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. This can be done by using the compact as a tool for having a structured discussion between candidates and supervisors that involves clarifying, negotiating, and establishing an agreement against the expectations and associated responsibilities listed.

A candidate's circumstances and wellbeing can also change over the course of their candidature, and it is important for candidates and supervisors to discuss the effects of these changes on candidature. It is expected that this compact is completed at the commencement of candidature and at a minimum of every twelve months as a way of identifying and addressing concerns over expectations arising from these changes. The compact can also be requested to be completed when the following circumstances occur:

- Variation of candidature
- Changes to supervision panels
- Significant modifications or changes to a research project
- Issues with progression of candidature

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, supervisory panels and candidates will view and modify these guidelines to best suit the specific circumstances of the candidature.

The roles and responsibilities for the Associate Dean, HDR/HDR Director and the Graduate Research School will have in relation to supporting candidature will also be outlined for awareness and understanding.

Practices

Establishing and maintaining clear expectations is integral to maintaining an effective long-term research project partnership and working relationship. This document outlines practices in the following areas for which both candidates and supervisors share joint and individual responsibilities:

- Meeting Arrangements
- Workload and Progress
- Feedback
- Interpersonal and Professional Conduct
- Wellbeing
- Safety, Ethics and Etiquette (don't forget email etiquette)
- Academic Development
- Professional Development
- Working with the Associate Dean, HDR / HDR Director
- Working with the Graduate Research School

How to complete this document

Candidates and Supervisors are to review their respective responsibilities and then meet to clarify expectations, discuss preferences, negotiate and note down agreed actions in the document. The document will then need to be signed by Candidates and Primary Supervisors, with the completed document distributed to the Candidate and Supervision Panel. The compact, when first completed, is to be submitted with the Early Candidature Plan, and subsequently with the Annual Progress Report.

Meeting Arrangements

Candidate Responsibilities	Supervisor / Supervisory Panel Responsibilities
Meet regularly with the Principal Supervisor to report on research progress and to meet deadlines, in compliance with established program timelines and milestones. 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. Set or review Candidate-Supervisor contact and meeting arrangements with reference to arrangements detailed in the Early Candidature Plan. Set or review Supervisory Panel meeting arrangements on at least a quarterly basis, with consensus of all parties.	Meet at the established intervals as discussed and agreed with the candidate. 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.

Candidate-Supervisor Contact Arrangements:

Format (face to face, video conferencing, phone, email):

Estimated frequency of contact (in line with project stage and requirements):

Approach to queries and requests for clarification:

Candidate-Supervisor Meeting Arrangements:

Meeting format (face to face, video conferencing, phone):

Frequency (in line with project stage and requirements):

Schedule/duration:

Supervisory Panel Meeting Arrangements:

Meeting format (face to face, video conferencing, phone):

Frequency (in line with project stage and requirements):

Schedule/duration:

❑ Read and discussed

Workload and Progress

Candidate Responsibilities	Supervisor / Supervisory Panel Responsibilities
Clarify full-time / part-time workload expectations, including usual working hours and number of hours per week. (if you have responsibilities outside of your PhD commitments i.e. work, parenting, carer responsibilities etc you should consider discussing this with your supervisor to set realistic expectations) 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. Make suitable progress towards the completion of research and spend the agreed number of hours carrying out research activities. 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. Establish measures to be taken to address delays in completing project tasks and a process for revising the project timeline.	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.). Monitor the accuracy, validity, and integrity of the Candidate's progress and respond in a timely manner with comments and/or revisions. Complete initial and periodic progress checks as outlined in the Early Candidature Plan.

Agreed workload arrangements:

Usual working hours:

Number of hours per week:

Approach to addressing delays in completing project tasks:

Process for revising the project timeline:

❑ Read and discussed

Feedback

Candidate Responsibilities	Supervisor / Supervisory Panel Responsibilities
Establish arrangements for the provision of feedback and comments (e.g. preferred method of feedback, track changes, written notes, verbal, etc.).

Submit agreed material in a timely manner to allow time for the supervisor(s) to review and provide feedback.

Seek guidance and assistance from the supervisor(s), especially when making important decisions in relation to the research.

Be receptive to any advice or suggestions given by the supervisor(s). Consider and discuss approaches to the acknowledgement of receipt of feedback, clarification and application of feedback.

Consider your approach to raising questions to your supervisor(s), including potentially challenging matters such as quality, quantity and timeliness of feedback. | Set and review feedback arrangements as detailed in the Early Candidature Plan.

Provide timely feedback to thesis drafts and other submissions from the candidate in accordance with established milestones and/or agreements.

Discuss approaches to the provision of feedback, with consideration given to the stage of the project/chapter, and authorship:
- Degree of guidance (overarching to directive/specific)
- Format (review comments, in-text comments)

Be open, honest and fair with the candidate when academic performance is not meeting expectations. |

Feedback arrangements:

Who is providing feedback:

Approach to provision of feedback comments (in line with project stage and requirements):

Editing/use of Track Changes:

Review and turnaround timeframes:

Approach to submission of draft manuscripts and chapters:

❑ Read and discussed

Interpersonal and Professional Conduct

Candidate Responsibilities	Supervisor / Supervisory Panel Responsibilities
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. Interact with fellow candidates, both graduate and undergraduate, staff and faculty in a professional and respectful manner in accordance with all codes of conduct. Adhere to email etiquette guidelines when sending internal and external university correspondence: Email (westernsydney.edu.au). Attend Wellbeing training to ensure you know how and when to reach out for support.	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. Attend wellbeing and equity and diversity training regularly to ensure you are providing the best possible support for your candidate and are fully aware of the support the university offers
❑ Read and discussed	

