

ACGR Good Practice Guidelines for

Transferable Skill Development

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About these Guidelines

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

Using the Guidelines

ACGR recognises the national mandate to embed transferable skills training in our research training system. These Guidelines set out recommendations to universities for the development, assessment and recognition of graduate research candidates' transferable skills. The Guidelines are part of a suite of Good Practice Guidelines¹ 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 Principles² which articulate a set of standards considered to be essential for the delivery of graduate research programs and should be read alongside the Graduate Research Good Practice Principle 5 on Graduate Research Candidate Development.

¹[Australian Graduate Research Good Practice Guidelines](#)

²[Australian Graduate Research Good Practice Principles](#)

Recommendations

ACGR makes the following recommendations to universities.

Development

1. Ensure that all HDR candidates have access to transferable skills development.
2. Clearly articulate the skills candidates are expected to acquire during candidature.
3. Where relevant, involve end users and employers in the development and implementation of training provisions.
4. Recognise the importance of skills developed during the process of undertaking a research project.
5. Ensure that 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
 - recognition of prior learning, such as when candidates transfer from another university or have prior professional experience.
6. Explicitly support candidates to recognise and articulate the skills they have acquired relevant to their career aspirations.
7. Put in place a strategy and the necessary infrastructure for skills planning, delivery and recording, so as to incentivise engagement by candidates, supervisors, end users/employers and training providers.

Assessment

8. Base assessment on evidenced engagement and participation rather than prescribed curriculum hours.
9. Support candidates to self-assess their skills and to present themselves competitively for career choices post-graduation.
10. 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)
 - employability (such as diversity of graduate destinations).

Recognition

11. Recognise and reward achievement in various ways appropriate to the university research training environment, such as through certification, inclusion in the Australian Higher Education Graduation