



Supervisor and Higher Degree Research Candidate Compact

Prepared by the Graduate Research School

Background

This compact provides guidance to supervisors and candidates in establishing a working relationship over the period of the candidature. It will help to ensure that Western Sydney University leads the way in establishing respectful research cultures.

These are a general set of guidelines that are applicable across all disciplines. It is acknowledged that some suggestions may be more appropriate than others for certain disciplines or in specific circumstances. Supervisors and candidates should work together to discuss the points in relation to the needs and expectations of the candidature.

Why establish these guidelines?

Undertaking graduate studies is a very exciting time as candidates begin a journey of research and discovery. It can also be a stressful time as expectations, time pressures and deadlines mount.

Conflict and tension can arise in situations where expectations, roles and responsibilities are unclear or mismatched, so it can be helpful for supervisors and candidates to develop a written agreement. This compact aims to minimise the potential for misunderstandings to occur by clarifying the individual expectations of both supervisors and candidates and outlining potential challenges that may arise during the course of the research journey.

Roles and Responsibilities

While the Principal Supervisor and the supervisory panel are fundamental to the success of any higher degree research program, the candidate is primarily responsible for the program of research. As such, the candidate is required to demonstrate a deep commitment to the course of study and selected research topic.

Roles and responsibilities can vary both across different Schools, Institutes and even projects. It is expected that supervisors and candidates will modify these guidelines to best suit the specific circumstances of the candidature.

1. Candidate Responsibilities

Communication	Discussed: Yes/No
Meet regularly with the Principal Supervisor to report on research progress and to meet deadlines, in compliance with established program timelines and milestones.	
Submit agreed material in a timely manner to allow time for the supervisor(s) to review and provide feedback.	
Arrange face-to-face meetings with the supervisory panel on at least a quarterly basis (with the consensus of all parties).	
Set an agenda for all meetings to ensure the effective use of available time (circulated to all parties of the meeting).	
Email the supervisor(s) a summary of the meeting discussion within five (5) days following a meeting. You may consider recording meetings (audio/video) with the consent of participants.	
Participate in departmental meetings, seminars and training in consultation with the supervisory panel.	
Complete all progress milestones and understand the expectations and submission timelines: Early Candidature Plan, Confirmation of Candidature and Progress Reports.	
Plan the process and schedule for obtaining any required ethics approvals and/or other permissions required for the project.	
Clarify full-time / part-time workload expectations, including usual working hours and number of hours per week.	
Make suitable progress towards the completion of research and spend the agreed number of hours carrying out research activities.	
Establish arrangements for the provision of feedback and comments (e.g. preferred method of feedback, track changes, written notes, verbal, etc.).	
Develop a collaboration/study plan with the assistance of the supervisor(s) and renew on an annual basis (or more frequently if required).	
Establish measures to be taken to address delays in completing project tasks and a process for revising the project timeline.	

Interpersonal and Professional Conduct	Discussed: Yes/No
Be receptive to any advice or suggestions given by the supervisor(s).	
Interact with fellow candidates, both graduate and undergraduate, staff and faculty in a professional and respectful manner in accordance with all codes of conduct.	
Consider your approach to raising questions to your supervisor(s), including potentially challenging matters such as quality, quantity and timeliness of feedback.	
Seek guidance and assistance from the supervisor(s), especially when making important decisions in relation to the research.	
Advise the supervisor(s), in a timely manner, of any issues that may impact the candidature, including any foreseen absences or periods of leave.	
Advise the supervisor(s), in a timely manner, of any external issues that may impact the candidature, such as family responsibilities, employment commitments, etc.	
Discuss current input from Student Services, including the review and implementation of an HDR Academic Integration Plan (AIP), where appropriate and required.	
Understand policies, rules and regulations in effect at the University (such as the Code of Conduct and Student Misconduct Rule), as well as any communications or updates, that apply to the candidature.	

Publish (in collaboration with the Supervisory Panel)	Discussed: Yes/No
Present research results that are publishable in reputable, externally refereed journals, with a focus on quality over quantity.	
Refer to Research Services for advice when any discussion of intellectual property emerges.	
Maintain appropriate confidentiality concerning research activities, in accordance with the existing practices and policies of the discipline.	
Safety, Ethics and Etiquette	Discussed: Yes/No
Comply with Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing requirements, including undertaking any required training.	
Complete all ethics requirements, including undertaking any required training.	
Maintain clean and tidy workspaces, respect the space of colleagues, and participate in periodic office and/or laboratory clean-ups.	
Understand that space and equipment is shared, care must be exercised at all times and problems must be reported as they arise.	
Refrain from borrowing the materials of others and/or removing items without permission.	
Use computers and other equipment for research purposes only (e.g. email, data analysis, literature reviews) in accordance with University policies and guidelines.	
Quality and Integrity	Discussed: Yes/No
Be accountable for presenting a true reflection of findings and results in the thesis and/or publications.	

