**ACGR Good Practice Guidelines for**

**Graduate Research Governance and Management**

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Introduction

The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) represents the definitive set of requirements for Australian higher education providers. The Standards must be met for a university to be registered in Australia as a provider of higher education. They protect the quality and reputation of the sector and build operational excellence.

Graduate research education and program delivery is a responsibility that is shared across many organisational units across a university. This includes academic organisational units (Schools and Institutes, for example), Faculties and central divisions, often Graduate Schools. Governance and management of graduate research can be highly devolved or centralised, depending on the Institution, but they are all subject to the same HES Framework. Similarly, the Commonwealth Research Training Program provides funding that underpins graduate research education, with attendant legislative requirements. The governance and management of graduate research education must also ensure that the providers abide by the rigorous standards imposed by the Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and academic integrity.

These guidelines aim to support higher education providers to meet institutional, national and international expectations in graduate research education program design, delivery and quality assurance.

Using the Guidelines

The *ACGR Good Practice Guidelines for Graduate Research Governance and Management* support a pluralistic approach to assuring sound governance and management of graduate research education. Whilst the degree of centralisation of the key processes associated with graduate research varies across institutions, it is essential that each university has a clear governance framework that identifies where authority in decision making and responsibility in documentation and reporting lies. These guidelines identify the key matters for consideration when determining appropriate delegations of authority and organisational structures for the management of graduate research programs at each university.

This document is part of a suite of Good Practice Guidelines that are designed to support institutions as they develop their strategies and processes in particular important areas of operation. They support the *Australian Graduate Research Good Practice Principles* which articulate a set of standards considered to be essential for the delivery of graduate research programs.

Recommendations

Design and authority

1. The authorities, policies and procedures in place to manage graduate research education should ensure transparency, consistency and equitable access across the institution for all candidates and supervisors whilst allowing for appropriate disciplinary differences in research methodologies and outputs.
2. Universities should clearly articulate and promote the responsibilities and rights of each of the stakeholders in graduate research provision (candidates, supervisors, schools/faculties and other academic units and central support services including graduate schools and offices)
3. Universities should include in their academic governance structure a senior appointment with institutional responsibility for graduate research education who will work closely with academic organisational units (faculties and schools) to protect the quality and reputation of their graduate research provision and ensure operational effectiveness.
4. Appropriate levels of professional and administrative support should be provided to facilitate operational effectiveness in graduate research management.

**Candidature management**

1. Universities should have clear policies relating to admission into and examination of a graduate research program and a shared understanding of where authority lies in decisions relating to the various processes associated with admission and examination.
2. The responsibility for documentation and reporting of learning outcomes HDR candidates during candidature should be clear and the processes that ensure that the assessment of the major assessable research outputs via the HDR examination should be managed to meet HES expectations.
3. Universities should have clear processes to confirm that appropriate supervision and study environment of research activity is in place prior to admission of an HDR student and that this learning environment can be maintained throughout candidature.
4. Universities should ensure that appropriate induction processes relating to a responsible research culture are established for all HDR candidates.
5. Universities should ensure that they can provide timely access to services that support HDR candidate well-being and safety.
6. Universities should have clear policies and procedures and transparent processes for the management of Student Grievances and Complaints involving HDR candidates.

**Strategy and Planning**

1. Universities should establish clear processes for the development and promotion of key strategies and performance expectations which recognise and value the pluralistic nature of graduate research education provision.
2. Quality assurance in collaborative research training arrangements with other parties (e. g. Industry/End-Users, International partners) should be established across the University.
3. Universities should ensure compliance with HES expectations in Research Training by ensuring that decision makers and managers of research training programmes are appropriately trained.
4. Universities should ensure that expenditure and data collection in relation to Research Training is documented to meet RTP legislative and HEIMS reporting requirements.