Australian College
of Theology

HDR CANDIDATE AND SUPERVISOR INDUCTION POLICY

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Policy Document Approver	Research Committee
Responsible Body/Person	Research Committee
Initial approval date	02 October 2020
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Superseded documents	
Related documents	ACT Handbook *Annual Progress Report Form* Confirmation of Candidature Policy HDR Course Enrolment Policy HDR Minimum Resources Policy Research Active Policy Research Plan Research Proposal Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) Policy Supervisor and Supervision Policy Supervisors and HDR Candidate's Expectation Rating Scale Wellbeing and Safety Policy
Related HE Standards	1.3.1, 4.2.4
Student Lifecycle Stage/s	Admission

1. PURPOSE

To set out the process of induction for HDR candidates and supervisors and the related responsibilities and roles.

2. DEFINITIONS

Academic Board is the Academic Board of the **ACT**.

ACT is the *Australian College of Theology Limited*.

ACT Handbook is the main **handbook** of the **ACT**, published each year, and providing the first place of reference for ACT policy and procedures.

ACT Office is the office of the *Australian College of Theology Limited*.

Adjunct supervisor is the **superviso**r of an **HDR candidate** who acts as a complementary expert in their area of expertise.

Co-supervisor is the **supervisor** of an **HDR candidate** who works alongside the **Principal Supervisor**, responsible for supervision of research content as negotiated and may act as the Principal Supervisor in the absence of the Principal Supervisor.

Director of Research is the officer of the **ACT** who manages all research and research training through the **Graduate School of Research.**

Endnote is software that enables the formatting of citations, footnotes and bibliographies to a chosen standard. The **ACT** provides this software for students.

Graduate School of Research (GSR) is the division of **ACT** which oversees research and research training, managed by the **Director of Research** and overseen by the **Research Committee**.

Higher Degree by Research candidate is a **candidate** enrolled in the **MTh (Res), DMin,** and **PhD** degrees. Also known as an **HDR candidate.**

HREC is the *Human Research Ethics Committee* of the **ACT** – the committee with responsibility for ethics review of human participant research.

Postgraduate Coordinator (also known as the Research Coordinator) is the academic staff member in an **affiliated college** who has responsibility for oversight of research and research training in that college. They also act as the **Research Integrity Advisor**.

Principal Supervisor is the **supervisor** responsible for supervision of the research content and academic administration of an assigned **HDR candidate**.

Research Committee (RC) is the committee of the Academic Board which oversees research and research training within the **ACT** through the **Graduate School of Research.**

Supervising College is the affiliated college at which an **HDR candidate** is enrolled which has responsibility for the supervision of the candidate.

Supervisor is a person who supervises an **HDR candidate** enrolled in a research course of the **ACT**.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all ACT HDR candidates, supervisors, and supervising colleges.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The Australian College of Theology recognises the key contribution of both supervisory relationships and the relationship with the supervising college for the HDR process, and the necessity for clear and constructive expectations for these relationships. Successful HDR completion also requires that all candidates and supervisors are thoroughly familiar with ACT requirements as well as the support and resources available.

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1   General

5.1.1   Every **Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidate** is admitted by **Research Committee (RC)**. At the time a candidate is admitted as a provisional (or confirmed) candidate, RC will also formally appoint a principal supervisor, and at least one co-supervisor (the supervisory team).

5.1.2   The **ACT Office** will then send a letter of offer to candidates, copied to the supervisory team and postgraduate coordinator. This will advise candidates of their commencement date and maximum completion date, their principal supervisor and co-supervisor(s), and other relevant details of their candidature (load, mode, residency status, payment method and field) and a link to the Graduate School of Research website.

5.1.3   Candidates will undergo induction through both the Graduate School of Research (GSR) and their supervising college.

5.2   Graduate School of Research Induction for HDR Candidates

Graduate School of Research (GSR) induction will be held each semester for the commencing cohort via Zoom. Topics will include research integrity, ethics, occupational health and safety, intellectual property rights, and respectful relationships, as well as orientation to the GSR website.

5.3   College Induction for HDR Candidates

5.3.1   The Postgraduate Coordinator at each supervising college is responsible for ensuring all their HDR candidates receive adequate induction. This may be as an individual or part of a cohort of candidates. Candidates can expect the following matters to be addressed in this orientation meeting:

- College code of conduct;

- Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) awareness training and the contact details for the college SASH officer;

- information concerning people and processes they need to be aware of at the supervising college;

- a library orientation including online resources and accessing interlibrary loans and online articles;

- reference to the *HDR Minimum Resources Policy* and notification of resources available to them on the campus and through the ACT Office (e.g. work space, internet access, student support, Endnote);

- ACT grants for HDR students;

- a schedule of research seminars;

- reference to the relevant *HDR Examination and Ranking Form* which includes the criteria by which the award is being examined and the possible outcomes;

- a brief section on managing candidature – especially matters related to suspensions and extensions of candidature.

