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THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE DEGREES COMMITTEE

GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISION AND CANDIDATURE OF DOCTORAL RESEARCH STUDENTS

These Guidelines are based on the Doctor of Philosophy Rules; GDC Paper 2988B/1987 (rev. 1996), *Supervision of PhD Students*; and Paper 725/1995, *Operating Procedures of the Graduate School*. The Guidelines follow the framework of the latest Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee *Code of Practice for Maintaining and Monitoring Quality and Standards in Higher Degrees* (July 1998; 1st ed., 1987).

1 SUPERVISORY PANELS

1.1 Supervisory Panels

The Australian National University provides supervision and advice for each doctoral research student through a supervisory panel (rather than a single supervisor only). A supervisory panel consists of at least three members, with a usual maximum of five, including at least one supervisor and two other members who may be supervisors or advisors. Each panel has a chair who is a supervisor, and includes a supervisor who is a full-time member of the academic staff of the Australian National University.

Supervisors are normally appointed from amongst the full-time academic staff of the University, have research expertise and experience relevant to the area of the student's proposed research, and are expected to hold a university appointment for the duration of the course.

Where it is appropriate to appoint a panel member from outside the University, who has particular expertise unavailable within the University, an additional supervisor or advisor may be appointed by the Graduate Degrees Committee. Advisors are appointed to provide access to additional expertise, and to provide wider contacts for the candidate.

1.2 Provisional Supervisor(s), Supervisors and Advisors

When an applicant is recommended for admission to the University, Heads of Departments or areas nominate a provisional supervisor(s) to the Prescribed Authority (normally the Director of a School, Dean of a Faculty or Head of a Centre), and obtain the agreement of the provisional supervisor. The Prescribed Authority will not accept applicants for admission unless appropriate supervisory arrangements can be made for the specific field and course of study.

Where possible applicants are told the name(s) of their provisional supervisor(s) and panel chair when they are offered a place, preferably after direct consultation between applicant and prospective supervisor. The student is enrolled in a Graduate Program and normally located in the School, Faculty, or Centre to which the panel chair is appointed. Supervisors are initially appointed by the Prescribed Authority within one month of the admission of a candidate to a

course. Supervisors for professional doctorate candidates are normally confirmed within one month of the start of the thesis component or earlier.

1.3 Changes in Supervisory Panels

Candidates or panel members may request changes in supervisory panel arrangements during candidature, and may seek advice on this from the Head of Department/area, Graduate Program Convenor, Prescribed Authority, Dean of the Graduate School, the Research and Scholarships Office or from the Postgraduate and Research Students' Association (PARSA). Changes must be approved by the Prescribed Authority/ies.

1.4 Change in Student Status and Supervisory Panels

Any proposed change in student status which has implications for supervision arrangements, such as a temporary move to another location for research purposes or a move to take up employment elsewhere, requires approval by the Prescribed Authority, with the written support of the supervisor, well in advance of any such proposed move. It may be necessary to appoint another supervisor in any new location to ensure adequate day-to-day supervision, in addition to maintaining email or other communication between the chair of the panel and the candidate.

1.5 Acting Supervisors - Arrangements During the Absence of a Supervisor

When a sole supervisor on a supervisory panel goes on extended leave for more than three consecutive months, it is necessary for an acting supervisor from within the University to be nominated. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to make a nomination to the Prescribed Authority, normally at least a month before the supervisor departs, and after consultation with the candidate. It is expected that the original supervisor will continue to have regular contact with the candidate when practicable, but the acting supervisor will be responsible as chair of the supervisory panel and for day-to-day assistance required by the candidate.

Where there is more than one supervisor, the supervisor remaining on campus when the other goes on study leave or other approved leave will normally assume responsibility as chair of the panel.

