Edith Cowan University
POLICY

Policy Title: **Supervision of Students Undertaking Higher Degrees by Research (HDR)**

Policy Owner: **Dean, Graduate Research School**

Keywords: **1) Higher degree by research   2) Supervision**

Policy Code: **PL218 [ac085]**

1. **INTENT**

   The intent of this policy is to ensure that supervision is conducted in the most beneficial, efficient and effective manner, and aligns with principles outlined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007) and the Higher Education Standards Framework (2017).

2. **ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE**

   This policy applies to all Candidates undertaking a higher degree by research, and University staff engaged in the provision or support of HDR supervision.

3. **DEFINITIONS**

TERM	DEFINITION
Assistant supervisor	A member of academic staff who provides specialist technical, subject matter expertise, or experience to an aspect of a candidate's research project not catered for through the appointment of other panel members.
Associate supervisor	A member of the supervisor panel to provide specialist knowledge in a particular aspect of a student's research. An associate supervisor will also ensure continuity of supervision during leave of the principal supervisor.
EFTSL	Equivalent full time student load.
External supervisor	Supervisor who is external to the University, normally from industry or other universities.
GRS	Graduate Research School

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TERM	DEFINITION
Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidate	A person who is enrolled as a Higher Degree by Research student and whose body of research work is incomplete or still under examination.
Higher Degree by Research (or Postgraduate) Coordinator	The academic staff member, nominated by the Dean of School, responsible for oversight of the school's Higher Degree by Research programs.
Principal and Co-Principal	Supervisor who has the overall accountability for the management of the HDR candidate and supervisor panel. The principal supervisor is not required to have the highest load on the supervisor panel.
Supervisor Panel	The persons appointed to supervise an individual HDR candidate.
Supervisor Register	A listing of the persons who meet the University's requirements for appointment as a principal or associate supervisor.

4. **POLICY CONTENT**

4.1 **University responsibilities**

The University's main responsibility is to provide appropriate governance relating to supervision and research training. This includes:

a) Providing a framework of Rules, policies and procedures supporting supervision and research training;

b) Ensuring adherence to the Higher Education Standards Framework on Research Training;

c) Maintain a register of supervisors;

d) Providing ongoing professional development opportunities for academic staff related to supervisor practice;

e) Providing development opportunities to HDR candidates related to research and professional skills development;

f) Providing mechanisms for dispute resolution by which either the HDR candidate or the supervisor may make representations as appropriate, should significant difficulties arise;

g) Monitoring and reporting on performance in research training and supervision.

4.2 **School responsibilities**

The School's main responsibility is to provide a supportive research training environment to assist candidates in the completion of their degree. This includes:

a) Ensuring applicants meet the minimum requirements set by the University for admission, and are capable of undertaking research at a level appropriate to the award;

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b) Ensuring that procedures are in place to select the most appropriate supervisor panel, and ensuring that each research candidate has an appropriately qualified and trained supervisor panel, with sufficient time allocated to allow for effective supervision throughout candidature;

c) Providing adequate resources, space, facilities and development opportunities to support HDR candidates complete their research project and meet examination requirements;

d) Overseeing orientation, induction and training opportunities provided at School level specifically for HDR students;

e) Overseeing the progression of candidates within the School, outlining the quality and progress expected at various stages of candidature within disciplines, evaluating research programs, and responding to feedback in a timely manner.

4.3 Supervisor panel responsibilities

The supervisor panel provides continuous support to HDR candidates in conducting and completing a research project and producing a thesis to the best of the candidate's ability. Specific responsibilities include:

a) Supporting the candidate in developing a project of appropriate scope and quality for the level of award;

b) Maintaining regular contact with and providing timely feedback to the candidate, establishing, reviewing and reconfirming project aims and milestones, establishing and reviewing the role of supervisor panel members, and facilitating the development of research and professional skills aligned to the candidate's research topic or course/career goals;

c) Monitoring the progress of candidates, and where necessary, advising candidates when progress is unsatisfactory, documenting strategies for improvement;

d) Ensuring that candidate's research is in line with legislative and policy requirements, such as the Australian Code for the Conduct of Responsible Research, and ECU's policies on data management, Human and Animal Ethics requirements, authorship and IP;

e) Maintaining knowledge of University procedures in order to advise candidates on course requirements such as confirmation of candidature, regular reporting, candidature management and examination.

