Policy Title: Higher Degree by Research Student Support

Descriptors: 1) Research  2) Postgraduate  3) Student Support  4) Grievances

Category: Academic

1. INTENT
The intent of this policy is to outline the levels of support to be provided to higher degree by research candidates in relation to:

- supervision;
- research support funding;
- facilities;
- computing and library services;
- information and communication;
- employment opportunities; and
- quality assurance.

2. Organisational Scope
This policy relates to the provision of support to candidates enrolled in higher degree by research courses only. Individual faculties should consider the extent of support they are able to provide to candidates enrolled in coursework higher degrees that have a research component.

3. Definitions
Higher degree by research candidate: a person who is enrolled as a higher degree by research candidate and whose body of research work is incomplete or still under examination.

4. Policy Content
Support for higher degree by research candidates will be provided on an equitable and transparent basis consistent with this University-wide policy. Higher degree by research candidates will be supported through information, funding, facilities and services through the University’s Faculties and Schools, the Graduate Research School and Student Services Central. These areas are responsible for advising postgraduate research candidates about the actual support, facilities and assistance available.
Faculties and Schools have the primary responsibility for ensuring the appropriate provision of facilities, funding and services required in order for postgraduate research candidates to complete their research programs.

4.1 Supervision

Heads of Schools are responsible for structuring the workload of supervisors to take account of the research supervision undertaken by staff.

Master by Research candidates will have a minimum of two supervisors; however, doctoral candidates must have a minimum of two supervisors of whom one is designated the Principal Supervisor. While recognising that workload allocations are school responsibilities, the recommended workload allocation for supervision is of the order of 0.1 FTE of staff workload per 1 EFTSL of candidate enrolment in research-based units. This workload allowance is shared between Principal, Co and Associate Supervisors on a basis agreed between the supervisors.

The roles of supervisors and processes of appointing supervisors are set out in the Supervision of Students Undertaking Higher Degrees by Research.

4.2 Research support funding

Research candidates should be provided with funding to enable them to complete the research component of their course. This funding may be used for the purchase of equipment or consumables, for data collection, conference attendance, or other research-related activities approved by their Faculty/School.

Research projects should be budgeted within the scope of research support funding available to candidates. If the research project requires funding in excess of the research support funding, candidates should indicate where the additional funds will be sought from. Shortfalls in funding should be addressed as part of the project risk assessment.

4.2.1 Eligibility

Funding to support research is available to Australian and international higher degree research candidates enrolled at ECU.

4.2.2 Funding Levels

- Faculties/schools should plan to provide the following levels of research funding to candidates enrolled in Master by Research and PhD courses. These funding levels refer to funds provided over the duration of their course.

  - Candidates enrolled in courses designated by DEEWR as high-cost courses:
    - PhD degree: $4,500
    - Masters degree: $2,250

  - Candidates enrolled in courses designated by DEEWR as low-cost courses:
    - PhD degree: $3,000
    - Masters degree: $1,500 ($1000 for 1.5 year research master degrees)

- PhD and Master by Research candidates can only apply for research support funding after approval of Confirmation of Candidature.

- Candidates must normally secure approval of any expenditure before that expenditure is made. Applications for retrospective approval of expenditure will not normally be supported.
• Faculties/Schools should maintain accurate records and a running total of the amount of funding available to each of their eligible candidates.

• All equipment purchased by candidates through the provision of research support funding remains at all times the property of the University and must be returned to the Faculty which provided the funding.

• If research support funding is used for attending conferences, candidates will normally be expected to present a paper at such conferences, and can only normally apply for the cheapest return fare and conference registration fees. Candidates are required to provide originals of receipts for any expenditure undertaken.

4.2.3 Applications

Applications for research support funding must be made on the application form provided by the Faculty or School for this purpose. Application should be made in advance of expenditure, and should contain detailed justification for the planned expenditure. Application forms for research support funding must be endorsed by the candidate’s supervisor and submitted to the relevant Faculty Higher Degrees Office or Faculty Administrative Assistant. The expenditure of funds is subject to standard University, Faculty and School regulations.

