

Supervisory Panels at UniSA: Guidelines

1. Introduction

Supervisory Panels make provision for expert and multidisciplinary supervision teams, with the inclusion of end-users of research where possible and appropriate, and are a key element of UniSA's enterprising research degrees. At UniSA, Higher Degree by Research (research degree) candidates are supported by a panel of supervisors, appointed at the proposal stage of research degree project establishment or, if possible, early in candidature. These guidelines¹ focus on Supervisory Panels, providing guidance on the establishment and maintenance of Supervisory Panels to staff who are directly and indirectly involved with research degree candidate supervision.

The guidelines have been informed by:

- Candidate focus groups;
- Supervisor feedback;
- Deans of Research;
- Professorial Leads for Research Education;
- Research degrees Committee;
- Research Leadership Committee;
- E25 innovations in research training, including the project-based research degree; and
- A review of Australian, European and American models of panel supervision, and of panels with end-user involvement.

2. Supervisory Panels: Benefits

Candidate benefits of panel supervision may include:

- Opportunity to enrich the project with multidisciplinary expertise & perspectives
- Understanding of the end-user perspectives, research translation and/or industry practices
- Access to research participants, specialist equipment and/or facilities
- Continuity of supervision
- Opportunity to gain industry-based experience
- Career mentoring
- Broadened networks
- Employment opportunities

¹ Published 2017, updated 2020

Supervisor benefits of panel supervision may include:

- Working as part of a supervisory team
- New collaborations with colleagues from other disciplines
- Optimising research outcomes that are relevant and usable
- Incorporation of market knowledge – via end-user advisor – to research project design
- Development opportunities for less experienced supervisors
- Continuity of support for candidate during staff leave
- Strengthened interaction with industry partner(s) (scale/depth)

End-user benefits of panel supervision may include:

- Development of new knowledge to assist end-user organisation(s)
- Shaping research projects, to achieve real-world outcomes
- Access to technology pipeline
- Exposure to talented candidates
- Formation of networks and collaborations in the University
- Access to research that is evidence-based, rigorous, and future-focused
- Commercial outcomes

3. Supervisory Panels: UniSA Policy

Supervisory Panels are incorporated into Higher Degree by Research Policy and Procedures. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- Policy A-1: Research Degrees
- Procedure A-1.2: Research Degrees Supervision
- Policy RES 18: Higher Degree by Research Supervision

The Higher Degree by Research Supervision policy and the Code of good practice: research degrees management and supervision include information which supports the streamlined formation of Supervisory Panels, and to facilitate the involvement of external parties by removing unnecessary barriers.

In developing Supervisory Panels, the University strongly encourages the:

- formation of panels in establishing the project (pre-advertisement) or early in candidature;
- participation of end-users of research on Supervisory Panels; and

- inclusion of early career researchers on panels, to support their professional development as research degree supervisors and for career progression.

4. Supervisory Panels: Definition & Roles

A Supervisory Panel is a team-based approach to supervision, with each member of the panel having an agreed role in supporting the candidate and/or the project. All candidates are expected to have a Supervisory Panel.

Panels make provision for expert and multidisciplinary supervisory teams, with the inclusion of end-users where meaningful and appropriate.

The Australian Research Council defines an end-user as "The person(s) or organisation(s) that will use or benefit from the product or service arising from the research."²

Three key things to note about end-users in this context are:

1. End-users of research do not need to come from a particular business type, or industry sector.
2. End-users can be drawn from a wide range of industries, including, but not limited to, private enterprise, federal, state or local government, and the not-for-profit sector.
3. End-users will normally be external to the University, or may have an ongoing relationship with the University as an adjunct, visitor or staff member.

Given the critical contribution that research degree training can play in industry-university collaborations, the university is committed to increasing the extent of this collaboration and also its depth through E25 and the Enterprise PhD. Involving end-users on Supervisory Panels brings distinctive skill and knowledge contributions to the project and to the development of candidates. Candidates value the active role end-users can play in mentoring and providing career development support, supervisors are able to underpin university-industry engagement as a key vehicle for innovation, and end-users may benefit from the contribution candidates can bring to industry-defined problems.

5. Formation of Supervisory Panels

All candidates commencing in a research degree at UniSA from 2016 should have a panel of supervisors, appointed as early as possible in candidature.

² <https://www.arc.gov.au/file/606/download?token=T7ZEgGB4>

Panels can be formed to supervise a single research degree candidate or, if the collaboration is such, a single panel may lend itself to the supervision of multiple candidates in a variety of projects over time.

Table 1 notes some of the attendant issues to consider when forming a new Supervisory Panel, or changing the membership of an existing panel. Consideration of these questions will assist with forming the panel, and with setting expectations between panel members and candidates.