4.4 Candidate responsibilities

The primary responsibility for undertaking, active pursuit and completion of the research rests with the HDR candidate. Specific responsibilities include:

a) Become familiar with the procedural and substantive rights and responsibilities of HDR candidates at the University, including those contained relevant policies;

b) Maintain regular contact with the supervisor panel and negotiate and maintain a reasonable timetable of meetings, milestones and submitted work, which is reviewed regularly in the course of candidature;

c) Present required written material in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussions before scheduled meetings;

d) Negotiate with the supervisor(s) appropriate ways of documenting meetings including agreed actions arising from supervision sessions;

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e) Discuss with the supervisor(s) the most useful type of help, training and support required for successful completion of the degree;

f) Undertake induction and other appropriate training or remedial work identified by the supervisor(s), should this be necessary.

4.5 Supervisor Panels

a) All Candidates must have a supervisor panel appointed at the time of initial enrolment.

b) A Supervisor panel will consist of at least a principal and associate supervisor, or two co-principal supervisors. Each of the following areas of expertise and mentoring must be catered for in the panel:

  i) discipline knowledge;
  ii) research design and methodology;
  iii) rules, deadlines, policies, reporting and all other supervisory administration requirements, as well as ensuring timely and effective feedback on progress;
  iv) mentoring the candidate in areas such as, but not limited to, attainment of Graduate Attributes, and appropriate professional skills; applications for funding; networking opportunities with colleagues in academia and beyond; presenting at conferences; casual work; assistance with publications; and the development of a career plan;
  v) mentoring less experienced supervisors.

c) Supervisor panel examples are illustrated in the *Guidelines for Supervisor Panel Selection.*

4.6 Supervisor Eligibility

a) ECU principal and associate supervisors should be registered as compliant with the requirements of this policy on the University's Supervisor Register. In order to be deemed compliant, these supervisors are required to:

  i) be research active through demonstrated achievement of a threshold number of government-reportable publications or equivalent research outputs, as described by the ASPIRE framework, unless determined otherwise by the Dean of School (or nominee);
  ii) have completed appropriate training in HDR supervision (see 4.11 Supervisor Training), and
  iii) hold a doctoral qualification (or significant research experience judged to be equivalent as outlined the *Guidelines for Assessing Supervisor Qualifications.*

b) Academics who are research active and hold appropriate qualifications will be able to assume the role of principal supervisor after successful completion of the Principal Supervisor Accreditation Program *(see Guidelines for Supervisor Accreditation Program)*

c) Staff supervising more than 5 EFTSL of HDR candidates must seek the approval of the Dean of School (or nominee) for each additional research candidate.

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When approving additional supervisory load, the following should be considered:

i) experience, including past completion and attrition rates;
ii) administrative, teaching and other research commitments; and
iii) proposed role and load on the supervisor panel.

4.7 Principal Supervisor Role

a) Principal supervisors, in addition to the conditions outlined in 4.6, must:

   i) have had a successful HDR completion (*(see Guidelines for Supervisor Accreditation Program)*;
   ii) be a member of ECU academic staff, and have a tenure commensurate with the expected course duration; and
   iii) hold a doctoral qualification (or significant research experience judged to be equivalent as outlined *Guidelines for Assessing Supervisor Qualifications.*

b) Principal supervisors are responsible for:

   i) guiding the candidate through course requirements including meeting required milestones, supporting timely completion, reporting on progress and nominating examiners;
   ii) providing clear communication within the supervisor panel about required course and administrative requirements;
   iii) carefully monitoring the performance of the candidate relative to candidature consumed; and
   iv) mentoring other members of the supervisory team as required.

