

# HDR Supervision Arrangements Procedure

## Section 1 - Context

(1) This procedure defines the processes for registering, appointing and replacing HDR supervisors and supporting supervisor performance and professional development.

## Section 2 - Authority

(2) Authority for this document is established by the [Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#).

## Section 3 - Scope

(3) Supervisors of higher degree by research (HDR) candidates.

## Section 4 - Procedure

### Allocation of Supervisors

(4) The Dean/Head of School is accountable for the allocation of supervisors to HDR candidates and the oversight of supervisor performance.

(5) The Dean/Head of School may choose to delegate aspects of their authority to the School HDR Delegated Authority (HDR DA).

(6) A minimum of two supervisors, at least one of whom is a senior supervisor, are allocated to each candidate on the basis that the supervisors:

- a. are willing to supervise the candidate
- b. have sufficient supervisory capacity in their workload to provide high-quality support, and relevant experience in the candidate's research topic
- c. if Senior supervisors, intend to supervise the candidate for the full period of candidature
- d. if enrolled in an HDR program, have a research topic of sufficient separation from that of their candidate (only applicable to supervision of masters by research candidates)
- e. have no potential or actual conflict of interest, including but not limited to:
  - i. with a candidate or with other members of the supervisory team: an existing or previous personal or legal relationship, including biological or legal relative or guardian, de facto partnership or marriage or an emotional or intimate relationship not otherwise formally recognised
  - ii. with a candidate: an existing professional or commercial relationship, including line management, business partnership, shared membership of a Board or Committee.

(7) Allocation of a candidate's supervisory team must be finalised before an offer of admission can be made.

(8) The HDR DA assists applicants to HDR programs with identifying suitable supervisors following receipt of an expression of interest. It is expected that some discussion between the applicant and prospective supervisors will precede admission. Initial supervisory arrangements will be endorsed by the Dean/Head of School and approved by the Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research Training and Development (ADVC RT&D) as a condition of offer.

(9) Where a candidate's research project is pursued in the context of a formal agreement with a partner organisation, every effort to appoint an external supervisor associated with the partner organisation shall be made.

## **Supervisor Registration**

(10) All supervisors must be accredited and listed on the RMIT supervisor register as either Category 1 or Category 2 supervisors before they can be allocated to candidates.

(11) Supervisors apply to be registered via the online Supervisor Registration Form.

(12) Recommendations for entry on the register are made by the Dean/Head of School (or Deputy Vice-Chancellor for the registration of Deans/Heads of School). Non-affiliated academics and professional staff nominations are considered by the ADVC RT&D.

(13) Registration criteria is detailed in Schedule 1.

(14) The Supervisor Register is owned and maintained by the School of Graduate Research (SGR).

(15) Application of a waiver to any of the criteria detailed in Schedule 1 must be recommended by the Dean/Head of School (or HDR DA) based on evidence of research and supervisory performance and/or capability, and approved by the ADVC RT&D.

## **Supervisory Teams**

(16) The minimum requirements for a supervisory team are a senior supervisor and an associate supervisor per candidate. Teams may also be comprised of:

- a. two joint senior supervisors;
- b. one senior and several associate supervisors; or
- c. two joint senior supervisors and one or more associates.

(17) The senior supervisor in the supervisory team provides the overall academic leadership to the candidate on their research project.

(18) The role of the senior supervisor may be shared equally between two joint senior supervisors.

(19) Any major decisions concerning the academic direction of the candidates' research require the agreement of both joint senior supervisors, where applicable.

(20) One senior supervisor per team, who is affiliated to the candidate's enrolling school, must take responsibility for candidature administration and compliance (e.g. candidature variation approvals; first point of contact regarding the candidature).

(21) Associate supervisors' roles in the supervision of a candidate may vary, depending on the candidate's supervisory requirements, from providing day-to-day guidance to provision of specific technical, contextual or methodological advice or support.

(22) The combined supervisor contribution load per candidate must total 100%.

- a. The senior supervisor must have a minimum load of 40%, and a higher load than any associate supervisors.
- b. If there are two joint senior supervisors, they must have the same load (e.g. 50% each, or 40% each with an associate supervisor contributing 20%).

(23) The relative loads of each supervisor contribution are allocated to an HDR candidate are recorded in the candidate record.

(24) HDR completions are a performance indicator used in the assessment of supervisor research performance and supervisor registration. All members of a supervisory team receive full recognition for any HDR completions to which they have contributed, regardless of load or role.

## **Supervisory workload**

(25) The Dean/Head of School is accountable for the adequate workload allocation for the supervision of all candidates enrolled within their School. While the number of hours required to supervise a candidate may vary depending on supervisory arrangements and preferred approach, as well as the stage and progress of candidature, an indicative allocation of no less than one hour per week should be made to a full-time candidate and no less than one hour per fortnight to a part-time candidate.

## **Replacement/Change of Supervisor**

(26) Candidates may apply for a change to supervisory arrangements at any time except during recorded periods of action and support. In doing so, they must seek the assistance of the HDR DA in identifying a suitable replacement supervisor(s).

