

HDR Supervision Policy

Section 1 - Overview & Scope

(1) This policy provides a quality assurance framework for the effective monitoring and delivery of higher degree by research supervision, recognising that supervision is the most significant support the University provides to its HDR Candidates.

(2) The University of New England is responsible for the delivery of high-quality research training programs that are academically rigorous, promote responsible research conduct, and provide enriching experiences for HDR Candidates and Supervisors.

(3) This Policy outlines the fundamental principles and appointment provisions underpinning higher degree by research supervision at UNE, to ensure that:

- a. academics and other professionals appointed as supervisors of research have the appropriate skills, experience and time for effective supervision;
- b. supervisors of research trainees have a clear understanding of good professional practice in supervision and the University's expectations of them;
- c. HDR Candidates understand what they can expect from their supervisory team;
- d. supervision is proactive and a positive experience for HDR Candidates and HDR Supervisors; and
- e. the policy complies with:
 - i. [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#);
 - ii. the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\) \(Cth\)](#);
 - iii. Universities Australia Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships (2018); and
 - iv. the Australian Council of Graduate Research (ACGR) Good Practice Guidelines for Quality Graduate Research Supervision Version 2: August (2021).

(4) This policy applies to HDR Candidates, current and prospective HDR Supervisors, and UNE Representatives.

(5) Within this policy:

- a. Part A - states the principles of this policy;
- b. Part B - covers the roles and responsibilities of the University, Academic Staff, HDR Supervisors and HDR Candidates in relation to supervision;
- c. Part C - covers the requirements for the registration of HDR Supervisors on the Supervisor Register;
- d. Part D - covers HDR Supervisor development and training requirements;
- e. Part E - covers the administrative requirements for the appointment of HDR supervisors and changes to supervisory arrangements; and
- f. Part F - covers complaints and appeals of supervisors and HDR Candidates.

Section 2 - Policy

Part A - Policy Principles

General Principles

(6) The University is committed to establishing a supervisory environment where:

- a. HDR Supervisors and HDR Candidates establish and maintain clear communication and actively identify and resolve any misunderstandings or divergent expectations as they arise;
- b. giving and receiving constructive feedback, and learning how to use it effectively, are integral aspects of the research process. HDR Supervisors and HDR Candidates should undertake these activities respectfully and with a common focus on producing quality learning as well as quality work;
- c. HDR Supervisors are responsive to HDR Candidates' changing needs at different stages of the degree;
- d. HDR Supervisors and HDR Candidates should treat each other fairly and reasonably and should respect the social, cultural and intellectual diversity of the University community;
- e. HDR Supervisors and HDR Candidates must not engage in, or tolerate, harassment and discrimination;
- f. HDR Supervisors and HDR Candidates recognise that intellectual and practical input from other researchers is necessary and desirable, and is to be encouraged;
- g. HDR Supervisors and HDR Candidates exercise professional discretion in their relationship, maintaining confidentiality where appropriate;
- h. HDR Candidates are encouraged to take part in opportunities at the University to develop skills and knowledge that complement their research;
- i. the University recognises its responsibility to foster research communities that welcome and engage HDR Candidates as active participants;
- j. HDR Supervisors ensure that research trainees/HDR Candidates are made aware of UNE's intellectual property policies and provided with fair opportunities to consider the implications for their research project, especially for externally-funded research; and
- k. the University maximises supervision capabilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR Candidates by:
 - i. providing appropriate academic professional development training in Indigenous Research Methodologies to ensure supervisors can effectively supervise both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates or non-Indigenous Candidates undertaking Indigenous-related research;
 - ii. encouraging the practices of including an appropriately- academically qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supervisor on supervisory panels and using appropriately-academically qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander examiners wherever appropriate; and
 - iii. improving peer networks for all supervisors to share learnings and approaches.

Part B - Roles & Responsibilities

Supervisory Teams

(7) Each HDR Candidate must be supported and guided by a supervisory team consisting of a minimum of two (2) and normally a maximum of four (4) Supervisors.

(8) Supervisors must work with each other and the HDR Candidate to:

- a. develop the HDR Candidate's personal and professional capabilities as a researcher; and
- b. improve the HDR Candidate's capability to produce high quality research.

(9) Two supervisors must be members of academic staff and have an appointment at UNE that extends for the expected period of candidature. One will be nominated as Principal Supervisor.

Principal Supervisor

(10) The key functions of a Principal Supervisor in a supervisory team are to:

- a. ensure that appropriate resources and support are available to assist the HDR Candidate's progression;
- b. meet administrative requirements; and
- c. ensure that the supervisory team provides timely, honest and constructive commentary on their HDR Candidate's work.

