

## #7 The Responsible Supervisor

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### 1) Reflecting on role

Supervisors play an essential mentoring role with regard to the development and responsible conduct of their HDR candidate. Griffith University supervisors are expected to re-enforce the message that research integrity is the foundation of quality research and essential for a successful research career. All supervisors must be conversant with, and adhere to the [Code of Practice for the Supervision of Higher Degree Research Candidates](#).

### 2) National Guidelines

The [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (2018) is the Australian standard for research integrity/the responsible conduct of research. All researchers are expected to follow the principles and responsibilities set out in the Code.

While not directly mentioned, the following general principle relates to supervision:

#### **P8** Promotion of responsible research practices

Promote and foster a research culture and environment that supports the responsible conduct of research.

Supervisors must remain cognisant of all eight principles as they apply to the work of their HDR candidate and mentor their candidate with regard to responsible conduct.

The following institutional responsibility relates to the supervision of HDR candidates:

R5 Ensure supervisors of research trainees have the appropriate skills, qualifications and resources.

The following researcher responsibility relates to the supervision of HDR candidates:

R15 Provide guidance and mentorship on responsible research conduct to other researchers or research trainees under their supervision and, where appropriate, monitor their conduct.

While to varying degrees all of the researcher responsibilities apply to the supervision of HDR candidates and students, the following two responsibilities are particularly relevant:

R14 Support a culture of responsible research conduct at their institution and in their field of practice.

R16 Undertake and promote education and training in responsible research conduct.

### 3) Griffith University's approach

Griffith University considers research integrity to be a core component



## Principles of responsible conduct

P1 Honesty in the development, undertaking and reporting of research

P2 Rigour in the development, undertaking and reporting of research

P3 Transparency in declaring interests and reporting research methodology, data and findings

P4 Fairness in the treatment of others

P5 Respect for research participants, the wider community, animals and the environment

P6 Recognition of the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be engaged in research that affects or is of particular significance to them

P7 Accountability for the development, undertaking and reporting of research

P8 Promotion of responsible research practices

See the Australian Code (2018) for the full text of the eight principles

of quality research and research training to be a core component of the University's mission. In adherence to Responsibility 5 of the Australian Code (2018):

- (i) Griffith University maintains a Register of Accredited Supervisors which is a listing of persons who meet the University's requirement for appointment as a HDR supervisor. There are [standards](#) with regard to skills, professional development and qualifications that must be met in order for an academic staff member to be included on this Register. Completion of the GGRS-offered 'Research Integrity for Supervisors' development module is compulsory in order to maintain accreditation and inclusion on the Register. Supervisor can be appointed on a transitional basis

Griffith University's approach to the implementation of Responsibility 15 of the Australian Code (2018) is summarised below:

- (ii) Supervisors are responsible for mentoring their HDR candidates with regard to responsible conduct matters (see the responsibilities of the supervisor set out in the [Code of Practice for the Supervision of Higher Degree Research Candidates](#)).
- (iii) The mentoring of candidates includes identifying with them if they require capacity building/professional development in an area, and then suggesting appropriate sources of that training.
- (iv) An essential part of a mentor's role is reinforcing that responsible conduct is one of the defining characteristics of quality research and a shared responsibility for all Griffith University researchers.

Griffith University's implementation of the [Australian Code \(2018\)](#) is described in the [Griffith University Responsible Conduct of Research policy](#).

## 4) Risks and consequences

Failing to adhere to the principles and responsibilities described above is likely to be considered a breach of the [Australian Code](#) (and so inter alia a breach of the [Griffith University Responsible Conduct of Research policy](#)).

Serious breaches may be classified as research misconduct, which can have disciplinary and other significant consequences. Every effort should be made to avoid such breaches. Some types of breaches, or even disputes between co-authors can result in forced retractions of published research outputs.

## Researcher responsibilities

*Researchers will uphold the principles of responsible research conduct in all aspects of their research. To this end, researchers will:*

R14 Support a culture of responsible research conduct at their institution and in their field of practice.

