

Preamble

ACGR recognises the national mandate to embed transferable skills training in our research training system.

Transferable skills:

- are complementary to research skills developed during candidature;
- can be acquired by undertaking research, bespoke skills development activities, peer learning, experiences, and training;
- impact positively on experience during candidature; and,
- are useful for a diversity of careers, including academic and research careers.

The ACGR Good Practice Principles for Graduate Research Candidate Development (appended) articulate a set of principles about developing research and transferable skills that, combined, enhance employability for academic and non-academic careers. The additional Guidelines proposed here should be read in association with those Principles.

Guidelines

The ACGR recommends that:

Development

- All HDR candidates have access to transferable skills development;
- Universities clearly articulate the skills expected to be acquired during candidature;
- End users and employers are, where relevant, involved in the development and implementation of training provisions;
- The importance of skills developed during the process of undertaking a research project are recognised and incorporated;
- Training programs and other models of skills development consider:
 - identifying some mandatory requirements or activities;
 - determining participation thresholds and evidence of participation;
 - how skills development is to be recorded and recognised;
 - incorporating external engagement opportunities for skills development (including industry internships);
 - enhanced career support for candidates; and,
 - recognition of prior learning, such as when candidates transfer from another university or have prior professional experience.
- Candidates are explicitly supported to recognise and articulate the skills they have acquired relevant to their career aspirations.

- Universities have a strategy and the infrastructure required for skills planning, delivery, and recording, so as to incentivise engagement by candidates, supervisors, end users/employers and training providers.

Assessment

- Assessment utilises an approach of evidenced engagement and participation, in preference to prescribed curriculum hours;
- Candidates are provided with support to self-assess their skills and to present themselves competitively for career choices post-graduation;
- Universities have a clear plan for understanding the impact of skills development on:
 - the quality of research outcomes (such as submission rates, examination outcomes);
 - the candidate experience (such as effectiveness of research project management); and,
 - employability (such as diversity of graduate destinations).

Recognition

- Achievement is recognised and rewarded in various ways appropriate to the university research training environment, this may include certification, inclusion in the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS), and micro-credentialing.

Appendix 1: ACGR Good Practice Principles on Graduate Research Candidate Development

Graduate research candidates are supported to undertake original research and scholarly activities whilst developing key research and employability skills for academic and non-academic careers.

1. With a primary objective of research and research skill development, transferable skill training is integrated within the higher degree program rather than separate and additional to it.
2. Universities articulate the (non-research specific) skill sets that each candidate will acquire by the completion of their candidature
3. Early assessment of the prior learning and skill level of every candidate, should inform the development of training programs for candidates from diverse educational, employment and cultural backgrounds
4. The University offers relevant development opportunities that are aligned with each stage of the candidature. Supervisors support the development of discipline specific research skills, general academic skills and career planning.
5. Candidates should have opportunities to develop skills and experience diverse research environments through collaboration, partnerships, internships, and national and international conference participation.
6. Transferable skills developed and assessed as part of graduate research program are documented and formally recognised on graduation.
7. The University periodically and systematically reviews the processes and outcomes of developmental activities for candidates.