

Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Degree Students

Abstract

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Responsible Officer	Dean, Graduate Research School	
Related documents	Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research UTS Policy by classification: Conduct and ethics UTS Graduate Research School: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, rules and guidelines • Review of progress guidelines Intellectual Property Policy Student Rules: Section 11 — Graduate Research	
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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Functions of Principal Supervisors
3. Rights of students
4. Responsibilities of students
5. Version control and change history

1. Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with the Rules of the University, with particular reference to [Section 11 – Graduate Research](#) in the Student Rules.

1.1 Purpose

The University acknowledges that research students have a right to effective supervision and research education. The purpose of this Code of Practice is therefore to provide both supervisors and Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students with an overarching framework in which they can negotiate the details of the research and supervision. This is with an understanding that supervisory practices

will vary across faculties and disciplines. The nature of the student–supervisor relationship therefore cannot be mandated, as it needs to take into account the discipline, the research project, the student, the supervisors and the stage of the candidature.

An essential part of effective supervision is the advice, guidance and critical feedback of the supervisor and other members of a Supervisory Panel. For their part, students have a responsibility to maintain satisfactory progress, adhere to University rules and procedures, communicate with their supervisors, and respond appropriately to critical feedback received. It is also important for supervisors and students to acknowledge that research education extends beyond any particular supervisor–student relationship.

1.2 Selection and composition of Supervisory Panels

A Supervisory Panel will be appointed so that an HDR student may be guided and supervised properly throughout the candidature. The Supervisory Panel must have a minimum of two supervisors, with at least one Principal Supervisor. Other panel members may be Joint Supervisors, Co-Supervisors, Alternate Supervisors, External Supervisors or Advisors as appropriate. The exact composition of the panel will vary across faculties.

The Dean, Graduate Research School appoints supervisors on the recommendation of Faculty Research (or HDR) Committees or Responsible Academic Officers (RAOs). Supervisors must be admitted to the supervisor register in accordance with the UTS Protocol on the Register of Research Student Supervisors.

Changes to supervision arrangements should be made in consultation with all parties concerned. Ultimately, it is the right and responsibility of the University to appoint and change supervisory panels, or to make other supervisory arrangements as it sees fit.

1.3 Supervisory roles

Principal Supervisor — the lead (first) supervisor, who takes primary academic responsibility for the HDR candidate. In addition, the Principal Supervisor must be a salaried UTS employee.

Joint Supervisor — at least two supervisors share lead supervision. Both must be qualified to undertake principal supervision for the relevant degree level. Joint supervisors must be salaried UTS employees.

Alternate Supervisor — a supervisor who is able to stand in during a Principal or Joint Supervisor's leave. An Alternate Supervisor must be qualified to undertake principal supervision for the relevant degree level. An Alternate Supervisor must be a salaried UTS employee.

Co-Supervisor — a secondary supervisor who will have appropriate expertise, as determined by the Faculty Research (or HDR) Committee. The role of Co-Supervisor will differ depending on faculty and candidature requirements but is expected to participate and comment on candidature stage assessments and participate in key meetings with the student as appropriate.

External Supervisor — a person external to the University (not a salaried UTS employee) who may be appointed to the supervisory panel. The person will have particular experience and provide specialist advice. External Supervisors cannot be Principal Supervisors.

In addition, there are Advisors who may be members of a panel who have particular experience and provides specialist advice. Advisors may be external to the University.

2. Functions of Principal Supervisors

The functions of Principal Supervisors are to:

- 2.1** encourage broader engagement by the student with the research community
- 2.2** plan with the student an appropriate program of research and supporting studies and activities through the doctoral study plan
- 2.3** communicate with the student at appropriate intervals to discuss, assess and guide the progress of the work
- 2.4** raise and discuss with the student, early in the candidature and throughout, intellectual property issues arising from the program of research
- 2.5** read and comment critically on drafts of written work relevant to the thesis
- 2.6** provide a fair and accurate report on progress and advise on ethical and safety requirements
- 2.7** liaise with panel members as appropriate and organise candidature assessments when required
- 2.8** make recommendations to the RAO for the appointment and replacement of panel members
- 2.9** advise on milestones in the research degree and the supports available in the University
- 2.10** inform the student as soon as possible, when the case arises, of any expected absence and the alternative arrangements for supervision
- 2.11** meet the student at frequent intervals to discuss, assess and guide the progress of the work
- 2.12** advise the student on the scope and presentation of the thesis and on any publication likely to arise from the work
- 2.13** comment critically on the draft of the completed thesis before it is submitted
- 2.14** impress upon the student the necessity of care in proofreading the thesis, so as to reduce the need for minor amendments at a later stage
- 2.15** liaise with the relevant faculty RAO
- 2.16** make recommendations to the RAO on the nomination of examiners.

At any time, should the Principal Supervisor believe the student's progress to be unsatisfactory, they should inform the student of the reasons and subsequently report that in the Review of Progress.

3. Rights of students

3.1 Selection of topic

Students have a right to negotiate their own topic within the constraints of the faculty's resources and the expertise of the supervisors, unless their proposed

candidature is part of a wider research program. The student should formulate the specific problem for research in collaboration with the Principal Supervisor.

3.2 Candidature information

Students have the right to receive information about how to manage the administrative aspects of candidature including degree requirements, resources available and administrative procedures.