4.2.4 Information

Faculties and Schools are responsible for advising their candidates of the level of research funding support available, and how applications should be made. This advice should be supplied to candidates at orientation and should include funding application forms which clearly detail the relevant criteria for acceptance of funding applications.

4.3 Facilities

4.3.1 Research Facilities

Faculties and Schools have the responsibility for ensuring the appropriate provision of facilities and equipment required for their candidates to complete approved research programs.

4.3.2 Study Space

Adequate study space should be provided by faculties on campus for their research candidates according to the level of demand. Study rooms should contain desks, chairs, bookcases, lockable filing cabinets, computers equipped with appropriate software and on-line Internet access. With due regard to ethics requirements, candidates should be given access to an individual lockable cupboard or filing cabinet and, in special cases, a secured computer. Study spaces should have adequate air conditioning, lighting, security, privacy and provide a quiet working environment. Where possible, the University should provide some private study spaces for candidates engaged in research of a confidential or sensitive nature, and should maintain some private study offices for research candidates in the writing-up stage of their degrees.

4.4 Computing Assistance

• Higher degree by research candidates should have access to on-campus computer laboratories adequately equipped with research and other software as well as facilities such as printing. After-hours access to computer laboratories should also be available.

• Information about access to computer systems should be provided by the Faculty Higher Degree Office, and should also be included in orientation packages.
• Training will be available to candidates through the, Graduate Research School and support through Faculty Higher Degrees Offices.

4.5 Library Services

Higher degree by research candidates should have access to the following services:

- Consultation with a faculty librarian and ongoing assistance as required;
- An orientation to library services;
- A tutorial on using information sources relevant to the students particular area of study;
- Access to information services from other libraries (negotiated agreement required), such as inter-library loan and document delivery services and the Libraries Australia Reciprocal Agreement.

4.6 Orientation, Information and Communication

Orientation sessions for commencing higher degree research candidates will provide information about the research process, supervision, research funding support, access to general facilities, computing assistance and library services.

Induction must include training relating to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, research ethics (including ethical requirements for studies involving humans and animals), requirements for privacy and confidentiality, occupational health and safety, environmental protection matters and the University's mechanism for dispute resolution.

Student Services Centre will provide information and services related to course admission and enrolment, academic progress, postgraduate research scholarships, approval of research proposals, and thesis examination.

The Graduate Research School will provide a web site with access to higher degrees policies and procedures.

4.7 Employment Opportunities.

Where faculties, schools or research centres seek to employ research assistants, they should, wherever possible, support and encourage the employment of higher degree by research candidates from Edith Cowan University. Employment opportunities should be discussed with the principal supervisor and should not impede student progress.

4.8 Quality Assurance

The University will conduct an annual survey of all Master by Research and Doctoral candidates to determine their satisfaction with their research training experience. A report on the survey will be presented to the Research Students and Scholarships Committee and referred to Faculty Research and Higher Degrees Committees and the University Research and Higher Degrees Committee for information and action.

4.9 Grievance Procedures

Any candidates who are dissatisfied with their supervision, support or facilities which are affecting their academic progress, and discussions with their supervisors have failed, are encouraged to make a private appointment with the:

i. Postgraduate Coordinator of their School;
ii. Head of School or their nominee;
iii. Associate Dean (R&HD); or
iv. If none of these above are satisfactory, then the Dean of the Graduate Research School.
Any problems or any disagreements encountered during the candidature that cannot be resolved between the higher degree research candidate and the supervisor with any of the above arbitrators, should be dealt with in accordance with the Student Complaints Policy (SA004).

5. References

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<td>File No:</td>
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<td>Dean, Graduate Research School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Related Policies/Documents:</td>
<td>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, Australian Research Council (ARC), Universities Australia and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Australian Government 2007</td>
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6. Contact Information

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<tr>
<th>Contact Person:</th>
<th>Coordinator, Graduate Research School</th>
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<tr>
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