2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERVISORS

The chair of the supervisory panel is responsible for arranging panel meetings of supervisors and advisors, including the initial meeting with the candidate, panel meetings for consideration of the detailed research proposal (within six months of commencement), annual progress reports and the Mid-term Review of Progress, and for ensuring that any off-campus supervisors and advisors are informed of their responsibilities. The chair of the supervisory panel has the primary responsibility for the supervisory roles included below:

2.1 Rules, Guidelines, Codes and Costs

- 2.1.1 becoming familiar with the Rules for the degrees of PhD or professional research doctorate, the Guidelines for the Responsible Practice of Research, the Guidelines for Supervision, the Policy on Minimum Allocation of Resources for Full Time Research Students, and the Intellectual Property Guidelines;

2.1.2 before the candidate begins the research program, informing the Head of Department and Prescribed Authority of the likely total cost of the program and the candidate's annual maintenance needs, fieldwork requirements and access to special equipment if these are likely to exceed the normal range of postgraduate research costs in the area;

2.2 Commencement of Candidature

2.2.1 advising on and discussing with the candidate at the commencement of candidature the aims, scope and presentation of the thesis, and any orientation, required course work or supplementary training necessary for the research project;

2.2.2 clarifying the candidate's and the supervisor's respective expectations of supervision and of the operation of the supervisory panel. On the basis of this discussion the chair of the supervisory panel and candidate should establish guidelines and expectations pertaining to :

- frequency of contact with supervisors and other panel members (normally not less than once a month with supervisors), recognising that there are different needs at different thesis stages,
- monitoring, evaluation and reporting of progress within a three year timetable (as required by Degree Rule 20),
- provision of necessary material resources to complete the thesis, including fieldwork or other research travel support,
- orientation, learning support, prescribed course work, training courses, and conference support as required,
- the nature of any directed reading program required,
- strategies for contact with and introductions to other researchers in related areas, including external agency, industry, or other institutional links;

2.2.3 advising and negotiating with the candidate at the commencement or during the course of candidature, in respect of any publication or joint publication likely to arise during or on the basis of the research project, appropriate and adequate recognition of the candidate's and the supervisor's contribution to the publication;

2.2.4 advising the candidate on health and safety working practices relevant to the field of research (including the occupational strains hazard), the ethical practices appropriate to the discipline (including Human Research and/or Animal Experimentation Ethics requirements), requirements regarding the retention of primary data, and the University's Guidelines relating to Intellectual Property in relation to the research;

2.2.5 if the research is funded by a contractual arrangement, discussing with the candidate any particular contract terms or conditions which could either restrict disclosure or affect the extent to which communication with colleagues is possible during the research and on its completion. Any restrictions, e.g. confidentiality agreements, must be consistent with the Degree Rules and related papers. When restrictions upon disclosure exist, the candidate is advised to seek independent legal advice, and the discussion should culminate in a written agreement on the conditions of disclosure;

2.2.6 identifying any English-as-a-second-language candidate who needs assistance in communicating orally or in writing in English using the vocabulary and conventions of the discipline, in the first and any subsequent semester of enrolment, advising the candidate in writing of the need for this assistance, and referring the candidate for appropriate academic skills assistance;

2.2.7 assisting the candidate to prepare a provisional three year research plan and research timetable, including any proposed fieldwork, as the basis for a program of study for

submission to the Prescribed Authority for approval not later than six months after the candidate's enrolment.

