provided that all of the following criteria are met:

- (i) they are a full-time or fractional full-time employee of UNSW as a member of the academic staff
- (ii) they have experience in successful supervision (of the relevant degree) of at least two HDR candidates to completion as a primary or joint supervisor (see exception 2.1.2 related to early career researchers)
- (iii) they are able to fulfil the roles and responsibilities outlined in Section 5
- (iv) their academic tenure exceeds the expected duration of the candidature
- (v) they hold an appointment in the School in which the candidate is enrolled
- (vi) they have a high level of expertise in the proposed field of study
- (vii) they have an active and continuing participation in research at UNSW
- (viii) they hold a doctoral degree or have equivalent research experience.

2.1.2. Exceptions

Where the supervisor does not have previous experience in successful supervision of at least two HDR candidates to completion (2.1.1(ii)) but meets all other eligibility criteria, they can be appointed as primary supervisor if:

- (i) a joint supervisor who meets all eligibility criteria in 2.1.1, with the exception of holding an appointment in the School in which the Candidate is enrolled (2.1.1(v)) is appointed; and
- (ii) professional development, appointment of a mentor and participation in University supervision training programs or other relevant activities must be undertaken. The Head of School will determine the development required.

2.2. Secondary Supervisor

2.2.1. Eligibility

A person is eligible to be appointed as a secondary supervisor if they:

- (i) hold an appointment that satisfies the eligibility conditions for the appointment as primary supervisor, with the exception of 2.1.1(ii); or
- (ii) are an Emeritus Professor, hold a contract/visiting/honorary appointment, or are retired and remain active in research.

2.2.2. Exceptions

Appointment of a secondary supervisor who has no formal affiliation with the University is allowed in order to provide expertise for a research project, or when it is planned that a student spend time in an external laboratory or studio as part of a collaboration. In addition to researchers at other universities, such supervisors could include researchers from institutions such as government departments, research institutes, libraries, museums or industry.

2.3. Joint Supervisor

2.3.1. Eligibility

Appointment of two joint supervisors requires that:

- (i) at least one of the joint supervisors must satisfy the conditions for appointment as a primary supervisor, with the exceptions outlined in 2.1.2;
- (ii) the UNSW joint supervisor must satisfy the conditions for appointment as a primary supervisor, where one of the joint supervisors is external to UNSW;

- (iii) Where the joint supervisor who is not designated as the primary is a UNSW staff member, that person must hold a doctoral degree or equivalent (2.2.1(viii)) and have an active and continuing participation in research at UNSW (2.1.1(vii)).

2.4. Exclusion

A person is not eligible to be appointed as supervisor if they:

- (i) are a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy; or
- (ii) have a conflict of interest as defined in the *Conflict of Interest Policy*; or
- (iii) hold an appointment that is not at the level to provide the sustained commitment required to support a doctoral candidature; or
- (iv) are not considered a fit and proper person to provide supervision to a research candidate.

2.5. Special Supervisory Arrangements

2.5.1. Conjoint Staff

Conjoint academic staff are eligible to be appointed as the primary supervisors of HDR candidates whose research will be carried out in a clinical School or an approved UNSW-affiliated Centre, Institute or location as defined by the Grants Management Office provided that they meet the eligibility conditions for appointment as a Supervisor with the exception of 2.1.1 (i) Additionally, if a conjoint academic staff member has a concurrent substantive position as an employee of UNSW, then they will need the written approval of their Head of School or equivalent prior to being appointed as a primary supervisor.

2.5.2. Research Only Academic Staff

A holder of a research appointment whose tenure cannot be guaranteed to exceed the period of the candidature may be appointed as a primary supervisor only if:

- (i) they meet the eligibility conditions for appointment as a supervisor with the exception of 2.1.1 (iv); and
- (ii) the secondary supervisor meets all of the criteria for appointment as Primary Supervisor; and
- (iii) the secondary supervisor has agreed to act as supervisor should the staff member's position terminate before the candidate has completed; and
- (iv) the candidate is informed of, and understands, the implications of these supervision arrangements.

2.5.3. Special Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, the Faculty Higher Degree Committee may recommend the appointment of a person who does not meet the eligibility criteria in this procedure for appointment as a primary supervisor or approve alternate supervisory arrangements, provided that compelling reasons are presented in writing from the Head of School and the appointment is endorsed by the Associate Dean (Research/Research Training) or equivalent. The Dean of Graduate Research or nominee must approve such appointments.

3. Supervisory Load

3.1. Primary supervisor

A Primary supervisor may not supervise more than six candidates (full-time equivalent) at any one time unless they have:

- (i) evidence of adequate time for supervision taking into account teaching, research and administrative responsibilities; and
- (ii) a track record of successful completions within 4 years for a doctorate or 2 years for a Masters; and
- (iii) approval by the Head of School

3.2. Secondary supervisor

Supervisory load of secondary supervisors should be monitored by the Head of School and should take into consideration:

- (i) evidence of adequate time for supervision taking into account teaching, research and administrative responsibilities; and be
- (ii) approved by the Head of School

3.3. Supervisory load monitoring

Faculty Associate Dean (Research/ Research Training) or equivalent will be provided with reports of supervisor metrics by the Dean of Graduate Research. Faculties are expected to proactively manage supervisor performance in line with UNSW expectations.

