Higher Degree by Research - Supervision Procedure

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') is committed to providing an environment that enables and supports transformative education through higher degrees by research (HDR) and drives world-class research in areas critical to the sustainable and prosperous development of Northern Australia and the wider region.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This procedure outlines the appointment, roles, and responsibilities of supervisors and other members of supervisory panels to assist Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) Candidates.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This policy applies to all HDR courses, supervisors of HDR candidates, and university staff responsible for supporting HDR courses.

Section 4 - Procedure

Role of Supervisors

(4) Every HDR candidate must be assigned a supervision panel. The home faculty is responsible for managing panel composition and ensuring the student's best interests are upheld. Panels should usually:

a. consist of one principal supervisor and one associate supervisor. Additional associate supervisors may be appointed at the faculty's discretion, with a standard maximum size of four supervisors/advisors;
b. have associate supervision make up at least 20% of the supervision of the student; and
c. include at least two University employees.

(5) The role of all research supervisors is to:

a. enhance the quality, efficiency, and impact of the research they are supervising;
b. support the wellbeing of candidates;
c. inculcate responsible, ethical, and safe research practices; and
d. help develop the research, personal, and career skills of candidates.

(6) Principal supervisors must also:

a. fulfill the administration and management duties that facilitate the enrolment, progress, and completion of HDR candidates;
b. ensure their candidates' compliance with research ethics and the foreign arrangements and autonomous sanctions schemes;

c. meet at regular intervals with candidates to uncover any possible impediments to progress as well as measures that could address these impediments;
d. together with the assistance of candidates and the faculty (including the Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies)) to which the candidate is allocated (the home faculty), assemble the supervision panel and arrange replacements if supervisors depart;
e. coordinate the supervision panel and resolve discrepancies among panel members; and
f. if unable to supervise over an extended period, organise an acting Principal Supervisor in agreement with the home faculty. The Dean of Graduate Studies may appoint an acting Principal Supervisor if the Principal Supervisor and home faculty do not.

(7) Associate Supervisors can assume a range of roles. They may:

a. serve as a subject matter expert on a specific topic;
b. be the main contact of candidates;
c. operate as an apprentice who is developing their skills in supervision; and
d. act in the role of principal supervisor when the principal supervisor is unavailable.

(8) Associate Supervisors can act as the Principal Supervisor only after:

a. they have registered as a Principal Supervisor on the University Register of Supervisors; and
b. the home faculty has informed Research and Innovation of this arrangement.

(9) Advisors are other members of the supervision panel who assist the candidate but are not registered supervisors. These advisors may include:

a. staff at this University who have not fulfilled the criteria to become supervisors;
b. academics at other universities;
c. industry partners; and
d. subject matter experts.

(10) Prior to working with the student, advisors must:

a. be approved by the student, Principal Supervisor, home faculty and Dean of Graduate Studies to work with the student on the project; and
b. sign an agreement with the University to work with the student on the project as an advisor and to comply with University governance documents while in that capacity.

(11) The University may also develop subclasses of Principal Supervisors or Associate Supervisors in the future, such as Mentoring Supervisors.

Eligibility to Register as a Supervisor

(12) To register as a Principal or Associate Supervisor, individuals must fulfil the following criteria designed to confirm that supervisors have developed the capacity to predict and manage the challenges that HDR candidates may experience:

a. attained a doctoral degree or equivalent;
b. acquired the expertise to enhance the quality, efficiency, and impact of the research they are supervising;
c. completed the supervisory training and assessment specified by the Dean of Graduate Studies; and
d. agree to regular ongoing supervisory training and assessment as specified by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

(13) In addition to these general criteria:

a. Principal supervisors must be an employee of the University or Menzies, unless an exception has been granted (see below).
b. Associate supervisors must be an employee of, or hold an adjunct appointment with, the University or Menzies.

(14) Furthermore, the Principal supervisor must be active in research and publishing in, or otherwise making original contributions to, a relevant field or discipline. For example, has five or more peer-reviewed research publications or research outputs including Non-Traditional Research Outputs (NTROs) in the last five years. Principal supervisors who fail to remain active in research and publishing may be assessed as ineligible to supervise in a principal capacity.

(15) An adjunct appointee may serve as a principal supervisor only if:

a. The relevant Faculty or Menzies School of Health Research is unable to identify a suitable replacement Principal Supervisor; and
b. an exception is approved by the ADR Review Panel following a formal request for exception submitted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) or Menzies Director.

(16) These criteria are also designed to confirm that Principal Supervisors have developed and maintain the capacity to predict and manage the challenges that HDR candidates may experience and provide appropriate guidance and support throughout the candidature.

Approval of Supervisors

(17) To register as a Principal Supervisor or Associate Supervisor, individuals must complete the Register of Supervisors form found at HDR Forms and Codes, including the training and assessment specified in the form. After this form is submitted:

a. the Home faculty may recommend to the Dean of Graduate Studies that:
    i. the individual be registered as Principal or Associate Supervisor as requested;
    ii. the individual be registered as an Associate Supervisor instead of a Principal Supervisor (only applicable if the initial registration was for a Principal Supervisor); or
    iii. the request be rejected.
b. the Dean of Graduate Studies may then approve this recommendation; and
c. Research and Innovation will enter the relevant information in the University's Register of Supervisors.

(18) HDR supervisor registration will be granted for a maximum of five years. Once registration expires, Research and Innovation will prompt supervisors to apply to renew their registration. Adjuncts and staff on a contract of less than five years will only be registered up to the end of their current contract.

