



## Research Degrees Supervision

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### 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 research degree 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, research degree 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 research degree student's record (student record).

All other procedural responsibilities are detailed in this procedure.

### Confidentiality

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

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### 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 research degree 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 research degree 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 are end users of research 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 research degree 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 research degree student, nominates a replacement supervisor, in accordance with Policy AB-64: [Supervision of Research Degree Students](#).
- 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 research degree 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 research degree 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 research degree student and Research Degree Coordinator, nominates a replacement supervisor 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](#).

## 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.

**End-user 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 as an end-user of research, and/or their position in a relevant industry, and/or their capacity to provide expertise relevant to the student's research. End-user advisors will usually be external to the University, or an Adjunct.

**Enterprise Agreement / Collective Agreement** is the University of South Australia Enterprise Agreement 2019 and the University of South Australia Senior Staff Collective Agreement 2006 (as varied or replaced from time to time).

**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 10-15 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 end-user 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](#)

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#### **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](#)

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**Officer Responsible for Update and Review:** Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research and Enterprise

**Approved by:** Academic Board

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