



# The University of Sydney

## Postgraduate Research Higher Degree Training Supervision at the University of Sydney

Approved by: Academic Board  
Date of approval: 12 November 2003  
Date of effect: 1 January 2004  
Amended: 15 November 2006

### 1. Policy

The University of Sydney is an institution of higher education at which research training of the highest national and international quality is a pre-eminent responsibility. The University has a responsibility to ensure that candidates for higher degrees work in an appropriate intellectual and academic environment and receive appropriate supervision during their candidature. The University shall maintain control of the candidature at all times.

The University's approach to postgraduate research supervision is positive and proactive. The University strives to ensure consistent excellence in supervision across all faculties. Excellence in supervision will be acknowledged and rewarded across the institution and enhanced through training and support.

### 2. Background

This policy draws together and updates preceding policy and guidelines to present the University's approach to supervision and requirements of supervisors in one clear policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Code of Practice for Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students* and the *Code of Conduct for Responsible Research Practice and Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Research Misconduct*.

### 3. Coverage

This policy applies to all staff and students involved in postgraduate research higher degree training candidatures.

### 4. Postgraduate Research Higher Degree Training Supervision Arrangements

#### (1) Supervisor

A supervisor appropriate to the field of study in which the candidature is to be undertaken shall be appointed for each candidate. In appointing a supervisor, consideration shall be given to:

- (a) how the successful completion of the candidature can be achieved while ensuring that the candidate has the best possible supervision available;

- (b) the need for additional support, particularly for a first time supervisor. For first time supervisors, the University shall normally appoint an experienced supervisor as the associate supervisor who will also be able to provide instruction, advice, and mentoring;
- (c) continuity of supervision throughout the entire candidature; and
- (d) the distribution of the supervisory load of the department/school.

**(2) Associate supervisor**

At least one associate supervisor shall be appointed for each candidate. In appointing an associate supervisor, consideration shall be given to:

- (a) how the appointment can assist in the successful completion of the candidature; and
- (b) the distribution of the supervisory load of the department/school.

**(3) Contributions**

- (a) The supervisor holds the ultimate responsibility for the supervision of the candidate.
- (b) The relative contributions of supervisor and associate supervisor should be discussed and agreed to at the commencement of candidature and review as required.
- (c) An associate supervisor who is not an employee of the University shall be required to agree to abide by the University's rules and regulations and codes of practice prior to undertaking supervisory duties.

**(4) Limits on supervision**

- (a) A supervisor shall not normally supervise more than five full-time equivalent postgraduate research candidates at one time, or pro rata for a supervisor employed on a fractional basis. Whenever a higher supervision load for a particular supervisor is proposed, the head of department/school shall make a recommendation, including the reason, to the Dean of the Faculty (or delegate) for approval.

The Dean of the Faculty shall report such approvals to the Dean of Graduate Studies after each HECS census date.

**5. Postgraduate Research Higher Degree Training Supervisor Requirements**

**(1) Introduction**

- (a) The University acknowledges that supervisory practices vary between disciplines and is committed to providing high-quality supervision in all areas of study.
- (b) The role of a supervisor in a research higher degree candidature has evolved over time with increased requirements for pro-active

management of candidatures and responsibility for some administrative aspects of candidature. It is vital that the University ensure that all supervisors are well placed to provide high-quality supervision to all postgraduate research higher degree training candidates.

- (c) Where no associate supervisor is immediately identifiable, the head of department/school (or delegate) shall be appointed to the role until such time as an associate supervisor is identified.

## **(2) Supervisor**

### **(a) General requirements**

To be eligible to be appointed as a supervisor, a person must:

- (i) be a member of the academic staff of the University at Level B or above; or
- (ii) be considered appropriate by the Dean of the Faculty on a case by case basis;

and

- (iii) hold a qualification at a level above that for which the candidate seeks to be supervised, or
- (iv) hold a qualification at the same level as that for which the candidate seeks to be supervised and demonstrate a record of scholarly achievement; or
- (v) demonstrate current and active involvement in research appropriate to the field of study and a record of scholarly achievement to the satisfaction of the Dean of the Faculty on a case by case basis;

and

- (vi) participate in activities for postgraduate research training supervision as the Dean of the Faculty may deem appropriate; and
- (vii) meet such other conditions as the Dean of the Faculty may deem appropriate.