2.3 Candidature

- 2.3.1 initiating and holding frequent and adequate discussions with the candidate on the candidate's research program. Supervisor and candidate are jointly responsible for initiating such discussions; and there should normally be contact between the supervisor and the candidate at least once each month even if a formal meeting is not always possible. Contact should be maintained during any period of fieldwork;
- 2.3.2 ensuring that any major decisions about the candidate's research program made in conversation between the supervisor and the candidate, or any major variations to agreed expectations and guidelines, are confirmed in writing and a copy given to the candidate, and to any other supervisor or advisor, and noted in the annual progress report;
- 2.3.3 encouraging and ensuring that the candidate is actively engaged in the research course in a manner likely to produce significant results by the time of the annual report, by the Mid-term Review, and by the time the thesis is due to be submitted, or advising the candidate in writing that progress is unsatisfactory and identifying improvements necessary for continuation of candidature;
- 2.3.4 encouraging and ensuring that the candidate participates in the intellectual activity of the department or area through activities such as attendance and presentations at departmental seminars and conferences;
- 2.3.5 requiring written work from the student on a pre-arranged and agreed schedule, reviewing drafts of submissions for and participating in the Mid-term Review, commenting critically to the candidate on the Mid-term Review presentation, reviewing drafts of the thesis and providing written and/or verbal comments within a mutually agreed period (not exceeding one month from time of submission), and providing written and/or verbal comments on the completed thesis before it is submitted for examination;
- 2.3.6 submitting to the Head of Department, Graduate Program Convenor and Prescribed Authority each year an annual report on the progress of the candidate, noting any significant achievements, difficulties and problems discussed with the student, including inadequate progress if applicable, and the action taken or advice given. A supervisor who considers that a candidate has failed to pursue the course satisfactorily or has not observed the Degree Rules shall report accordingly to the Prescribed Authority;
- 2.3.7 advising the student about any plans for extended supervisor's absence from the University (e.g. on study leave, long service leave) during the candidature and the proposed arrangements for supervision during this absence, where possible with at least six month's notice and preferably on enrolment;
- 2.3.8 facilitating contact between the student and other researchers in related areas, including external agency, industry, or other institutional links;
- 2.3.9 in consultation with the Head of Department, and after giving the candidate an opportunity to comment on possible examiners for the thesis, nominating examiners to the Graduate Program Convenor and Prescribed Authority, for approval by the Chair of the Graduate Degrees Committee normally at least two months before the thesis is due to be submitted;

- 2.3.10 in consultation with the Head of Department, advising the candidate on any examiners' recommendations for amendments to the thesis, and if nominated as the 'appropriate person' under Rule 23B 1(a), advising the candidate during the revision process for re-submission and re-examination;
- 2.3.11 advising the candidate on post-doctoral research, visiting fellow appointments or other career options, and on any prospective publications arising from the final thesis.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADVISORS

The responsibilities of the advisor(s) include:

- 3.1 providing additional expertise on the research topic or related subjects;
- 3.2 providing wider contacts within the University or outside;
- 3.3 providing advice on the research proposal and the Mid-term Review presentation;
- 3.4 at the request of the candidate, advising on any matter relating to the candidate's course, including advice on any difficulties in the relationship between the candidate and the supervisor(s) or other advisors.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF CANDIDATES

The responsibilities of the candidate include:

- 4.1 becoming familiar with the Rules for the degrees of PhD or professional research doctorate, the Guidelines for the Responsible Practice of Research, the Guidelines for Supervision, and the Intellectual Property Guidelines;
- 4.2 initiating (when required) and participating in frequent and adequate discussions with the supervisor(s) on the research program. Supervisors and candidates are jointly responsible for initiating such discussions, and there should normally be contact between the supervisor(s) and the candidate at least once a month even if a formal meeting is not always possible. Contact should be maintained during any period of fieldwork;
- 4.3 clarification of the candidate's and the supervisor's expectations of supervision and of the operation of the supervisory panel. On the basis of this discussion the chair of the supervisory panel and candidate should establish guidelines and expectations pertaining to:
 - frequency of contact (not less than once a month with supervisors) recognising that there are different needs at different thesis stages,
 - monitoring, evaluation and reporting of progress within a 3 year timetable,
 - provision of necessary material resources,
 - orientation, learning support, graduate course work and training courses, as required, including necessary communication skills assistance for English-as-a-second-language candidates,
 - strategies for contact with other researchers in related areas;
- 4.4 in consultation with the supervisor, preparing a research plan and research timetable as the basis for a three year program of study, including any proposed fieldwork, for submission to the Prescribed Authority for approval not later than six months after the candidate's enrolment;
- 4.5 submitting written work to the supervisor in accordance with a pre-arranged and agreed schedule, actively engaging in the research course in a manner likely to