Co-Supervisor

(11) All members of the supervisory team must:

- a. support and advise the HDR Candidate in research activities, noting that the extent of project leadership will vary with academic discipline; and
- b. facilitate the HDR Candidate's access to the agreed resources necessary for the HDR Candidate to succeed.

(12) Additional supervisors may be appointed to fulfil specific roles in the candidature. These supervisors must meet the requirements outlined in clause 24 and 25 below.

(13) The composition of a supervisory team will depend on: faculty arrangements, the interdisciplinary nature of the research project, other criteria as determined by the faculty, project, and as appropriate to the project, the candidate and the degree.

(14) The supervisory team must:

- a. include at least one member of the academic staff with the requisite skills, subject knowledge and experience for supervision of the HDR Candidate's project topic;
- b. be able to provide continuous supervision for the likely duration of the HDR Candidate's candidature, allowing for changes in any individual supervisor's availability; and
- c. be focussed on candidate outcomes, recognising the challenges faced by HDR Candidates undertaking interdisciplinary projects.

(15) The Head of School or nominee may review and change supervisory arrangements as required throughout the course of the candidature.

(16) The Head of School or nominee must inform the HDR Candidate about all such changes.

(17) The University must appoint an academically qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supervisor on supervisory panels wherever appropriate.

General Roles & Responsibilities of Supervisors

(18) Supervisors assist HDR Candidates to devise, undertake and complete an independent research project within the allotted candidature duration by providing appropriate direction, guidance, feedback and support, including, but not limited to:

- a. inducting research trainees into the University, Faculty, School and research group, so they meet colleagues and understand the environment in which they will be working;

- b. providing advice on the theoretical basis of the project;
- c. suggesting appropriate reading;
- d. providing guidance on research methods and methodology;
- e. provide oversight and model appropriate ethical conduct when undertaking research, as appropriate for discipline;
- f. providing guidance on the responsible conduct of research;
- g. providing guidance and modelling of research communication in written, spoken and visual genres relevant to the discipline;
- h. being available for regular consultation and to provide timely constructive feedback (written and verbal) on the thinking, writing and research of the HDR Candidate's work; and
- i. observing the Policy Principles in Part A in the exercise of their supervisory activities.

(19) All HDR Supervisors must keep up to date with, and implement, UNE policies, procedures and guidelines governing the conduct of research and research degrees at the University of New England.

(20) HDR Supervisors must guide, monitor, review and oversee HDR Candidates to ensure compliance with the requirements of external bodies and internal regulations and policies for the conduct of research including ethics and integrity, health and safety, sanction laws, work with foreign organisations and Defence Export Controls.

(21) Supervisors should be particularly mindful of the power imbalance that exists between HDR Candidates and Supervisors. Supervisors are expected to actively work to ensure that this is not abused, and that all HDR Candidates are provided with an appropriate and supportive professional environment in which to undertake their program of research and study.

Part C - The Supervisor Register

(22) All individuals providing supervision to HDR Candidates must be registered on the accredited Supervisor Register with the University of New England.

(23) The Director Graduate Research, in consultation with the relevant Associate Dean, Research is responsible for establishing and maintaining the register of all individuals eligible to be appointed as Supervisors.

Criteria for Principal Supervisor Registration

(24) To be registered as a Principal Supervisor of HDR Candidates, all of the following criteria must be satisfied:

- a. be an academic member of staff at the University;
- b. meet the equivalency criteria for Principal Supervisors in accordance with Part B of the [AQF Plus 1 and Professional Experience Equivalence Policy](#).

Co-Supervisor Registration

(25) To be registered as a Co-Supervisor including External and End-User Supervisors of HDR Candidates, all of the following criteria must be satisfied:

- a. meet the equivalency criteria for Co-Supervisors in accordance with Part B of the [AQF Plus 1 and Professional Experience Equivalence Policy](#);
- b. agree to supervise HDR Candidates in accordance with UNE's HDR rules, policies and guidelines; and

Conflicts of Interest

(26) All supervisors must be compliant with the University's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#), the [UNE Code of Conduct](#), and the UNE [Code of Conduct for Research](#).

Supervision Load

(27) The maximum supervisory load for a registered supervisor is normally 6.0 (six) FTE.

Annual Review of Supervisor Registration

(28) Each year the Graduate Research School will undertake an administrative review of all registered supervisors.

(29) Following the review, the Graduate Research School will make one of the following recommendations to the relevant Head of School or nominee:

- a. continued registration;
- b. conditional registration;
- c. upgrade to higher level (with requisite training if required); or
- d. registration deactivated in good standing.