### **(b) Specific requirements**

To be eligible to be appointed as a supervisor, in addition to the general requirements above, a person must:

- (i) have acted as an associate supervisor for the successful completion of at least two candidatures at a recognised tertiary institution; or
- (ii) have acted as a supervisor or an associate supervisor for at least 12 months duration at a recognised tertiary institution, and have completed the Institute for Teaching and Learning Postgraduate Supervision Development Program, or equivalent<sup>1</sup>; or

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<sup>1</sup> The Postgraduate Research Training Sub-Committee of the Graduate Studies Committee shall determine which courses are equivalent to the Institute for Teaching and Learning Postgraduate Supervision Development Program.

- (iii) have acted as a supervisor for the successful completion of at least one candidature at a recognised tertiary institution.

**(3) Associate supervisor**

(a) General requirements

To be eligible to be appointed as an associate supervisor, a person must:

- (i) meet the general requirements specified in 5(2)(a) above; or
- (ii) have been appointed as an honorary associate of the University; or
- (iii) meet such other requirements as the Dean of the Faculty may determine.

(b) Specific requirements

To be eligible to be appointed as an associate supervisor, in addition to the general requirements above, a person must:

- (i) demonstrate ability to successfully supervise a candidature to completion; or
- (ii) meet such other specific requirements as the head of department/school (or delegate) may determine.

**(4) Training and scholarship**

The University expects all academic staff with supervisory responsibilities to undertake training in issues relating to supervision of postgraduate research higher degree training candidates. This includes participation in the Institute for Teaching and Learning Postgraduate Supervision Development Program and attendance at workshops designed to inform supervisors on issues relating to University resolutions and policies and to identify and share good practice.

Staff commencing work with the University who have completed supervisor training elsewhere are encouraged to participate in the training course to ensure familiarity with supervisory practices at the University of Sydney.

**6. Postgraduate Research Higher Degree Training Supervisor Register**

**(1) Introduction**

(a) Faculties, individual academic staff members, and candidates will benefit from a supervisor registration process which will clearly identify supervisors and associate supervisors who meet the University's requirements and will encourage on-going commitment to excellence in supervision.

(b) It is essential that supervisors of good standing are recognised and acknowledged as such. This recognition is formalised by the inclusion of the name of a supervisor or associate supervisor on a central register identifying staff who are able to undertake supervisory responsibilities.

- (c) In this context good standing is taken to mean upholding and abiding by the provisions of the University's Code of Practice for Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students.
- (d) The Dean of Graduate Studies shall oversee the maintenance of the register and may provide reports to faculties regarding general supervisory practices in a faculty, or regarding supervisory responsibilities relating to an individual.

**(2) Maintenance of register**

The Register will be maintained by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

**(3) Inclusion on register**

**(a) Entry onto register**

- (i) The Register shall have two sections; Supervisors, and Associate Supervisors. A person who is listed in the Supervisor section may be appointed as a supervisor and/or an associate supervisor. A person who is listed in the Associate Supervisor section may only be appointed as an associate supervisor. A person shall therefore only appear in one section of the Register at a time.
- (ii) All academic staff who are currently supervisors at the University of Sydney as of 1 January 2004 will be added to the Supervisors section in the first instance.
- (iii) All academic staff who are currently associate supervisors at the University of Sydney as of 1 January 2004 will be added to the Associate Supervisors section in the first instance, unless they are also entitled to be included in the Supervisors section.
- (iv) Other persons, whether they be current staff or future staff, will be added to the appropriate section of the Register as and when the Dean of Graduate Studies is advised by the Dean of the Faculty that the person has become eligible for inclusion by meeting the criteria set out in section 5(2) and/or section 5(3) above.