Training, Development, and Evaluation of Supervisors

(19) Faculties, Institutes, and Research and Innovation offer regular workshops and developmental opportunities to enable supervisors to fulfil their supervisory responsibilities. These activities should provide knowledge and skills in how to:

a. motivate and support diverse candidates;
b. conduct exemplary research; and
c. comply with relevant laws, codes, policies and procedures, including the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018 and the Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships.

(20) To develop and implement these activities the Research Committee should determine the minimum level of training and development that individuals must complete to be eligible to register as a Principal Supervisor or Associate Supervisor.

(21) This training and development should impart relevant knowledge and skills in how to motivate and support candidates, conduct exemplary research, and comply with University practices.

(22) The Home faculty or managers of supervisors may impose other minimum or recommended levels of supervisor training and development.

(23) The Home faculty, managers of supervisors, or Research and Innovation must evaluate the performance of supervisors as well as address inadequate performance and reward excellent performance.

Cessation of supervisor registration

(24) A registered supervisor's registration will be cancelled if:

a. they write to Research and Innovation to request its cancellation;
b. their employment or adjunct/honorary appointment with the University ends;
c. their registration expires and they do not undertake the renewal process;
d. the University no longer requires their supervisory input; or
e. their registration is terminated in accordance with the process described in the Responses to Concerns Raised About Supervision section of this procedure.

(25) Once a supervisor's registration has been cancelled, they may no longer supervise University or Menzies HDR students. The former supervisor may continue to act as an advisor for University or Menzies students unless their registration was terminated in response to concerns about their supervision.

Responses to Concerns Raised About Supervision

(26) If concerns have been raised about a supervisor, the Dean of Graduate Studies may refer them to the ADR Review Panel for consideration. Depending on the level of severity and evidence, recommend that:

a. the registration of this supervisor be terminated, either permanently or temporarily;
b. the supervisor complete relevant training and assessment activities to redress these concerns; or
c. the role of this supervisor be restricted.

(27) These recommendations may be implemented in response to:

a. breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018 and the Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships;
b. patterns of behaviour that could impair the wellbeing or productivity of HDR candidates;
c. an investigation that indicated the supervisor had acted inappropriately;
d. unconfirmed complaints from multiple candidates or colleagues;
e. a failure to complete the minimum level of training and assessment activities or comply with the HDR Student and Supervisor Charter; or
f. research activity, over a period of at least one year, below the standard expected for their registered level of supervision. Mitigating factors including periods of leave and non-research University responsibilities will be taken into consideration.

(28) These recommendations can be implemented only if approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and

Community Connection.

Composition of Supervision Panels

(29) Each HDR candidate must have a panel consisting of at least two supervisors. In the event that an appropriate supervisory panel cannot be appointed or maintained, a student's candidature may be cancelled in accordance with the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

(30) The HDR Student and Supervisor Charter stipulates the precise role of supervisors. Before confirmation of candidature can be approved, the Principal Supervisor must confirm that each candidate is assigned at least one registered supervisor who:

a. has expertise in the relevant discipline or field of research;
b. has expertise in relevant methodology or methods; and
c. is likely to be employed at CDU during the entire candidature.

(31) Additional panel members may be added such as an early-career researcher who could benefit from their role in this project.

(32) No academic may be the principal supervisor of more than eight (8) candidates at once, unless approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Home faculty should confirm that supervisors can allocate sufficient time to each HDR candidate based on the supervisor's current and future employment, workload and supervisory load.

(33) To protect the right of candidates and to maintain autonomy supervisors should not have a conflict of interest with a student. All actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest must be reported in line with the Conflicts of Interest Policy and Conflicts of Interest Procedure.

(34) If two staff who are close relatives or involved in a romantic relationship want to supervise the same candidate, they need to submit a justification to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection. This justification should outline the necessity of this supervisory arrangement as well as how these staff plan to manage the risks, such as the imbalance of power and the possibility that both supervisors might leave the University before the thesis is completed. This relationship must also be declared on the Conflict of Interest eform in line with the Conflicts of Interest Policy and Conflicts of Interest Procedure.

Changes to the Supervisory Panel

(35) The Principal is responsible for maintaining an appropriate supervisory panel and engagement for each student. If a Principal supervisor leaves a supervisory panel, including because their registration is ending or has ceased, they must provide a handover to a new principal supervisor and the home faculty Associate Dean Research, no later than 15 working days after they cease to be a member of the panel. Wherever possible, the handover must be completed while they are still a member of the supervisory panel.

(36) HDR candidates, in consultation with their supervisors or other individuals, may decide to change the membership of their supervision panel. To arrange permanent changes candidates should complete the Change of Supervisors Panel form found at HDR Forms and Codes and seek the approval of all members of the updated supervision panel.

(37) If the Home faculty endorses these requests, the Dean of Graduate Studies must approve these requests or suggest other arrangements.

(38) HDR candidates may sometimes wish to remove a supervisor from the supervision panel but do not feel able to communicate this information to the supervisor. In these circumstances, the candidate should convey this decision to their Principal Supervisor, to the HDR coordinator, or to the Dean of Graduate Studies. These individuals can then

inform the relevant supervisor as sensitively as possible.

(39) If Principal Supervisors cannot fulfill their role for more than two months, they should arrange an interim Principal Supervisor and inform their Home faculty as well as Research and Innovation.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(40) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Employees or the Code of Conduct - Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct - Students.

(41) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(42) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Steve Rogers Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection +61 8 89466890
Implementation Officer	Steven Greenland Dean of Graduate Studies
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Home faculty" - The Faculty in which a Higher Degree by Research candidate is enrolled. The Menzies School of Health Research is the home faculty for students of Menzies.

"Faculty" - An organisational and academic unit in the University that delivers courses and conducts research.

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.