Supervisor Register Reporting

(30) The Director, Graduate Research will report annually to the Academic Board on issues relating to the Supervisor Register, including but not limited to the:

- a. number of currently active supervisors;
- b. number of supervisors added to the Supervisor Register in the past twelve months;
- c. number of supervisors reregistered in the past twelve months;
- d. number of currently inactive supervisors;
- e. number of supervisors who have been deregistered and the reasons for their deregistration;
- f. average number of candidates per supervisor;
- g. number of supervisors who exceed the supervisory load stated in clause 60 by three or more candidates; and

(31) Reports must include a summary of actions taken and any recommendations relating to the operation of the Supervisor Register.

Part D - Supervisor Development and Training

(32) All supervisors employed by UNE are required to maintain current knowledge of supervisory practice and an awareness of UNE research and research training policies through attendance at a Supervisor's Refresher program (face-to-face or online module) every two years from their anniversary date or re-registration date.

(33) All prospective supervisors who wish to be included on the register must undertake supervisory development activities and must familiarise themselves with current supervisory practices and expectations by completing the University's supervisor training courses or workshops.

(34) If a potential supervisor has already undertaken an equivalent course or has substantial suitable experience in supervising HDR Candidates to completion, the Director Graduate Research may exempt them from taking the University's supervisor training course.

Part E - Administrative Requirements

Absence of Supervisors

(35) When a Principal Supervisor is expected to be absent and unable to provide supervision for an extended period (more than two months), then an Acting Principal Supervisor must be formally appointed.

Resignation/Retirement

(36) In special cases where the Principal Supervisor has left UNE, the Co-Supervisor may be appointed as Principal Supervisor. However, where the Co-Supervisor does not meet the necessary criteria, appointment of appropriate supervisors is at the discretion of the Director, Graduate Research on the recommendation of the Head of School.

Part F - Complaints and Appeals

(37) HDR Candidates and/or Supervisors have the right to lodge a complaint if the Principles of the Policy (PART A) have not been upheld and it has impacted the research and/or research progress.

(38) Complaints can be made to the Head of School (or nominee) in the first instance and should follow the process as outlined in the HDR Supervision Procedures.

(39) If not resolved at the School level, the matter can be raised with the Graduate Research School. The Graduate Research School may refer the matter to the appropriate area which includes, but not limited, to:

- a. People and Culture;
- b. Student Grievance Unit;
- c. Research Integrity and Ethics;
- d. Academic Integrity;
- e. Associate Deans, Research; and
- f. Director, Graduate Research.

(40) Complainants have the right to appeal under the appropriate unit investigating the matter.

(41) Once all internal avenues of appeal have been exhausted complainants can appeal to the NSW Ombudsman on matters of process only.

Section 3 - Authority & Compliance

Authority

(42) The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer (VC&CEO) pursuant to Section 29 of the [University of New England Act 1993 \(NSW\)](#), makes this University policy.

(43) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research (DVCR) is authorised to make procedures and processes for the effective implementation and operation of this policy, and to publish as associated documents any tool that will assist with compliance.

(44) Policy Administrator for this policy is the Director Governance and University Secretary, who is authorised to make minor administrative updates to this policy.

Compliance

(45) UNE Representatives, HDR Supervisors and HDR Candidates must observe this policy in relation to HDR Supervision. Non-compliance may be a breach of the Code of Conduct and may be addressed under the disciplinary provisions of the relevant Enterprise Agreement.

(46) This policy is consistent with all legislative standards and regulatory frameworks, including the [Higher Education Support Act \(HESA\)](#), the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(HESF\)](#), the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act \(ESOS Act\)](#) and the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students](#). Further information regarding compliance obligations is available via the Compliance Register.

(47) This policy operates as and from the Effective Date. Previous policy on HDR supervision are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date.

(48) Notwithstanding the other provisions of this policy, the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer may approve an exception to this policy where the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer determines the application of this policy would otherwise lead to an unfair, unreasonable or absurd outcome. Approvals by the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer under this clause must be documented in writing and must state the reason for the exception.

Section 4 - Definitions (specific to this Policy)

(49) FTE (Full-Time Equivalent)- means supervision of a HDR Candidate studying at a full-time capacity.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	18th February 2024
Review Date	18th February 2025
Approval Authority	Director Governance and University Secretary
Approval Date	8th December 2023
Expiry Date	To Be Advised
Unit Head	Chris Armstrong Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"UNE Representative" - Means a University employee (casual, fixed term and permanent), contractor, agent, appointee, UNE Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.

"HDR Candidate" - Means a Higher Degree Research student.

"School" - Is an organisational unit comprising academic staff in related fields of study who are responsible for teaching and research in those academic fields together with support staff. Each School also has lead management for the design and delivery of the courses within its responsibility.

"Faculty" - An organisational unit consisting of a group of related Schools, which is responsible for coordinating the management and quality of the teaching and research conducted by those Schools.