

# Responsibilities of HDR Supervisors Research Integrity at Griffith University

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## Overview

Supervisors have key responsibilities with regards to the mentoring of their HDR candidates, including the design, conduct and reporting of the work in a manner that adheres to the principles of the responsible conduct of research. This resource sheet is intended as an introduction for academic staff who are relatively new supervisors. Since 2007 there has been considerable development of the national and University research integrity frameworks. Consequently, this resource may also be a useful reference for more experienced supervisors and academics who supervise research by other students (e.g. honours and coursework students).

## National guidelines

The national reference standard for research integrity is the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (2007). The [Australian Code](#) articulates the research integrity responsibilities of supervisors.

## University policy

The University has implemented, and clarified our implementation of, the [Australian Code](#) with the release of the [Griffith University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#). As per the [Australian Code](#), Griffith University has established policies with regards to the responsibilities of HDR supervisors for research integrity and the appropriate conduct of their students.

**It is extremely important that a HDR supervisor is clear about her/his responsibilities with regards to these matters.** The *Research Integrity Resource Sheets* provide assistance with the implementation of these guidelines.

The following University policies also apply to the supervision of HDR candidates: Code of Practice for the Supervision of Higher Degree Research Students; Higher Degree Research Supervisor Accreditation Policy; and the Higher Degree Research Policy.

## Overview of responsibilities

The [Australian Code](#) and the [Griffith University Code](#) discuss the following responsibilities of supervisors. Included is that a supervisor must:

- be familiar with the [Griffith University Code](#) and the elements of the appropriate conduct of research;
- be familiar with University policies and procedures relating to research (e.g. research ethics, conflicts of interest, intellectual property);



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Supervision code

<http://griffith.edu.au/code-practice-research-supervision>

The Code of Practice for the Supervision of Higher Degree Research Students details the responsibilities of those involved and provides advice on the standards of support that HDR candidates can expect to receive, as well as information on:

- physical facilities, financial and other resources
- ethical clearance procedures
- supervisor accreditation
- candidate progression
- the role of the HDR Convenor and
- managing the supervisory relationship.

- mentor her/his students with regards to the above matters, identify appropriate training, and ensure their students participate in the available training; and
- oversee her/his student's research process to ensure that -
  - all required University and external ethics and other clearances are obtained where necessary and the terms of the resulting clearances are followed
  - design, methods, analysis, interpretations and findings are appropriate and valid
  - supervisors must ensure research trainees receive appropriate acknowledgement for their work, including both publication and intellectual property (see the University's [Intellectual Property Policy](#)).
  - findings are reported in appropriate forums and media
  - research trainees receive appropriate credit for their work.

Additional responsibilities of HDR supervisors are described in the [Griffith University Code of Practice for the Supervision of Higher Degree Research Students](#).

## Who is the chief investigator for student research?

Irrespective of discipline or methodology, Griffith University policy is to consider the primary supervisor the chief investigator, with principal responsibility for the responsible and ethical conduct of the student's research. Of course the student has shared responsibility, but it is the primary supervisor's responsibility to keep the research on track. **This is one of the many reasons why it is vital for there to be good communication between the HDR student and supervisor (including, but not limited to, regular meetings between them) and for the supervisor to have a thorough and current appreciation of what's happening with the student's research.**

## Mentoring students

The fact the primary supervisor is the chief investigator for a student research project (see above) does not imply the student has a passive role with regards to the appropriate conduct of their research. In fact, the [Griffith University Code](#) outlines the responsibilities of student researchers (see below). As is the case for many elements of a student's journey, the primary supervisor doesn't do the work for the student, but must adequately mentor the student with regard to accepted standards and University policy on the responsible design, conduct and reporting of research.

For research integrity this mentoring will involve discussing the issues, suggesting resources and references, identifying usual practices and approaches, and providing thoughtful and engaged feedback as the student attempts to apply this knowledge to her / his own research.



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**GGRS Contact**[griffith.edu.au/hdr/services-support-resources](http://griffith.edu.au/hdr/services-support-resources)

The Griffith Graduate Research School is responsible for implementing the strategic direction for higher degrees by research, research education and training. GGRS assists the academic elements in maintaining distinctive standards of recruitment, admission, candidature management and assessment of research students.

GGRS is currently development a new professional development program for HDRs and Supervisors. This new program will be implemented in early 2014.

For workshop details and resources, visit the URL to the left.

Research integrity and research ethics principles should be presented as integral to research practice and a key element of the quality of a research project.

Ultimately the goal is fostering, supporting and resourcing the reflective practice of the HDR student, so research integrity is a core component of her/his research practice.

**Ethical clearance**

When a HDR student's project requires animal ethical clearance or human research ethical clearance the primary supervisor must ensure that the work is **not commenced until the student has been issued with an authorisation to do so.**

The primary supervisor must appropriately monitor the conduct of her/his student's project to ensure it adheres to what has been approved, University policy and all relevant external standards.

When information/action (an annual ethical conduct report) is sought from the student, the primary supervisor is expected to ensure the student appropriately responds. If extended failure to respond results in a formal review both the student and supervisor would be respondents.

**Safety**

The design and conduct of a research project must provide for the safety of the researchers (e.g. student and supervisor) including research assistants. This includes appropriately addressing physical, emotional and other risk factors.

In the case of animal-based work the harm and pain to the animals must be minimised, mitigated and ethically justified. For human research all risks (e.g. to potential participants, actual participants, identifiable third parties, and the wider community) must be minimised, mitigated, otherwise addressed, and ethically justified. Any risks to the environment (e.g. relating to work with a genetically modified organism) must also be addressed.

Early in the design of a project the primary supervisor must start discussing with the student the safety considerations that are associated with the planned research and keep revisiting these matters through every stage of the research.