4.8 Associate Supervisor Role

a) Associate supervisors must be a member of ECU academic staff, and have a tenure sufficient to ensure consistency of supervision to a candidate.
b) Associate supervisors support the Principal Supervisor and contribute in an academic and mentoring role to the progress and development of the higher degree by research student's candidature. With the Dean of School (or nominee) approval, the Associate Supervisor may assume the role of Principal Supervisor when the Principal Supervisor is absent for a period greater than four weeks.

4.9 Assistant Supervisor Role

a) The Dean of School (or nominee) may appoint an assistant supervisor to bring specific skills or expertise to the supervisor panel of a higher degree by research candidate. The appointment of an assistant supervisor must be in addition to a principal and associate or co-principal supervisor panel.
b) An assistant supervisor does not need to meet the same eligibility criteria as a principal or associate supervisor. The Dean of School (or nominee) must be satisfied that the skills or expertise of the assistant supervisor is aligned to the proposed research project of the candidate. An assistant supervisor will act in a consultative rather than supervisory role on a panel.

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c)   If a staff member undertaking HDR studies is appointed as an assistant supervisor, the Dean of School (or nominee) must be satisfied that there is no perceived or real conflict of interest between the assistant supervisor, the other members of the supervisor panel or the candidate.

d)   An assistant supervisor may apply for workload allocation for their role based on their supervision percentage on the panel. An assistant supervisor is not eligible to claim research training completion through the University's Research Performance Scheme.

4.10 **External Supervisor Role**

a)   To be appointed as an external supervisor, the person should have approval from the principal supervisor and Dean of School (or nominee) certifying that they are satisfied an external supervisor can provide appropriate supervision. Principal supervisors in establishing the panel must provide sufficient information for the Dean of School (or nominee) to enable them to determine the suitability of each nominated external supervisor.

b)   All arrangements for external supervision must be confirmed in writing, including the period of supervision, the contact model, and maximum and minimum limits on payment. Schools are responsible for ensuring that the external supervisor is given all of the relevant University policies and procedures.

c)   External supervisors may be appointed with or without remuneration for their supervisory contribution (see *Guidelines for the Remuneration of External Supervisors*).

d)   External supervisors may be offered an honorary appointment (Adjunct, Honorary or Emeritus staff) to ECU, where there exists mutual benefit for the University and the external supervisor.

4.11 **Supervisor Training**

a)   Principal and Associate Supervisors are required to undertake ongoing professional development in order to understand the specific responsibilities, policies, processes and systems relating to supervision.

b)   All new ECU supervisors, regardless of their level of experience at other institutions, will be required to undertake a course that deals specifically with the practice of higher degree by research supervision at ECU.

c)   All supervisors will be required to update training every two years.

4.12   **Supervisor Absence**

a)   Supervisors must ensure that HDR candidates have advanced notice about any planned long leave or retirement during their candidature. Suitable alternative supervisory arrangements should be negotiated with the Dean of School (or nominee), communicated to the candidate and documented on the Progress Reports.

b)   An associate supervisor should ensure continuity of supervision during leave of the principal supervisor.

4.13 **Close Personal Relationships**

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a) Staff shall not supervise or assess a student who is a member of their family, or with whom they have, or have had, a close personal relationship.

b) Staff members who believe that the nature of the relationship between themselves and a Candidate that they are currently, or have been asked to supervise, compromises their independence should immediately inform their Dean of School (or nominee) so that alternative supervision arrangements can be made.

c) It is not permitted for supervisors who are in a close personal relationship to be on the same superior panel, unless there is a compelling case for that approval, and a suitable third supervisor is appointed to the panel.