3.3 Contact with supervisors

Students have a right to receive adequate supervision. There will be variation in the frequency and nature of supervision across faculties and at different stages of candidature.

Students should meet the Principal Supervisor to discuss the work and any issues associated with it. Students can expect their Principal Supervisor to be accessible in person at agreed times, when academic advice may be needed. Both student and Principal Supervisor have an obligation to ensure that they confer on the progress of the research at agreed appropriate intervals. An Alternate Supervisor or a Co-Supervisor should also be available in accordance with section 1.3 above.

3.4 Change of supervision

Students are able to negotiate a change in supervision with their supervisor and RAO. Where there are personality clashes which prevent fruitful cooperation between the student and a supervisor, or any other problems not able to be resolved easily, steps should be taken as soon as possible to seek a resolution of the problems in discussion with the RAO. If alternative supervision is considered the only solution, the RAO should facilitate this process in the faculty. If no alternative supervision can be found, the matter should be referred by the RAO to the Dean, Graduate Research School.

3.5 Disagreements and difficulties

If at any stage, the student disagrees with assessment of progress made by the supervisor or has other concerns relating to candidature, then the matter should first be discussed with the supervisor and/or the relevant RAO. Any further disagreement can be taken to the Graduate Research School.

3.6 Resources

Students have the right to expect agreed facilities and services from the faculty, as well as the equipment, funds and other support necessary to support the degree program, subject to reasonable regard for the financial situation of the University and the relevant faculty.

3.7 Examination

Students have the right to advise the Principal Supervisor of the names of persons about whose potential role as examiners they may have some concern.

3.8 Feedback

Students have the right to constructive and critical assessment of relevant work submitted. In particular, students have a right to know when the Principal Supervisor assesses progress as inadequate or standards of work as being below that generally expected. Principal Supervisors should specify the problems and suggest ways of addressing them. Students are expected to develop, in consultation with their

Principal Supervisor, a doctoral study plan for their research including timelines. Both the Principal Supervisor and student should be clear about these goals.

While supervisors should give feedback promptly, it is also incumbent on the student to take account of the supervisors' other commitments and not to place unreasonable demands on supervisors with respect to time allowed to read a draft section.

3.9 Research integrity

Students have a right to receive information and training on the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and the various [University-related policies](#) that govern the responsible conduct of research.

4. Responsibilities of students

4.1 Selection of the supervisor

As the Principal Supervisor will be the main source of advice and guidance, it is important for students to seek a Principal Supervisor whom they can respect professionally and to whom they can relate personally. Information about supervisors, including research areas of expertise, is held on the UTS website.

4.2 University rules and procedures

Students are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the [Student Rules](#) and, in particular, [Section 11 – Graduate Research](#). In addition, students should familiarise themselves with the [various policies and procedures](#) about Graduate Research issued by the Graduate Research School Board and the faculty.

4.3 Contact with supervisors

Students should take initiative to make regular contact with supervisors and to ask for support when needed. Students should respond to contact and feedback provided by the supervisor.

4.4 Changes to candidature

Students should inform the Principal Supervisor of any significant factors which might affect the program of research, so that leave of absence or other changes to candidature can be made if necessary. Students are required to inform the Principal Supervisor (and the University) of any change in contact details.

4.5 Resources

Students should discuss the resources needed and those available with the supervisor at the time of enrolment. Both the student and the Principal Supervisor should reach early agreement that the scope of the research project is feasible in the time available and that the necessary resources are available.

4.6 Difficulties

Any difficulties arising from the research or with supervision should be raised first with the Principal Supervisor, but if the issue cannot be resolved, the RAO should be consulted. The matter can be referred to the Graduate Research School if the issue persists.

4.7 Academic progress

Students have a responsibility to maintain the progress of the work in accordance with the doctoral study plan and ongoing arrangements with the Principal Supervisor. In particular, this includes sending the supervisor written material in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussions before proceeding to the next stage.

Continuation of candidature is conditional on maintaining satisfactory progress in all aspects of candidature, which may include some or all of:

- progress on research work
- ethics clearance
- safety and risk management requirements
- coursework components, and
- candidature stage assessments.

Supervisors or the RAO may draw the attention of the Graduate Research School to problems with progress of a student at any time.

4.8 Intellectual property

The University has a [policy on intellectual property](#). Research Students should become familiar with its implications for them before their candidature commences. Potential problems should be raised before enrolment so that a conflict of interest between the student, the University and the employer or sponsor does not occur later on. If issues of ethics or fraud arise then the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and the various [University-related policies](#) that govern the responsible conduct of research should be consulted.

4.9 Review of progress

All students are required to complete a review of progress at the end of each semester. Failure to complete the review of progress may be taken to constitute unsatisfactory progress, which may result in discontinuation of candidature. The process for assessing progress is covered in [Rule 11.13](#) in the Student Rules and the Graduate Research School Board's [Review of Progress Guidelines](#).

4.10 Research integrity

Students are required to read and comply with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and the various University-related policies that govern the responsible conduct of research.

5. Version control and change history

Effective date	Edition	Approved by, resolution number (date)	Amendment
08/04/2014	10	Academic Board, AB/14-1/12.3 (12/03/2014)	—
01/12/2014	10.1	Council, COU/14-5/106 (15/10/2014)	Consequential changes to align with changes to Student Rules.
		Director, Governance Support Unit (15/10/2014)	