

Appendix A: Higher Degree Supervision Policy

1. Qualifications of Supervisors

- 1.1 The University Research Committee (URC) requires that the principal supervisor of a Master's candidate hold at least a Master's degree or equivalent academic qualifications and/or has an appropriate record of scholarly publications
- 1.2 The URC requires that a principal supervisor of a doctoral candidate hold a Doctorate and/or has an appropriate record of scholarly publications
- 1.3 The URC requires that supervisors of master and doctoral degree candidates:
 - (a) be experienced in research and/or in the supervision of research at higher degree level
 - (b) have relevant knowledge and expertise in the nominated topic area
 - (c) have sufficient time and access to adequate resources, taking account of total work load including the supervision of other higher degree candidates.
- 1.4 Any departure from these criteria must be justified primarily on scholarly grounds.

2. Principal Supervisors

- 2.1 Subject to the approval of the URC, the following categories of staff who are otherwise appropriately qualified may act as principal supervisors of research master's and professional doctorate degree candidates:
 - (a) any staff member holding a continuing academic appointment or an appropriate contractual academic appointment
 - (b) any staff member holding a research appointment, provided that the duration of such research appointment is appropriate
 - (c) Any staff member holding a professional appointment whose professional activities relate significantly to research.
- 2.2 If the principal supervisor is a member of a University Research Centre or Institute and not an academic member of an academic School of Australian Catholic University, a co-supervisor should be appointed from the Faculty accepting the enrolment.

3. Associate Supervisors

- 3.1 The principal supervisor may be assisted by other members of the University staff (who may be co-supervisors) or by outside specialists (who may be appointed as associate supervisors). The candidate may be referred for advice to other staff in the University or elsewhere.
- 3.2 In all cases the principal supervisor remains responsible for directing the candidate's academic work, for ensuring that the candidate submits reports, and meets other administrative responsibilities.

4. Responsibilities of the Principal Supervisors

- 4.1 Before the applicant is accepted as a candidate:

- (a) To examine a brief (approximately 300-500 words) written research proposal provided by the applicant. (This proposal in original or amended form should be accompanied by the Application for Admission as a Higher Degree candidate before the application is lodged with Research Services.)
- (b) To advise the Associate Dean whether the applicant's interests fall within the supervisor's current interests and/or research program, experience and knowledge and whether the applicant appreciates that there may be a need to consult others on some aspects of the research.
- (c) To advise the Associate Dean whether the applicant's qualifications and/or prior research experience indicate capacity to complete a Master's degree in one and a half (1.5) to two (2) years as a full-time student (or part-time equivalent) or a PhD Degree within three (3) to four (4) years as a full-time student (or part-time equivalent), or a DPsych Degree within three (3) years as a full-time student (or part-time equivalent) or an EdD student within three years as a full time student or six years part-time, and in either case justify admission.
- (d) To advise the Associate Dean on the resources likely to be necessary for the project (e.g. library, computing, laboratory, technical assistance, maintenance funds) and whether acceptance of the candidate should be conditional on the guaranteed provision of such resources.
- (e) To advise the Associate Dean how, over a candidature of normal length, the candidate could continue to receive proper supervision in the absence of a supervisor (e.g. during an Outside Studies Program or period of leave greater than three months).
- (f) To inform the Associate Dean of the number of higher degree candidates already being supervised by the proposed supervisor and whether adequate supervision can be given to the extra candidate.

4.2 In the first semester of candidature:

- (a) To inform the candidate at the beginning of candidature that research involving contact with human participants (including interviews, use of survey instruments or questionnaires, audio/video taping of participants, or access to an individual's files or records) may not commence until ethical clearance has been obtained in writing from the University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).
- (b) To inform the candidate that research involving animals, recombinant DNA or ionizing radiation must also be approved by the University Ethics or Safety Committee before commencing work on the project.
- (c) To assist the candidate to develop a realistic program of study (including the preparation of a mutually agreed timetable for completing the degree requirements within the maximum period of candidature) and research on a topic that offers sufficient scope for research training, is likely to prove an intellectually rewarding investigation, and could be expected to produce sufficient results for submission of an acceptable thesis within the time laid down by the URC. The program of study should be designed with the need to obtain ethical clearance in mind if human, animal or recombinant DNA experimentation is involved.
- (d) To ensure that the field and topic will not be unduly constrained by requirements of confidentiality or questions of possible defamation.
- (e) To suggest appropriate background reading and to advise on the literature review.
- (f) To arrange with the candidate mutually acceptable set times of appropriate frequency for formal discussions on assigned reading, criticism of written work, development of experimental procedures or other data gathering and to provide

constructive evaluation of the work submitted. In the research design and data gathering stages of candidature, supervisory meetings may be held weekly but never less than once a fortnight. In later stages of candidature, meetings may be once a fortnight and never less than once a month.