2. Supervisor Responsibilities

Communication	Discussed: Yes/No
Meet at the established intervals as discussed and agreed with the candidate.	
Ensure that the candidate is aware of relevant policies, procedures and guidelines for the conduct of research.	
Monitor the accuracy, validity, and integrity of the Candidate's progress and respond in a timely manner with comments and/or revisions.	
Be available to meet with the candidate at a negotiated time to provide support towards the progress and completion of the program.	
Ensure arrangements of continuity of supervision are in place for periods of extended leave or other absences.	
Consider the level of support to be offered across the different stages of the research project (e.g. early stages, data collection phase, thesis writing phase, etc.).	
Consider the level of support to be offered in relation to developing conceptual content, expertise, knowledge of subject area, etc.	
Interpersonal and Professional Conduct	Discussed: Yes/No
Establish a professional and respectful working relationship to guide the candidate in their approach to research (including the language used in all communications).	
Avoid personal or business relationships that may constitute a conflict of interest. If a conflict of interest arises, it must be reported to the School Dean, Institute Director or Dean, Graduate Studies.	
Take all precautions to ensure the safety and support of the candidate in all aspects of their research.	
Support the health and wellbeing of the candidate, guiding them as appropriate to relevant Student Support Services.	
Implement HDR Academic Integration Plan (AIP) adjustments, where appropriate and required.	
Safety and Ethics	Discussed: Yes/No
Assist the candidate in determining the level of training required for their research and ensure they attend any required courses and/or workshops.	
Assist the candidate in their ethics applications and monitor their adherence to any ethics approvals.	

Academic Development	Discussed: Yes/No
Provide the candidate with access to suitable resources, equipment and a workspace.	
Provide timely feedback to thesis drafts and other submissions from the candidate in accordance with established milestones and/or agreements.	
Work with the candidate to identify the most appropriate data-gathering and analysing techniques for their research.	
Be open, honest and fair with the candidate when academic performance is not meeting expectations.	
Provide appropriate mentorship and guidance throughout the candidature.	
Develop a collaboration/study plan in collaboration with the candidate and renew on an annual basis (or more frequently if required).	
Professional Development	Discussed: Yes/No
Give credit in an appropriate manner to the candidate's contributions to scholarly activity, whether presented at professional meetings, in publications, or in applications for grants.	
Discuss an authorship process for shared and non-shared work and identify the importance of first authorship for the candidate.	
Work with the candidate to identify opportunities to attend suitable conferences and present research findings, and seek funding sources for associated travel and attendance costs.	
Identify opportunities for the candidate to participate in non-academic programs for the purposes of professional development.	
Quality and Integrity	Discussed: Yes/No
Be accountable for ensuring that the candidate presents a true reflection of any results in the thesis and/or publications.	

3. Associate Dean, HDR / HDR Director Responsibilities <i>To be discussed between the Principal Supervisor and the HDR Candidate.</i>	Discussed: Yes/No
Be available for candidates to raise concerns about progress, candidature management, the relationship with the Principal Supervisor and/or the supervisory panel.	
Be available for supervisors to raise concerns about a candidate's progress, candidature management, the relationship with the candidate and/or the supervisory panel.	
Monitor the progress of the candidate by reviewing milestone outcomes, progress reports and other relevant materials.	
Monitor the performance of Supervisors and ensure they are acting in accordance with University expectations.	
Report to the Graduate Research School in matters where an issue has been identified and a resolution cannot be reached, or a candidature is considered to be at risk.	

4. Graduate Research School Responsibilities <i>To be discussed between the Principal Supervisor and the HDR Candidate.</i>	Discussed: Yes/No
Clearly communicate information and advice about candidature requirements, and research policies and procedures.	
Monitor the progress of the candidate by reviewing milestone outcomes, progress reports and other relevant materials.	
Provide clear mechanisms for raising and resolving problems that arise between candidates, the Supervisory Panel, and/or other members of the University.	

_____ *HDR Candidate Name* _____ *Signature* _____ *Date*

_____ *Principal Supervisor* _____ *Signature* _____ *Date*

Note: Please attach this document to your Early Candidature Plan submission.