- produce significant results by the time of the annual progress report, by the Mid-term Review and by the time the thesis is due to be submitted;
- 4.6 participating in the intellectual life of the department/area through activities such as attendance and presentations at departmental seminars and conferences;
 - 4.7 if a full-time candidate, devoting at least 40 hours per week on average to the research course during enrolment, with the exception of approved recreation leave; if a part-time candidate, devoting at least 20 hours per week on average to the research course during enrolment;
 - 4.8 reporting to the supervisor and Prescribed Authority any significant change in other commitments likely to affect the progress of the research course, or any proposed period of suspension of candidature or attendance at another institution;
 - 4.9 submitting to the chair of the supervisory panel each year a progress report, for consideration by the Head of Department, Graduate Program Convenor and Prescribed Authority;
 - 4.10 submitting a Mid-term Review of Progress as specified in the procedures approved for the School, Faculty or Centre;
 - 4.11 acquiring the necessary health and safety skills by attending health and safety training courses as required, adopting safe working practices relevant to the field of research, and adhering to the ethical practices appropriate to the discipline at all times;
 - 4.12 negotiating with the supervisor(s) at the commencement or during the course of candidature in respect of any publication or joint publication likely to arise during or on the basis of the research project, to ensure appropriate and adequate recognition of the candidate's and the supervisor's contribution to the publication;
 - 4.13 submitting to the Research and Scholarships Office notice of intention to submit and providing the final title of the thesis, with an abstract of approximately 250-500 words describing its content, at least two months before the expected submission;
 - 4.14 producing the final copies of the thesis for the examiners, and ensuring that its content and standard of presentation is in accordance with University requirements.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM CONVENOR

The responsibilities of the Graduate Program Convenor include:

- 5.1 informing new students of Graduate Program activities and resources as part of Graduate Program induction;
- 5.2 ensuring that appropriate arrangements are made for supervision of Program candidates;
- 5.3 organising and/or supervising Graduate Program seminars and/or courses, workshops, summer schools and conferences on behalf of the Graduate Program Board of Studies;
- 5.4 monitoring the academic progress of Graduate Program research students, including formal comments on annual progress reports and involvement in the Mid-term Review of progress;
- 5.5 ensuring that appropriate arrangements are made for examination of research theses, and commenting on thesis examination reports and Head of Department recommendations;
- 5.6 providing or arranging pastoral support for Graduate Program students, in particular where problems may arise between students and supervisors or Heads of Department;

- 5.7 organising student elections for representation on the Graduate Program Board of Studies;
- 5.8 convening meetings of the Graduate Program Board of Studies, which develops initiatives for enhancing the quality of postgraduate supervision in the Program, and plans Program activities;
- 5.9 undertaking additional Graduate Program work, including recruitment of Graduate Program students on behalf of the Program, and organisation and coordination of selection and assessment procedures for graduate student applications for admission and scholarships to the Program.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESCRIBED AUTHORITY AND HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

The Prescribed Authority is normally the Director of a School, Dean of a Faculty or Head of a Centre.

The responsibilities of the Prescribed Authority are normally exercised in association with the Head of Department, and include ensuring that:

- 6.1 the student meets the requirements set down by the University for admission to candidature, including in the case of applicants from non-English speaking backgrounds, at least the prescribed minimum English language proficiency;
- 6.2 the proposed research project is appropriate for the degree and can be completed within a three year course, as required by Degree Rule 20;
- 6.3 the proposed supervisor is sufficiently expert in the area of research, and has the time and supervisory capacity to be able to offer the student appropriate supervision;
- 6.4 appropriate supervision can be provided and maintained throughout the research period;
- 6.5 appropriate resources (including fieldwork funds) and physical facilities can be provided and maintained throughout the research period, in accordance with the *Policy on Minimum Allocation of Resources for Full Time Research Students*;
- 6.6 appropriate opportunities are provided, by way of seminars and the like, for students to develop their skills at presenting their work as well as facilitating related social skills such as team work, and students are encouraged to participate in other appropriate training activities, such as training workshops on safety and health procedures, offered within the University;
- 6.7 each candidate has written guidelines concerning School, Faculty or Centre postgraduate policies and procedures, including resource allocation;
- 6.8 each candidate is provided with School, Faculty, or Centre Induction in the first semester of candidature, to clarify procedures and policies, and to discuss the expectations of candidates and staff;
- 6.9 mediation takes place when there are problems between student and supervisory panel members, and panel changes are authorised when appropriate;
- 6.10 supervisors are encouraged to participate in supervision training activities provided within the University;
- 6.11 the School, Faculty or Centre provides conference travel support for eligible research students during their period of candidature, subject to the availability of funds;