- (g) To direct the candidate to take approved courses relevant to the research degree program being undertaken if this is required by gaps in the candidate's background or by the nature of the program.
- (h) To arrange an oral presentation of completed work to staff and other advanced students and so to develop the candidate's skill in dealing with penetrating questions.
- (i) To give any additional assistance needed by overseas students, especially in respect of advice on problems with language.
- (j) To ensure that the candidate is familiar with the relevant rules and policies of the University, with the administrative requirements (e.g. submission of half-yearly reports by the due date), and with the University facilities likely to be of assistance.
- (k) To agree with the candidate on the structure and nature of the thesis.
- (l) To ensure that the co-supervisor(s) are consulted on mutually convenient times to meet with the candidate.

4.3 During the second and subsequent semesters after commencement:

- (a) To insist on seeing drafts of the major sections of the thesis as they are prepared and to return these to the candidate with reasonable expedition.
- (b) To advise the candidate when an open-ended project has proceeded far enough and to assist the candidate to complete the thesis.
- (c) To refer some, but not necessarily all, sections of the thesis to any associate supervisor or to specialist consultants, if appropriate.
- (d) To ensure that the thesis is not unnecessarily long and that it does not exceed the suggested maximum of 50,000 words in the case of a research master thesis or a Doctor of Education dissertation, or in the case of Doctor of Philosophy Degree the maximum of 100,000 words in the case of the PhD Degree.
- (e) To comment critically on the final draft of the completed thesis before it is submitted to examiners.
- (f) To give the candidate the opportunity to list any persons who should not be appointed as examiners and the reason for such objections and to advise the Dean regarding such objections.
- (g) To ascertain the availability of potential examiners and their willingness for their names to be put forward to the URC. It should be made clear to potential examiners that their name is one of many names being put forward for consideration and that this informal approach does not mean that the University will definitely invite them to serve as an examiner. Potential examiners should be informed of the thesis title, a short summary and the approximate date of submission. They should also be asked if they could submit their report within six to eight weeks at doctoral level or three to four weeks at Master's level, if they were invited. If a potential examiner is not able to submit a report within this reasonable period, alternative examiners should be considered. No further communication on this matter should be entered into by the supervisor and the potential examiner. All communication on the examination process must be via the URC.

- (h) To discuss possible examiners with the Dean before the Dean nominates examiners.

4.4 For PhD Candidates during Semesters three to five of Candidature:

- (a) To arrange mutually acceptable set times with the candidate for formal discussions of the work.
- (b) To arrange each semester for an oral presentation of completed work to staff and other advanced students and so to develop the candidate's skill in dealing with penetrating questions.
- (c) To encourage, when appropriate, the preparation of draft sections of the thesis and of other material for presentation at conferences or through publication.
- (d) To agree with the candidate on the structure and nature of the thesis.

5. Other responsibilities

- 5.1 To report to the Dean and to the URC as required on the candidate's progress and to ensure that the candidate supplies the required reports and other information by prescribed dates.
- 5.2 To ensure that ethical clearances are obtained as soon as possible and that contact with human participants and/or animals, or work involving recombinant DNA or ionizing radiation is not commenced before any necessary ethical clearance is obtained.
- 5.3 To allow the candidate to read the comments in the annual report on academic progress and to allow the candidate the opportunity to attach a reply to any adverse comment.

6. Variations in respect of part-time candidates

- 6.1 Before agreeing to act, the supervisor should determine:
 - (a) That the candidate can attend for discussions at mutually convenient times of appropriate frequency.
 - (b) That the candidate's past record and present circumstances suggest the ability to present an acceptable thesis in the time determined by the URC.

The principal supervisor should be convinced that a part-time applicant has the time available (in the light of other commitments), and the necessary persistence and ability (possibly demonstrated by substantial independent research and publication), to undertake part-time candidature with a reasonable expectation of success.

- 6.2 In general, except for differences in time, the points in paragraphs 1 to 4 apply.

7 Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students by Staff on Leave Greater Than three Months

- 7.1 In accordance with the Research and Professional Doctorate Degree Regulation, academic staff with responsibilities for postgraduate supervision shall ensure that continuity of such supervision can be maintained when applying for leave from the University for periods greater than three months, e.g. an Outside Studies Program, Long Service Leave or Sick Leave.
- 7.2 Academic staff who apply for leave greater than three months shall as part of the application process, complete and submit a proforma indicating how continuity of supervision will be maintained.

- 7.3 The Head of School and the Associate Dean shall include as part of their recommendation, advice on how continuity of postgraduate supervision can be maintained while the person is on leave and what alternative arrangements are appropriate.
- 7.4 If the application for leave is approved, the Head of School will notify Research Services. The Head of School will negotiate with the supervisor to ensure continuity of supervision.