5.3.2 The Principal Supervisor is responsible for ensuring a first formal meeting takes place with the candidate and supervisory team as soon as realistically possible on commencement of candidature. At this meeting, candidates can expect the following topics to be addressed:

- Supervisor and candidate expectations, including distinguishing between the roles and expectations of principal supervisor and co-supervisor (*Supervisors and HDR Candidate's Expectation Rating Scale*);

- Reasonable adjustments which may be required due to disability or other ongoing circumstances;

- Confirmation of candidature policy: requirements & time frames;

- Research Methods;

- Research Plan;

- Research Proposal;

- Dissemination of research outcomes;

- Schedule of supervision meetings.

5.4   HDR Candidate Responsibilities

5.4.1 Candidates have the responsibility to be well-informed about and to conform to the regulations governing the course and its academic standards.

5.4.2 Candidates must be aware of the prescribed word limit for theses. The word count includes all material except the bibliography i.e., it includes footnotes and any excursuses or appendices. An excursus contributes to and supports the argument; an appendix contains information which verifies the argument of the thesis, such as a translation of a key text, extensive tables, or a questionnaire.

5.4.3 Candidates should expect to submit to their supervisor coherent accounts of the research to date.

5.4.4 Candidates should communicate with and submit material to their supervisor in accord with a mutually agreed schedule. Personal contact is preferable to merely submitting work by email. At least three annual face-to-face meetings (in person or via Zoom) are recommended. Supervisors comment on whether or not they consider a candidate's progress to be satisfactory in the Annual Progress Report. Reports of unsatisfactory progress will be investigated and, after discussion with the candidate, may lead to the candidate's status being reviewed or, ultimately, terminated by Research Committee.

5.4.5   Candidates are advised to keep a diary of meetings with their supervisor.

5.4.6   Candidates should not hesitate to seek clarification if unsure about the expectations of their supervisor.

5.4.7   Candidates should accept responsibility for maintaining negotiated regular communication with his/her supervisor and the progress of research agreed upon. If impediments arise, these should be immediately discussed with his/her supervisor.

5.4.8   When submitting the thesis for examination, the candidate must lodge with the supervisor a copy of the thesis in the form in which it has been submitted.

5.4.9   Admission to ACT Higher Degree by Research candidature does not guarantee eventual graduation.

5.5   Supervisor Responsibilities

The requirements for supervisors and their roles and responsibilities are outlined in the Supervisor and Supervision Policy and the Research Active Policy.

5.6   Graduate School of Research Induction for Supervisors

5.6.1   Graduate School of Research (GSR) induction for supervisors is mandatory for ACT affiliated staff acting as **supervisors** and for all external **supervisors** who are acting as **principal supervisors**. It is encouraged for external co-supervisors and adjunct supervisors.

5.6.2   GSR induction will cover respectful relationships and ACT's expectations of supervisors, as well as key milestones and processes. It will also include orientation to the GSR website which has links to all HDR-related policies, forms, and resources, including those related to supervision.

5.6.3   GSR induction is in addition to supervisory training as required by the Supervisor and Supervision Policy.

5.7   College Induction for Supervisors

It is the responsibility of the Postgraduate Coordinator to ensure all HDR supervisors affiliated with their college (including Honorary Supervisors and external supervisors), receive adequate induction to the supervising college. This would include but is not limited to the following:

- information concerning people, policies, and processes they need to be aware of at the supervising college;

- information about resources available to them to support their supervision (e.g. work space, internet access, library resources, student support);

- notification of scheduled meetings of any relevant committees of the supervising college (e.g. Advisory Panel and Research Committee);

- a schedule of college research seminars;

> • where applicable, a contract with the supervising college.

6 RELATED LEGISLATION

7 REFERENCES

Denholm, Carey and Terry Evans (eds.), *Doctorates Downunder*, 2nd ed. (Camberwell: ACER Press, 2012).

Shaw, Ian, *Handbook for Supervisors of Doctoral Students in Evangelical Theological Institutions* (Carlisle: Langham Global Library, 2015).

8 VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1	R&RSC	2015	2015	
2	R&RSC	1/02/2017	1/02/2017	
3	R&RSC	July 2018	July 2018	Reformat, slight rename change of rules around co-supervisors, safe spaces policy included, DMin (removed, changed)
4	R&RSC	02 October 2020	1 January 2021	Modification of wording regarding timing of first supervision, 5.2.3 section on DMin coursework units added, section 5.1.3 deleted, 5.1.4 renumbered
5	Research Committee	19 April 2024	19 April 2024	Removal of references to Candidate and Supervisor Handbooks; updates to cohere with other policies and procedures; rearrangement of sections; removal of appendix.

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