4. Appointment of Supervisors

4.1. The Head of School or Postgraduate Research Coordinator

- (i) HoS/PGC in the School/Centre or the Associate Dean (Research or Research Training) or equivalent recommends the appointment of a primary and secondary or joint supervisor, or a supervisory panel to the Dean of Graduate Research
- (ii) Recommendation of appointment must be on the basis of appropriate space, resources and expertise being available to support the proposed research candidature

4.2. The Dean of Graduate Research

- (i) Approves appointment of the supervisory team
- (ii) Approves changes to supervisory arrangements during a candidature

4.3. Replacement of Supervisor/s During Candidature

- (i) If the appointment of a new primary supervisor is required then either the secondary or joint supervisor or an alternate eligible supervisor shall be appointed. The suitability of the secondary or joint supervisor or other proposed supervisors must be discussed with the candidate. Such candidatures will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the candidate is appropriately supported. In certain cases, it may be necessary to appoint a supervisory panel.
- (ii) If a breakdown of the supervisory relationship occurs, attempts at mediation should be made by the Head of School or the PGC. The Associate Dean (Research/ Research Training) or equivalent in the Faculty must be advised of the issues that have arisen and be involved in mediation if the issue is not able to be resolved by the School. The Dean of Graduate Research should be contacted if the mediation is not able to be resolved at Faculty level. In the latter case, independent mediators may be used.
- (iii) Where appropriate replacement supervisors cannot be identified within a reasonable timeframe, the Dean of Graduate Research may require the candidate to take leave or may discontinue the candidature. Re-admission in the latter case will proceed according to the HDR Admissions Procedure.
- (iv) A supervisor must be a fit and proper person to provide supervision to research candidates. In rare cases, the University may remove or suspend a supervisor from their role if the supervisor is not considered a fit and proper person to provide supervision. The Dean of Graduate Research will inform the supervisor and provide the supervisor with reasons for the decision and the opportunity to respond. This applies to all categories of supervisors. The change in supervision will be managed in accordance with 4.3 (i) to (iii).

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Supervisory teams:

- (i) Must adhere to the principles in the *Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy*; and
- (ii) are the University's agent in advising and supporting the candidate to complete an original, feasible and timely research program.

5.1.1. Primary supervisors:

- (i) Are the administrative contact for the University on all matters regarding candidatures;
- (ii) are responsible for ensuring that the candidate understands their rights and obligations under relevant UNSW research policy including the UNSW *Research Code of Conduct* and *Intellectual Property Policy*;
- (iii) must ensure that the candidate is familiar with and understands the UNSW *Health and Safety Policy*;
- (iv) provide formal advice on progress of the candidature to the Head of School via the UNSW annual review process;
- (v) must ensure that their absences from the University of more than 4 weeks are covered by the secondary supervisor or by a member of academic staff if the secondary or joint supervisor is not available (or not a member of academic staff). This includes periods of approved leave such as sabbatical leave or time overseas; the candidate must also be informed.
- (vi) provide advice to the Head of School on the appointment of thesis examiners as soon as possible after the student has put in their notice of intention to submit, and
- (vii) certify that the thesis is in the correct format for examination.

5.1.2. Secondary Supervisors:

- (i) ensure regular contact and communications are maintained with the candidate via a mutually agreed, documented mechanism;
- (ii) act in a mentoring capacity to candidates and/or supervisors when requested; and
- (iii) act in place of the primary supervisor when they are absent from the University; and
- (iv) provide feedback to the candidate during the annual review.

5.2. Higher Degree Research Candidates:

- (i) attend induction and adhere to the principles in the *Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy*;
- (ii) conduct supervised research with approved supervisory arrangements;
- (iii) engage in identifying supervisory team members when changes are necessary; and
- (iv) complete an original, feasible and timely research program.

Accountabilities	
Responsible Officer	Dean of Graduate Research
Contact Officer	Director Graduate Research School
Supporting Information	
Legislative Compliance	This Procedure supports the University's compliance with the following legislation: <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> (Cth) <i>Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000</i> (Cth) <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i> (NSW) <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> (Cth) <i>Disability Standards for Education</i> (2005)
Parent Document (Policy)	Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy
Supporting Documents	Higher Degree Research Supervision Guidelines

Related Documents	Research Code of Conduct Conflict of Interest Policy Intellectual Property Policy Health and Safety Policy Conditions for Award Admissions Policy Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure Thesis Examination Procedure Register of Delegations			
Superseded Documents	Higher Degree Research Supervision Procedure, v1.0			
File Number	2018/26928			
Definitions and Acronyms				
No terms have been defined				
Revision History				
Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
1.0	Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	23 May 2016	23 May 2016	This is a new Procedure
1.1	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Training)	18 September 2018	18 September 2018	Amended to clarify supervisor eligibility.

Archived Document