- 6.12 the academic progress of School, Faculty or Centre research students is monitored, including formal comments on annual progress reports and involvement in the Mid-term Review of progress;
- 6.13 the School, Faculty, or Centre administration maintains the capacity to provide efficient and effective local administration for candidates, and provides helpful advice to these candidates;
- 6.14 appropriate arrangements are made for examination of research theses, and appropriate comments are made on thesis examination reports and Head of Department recommendations;
- 6.15 an 'appropriate person' is nominated under Rule 23B 1(a) to advise a candidate during the revision process for re-submission and re-examination.

7 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

The responsibilities of the Dean of the Graduate School include:

- 7.1 ensuring that each candidate is provided with access to a Graduate School Research Student Induction program in first or second semester, to clarify University procedures and policies, and to review the expectations of new candidates and staff;
- 7.2 providing or arranging pastoral support for Graduate Program students on request, in particular where problems arise between students and supervisors, Heads of Department, Graduate Program Convenors or Prescribed Authorities;
- 7.3 supporting and monitoring the operation of Graduate Program Boards of Studies and Graduate Program Convenors in enhancing the quality of supervision and Program activities for research students;
- 7.4 allocating funds to Graduate Program Convenors to enhance the research experience of graduate students;
- 7.5 encouraging supervisors to participate in supervision training activities provided within the University through CEDAM and the Graduate School;
- 7.6 ensuring that appropriate arrangements are made for examination of research theses, and reviewing thesis examination reports and Head of Department, Graduate Program Convenor and Prescribed Authority recommendations;
- 7.7 chairing the Graduate Degrees Committee, a joint committee of the two academic Boards, to facilitate the development and review of University policies for postgraduate research and consideration of individual student cases where appropriate, with regular consultation with student representatives, for the attention of the Boards;
- 7.8 chairing a Grievance Resolution Panel when a graduate student initiates action under the *Grievance Procedures for Graduate Students*;
- 7.9 fostering postgraduate research within the University, and providing relevant advice to Directors, Deans and Heads, and to the Boards.

8 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

The responsibilities of the University include ensuring that:

- 8.1 there are clearly specified entry standards and procedures regardless of discipline, and that these standards and procedures are documented and applied equitably;
- 8.2 each candidate is advised of guidelines concerning University policies and procedures relating to postgraduate students, including health and safety, research ethics, intellectual property, minimum resources, equal opportunity and equity, and grievances and appeals;

- 8.3 each candidate is advised of the entitlement for access to University facilities and resources, including the University Library and educational service facilities such as the Careers and Employment Centre, the Counselling Centre, the Dean of Students, the Disability Support Unit, the Health Service, the Student Welfare Office and the Study Skills Centre;
- 8.4 there are reporting and review requirements, advised to the candidate, via at a minimum an annual Progress Report to be completed by the student, chair of the supervisory panel, Head of Department, Graduate Program Convenor and Prescribed Authority, monitored by the School/Faculty/Centre administration and by the Research and Scholarships Office; and via a Mid-term Review of Progress for PhD candidates carried out by the supervisor and supervisory panel in association with the Graduate Program Convenor and Head of Department;
- 8.5 there are explicit grievance procedures by which either the student or supervisor/advisor may proceed to resolve difficulties;
- 8.6 there are explicit procedures for the examination process, including an appeals procedure against decisions by the Graduate Degrees Committee;
- 8.7 the Research and Scholarships Office maintains the capacity to administer higher research degree candidature efficiently and effectively across the University, and provides helpful advice to all research students.

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