Table 1: Some of the issues to consider when forming or changing Supervisory Panels

Area	Questions to consider	Notes and Resources
<i>Membership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are the most appropriate members for the supervision panel? Could an expert from another discipline add value for the candidate? Who is the most appropriate partner to involve as an end-user on the panel? How can a panel be established to build supervisory capacity by, for example, the inclusion of an early career researcher? 	Refer to Enhancing industry university engagement through graduate research students: a guide for universities
<i>Intellectual Property</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will IP be managed and assigned? Are there requirements for IP due to funding of the project? Are all panel members aware of their responsibilities around managing project IP? 	Refer to Intellectual Property: Ownership and Management Policy
<i>Authorship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will authorship of publications from the research be managed? Are there likely to be any restrictions on publication? 	Refer to Authorship Policy Decisions on authorship should also be documented in the candidate's Statement of Agreement and Reviews of Progress
<i>Management of candidates</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the role and responsibilities of each panel member been discussed and agreed? 	All members on supervisor panels should participate regularly. The nature and frequency of participation can be

Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who will take the lead in organising and conducting panel meetings? Who will be responsible for ensuring the candidate meets milestones? Who will the candidate meet with (i.e. individuals, or the panel as a whole)? How often? Will the panel meet in the absence of the candidate? Under what circumstances? 	<p>determined as appropriate for each panel member, and their agreed role.</p> <p>Panels may meet in the absence of the candidates to prepare for meetings with the candidate such as reviews of progress. Panels supervising more than one candidate may also wish to meet to discuss the progress of all candidates.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will potential conflicts be managed? Do any of the proposed panel members have a conflict of interest? If so, have these conflicts been declared, and how can this be managed to ensure the panel operates in the best interest of the candidate? 	<p>Refer to Managing conflicts of interest Responsible Research Practice</p>

6. Guidelines for panel membership, roles and responsibilities

The panel requires a minimum of 2 UniSA supervisors, one of whom will be the principal, but should comprise of a total of between 3 and 5 members from within or external to UniSA, as appropriate for the candidate's discipline and project. The inclusion of 3-5 members in a Supervisory Panel is consistent with the model used for panels at several other Australian universities, including Australian National University, Charles Darwin University and Western Sydney University, and also shares similarities with European collaborative doctoral programs, and the American supervisory committee model.

Table 2 identifies the key roles and responsibilities of supervisors and advisors in the context of the Supervisory Panel, and the role of an advisor, as distinct from a traditional academic supervisor.

Table 2: The role and responsibilities of supervisors and advisors

		Role	Responsibilities
<i>Research Supervisor</i>	Principal	Take the leading role in guiding the candidate to undertake a successful research project and complete the program; Lead discussions around the formation and organisation of the panel.	Ensure the Supervisory Panel and candidate are familiar with their responsibilities; Fulfil the responsibilities of supervisors, as detailed in the Code of good practice: research degrees management and supervision ; Be the primary contact for the Supervisory Panel.
	Co (s)	Play an active role in guiding the candidate to undertake a successful research project and complete the program, in collaboration with the Principal Supervisor.	Fulfil the responsibilities of supervisors, as detailed in the Code of good practice: research degrees management and supervision , in collaboration with the Principal supervisor.
	Associate(s)	Provide advice in specialised aspects of the research program.	Participate in the supervision of the candidate, as agreed with the panel and the candidate.
<i>End-user</i>	Advisor	Be involved in the development of candidate research project(s); Contribute end-user knowledge, skills, resources and time; Actively mentor the research degree candidate in career interests, research translation, industry practices etc.;	Likely to include some of the following, depending on the needs of the candidate, and the role of the advisor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular meetings with the candidate and/or the panel; - Provision of mentoring throughout the candidate's candidature, including a focus on skills development and career conversations linked with their EDGE experience; - Provision of end-user linked (EDGE) experiences, such as invitation to company board meetings, placement opportunities, or other exposure; - Assist candidate in gaining access to relevant research resources (participants, equipment etc)

		Provide end-user linked exposure and experience to the candidate.	<p>within an end-user's; organisation/company/community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading and providing feedback on the research proposal and/or on draft thesis chapters.
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7. Support and Resources

The following people are available to assist supervisors in the development of Supervisory Panels for newly commencing, or continuing research degree candidates:

- Dean of Research (or delegate) in your Academic Unit.
- Research Degree Coordinator (or the equivalent in your Academic Unit).

Web-based resources include:

- End-users of research on Supervisory Panels [Frequently Asked Questions](#).
- A section in the University's research degree supervisor induction program (Supervising@UniSA - the essentials) focussed on panel supervision.
- A free-standing resource 'Panel Supervision and Supervising in Teams'.
- HDR Staff Research Portal.

To formalise the inclusion of panel members, the following forms must be completed:

- For new candidates before commencement, the panel should be captured on the project establishment and/or recommendation forms.
- For candidates completing their research proposal, panel members should be included on the confirmation of candidature and statement of agreement.
- For supervisors or advisors identified after confirmation of candidature the change of supervisor form must be used. The change of supervisor form also provides an opportunity for candidates who are already working with end-users to have this detailed on their candidate record.