



Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Supervision Procedures

1. COMPLIANCE OBLIGATION SUPPORTED

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

2. PROCEDURAL DETAILS

2.1. Supervision of HDR students

2.1.1. Unless otherwise specified, appointment or any change in appointments of the Thesis Chair and supervisors to a HDR student are to be made by the Director of Graduate Research for the Enrolling School (DGR) after consideration of the [Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Supervision Policy](#) and these procedures.

2.1.2. In the event that:

- (a) a Thesis Chair, principal supervisor, co-supervisor, external co-supervisor or external associate supervisor is unable to perform the duties or responsibilities of the role for a period exceeding three months; or
- (b) a Thesis Chair, principal supervisor or co-supervisor ceases employment at the University;

the DGR is to appoint a replacement after consideration of the [Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Supervision Policy](#) and these procedures.

2.1.3. Supervisors are to ensure they have appropriate workload available prior to agreeing to supervise a student.

2.1.4. The professional relationship between a supervisor and their student is characterised by mutual respect and trust. A sexual or romantic relationship between a supervisor and their student is never appropriate. If such a relationship occurs:

- (c) the supervisor must immediately remove themselves from all supervisory, teaching and assessment roles involving that student;
- (d) the supervisor must immediately inform the DGR; and
- (e) the DGR must ensure the student is provided with suitable alternative supervision arrangements.

2.1.5. Supervision is to be undertaken in a manner consistent with the provisions of ["Supervision: a guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research."](#)

2.2. Register of Supervisors

2.2.1. The ADVCRE may approve the listing on the Register of Supervisors as a Level 1 Supervisor a Curtin staff member who meets all of the following criteria:

- (a) has obtained a doctoral degree or have recognised equivalent experience;
- (b) has been substantially involved in the supervision of a doctoral student (at any university) who has submitted their thesis for examination;
- (c) has a current active involvement in research, as demonstrated by at least one relevant publication/output in the last three years;
- (d) has completed Curtin University's Research Integrity Training; and
- (e) has developed and maintained good supervisory skills and knowledge of Curtin's statutes, rules, policies, procedures and guidelines as they pertain to HDR courses through completing (i) two HDR professional development workshops or seminars or (ii) a formal HDR induction training program within the prior twelve-month period approved by the Research Office at Curtin.

2.2.2. The ADVCRE may approve the listing on the Register of Supervisors as a Level 2 Supervisor a Curtin staff member who meets all of the following criteria:

- (a) has obtained a research masters degree or have recognised equivalent experience;

- (b) has a current active involvement in research, as demonstrated by at least one relevant publication/output in the last three years;
 - (c) has completed Curtin University's Research Integrity Training; and
 - (d) has developed and maintained good supervisory skills and knowledge of Curtin's statutes, rules, policies, procedures and guidelines as they pertain to HDR courses through completing (i) two HDR professional development workshops or seminars or (ii) a formal HDR induction training program within the prior twelve-month period approved by the Research Office at Curtin.
- 2.2.3. The ADVCRE may, on request, approve entry to the Register of Supervisors as a Level 1 Supervisor a staff member does not meet section 2.2.1(b) provided the staff member has met all the other criteria of 2.2.1 and has been engaged in the co-supervision of a doctoral student for a minimum of two years.
- 2.2.4. Staff who have had a career disruption due to extended carers leave and, as a result, have not had the opportunity to attend relevant training, are encouraged to contact the ADVCRE to discuss further.
- 2.2.5. Listing on the Register of Supervisors is to be for a period of five years. Supervisors will seek renewal of their listing before the expiry period or may be removed from the Register.
- 2.2.6. To be eligible for renewal as a Level 1 Supervisor, supervisors must have met all following conditions during their prior period of registration:
 - (a) have been involved in the supervision of a HDR student who has been approved to graduate or has graduated;
 - (b) have acted as the Thesis Chair for a HDR student who has been approved to graduate or has graduated; and
 - (c) have maintained their Research Integrity training.

Supervisors who meet these conditions will have their registration automatically renewed for a five-year period. Supervisors who do not meet all conditions will be required to meet the conditions as set out in 2.2.1.
- 2.2.7. To be eligible for renewal as a Level 2 supervisor, supervisors will have met all following conditions during their prior period of registration:
 - (a) have been involved in the supervision of a HDR student who has been approved to graduate or has graduated; and
 - (b) have maintained their Research Integrity training.
- 2.2.8. The ADVCRE may remove from the Register or temporarily suspend an individual on the recommendation of (i) their Line Manager, (ii) Head of School, (iii) DGR or (iv) Dean of Research. Grounds include:
 - (a) the individual no longer meets the criteria set out in section 2.2.1;
 - (b) the individual has been disciplined by the University for academic or research misconduct;
 - (c) the individual has not carried out their supervisory duties satisfactorily; or
 - (d) the individual has a workload or work-plan that does not permit further supervision duties.

2.3. Thesis Chair

- 2.3.1. To be appointed as a student's Thesis Chair, the individual is to be:
 - (a) listed as a Level 1 Supervisor on the Register of Supervisors;
 - (b) a member of Curtin University's academic staff; and
 - (c) the Thesis Chair of no more than eight HDR students, unless approved by the ADVCRE.
- 2.3.2. The Thesis Chair is to:

- (a) oversee and approve HDR administrative processes as relevant;
- (b) assist with conflict resolution and mediate disagreements between the student and supervisors; and
- (c) ensure that the examination process is carried out according to relevant policies and procedures.