**Conflicts of interest**

Conflicts of interest are common in everyday Australian life and this is equally true of research. Conflicts can be pecuniary (e.g. corporate sponsorship of a project) or non-pecuniary (the student is an officer of the agency that delivers a service which the student is evaluating for her research).

Conflicts of interest may impact on what is studied, how it is studied, how the collected data is evaluated and how the results are



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Web site

[www.griffith.edu.au/research/research-support](http://www.griffith.edu.au/research/research-support)  
select 'Research Integrity'

**On the site you will find:**

A link to the Australian Code

A link to the Griffith Code

The Information Sheet series

Links to animal ethics and welfare resources

Links to human research ethics resources

Other resources

Contacts

Further resources are being developed so check this site regularly

disseminated. Such conflicts may also impact upon matters such as consent, confidentiality and risk. Unresolved conflicts can undermine a research endeavour, bring the University into disrepute, and possibly undermine public confidence in research.

Even when a student and/or their supervisor does not believe a conflict of interest actually exists, if there is a potential for third parties to perceive that there is a conflict, the matter should still be addressed. It is a key supervisor responsibility to discuss conflicts of interest early in the design of a student's project and to keep revisiting the matter throughout every step of the research through to the dissemination of the results / output and beyond.

Conflicts of interest (whether actual or potentially perceived) must be disclosed and addressed as per University policy, it must also be disclosed to:

- the head of the researcher's element;
- any collaborating researchers;
- (for animal work or human research) the ethical reviewers;
- (for human research) potential participants;
- (for work with GMOs or other biosafety matters) the Griffith University Biosafety Committee; and
- the editor/publisher of the output and potentially also be disclosed within the output itself.

See RIRS #5 for more about conflicts of interest in research.

**Data storage**

Early in the planning of a project, the supervisor and student should discuss:

- whether the data will be identified personal information;
- whether the data is sensitive or if there are any risks associated with the data;
- how the data will be stored;
- who will have access to the data;
- whether it is necessary to control access to the data; and
- who will be able to produce research outputs based upon the data.

This conversation can be especially critical when the student's project is part of a wider study or where the project involves multiple collaborating researchers.

During the conduct of a project appropriate arrangements must be made for the storage, security and (if the data is potentially sensitive information) controlled access. This includes transport and communication of data (e.g. between sites or collaborating researchers). If the data is sensitive it may be prudent to transport/send it in a coded



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form where the code key is sent separately.

In most cases research data must be retained beyond the completion of a HDR student's research project and after any outputs from that work have been disseminated. As per the [Australian Code](#), Griffith University has established policies with regards to the retention of research data and materials. This includes the [Schedule of Retention Periods for Research Data and Primary Materials](#). These arrangements have been registered as part of the University's disposal schedule and so have legislative force.

To fulfil Griffith University's responsibilities as per the [Australian Code](#) at least a copy of the data should remain under the control of the University. When the student does not agree to this, the student must appropriately store the data for the requisite period and the school / department must have current details of the location of the data.

Refer to RIRS 4 for more about the responsible management of data.

**Publication ethics**

When discussing possible outputs from the student's work the supervisor must mentor the student with regards to publication ethics, University policies and responsible practice, including such matters as:

- where to publish and any requirements of the publisher;
- who should be the authors (see **Authorship** below);
- honesty and accuracy;
- repeat publication;
- disclosing limitations;
- disclosing conflicts of interest; and
- deleterious impacts.

Refer to RIRS 2 for more about publication ethics.

**Authorship**

It is important for the supervisor and student to have an early discussion about the authorship of any outputs (e.g. research publications) arising from the student's work.

This discussion should cover matters such as:

- i) the order of the authors;
- ii) the roles of the authors; and
- iii) who else should be acknowledged for their contribution to the research or output.

The above matters are likely to evolve, and need to be revisited during the course of the student's work and the work on the publication.

Refer to RIISS 3 for more about authorship research integrity matters.



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## OR Contacts

## Office for Research

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Research Ethics  
and Integrity**

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**Policy Officer,  
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**Policy Officer,  
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Dr Amanda Fernie  
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**Systems and  
Support Officer**

Ext: 54855  
research-ethics@griffith.edu.au

**At the end of the student's program**

There are a number of research integrity issues that supervisors should ensure their HDR student has addressed before they leave the University:

- (if the work required ethical clearance) the final ethical conduct report has been submitted and confirmation received that the report has been processed – ordinarily the ethical conduct report is submitted once data collection / testing has been completed;
- (if the work is human research) an appropriate summary of the results of the project has been made available to participants and any other reporting (as specified by the ethical clearance) has occurred;
- a copy of the data and (as appropriate for the discipline / methodology) research materials has been provided for storage for the requisite period; and
- a final conversation should occur with regard to future research outputs (e.g. publications) arising from the student's work (e.g. in terms of whether the supervisor will be invited to be a collaborating author or otherwise acknowledged for her / his contribution to the student's work).

**The primary supervisor is responsible for ensuring that these matters occur (e.g. if the student leaves without completing an ethical conduct report the supervisor will have to instead complete the report).**

**Further advice**

Supervisors with further questions should consult a RIA in their Group (details on the Research Integrity page) or the Office for Research.

**Additional resources**

The Office for Research is continuing to work on refining the existing resources for Griffith University researchers and to produce additional resources. Any feedback on the existing resources or ideas for new resources would be gratefully received (see left for contact details).

**Scope of these guidelines**

These guidelines apply to all Griffith University research, regardless of whether the work requires ethical or biosafety clearance, the expertise of the supervisor, the methodology / design used, the funding for the work and / or how the results of the research will be reported.