4.14 Conflict Resolution

a) Any candidate who is dissatisfied with their supervision, and discussions with their supervisors have failed, are encouraged to meet with the Associate Dean Research or Dean of School.

b) Any problems or disagreements encountered during the candidature that cannot be resolved between the HDR candidate and the supervisor with any of the above arbitrators, may be mediated by the Dean, Graduate Research School.

c) A candidate may appeal to the Student Appeals Committee under Rule 8.3 if he or she is dissatisfied with the assessment of their academic work or progress.

4.15 Authorship

a) Agreement should be reached between the HDR candidate and the supervisor concerning authorship of publications and acknowledgment during, and after, the candidature.

b) There should be open and mutual recognition of the HDR candidate's and the supervisor's contribution on all published work arising from the project, as outlined in policy: ac073 - Authorship, peer review and publication of research.

5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In relation to this policy, the following positions are responsible for the following

The Policy Owner, Dean Graduate Research School, has overall responsibility for the content of this policy and its operation in ECU.

HDR Candidates and ECU staff engaged in the provision or support of HDR supervision are required to comply with the content of this policy and to seek guidance in the event of uncertainty as to its application.

All members of the University community are expected to comply with University Policy.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

6.1 The policy is supported by the following Guidelines:

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- Guidelines for supervisor panel selection
- Guidelines for assessing supervisor qualifications
- Guidelines for assessing equivalency to a completion
- Guidelines for the remuneration of external supervisors

6.2   Other documents which are relevant to the operation of this policy are as follows:

- *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*
- Higher Education Standards Framework (2017)
- *ECU policy hr117 Code of Conduct*
- *ECU policy ac101 Postgraduate Research Training*
- *ECU policy ac073 Authorship, peer review and publication of research*
- *ECU policy ac076 Research Data Management*
- *ECU policy hr081 Work, Health and Safety*
- *ECU policy ac023 Conduct of Ethical Human Research*
- *ECU policy ac 025 Conduct of Ethical Research and Teaching Involving Animals*
- *ECU Academic Misconduct Rules (Students)*
- *ECU Admission, Enrolment and Academic Progress Rules*
- *University of Wollongong "Code of Practice-Supervision" policy contribution*
- *Office of Research and Innovation – Research Data Management Guide and Research Data Management Plan*

7.   CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

Policy Owner	Dean Graduate Research School
All Enquiries Contact:	Dean, Graduate Research School
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8. **APPROVAL HISTORY**

Policy Approved by:	Vice-Chancellor
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Date last modified:	March 2018
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Guidelines for supervisor panel selection

The following examples exemplify how the model can be used to select the correct mix of skills for the Supervisor Panel, with at least one tick in each column:

Example 1

Role	Name	Load	Discipline Knowledge	Research Design	Rules & Deadlines	Mentor Candidate	Mentoring Supervisors
					Expertise		
Principal	Dr X	70	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Associate	Dr Z	30	✓		✓		

   *Both Dr X and Dr Z are experienced supervisors

Example 2

Role	Name	Load	Discipline Knowledge	Research Design	Rules & Deadlines	Mentor Candidate	Mentoring Supervisors
					Expertise		
Co-Principal	Dr X	51	✓		✓	✓	
Co-Principal	Dr Z	49	✓	✓		✓	

   *Both Dr X and Dr Z are experienced supervisors

Example 3

Role	Name	Load	Discipline Knowledge	Research Design	Rules & Deadlines	Mentor Candidate	Mentoring Supervisors
					Expertise		
Principal	Dr X	40			✓	✓	✓
Associate 1	Dr Z	60	✓	✓			

Example 4

Role	Name	Load	Discipline Knowledge	Research Design	Rules & Deadlines	Mentor Candidate	Mentoring Supervisors
					Expertise		
Principal	Dr X	40	✓		✓		✓
Associate 1	Dr Z	40		✓	✓	✓	
Associate 2	Dr A	20		✓			