2.4. Principal supervisor

- 2.4.1. To be appointed as a student's principal supervisor, the individual is to be listed as a Level 1 Supervisor on the Register of Supervisors.
- 2.4.2. Teaching-focused academic staff and professional staff on the Register of Supervisors may be appointed by the ADVCRE as principal supervisor on the recommendation of the DGR.
- 2.4.3. The principal supervisor has primary responsibility for the HDR student's supervision and progression. The principal supervisor is to:
 - (a) ensure that supervisors (including themselves) remain actively engaged in supervision and facilitate opportunities for the supervisors to constructively discuss the student's progress/progression;
 - (b) ensure that the HDR student has been provided with reasonable support to gain an appropriate understanding of their responsibilities and the expectations of the supervisors;
 - (c) provide guidance and advice, including in relation to ethics requirements, and ensure that the research is undertaken in accordance with the University's policies, procedures, guidelines and processes, including applying for ethics clearance as required and annual reporting of research progress;
 - (d) discuss with the student the scope of the research topic, planning of the research program and ensuring required resources and funding is available;
 - (e) provide academic support, including constructive and timely feedback, guidance and evaluate progress;
 - (f) maintain regular contact with the HDR student as dictated by the research program;
 - (g) monitor performance of the HDR student and address potential issues or problems as early as possible within the University framework;
 - (h) oversee all necessary administration with regard to milestones;
 - (i) ensure that the DGR is informed of progress and any issues with regard to supervision;
 - (j) provide support and constructive advice, including on funding, publishing and networking, and in pursuing additional opportunities related to the HDR training experience;
 - (k) where practical, facilitate opportunities to interact with the wider academic community nationally or internationally;
 - (l) provide constructive and timely advice about the design and preparation of thesis material and submission of final thesis; and
 - (m) provide career advice as appropriate.

2.5. Co-supervisors

- 2.5.1. To be appointed as a student's co-supervisor, the individual is to be listed as a Level 1 or Level 2 Supervisor on the Register of Supervisors.
- 2.5.2. Teaching-focused academic staff and professional staff on the Register of Supervisors may be appointed as co-supervisor.
- 2.5.3. A co-supervisor is to:
 - (a) maintain an awareness of the project scope and progression;
 - (b) provide academic support, including constructive and timely feedback, guidance and evaluate progress;

- (c) attend supervision meetings regarding students' progress as required; and
- (d) act in place of the principal supervisor when required.

2.6. External co-supervisors and external associate supervisors

- 2.6.1. A person employed at another higher education provider or a research institution affiliated with Curtin University (e.g., hospitals, medical research institutes and industry partners), who is research active, may be appointed as an external co-supervisor. The responsibilities of the external co-supervisor are equivalent to those of a co-supervisor (section 2.5.3).
- 2.6.2. External associate supervisors may be appointed to provide essential supplementary expertise to support a principal supervisor. This expertise is typically specialised assistance in an area or a specific aspect of the HDR student's course.
- 2.6.3. The DGR may approve the appointment of an external co-supervisor or associate supervisor, provided the individual has:
 - (a) obtained a research degree at the level at which they intend to supervise or above or have recognised equivalent specialist experience; and
 - (b) a current active involvement in research and attributes that will contribute to the success of the student's HDR course.
- 2.6.4. This appointment may be for a specific period or for an HDR student's course.
- 2.6.5. An external associate supervisor cannot at any time act as principal supervisor or Thesis Chair.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities are as set out in section 2.

4. SCOPE OF PROCEDURES

These procedures apply to all staff, University Associates and students involved with HDR programs.

5. DEFINITIONS

(Note: Commonly defined terms are located in the [Curtin Common Definitions](#). Any defined terms below are specific to this document)

Nil

6. SCHEDULES

Nil

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS/LINKS/FORMS

Internal

- [Guidelines for Establishing the Higher Degree by Research Supervisory Relationship](#)
- [Course Quality Manual](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Procedures](#)

External

- [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)
- [Supervision: A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

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| Policy Compliance Officer | Melinda Fitzgerald , Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Research Office at Curtin |
| Policy Manager | Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research |
| Approval Authority | Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research |
| Review Date | 1 st April 2024 |

REVISION HISTORY

| Version | Approved/ Amended/ Rescinded | Date | Committee / Board / Executive Manager | Approval / Resolution Number | Key Changes & Notes |
|---------|------------------------------------|------------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| New | Approved | 01/04/2015 | Chair, University Graduate Studies Committee (UGSC) | EM1507 | Unconditional |
| | Administratively Updated | 20/05/2015 | Director, Legal and Compliance Services | | Numbering Updated |
| | Administratively Updated | 06/10/2015 | Director, Legal and Compliance Services | EC 76/15 | Executive Manager Title Changes |
| | Amended | 08/12/2017 | Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research | EM1731 | Unconditional |
| | Rescinded | 08/03/2020 | Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research | EM2045 | This version was titled Supervision of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Students Procedures |
| | Approved | 04/08/2020 | Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research | EM2040 | Effective upon gazettal of Statute 12 (24/07/2020) and promulgation of the Admission and Enrolment (HDR) Rules (03/08/2020) and relevant policy |