R15 Provide guidance and mentorship on responsible research conduct to other researchers or research trainees under their supervision and, where appropriate, monitor their conduct.

R16 Undertake and promote education and training in responsible research conduct.

R17 Comply with the relevant laws, regulations, disciplinary standards, ethics guidelines and institutional policies related to responsible research conduct. Ensure that appropriate approvals are obtained prior to the commencement of research, and that conditions of any approvals are adhered to during the course of research.

R18 Ensure that the ethics principles of research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence

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It has been suggested that breaches, especially research misconduct, as well as forced retractions can have a marked impact on the reputation of researchers. Some commentators have also suggested this damage can last for decades, can occur even if the misstep was made in ignorance, and impact upon collaborators even if they were unaware/not responsible for the problem. It has also been suggested that collaborating with someone who has previously found to have committed research misconduct or have had a forced retraction can have a negative impact on you.

Items 5-9 of this sheet suggests strategies that can be helpful to avoid some of the more common missteps and costly problems.

### 5) Due diligence

It is prudent to engage in due diligence before commencing with a new candidate. Is their claimed previous publication record accurate? If they already have data, was it collected responsibly and as per the [Australian Code \(2018\)](#)? If it relates to human research, do they have ethics approval and what does the consent say the data can be used for? Were the data/primary materials obtained under contract, and if so what are the terms of that contract? Perhaps use the [Retraction Watch database](#) to see if the candidate has any forced retractions against their name.

The above are not automatically a concern, but could be serious enough for the University to withdraw its offer or at least warrant extra professional development and monitoring.

### 6) Early conversation and ongoing communication

The best way for an HDR supervisor to mitigate against the risks and consequences discussed at (4) above is to:

- (i) Re-familiarise yourself with the principles and researcher responsibilities of the [Australian Code \(2018\)](#) and the Griffith University's Research Integrity Resource Sheets series.
- (ii) Have an early discussion with your candidate about the approach to the Australian Code (2018) Griffith University takes.
- (iii) Discuss establishing a publication plan (see RIRS#4).
- (iv) Ensure there is a shared understanding of –
  - a. Roles of the supervisor team and expectations of all parties regarding responsibilities and conduct of the supervision.

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and respect are applied to human research.

R19 Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and respect their legal rights and local laws, customs and protocols.

R20 Ensure that the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) are considered at all stages of research involving animals and minimise the impacts on animals used in research and in so doing support the welfare and wellbeing of these animals.

R21 Adopt methods appropriate to the aims of the research and ensure that conclusions are justified by the results.

R22 Retain clear, accurate, secure and complete records of all research including research data and primary materials. Where possible and

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b. the approach that is to be taken to

1. authorship (including order of) any research outputs
2. the management of data (see 8)
3. research ethics
4. conflicts of interest

(v) If the HDR candidate's work will be part of a wider project (especially if that wider work is externally funded), discuss what impact that will have on intellectual property, data access/control, research outputs and what will happen after the candidate's involvement ends.

This conversation should be friendly, courteous and professional but soon after the meeting the supervisor should email the candidate to confirm the matters discussed and agreed. Preferably the candidate should reply to confirm their agreement. This is to establish a positive foundation for the collaboration and to serve as a record of what was agreed.

This early discussion should begin an open, ongoing conversation with your candidate. It is important they feel as though they have a mentor who genuinely cares about their research journey and success. It is important you have a solid insight into where they are at, if they understand the University's requirements and their responsibilities.

To varying degrees sticky problems and costly missteps can be traced back to communication breakdowns/miscommunications around expectations early in candidature.

### 8) HDR candidate knowledge

The following guidance is an integral part of the supervisor's mentorship responsibilities under R15 of the Australian Code. At an early stage in their journey together, the principal supervisor should discuss the candidate's awareness and understanding of the principles of the Australian Code (2018), the 16 researcher responsibilities and their implications for the candidate's work.

Global experience has highlighted that guidance at this stage of candidature should also address correctly referencing and citing the work of others.