**(b) Movement within register**

- (i) A person shall be moved from the Associate Supervisor section to the Supervisor section when the Dean of Graduate Studies is advised by the Dean of the Faculty that the person has become eligible for inclusion in the Supervisor section by meeting the criteria set out in section 5(2) above.
- (ii) A person shall be moved from the Supervisor section to the Associate Supervisor section when the Dean of Graduate Studies is advised by the Faculty that the person has become ineligible for inclusion in the Supervisor

section in accordance with the criteria set out in section 5(2), but remains eligible to be an associate supervisor in accordance with the criteria set out in section 5(3).

**(c) Removal from register**

- (i) A person shall be removed from the Register when the Dean of Graduate Studies is advised by the Faculty that the person has ceased to be a supervisor or associate supervisor of good standing.
- (ii) A person shall be advised in writing of their removal from the Register.

**(4) Appeals**

- (a) A person may appeal to the Chair of the Academic Board about their removal from the Register or movement within the Register.
- (b) Such appeals shall be made in writing within 28 days from the date of notification of removal from the Register.
- (c) The Chair of the Academic Board shall determine the process to hear appeals.
- (d) The decision of the Chair of the Academic Board is final.

**(5) Review of register**

- (a) The Dean of Graduate Studies shall review the Register annually and the process shall include reconfirmation of the status of persons listed on the Register.
- (b) The Dean of Graduate Studies shall report annually to the Research and Research Training Committee on issues relating to the Register, including a summary of actions taken in respect of the Register and any recommendations relating to the Register.

**(6) Privacy**

Access to the Postgraduate Research Higher Degree Training Supervisor Register is governed by the University of Sydney Privacy Policy and Privacy Management Plan.

**7. Authority**

**(1) Development/consultation**

The Research and Research Training Committee, Faculties, Academic Board.

**(2) Management responsibility**

Dean of Graduate Studies

**(3) Implementation and monitoring**

Dean of Graduate Studies with advice to the Research and Research Training Committee.

- (4) **Review**  
1 August 2005
  - (5) **Communication**  
Dean of Graduate Studies
  - (6) **Contact**  
Dean of Graduate Studies
8. **Related information**
- (1) **Related University legislation, resolutions, policies and procedures include:**
    - (a) *University of Sydney (Amendment Act) Rule 1999* (as amended) at:  
[http://www.usyd.edu.au/publications/calendar/amend\\_act\\_%20rule99.pdf](http://www.usyd.edu.au/publications/calendar/amend_act_%20rule99.pdf)
    - (b) *University of Sydney (Intellectual Property) Rule 2002* at:  
[http://www.usyd.edu.au/publications/calendar/intel\\_prop02.pdf](http://www.usyd.edu.au/publications/calendar/intel_prop02.pdf)
    - (c) Code of practice for supervision of postgraduate research students at: [http://db.usyd.edu.au/policy/policy\\_index.stm](http://db.usyd.edu.au/policy/policy_index.stm)
    - (d) Code of Conduct for Responsible Research Practice and Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Research Misconduct at: [http://db.usyd.edu.au/policy/policy\\_index.stm](http://db.usyd.edu.au/policy/policy_index.stm)
  - (2) **University policies superseded or replaced by this policy:**
    - (a) Postgraduate Supervision at:  
[http://db.usyd.edu.au/policy/policy\\_index.stm](http://db.usyd.edu.au/policy/policy_index.stm)
  - (3) **References and additional information include:**
    - (a) Resolutions of the Senate relating to Faculties, Colleges, College Boards, Boards of Studies, Departments, Schools and Committees: Academic Governance at:  
[http://www.usyd.edu.au/publications/calendar/facs\\_coll.pdf](http://www.usyd.edu.au/publications/calendar/facs_coll.pdf)
    - (b) Resolutions of the Academic Board relating to the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at:  
[http://www.usyd.edu.au/publications/calendar/degree\\_dr\\_.pdf](http://www.usyd.edu.au/publications/calendar/degree_dr_.pdf)
    - (c) Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Research Higher Degree Supervision at  
<http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/Teval/VCawards/excellence.htm>