(27) HDR DAs may initiate a change to supervisory arrangements at any time. It is the HDR DA's responsibility to endorse and allocate a replacement supervisor in these circumstances. As with initial allocation at admission the ADVC RT&D approves the replacement supervisor allocation.

(28) The ADVC RT&D may instruct a change of supervisor in cases where poor performance or concerns regarding staff conduct are identified.

(29) To aid the allocation of replacement supervisors, supervisors should notify the HDR DA in advance if they are planning extended leave or a change to their employment arrangements that will affect their ability to supervise candidates.

(30) Changes to supervisory teams and supervision weightings are notified via a Change of Supervisor Form, completed by the HDR DA and will only take effect following receipt by SGR of a duly completed and authorised form.

(31) If a supervisor is not able to supervise a candidate for a period exceeding six weeks and no alternative arrangements have been made, the HDR DA must put in place alternative supervisory arrangements for approval by the ADVC RT&D, in consultation with the candidate. Alternative arrangements may include:

- a. the appointment of a short-term replacement supervisor to cover any absence
- b. the re-weighting of roles within the supervisory team
- c. the designation of supervisor administrative responsibilities to another supervisory team member.

## **Supervisory Responsibilities**

(32) Supervisors are required to discharge their responsibilities in accordance with section 6.7 of the Higher Degrees by Research Policy and the Supervision Code of Practice.

(33) Supervisors are responsible for guiding candidates conduct in accordance with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and supporting opportunities for:

- a. the production of high-quality research outputs based on candidates' research;
- b. professional development; and
- c. end-user engagement.

## **Review of HDR Supervision Performance**

(34) Deans/Heads of School must ensure that line managers of HDR supervisors include supervision in performance and career planning, and review HDR supervision performance as part of annual work plan discussions. Consideration should be given to the outcomes of current and recent candidates including timeliness of completions, satisfactory progress and milestone reviews, candidate research outputs, conference presentations and any other relevant indicators.

(35) Exemplary supervision practice should be recognised by line managers in performance and career planning.

(36) Supervisors demonstrating exemplary practice may be eligible to nominate for one of the annual RMIT HDR supervision awards.

(37) Deans/Heads of School (or nominees), and the ADVC RT&D where appropriate, will review performance and compliance of individual supervisors when potential unsatisfactory performance is identified. Poor performance identified by a school should be reported to the ADVC RT&D.

(38) One or more indicators may lead to a review of a supervision performance and poor performance will be addressed according to the intervention strategy detailed in Schedule 2.

## **Professional Development of Supervisors**

(39) All supervisors who are RMIT staff members (excluding those with adjunct, emeritus, professorial fellow or research associate appointments) will be required to meet annual professional development requirements with respect to HDR supervision.

(40) Professional development requirements are detailed in Schedule 3.

(41) Failure to meet these requirements will be considered in the review of eligibility to supervise new candidates.

## **Reviews of Eligibility**

(42) SGR reviews the eligibility of a supervisor whenever a new supervision is proposed.

(43) SGR annually reviews compliance with registration requirements for all supervisors and ensures Deans/Heads of School (or nominees) are notified.

(44) Supervisors who are no longer eligible but who have a current load will enter a grace period of registration to enable them to fulfil their current obligations, subject to the satisfactory progress of current candidates. During this period they will be encouraged to meet ongoing eligibility requirements. Supervisors in a grace period will be 'unavailable' for new candidates.

(45) Non-eligible supervisors without current candidates will be given 'inactive' status and will not allocated further candidates until they either:

- a. fulfil the eligibility requirements; or

- b. receive a waiver in accordance with clause 2.6 of this procedure.
- (46) SGR will return a supervisor to 'active' status, on receipt of evidence to support clause 9.4 (a) or 9.4 (b).
- (47) External supervisors with no current load will be given 'inactive' status.
- (48) Deregistration may occur:
- a. where a supervisor has been inactive, with no candidates, for two years, in which case SGR assesses and deregisters the supervisor, and notifies the Dean/Head of School or nominee
  - b. if a supervisor who has been an RMIT staff member leaves the University, in which case SGR will check with the Dean/Head of School that there is no expectation of continuing supervision in an external capacity before completing the deregistration
  - c. in certain circumstances where unsatisfactory supervision performance is established (see Schedule 2) in which case, either the Dean/Head of School or ADVC RT&D may instruct deregistration.
- (49) To reregister following deregistration, regardless of registration level, the prospective supervisor will need to apply for new registration subject to approval by the Dean/Head of School and the ADVC RT&D.

## Section 5 - Schedules

- (50) This procedure includes the following schedules:
- a. Schedule 1 – Supervisor Registration Requirements
  - b. Schedule 2 – Potential Consequences of Unsatisfactory Supervision Performance
  - c. Schedule 3 – Supervisor Professional Development

## Section 6 - Procedures and Resources

- (51) Refer to the following documents which are established in accordance with this procedure:
- a. [Supervision Code of Practice](#)

## Status and Details

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