

Code and Guidelines for Higher Degree Research Supervision

Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

Preamble

These guidelines are effective from 17th February 2021.

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to outline acceptable practices for Higher Degree Research (HDR) Supervision to foster high quality research and learning experience in compliance with the university's **Research and Innovation Policy**.

Scope

These guidelines primarily apply to HDR supervisors appointed by the university, but can be applied to undergraduate research supervision also.

Policy

This procedure is related to **Research & Innovation Policy – 2018**.

Code and Guidelines for Supervisors

Undertaking HDR Supervision

1. Permanent academics of WUSL holding a position of senior lecturer or professor can be appointed as the Principal Supervisor of a HDR student enrolled in WUSL. A principal supervisor must,
 - a. hold a doctoral degree qualification,
 - b. have a period of remaining tenure reasonably longer than the duration of the HDR candidature, and
 - c. be an active researcher in the discipline of or in a discipline related to the proposed research with published research outputs.
2. The principal supervisor usually plays the key role in directing and supervising HDR and is responsible to the university authorities on administrative matters related to HDR students and awards.
3. It is the responsibility of the principal supervisor to arrange at least one co-supervisor who satisfies the requirements for a principal supervisor specified under above clause 1. All co-supervisors must satisfy the requirements a and c listed under clause 1. The co-supervisors may actively participate in the research work and/or play a consultative role.
4. To ensure effective and efficient supervision, the principal supervisor should consider his/her capacity to accept a new HDR student taking into account the time allocated for teaching, research, current HDR students and other administrative responsibilities.

5. HDR supervisors must not undertake supervision responsibilities beyond their expertise and academic/research background. They should not accept to supervise close relatives or those with whom any conflict of interest may occur, as HDR students.

Primary Role of the HDR Supervisors

6. The primary responsibility of the supervisors is to supervise and guide the HDR student throughout the research process, thesis writing and thesis examination process.
7. The supervisors may play an advisory role in the student's career/professional development.
8. The supervisors shall provide advice instructions, support, mentoring, reviews and comments to help the student in completing the HDR in accordance with the University's Research and Innovation Policy.
9. Such advice, instructions, etc. may be given verbally and/or in writing on:
 - a. research ideas and identifying research objectives,
 - b. obtaining ethics and other approvals where relevant,
 - c. identifying appropriate research methods, experimental plans, research sites, data collection methods, analysis tools, etc.,
 - d. obtaining research funding if needed,
 - e. academic/scientific writing,
 - f. publication of research outcomes,
 - g. professional development, or on
 - h. any other relevant matter.

Responsibilities in Planning and Management of Candidature

10. To advise HDR students of their rights and responsibilities as per the respective policies, procedures and by-laws adopted by the university.
11. To ensure that each HDR student receive (where relevant), research ethics training, academic and research integrity training, safety training, and information on how to access available services and document (policy documents, forms, etc.).
12. To negotiate and set out an agreement/contract with the HDR student on the work to be done, schedules to be adhered to, reporting requirements and authorship of joint publications, which is to be reviewed regularly.
13. To identify any deficiencies in a HDR student's knowledge, skills and attitudes which are important for successful completion of the HDR and to suggest appropriate remedial studies, programmes or practices to improve those. These may include prescribed coursework, training courses, directed reading or conference support as required.
14. To ensure that necessary infrastructure facilities such as furniture, computers, library access, network access and laboratory safety devices are provided to the students and inform the relevant authorities of any deficiencies.

Responsibilities in Monitoring Student Progress and Research

15. To ensure that progress reports are submitted, registration and re-registration requirements are met and upgrading of enrollment from MPhil to PhD where applicable, are done within stipulated time as per the current university by-laws.
16. To carefully assess all relevant written material submitted by the student including progress reports, thesis chapters and research papers and provide constructive and informative

feedback within agreed or reasonable time to enable the student to incorporate appropriate improvements and corrections before submitting to the next level.

17. To maintain regular contact with the HDR candidate according to the set-out schedule and provide timely and accurate feedback on the progress of the HDR student in relation to the established milestones and the standards required for the desired award.
18. To monitor the performance of the student continuously relative to the work agreement and the standards required for the award, and to inform the student if the progress is below satisfactory or if the outcomes are below the expected standards.
19. To advise the HDR student when it is suitable to finalize and submit the thesis and carefully assess the thesis against all applicable formats, policies, guidelines and procedures before submission.
20. To select suitable thesis examiners avoiding any potential conflict or interest and advise the university authorities/committees on their details and credentials.

Responsibilities in Managing Students' Research Integrity

21. To advise the HDR students on plagiarism and academic misconduct, relevant university policies and by-laws, and make every possible effort to avoid plagiarism and academic misconduct among HDR students.
22. To report to the relevant authorities or committees if there is concern that a HDR student's performance is not satisfactory; if there is evidence or reasonable doubt that a student has breached any applicable code of conduct / by-laws or has committed plagiarism or academic misconduct; or if there is a serious concern regarding the student's health, safety and well-being.
23. To ensure adherence to institutional and national policies on ethical research, intellectual property rights and confidentiality obligations applied in human research, animal experiments, published data, etc. and advise the students on handling them.
24. To encourage the HDR students to engage in dissemination of knowledge via research conferences, publications in journals, professional networking and continued commitment to create and share knowledge.
25. To adopt tolerance, flexibility and openness towards scholarly discussion and relevant comments from interested parties and to encourage the students to make use of such inputs.

Managing Conflicts

26. Relevant FHDC will immediately address any conflict that arises between supervisors and the student on an informal basis.
27. Where a conflict between the supervisor and student cannot be resolved, the supervisor will seek assistance-
 - a. First from the Dean of the relevant Faculty.
 - b. If the Dean cannot resolve the matter then they will refer it to the SRHDC.

Termination of HDR Supervision

28. The principal supervisor should attempt his/her best to continue supervision until the student is qualified for the desired award.
29. However in an unavoidable circumstance of principal supervisor being unable to continue, a co-supervisor who qualify to serve as a principle supervisor should assume the responsibilities of the principal supervisor.
30. In case of death or unavoidable termination of the principle supervisor, the relevant FHDC is responsible for nominating a suitable co-supervisor to take over the responsibilities of the principal supervisor.
31. While the formal supervisory agreement between the supervisor and the HDR student ends once the degree is awarded, the supervisors are encouraged to continue working together with the graduates for the advancement of their respective disciplines.
32. Graduates should be allowed to continue as partners of the research groups within the university under the purview of the supervisors.

Professional Development and Contributions

33. The university expects the HDR supervisors to undertake professional development opportunities to improve their HDR supervisory skills, as recommended by university policies.
34. It is the responsibility of the HDR supervisors to be thoroughly aware of the university codes and policies relevant to HDR supervision and to comply with them.
35. The experienced HDR supervisors should play a key role in devising such policies, guidelines and procedures and in revising them as new requirements arise.
36. The HDR supervisors are also expected to inform the university and national policies on research and innovation.

References

University of Wollongong (2020) Higher Degree Research (HDR) Supervision and Resources Policy. Available at: <https://documents.uow.edu.au/about/policy/uow058665.html>, accessed on 16/06/2020.

Australian National University (2020) ANU Guideline: Higher degree by research - University, candidate, and supervisor responsibilities. Available at: https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_012814, accessed on 16/06/2020.