Example 5

Role	Name	Load	Discipline Knowledge	Research Design	Rules & Deadlines	Mentor Candidate	Mentoring Supervisors
					Expertise		
Principal	Dr X	40	✓	✓	✓		✓
Associate	Dr Z	40		✓		✓	
External	Dr J	20	✓				

Example 6

Role	Name	Load	Discipline Knowledge	Research Design	Rules & Deadlines	Mentor Candidate	Mentoring Supervisors
					Expertise		
Principal	Dr X	40	✓		✓		✓
Associate 1	Dr Z	40		✓	✓	✓	
Assistant 1	Ms A	20	✓				

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Guidelines for assessing supervisor qualifications

Deans of School (or nominee) are required to approve the Nomination of Supervisors form. If the nominated supervisor does not hold an equivalent qualification to the level of degree they are requesting to supervise, the Dean of School must certify that they have achieved significant, equivalent research experience, and believe the nominated supervisor can provide appropriate supervision.

Staff without research qualifications wanting to supervise need to provide their Deans of School with evidence that they have substantial research experience, and are able to plan, direct and implement a research program equivalent to a research thesis.

Evidence must include a substantial track record in research and/or creative outputs at an advanced level including:

- Quality and quantity of refereed publications
- Evidence of peer review activity
- Evidence of creative outputs (Original Creative Work (live performance, recorded or rendered work, curated or produced exhibitions or events etc.))
- Competitive research awards, prizes and grants
- Past supervisory experience

Supporting evidence may include assessment of research standing and leadership and other peer esteem factors such as:

- On editorial board of high impact journal in their discipline
- Editor of a prestigious work of reference
- Visiting fellow or research fellow roles
- Fellowship of a learned academy
- Membership of a statutory committee

Guidelines for Principal Supervisor Accreditation Program

The Principal Supervisor Accreditation Program is a program that consists of a series of formal training seminars on supervisor development and good practice in research training combined with a mentored, practical experience component. Academics who successfully complete the Principal Supervisor Accreditation Program (PSAP) may be deemed to have equivalency to a completion. This combined with being research active and holding appropriate qualifications will allow participants to be able to assume the role of a principal supervisor in a panel.

Entry to this program is by nomination of the Dean of School (or nominee). The program is of one year duration, and the supervisor is expected to be active in an existing supervision panel throughout this time.

The program involves:

a) mentoring by the principal supervisor;
b) participation in a series of workshops run by the Graduate Research School;
c) creation of a portfolio covering content from the workshops and reflections on the supervision experience, which is guided by the mentor and may form the basis of a future publication; and
d) knowledge dissemination through presentations on an aspect of supervision, through a forum organised by the Graduate Research School.

In addition to the above, successful completion of the program will also require the recommendation of the principal supervisor.

Guidelines for the remuneration of external supervisors

Persons external to the University may be appointed as External Supervisors for the support of higher degree by research candidates.

These supervisors may be provided with or without remuneration for their supervisory contribution.

Non-remunerative appointment

An external supervisor may be appointed on a non-remunerative basis. Examples of non- remunerative arrangements would be where members of a cross-institutional collaborative research team regularly engage in the associate supervision and support of research students within a project, regardless of the institution in which the student is formally enrolled, or where there are long-standing cross-supervision arrangements between individuals, Schools or research areas at one or more institutions. In such cases, external supervision is conducted on a non- remunerative *quid pro quo* basis.

Remunerative appointment

The remuneration for external supervision is to be negotiated between the Dean of School/Director of Institute/Centre and the external supervisor, with reference to the:

- academic level or equivalent of the external supervisor commensurate with ECU's
- Academic Salary Rates;
- roles and responsibilities of the external supervisor in relation to the project;
- proportion of overall supervision being undertaken;
- policy on "Appointment – Emeritus, Honorary, Adjunct & Visiting Academic Staff