Wellbeing

Candidate Responsibilities	Supervisor / Supervisory Panel Responsibilities
Identify, where relevant, concerns over health and wellbeing relating to: • Coping with current circumstances, changing mental and emotional health • Changes to health conditions, experiencing disability • Issues with financial status, changes to living circumstances Consider discussing identified concerns or queries with Student Wellbeing by contacting: • WesternNow Student Portal [Student landing page - Student Portal (service-now.com)](service-now.com) • Phone 1300 668 370 Within the limits of personal disclosure and confidentiality, candidates can discuss with their panel supervisors the impacts of these concerns, where the impacts affect their capacity to undertake their project tasks. Candidates at their discretion may also wish to share aspects of their Wellbeing Plan developed with Student Wellbeing. Discuss the implementation of an HDR Academic Integration Plan (AIP), where appropriate and required.	Support the health and wellbeing of the candidate, and advise of the following Student Services: • The Counselling Service for coping with current circumstances, changing mental and emotional health • The Disability Service for changes to health conditions, experiencing disability • The Student Welfare Service for issues with financial status, changes to living circumstances Contact and/or provide the following Student Wellbeing contact details as needed: • WesternNow Student Portal [Student landing page - Student Portal (service-now.com)](service-now.com) • Phone 1300 668 370 Consider contacting Student Wellbeing when seeking advice on supporting a candidate's wellbeing. Support Candidates as they implement the strategies outlined in their Wellbeing Plan where required. Implement HDR Academic Integration Plan (AIP) adjustments, where appropriate and required.
❑ Read and discussed	

Safety, Ethics and Etiquette

Candidate Responsibilities	Supervisor / Supervisory Panel Responsibilities
Comply with Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing requirements, including undertaking any required training. Report any hazards, concerns with unsafe practices, and/or issues with physical or environmental access (eg. wheelchair accessibility) occurring in workspaces. 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. Complete all ethics requirements, including undertaking any required training. Maintain appropriate confidentiality concerning research activities, in accordance with the existing practices and policies of the discipline. Use computers and other equipment for research purposes only (e.g. email, data analysis, literature reviews) in accordance with University policies and guidelines.	Take all precautions to ensure the safety and support of the candidate in all aspects of their research. Complete risk assessments for workspace/fieldwork/practical tasks as required and in consultation with the candidate. Provide the candidate with access to suitable resources, equipment and a workspace. 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.

Concerns with safety and/or physical access of workspaces, field venues and practices:

Actions to address safety or access concerns:

❑ Read and discussed

Academic Development

Candidate Responsibilities	Supervisor / Supervisory Panel Responsibilities
Develop a collaboration/study plan with the assistance of the supervisor(s) and renew on an annual basis (or more frequently if required).	Develop a collaboration/study plan in collaboration with the candidate and renew on an annual basis (or more frequently if required).
Discuss expectations regarding publishing in collaboration with the Supervisory Panel.	Provide appropriate mentorship and guidance throughout the candidature.
Present research results that are publishable in reputable, externally refereed journals, with a focus on quality over quantity.	Consider the level of support to be offered in relation to developing conceptual content, expertise, knowledge of subject area, etc.
Refer to Research Services for advice when any discussion of intellectual property emerges.	Work with the candidate to identify the most appropriate data-gathering and analysing techniques for their research.
Be accountable for presenting a true reflection of findings and results in the thesis and/or publications.	Be accountable for ensuring that the candidate presents a true reflection of any results in the thesis and/or publications.

Completion of Study Plan: ❑ Yes   ❑ No – due:

Professional Development

Candidate Responsibilities	Supervisor / Supervisory Panel Responsibilities
Participate in departmental meetings, seminars and training in consultation with the supervisory panel.	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.
Professional Development opportunities:	
❑ Read and discussed	

Working with the Associate Dean / HDR Director

Associate Dean, HDR / HDR Director Responsibilities
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.

Candidate Responsibilities	Supervisor / Supervisory Panel Responsibilities
Contact Associate Dean, HDR / HDR Director: • To discuss significant changes to candidature support e.g. change of supervision panel • To report on concerns about progress and candidature management • To raise unresolved concerns over supervisory panel relationships	Contact Associate Dean, HDR / HDR Director: • To discuss concerns about a candidate's performance and/or need for additional support • To raise concerns over the candidate-supervisor relationship • To report risks to progression of candidature

❑ Read and discussed

Working with the Graduate Research School

Graduate Research School Responsibilities	
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.	
Candidate Responsibilities Ensure that all forms are submitted with time remaining for processing, use the history tab to check where the form is sitting if you experience delays. Notify the GRS as soon as possible if you are experiencing a disruption to study. Fill in all forms through ResearchMaster and utilise the WesternNow ticketing service to make enquiries to the GRS.	**Supervisor / Supervisory Panel Responsibilities** Approve forms in ResearchMaster and ensure comments are made. Notify the GRS as soon as possible if you have concerns about your candidate that cannot be resolved at the school level.
❑ Read and discussed	

❑ Copies of this Supervisor and Higher Degree Research Candidate Compact have been provided to the Candidate and Supervisory Panel.

HDR Candidate Name *Signature* *Date*

Principal Supervisor *Signature* *Date*

School/institute ADHDR *Signature* *Date*

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