Depending upon the likely research design it may be important to discuss research ethics, including allowing sufficient time for research ethics review. This conversation may identify areas where the candidate (and possibly you) need capacity building/professional

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appropriate, allow access and reference to these by interested parties.

R23 Disseminate research findings responsibly, accurately and broadly. Where necessary, take action to correct the record in a timely manner.

R24 Disclose and manage actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

R25 Ensure that authors of research outputs are all those, and only those, who have made

a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to the research and its output, and that they agree to be listed as an author.

R26 Acknowledge those who have contributed to the research.

R27 Cite and acknowledge other relevant work appropriately and accurately.

R28 Participate in peer review in a way that is fair, rigorous and timely and maintains the confidentiality of the content.

R29 Report suspected breaches of the Code to the relevant institution and/or authority.

development. Many of the specialist teams within Griffith University (e.g. the Griffith Graduate Research School, the library, the Office for Research and Griffith Enterprise) offer professional development opportunities and online material.

Discussing these matters should lead easily into steps (8) and (9) below.

## 8) Data plan

The data plan for the candidate's work (see RIRS#05) should specifically discuss the supervisor having access the data/primary materials so they are able to confidently respond when they are asked if the candidate's work is ready to submit.

The plan should discuss who can publish based upon the data (which is a separate matter from the analysis the candidate was involved in), metadata for the work and where the data will be stored during candidate and after the HDR candidate completes their candidature or they leave the University. Ideally a copy of the data/primary materials will remain with the University, but only to respond to any challenge made about published claims.

## 9) Authorship considerations

During the course of their candidature, doctoral candidates **must publish at least one** peer-reviewed article, ensuring it is **in a quality publication** and with them listed as a principal **author**.

This is a vital milestone for HDR candidates and an essential component of their research training.

A research output that meets the requirement above may come after an earlier output where the candidate was only a co-author.

This process affords the principal supervisor an opportunity to mentor the HDR candidate on the following matters:

- (i) Publication ethics;
- (ii) Authorship roles and criteria; Professional/collegiate communications with potential contributors;
- (iii) Professional/collegiate communication with co-authors;
- (iv) Formulating a publication plan;
- (v) Knowing where to publish (or at least where not to publish);
- (vi) The peer review process; and
- (vii) Fulfilling Griffith University reporting requirements.

OR CONTACTS

**Manager, Research Ethics and Integrity**

Tel: (07) 373 54375  
[research-ethics@griffith.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@griffith.edu.au)

**Policy Officer, Research Ethics and Integrity**

Tel: (07) 373 58043  
[research-ethics@griffith.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@griffith.edu.au)

**Research Ethics Systems and Support Officer**

Tel: (07) 373 5 2069  
[research-ethics@griffith.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@griffith.edu.au)



All supervisors are encouraged to read the [HDR candidate authorship resource paper](#).

**10) Intellectual property**

HDR candidates own the intellectual property generated from their research project, unless they have formally vested this interest in another party as per a contractual arrangement. As was noted at (6-v above) an important matter to discuss early with your HDR candidate, and then revisit as the work progresses, is intellectual property – especially if there are matters that alter Griffith University’s normal approach to students and intellectual property ([see 5.8 of the Griffith University intellectual property policy](#)).

Two such scenarios are where the candidate’s work is a subset of wider work (e.g. being undertaken by other Griffith University researchers) and/or the work is externally funded.

There must be a signed agreement for any such arrangement to vest the IP with another party and the candidate must have been offered a reasonable alternative.

Contact [Griffith Enterprise](#) for advice on these matters.

**11) Scope of these matters**

These guidelines apply to all Griffith University research, regardless of whether the work requires ethical or biosafety clearance, the expertise of the parties, the methodology/design used, and/or the funding for the work (if any).

**12) Sources of advice**

Researchers are urged to consult the [other resource sheets](#) in this series. Researchers with further questions should consult a [RIA](#) (whether in their Group or elsewhere in the University) or the Office for Research.

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