



Research Degrees Supervision

Context and Purpose

The most important resource that UniSA provides to research degree students is the expertise and time of the Supervisory Panel. This procedure outlines the requirements and processes involved in the consistent provision of supervision to students, enabling them to develop as researchers and produce high quality research.

This procedure must be read in conjunction with Policy AB-58: [Research Degrees](#) and its Definitions.

Responsibility

Research degree students, supervisors, and staff associated with the support, coordination and leadership of research degree programs are responsible for understanding and complying with the policy and this procedure.

Decisions and outcomes made in accordance with this procedure must be documented and a copy provided to Student and Academic Services to be retained on the student record.

All other procedural responsibilities are detailed in this procedure.

Confidentiality

Refer to [M-1 Privacy Policy](#).

Procedure

A. Supervision

1. The Dean of Research (or delegate) approves the Supervisory Panel proposed for research projects, prior to the selection and admission of research degree students.
 - a. The requirements, authorities and procedures for the appointment of supervisors are outlined in Policy AB-64: [Supervision of Research Degree Students](#).
 - b. All research degree students are supervised by a Supervisory Panel (Panel), with the Panel composition determined as appropriate for the student's research and intended career path. The Panel consists of a minimum of three (3) people, two (2) of whom need to be UniSA staff:
 - i. a Principal Supervisor (mandatory); and,
 - ii. one (1) or more co-supervisors/associate supervisors from the student's discipline area; and/or,
 - iii. one (1) or more co-supervisors/associate supervisors from other disciplines; and/or,
 - iv. one (1) or more advisors who may be research end-users in the discipline.
2. The University will ensure continuity of supervision for research degree students, when additional support is required.
 - a. In the event that the Principal Supervisor is unavailable or unable to supervise the student for periods of up to six (6) weeks, a co-supervisor ensures continuity of supervision during that period.

- b. In the event that the designated Principal Supervisor is unable to supervise the research degree student for a period of six (6) weeks or more, the Dean of Research (or delegate), in consultation with the Research Degree Coordinator and student, nominates a replacement supervisor within 20 working days of being informed of the matter; in accordance with Policy AB-64: [Supervision of Research Degree Students](#). For avoidance of doubt, consultation does not mean the student's approval is required.
- c. Where a research degree student wishes to change the focus of the research after the research proposal is accepted and which requires a change in supervision, the student must apply to the Dean of Research (or delegate) to vary the research. In these circumstances, the University reserves the right to decline the proposed change of focus. In such instances, decisions pertaining to the student's enrolment will ultimately be determined by the Dean of Graduate Studies.
- d. In the event that the Confirmation of Candidature Review Panel requires a change in supervision for the research degree student to progress in their program, the Dean of Research (or delegate), in conjunction with the student and Research Degree Coordinator, nominates a replacement supervisor within 20 working days of being informed of the matter; in accordance with Policy AB-64: [Supervision of Research Degree Students](#). The University exercises due diligence to find suitable supervisory arrangements in such instances.
- e. The research degree student may request the addition or removal of a supervisor or advisor to their Supervisory Panel at any stage of enrolment, where additional expertise is required. A new supervisor may be approved by the Dean of Research (or delegate) if there is a relationship or conflict issue. Changes to Supervisory Panels must be approved by the Principal Supervisor and Research Degree Coordinator and conducted in accordance with Policy AB-64: [Supervision of Research Degree Students](#).
- f. In cases where the University is unable to find suitable supervision to accommodate a change in research project, supervisor(s) availability or breakdown in supervisory relationship(s) the research degree student will be placed on administrative leave for up to three (3) months. During this time, the University will ensure best endeavours are made to appoint suitable supervision. If following this time, the University is unable to appoint suitable supervision, the student will have 20 working days from their notification to withdraw from their program or transfer to another program. If at the end of the 20 working days, the student has not withdrawn from their program or transferred into another program, they will be administratively withdrawn (refer to Procedure AB-58 P3: Research Degrees Student Progression, clause H).

Definitions

Confirmation of Candidature Review Panel is the Panel convened by the Research Degree Coordinator to evaluate the Statement of Agreement and Research Proposal to determine if the research degree student has reached the standard to move from provisional enrolment to continuing enrolment.

Dean of Research is the research leadership role in each Academic Unit who enacts the University's research strategy and is responsible for the oversight of research degree programs in their Academic Unit. The Dean of Research may delegate the leadership and management of research education and related activities to a Professorial Lead with portfolio responsibility for the research degrees in the Academic Unit.

Advisor is a member of a Supervisory Panel who is not an academic supervisor, and who has been chosen for the role due to their position in a relevant industry, and/or their capacity to provide expertise relevant to

the student's research. A research end-user is a type of advisor who is external to academia and affiliated organisations and will directly use or directly benefit from the output, outcome or result of the research.

Enterprise Agreement / Collective Agreement is the current University of South Australia Enterprise Agreement and the University of South Australia Senior Staff Collective Agreement.

Principal Supervisor is a university academic staff member or adjunct who has primary responsibility for guiding the postgraduate research undertaken by a designated research degree student and for overseeing the progress of that student towards completion of their research degree. The Principal Supervisor is normally responsible for decisions and processes as detailed in relevant procedures, including convening the Supervisory Panel for reviews of research degree student progress, and consultation on the research project.

Research Degree Coordinator is a member of academic staff, appointed by the Dean of Research in an Academic Unit, who has responsibility for pastoral care of research degree students. The Research Degree Coordinator convenes Confirmation and Reviews of Progress, and acts in accordance with Policy AB-58 Research Degrees and associated procedures.

Research degree student is an individual enrolled in a research degree.

Research project is a peer-reviewed and University approved statement of a research program, including designated resources, and an appropriate team of research supervisors.

Research Proposal is a 10-20 page statement prepared by a research degree student summarising the proposed research and research methodologies. An approved Research Proposal is required to satisfy the requirements of Confirmation of Candidature.

Staff member is an individual employed by the University under its Enterprise Agreement or Collective Agreement, and also includes adjuncts, visiting academics and guest lecturers, and volunteers, whether they are paid or unpaid.

Supervisors are members of the University Community who have oversight and/or direction of the work of staff or students.

Supervisory Panel is a team, usually comprising three (3) to five (5) members, who are responsible for providing supervision to a research degree student. The Panel must include a minimum of two (2) UniSA supervisors, one (1) of whom will be the Principal Supervisor. Supervisory Panels can also include experts from other disciplines and advisors, where appropriate for the research project.

University Community refers to all students and staff members of the University including honorary title holders, adjuncts, visiting academics, guest lecturers and volunteers who are contributing to the work of the University but who are not staff members.

Further Assistance:

[Student and Academic Services](#)

Related Documentation:

Policy AB-58: [Research Degrees](#)

Policy AB-61: [PhD Program Collaboration](#)

Policy AB-64: [Supervision of Research Degree Students](#)

Procedure AB-58 P3: [Research Degrees Student Progression](#)

Guideline AB-58 AD9: [Supervisory Panels in Research Degrees at UniSA](#)

Guideline AB-58 AD10: [Key Responsibilities in Research Degrees Management and Supervision](#)
[NHMRC Supervision Guide](#)

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History: This procedure contains clauses previously referenced in clause 7 in the Academic Regulations for Higher Degrees by Research.