Document Name

POLICY FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF HDR SUPERVISORS AND SUPERVISORY PANELS

Document Number

PO-RES-07

Document Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Director of Research</th>
<th>August 2015</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authorisation</td>
<td>Academic Board</td>
<td>August 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication</td>
<td>Issue 4</td>
<td>August 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Date</td>
<td>Review of Issue 4</td>
<td>August 2018</td>
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Purpose

This Policy establishes the criteria for appointment of supervisory panels. This policy aims to ensure the highest standards of practice in conducting academic supervision of higher degree by research candidates.

Definitions

A higher degree by research (HDR) is a program of which at least two-thirds of the study must be undertaken as independent research.

Principal Supervisor: The Principal Supervisor takes primary academic responsibility for the higher degree by research (HDR) candidature.

Co-Supervisor: The Co-Supervisor shall have specific expertise that is useful to the candidate’s research program and shall be available as an advisor to the candidate during the course of the candidature.

Policy Statement on Supervisory Panels

- Excelsia College uses a panel system of supervision. Each research candidate has a panel of at least two supervisors, one of whom is designated as Principal Supervisor, the other(s) as Co-Supervisor(s).
- The purpose of the panels is to provide expertise and impart skills across a range of knowledge and research methods.
- The operation of the panel is determined by the Principal Supervisor in consultation with the candidate and other panel members.
- The Director of Research is responsible for ensuring the quality of supervision of HDR candidates in the College.
- The Director of Research or Head of School approves the initial thesis topic and nominates the supervisory panel and any changes to the composition of the supervisory panel over the period of candidature.
- The appointment of a supervisory panel, and any changes to the composition of the panel, is approved by the Research Committee.

Appointment of Principal Supervisor

The Principal Supervisor must meet the following criteria:

1. Be employed as academic staff or contract staff of Excelsia College full-time or at least at 0.4 EFT, or be appointed as an honorary member of staff. Where the staff member holds a fractional or honorary appointment, they must demonstrate capacity to provide effective supervision that includes sustained commitment to the task.

2. Hold a doctoral degree in a field relevant to the candidate’s proposed research, or have an equivalent record of research experience.

3. Be registered on the Excelsia College Supervisors’ Register.
4. At the time of appointment as Principal Supervisor for a candidate, be currently supervising no more than five other full-time HDR candidates.

5. Show evidence of an acceptable level of research activity over the past three years in the form of publications, research grants and/or HDR completions as specified in the Excelsia College Policy on Research Active Status.

6. Agree to carry out the duties of Principal Supervisor according to the Policy for HDR Research Supervision.

7. Complete an induction process on first appointment as Principal Supervisor and then attend an Excelsia College Research Supervision Forum at least once every three years.

In order to be registered on the Excelsia Supervisors’ Register a person must:

- Complete the relevant application form
- Attach evidence of their qualifications and research activity over the past three years.

**Appointment as Co-Supervisor**

A Co-Supervisor must meet the following criteria:

1. Hold a doctoral degree in a field relevant to the candidate’s proposed research, or have an equivalent record of research experience.

2. Be registered on the Excelsia College Co-Supervisors’ Register.

3. At the time of appointment as Co-Supervisor for a candidate, be currently supervising no more than five other full-time HDR candidates.

4. Agree to carry out the duties of Co-Supervisor according to the Policy for HDR Research Supervision.

5. Complete an induction process on first appointment as Co-Supervisor.

Co-Supervisors are not required to be members of staff at Excelsia College. They are invited to attend Supervision Forums but are not required to attend. Co-Supervisors who are not members of staff at Excelsia College are generally referred to as Adjunct Supervisors but fulfil exactly the same roles and responsibilities as a Co-Supervisor employed by Excelsia College. Adjunct Supervisors are required to hold a doctoral degree in a field relevant to the candidate’s proposed research, or have an equivalent record of research experience.

A Co-Supervisor may be asked to act as Principal Supervisor during an absence of the Principal Supervisor for more than one month.

**Making Appointments**

- The Head of School or Director of Research recommends the appointment of a supervisory panel to the Research Committee.
Recommendation of appointment must be on the basis of appropriate space, resources and expertise being available to support the proposed research candidature.

**Replacement of Supervisor/s during Candidature**

- If a breakdown of the supervisory relationship occurs, appropriate attempts at mediation should be made by the Head of School or delegate. The Director of Research must be advised of the issues that have arisen and be involved in mediation if the issue is not able to be resolved by the School. Independent mediators may also be used.
- If appointment of a new Principal Supervisor is required then either the Co-Supervisor or an alternate eligible supervisor shall be appointed. Such appointments will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged. The suitability of the Co-Supervisor or other proposed supervisors to be appointed as supervisor must be discussed with the candidate.

**References Consulted**

UWS Supervision of Research Candidates Policy (2006)

Criteria for the Accreditation of Principal Supervisors and Co-Supervisors in the Australian College of Theology (revised 2013)

UNSW Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy (2012)