

Guideline: Higher Degree Research Conveners

Purpose

To set out the role and responsibilities of Higher Degree Research (HDR) Conveners.

Guideline

1. This document should be read in conjunction with the [Research Awards Rule](#).
2. Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidates are enrolled in Colleges which provide both academic supervision and resources under the direction of the head of the academic organisational unit and ultimately of the College Dean. Some HDR candidates are affiliated with an Academic Network which spans more than one academic organisational unit.
3. HDR Conveners play a critical role in supporting HDR education, facilitating cross-College collaboration on HDR matters and in the overall experience of HDR candidates.
4. The HDR Convener is selected by the Head of an academic organisational unit in consultation with the Associate Dean Higher Degree Research (ADHDR) and/or Dean of College. The Convener is normally the designated Delegated Authority (DA) within an academic unit whose duties are laid out in the Research Awards Rule and relate to every aspect of HDR Candidate progress, from admission to examination and completion. Where these roles are not aligned, liaison with the Delegated Authority is an important means to ensure the successful progress of each candidate. It is at the discretion of Colleges to determine which decisions are to be made by the ADHDR, DA and Conveners as appropriate to that College's structure.
5. There are clear lines of communication between both these functions (DA and Convener) and the ADHDR. The role of Convener carries significant academic and administrative responsibilities and involves skilled interpersonal communications. Heads of academic organisational units take into account the workload implications of this appointment with reference to HDR candidate numbers involved.
6. HDR Conveners should be an experienced supervisor with a strong research profile, an exemplar of HDR good practice and a member of the relevant academic organisational unit or network. They have a thorough, up-to-date understanding of the [rules, policies, procedures and guidelines](#) relating to higher degree research at ANU and act in accordance with them at all times. At all times they act and advise in accordance

with these rules and policies, procedures and guidelines. They are the point of contact for HDR matters within the academic organisational unit.

7. The Conveners are an important early contact for newly-enrolled candidates and it is vital that all HDRs and their supervisors are aware of their name, contact and location. Details of new HDR Convener appointments are communicated to the relevant College Deans, College HDR administrators, HDR candidates and supervisors who report to that Convener, as well as to the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Research).

8. All HDR Conveners are directly supported in their role by the ADHDR. The HDR Convener is responsible to the Head of their academic organisational unit and not the ADHDR.

Duties

9. In addition to DA responsibilities outlined in the Research Awards Rule, the HDR Convener:

- a. provides advice to prospective students on potential topics, supervisors and academic locations;
- b. provides advice to Colleges on the academic merit of applications for HDR admission and scholarships;
- c. provides confidential advice to HDR candidates regarding their supervision;
- d. provides support and advice to HDR supervisors regarding supervision;
- e. provides broad advice to candidates on research ethics, career pathways, and other matters relating to their candidature;
- f. convenes meetings of academic staff involved in the discipline or area of research to discuss HDR education and supervisory development, or ensures that these topics are discussed at School meetings, in consultation with the ADHDR;
- g. provides advice and support to Colleges on the development and delivery of HDR coursework in consultation with the ADHDR;
- h. coordinates student induction, oral and thesis proposal review (TPR) presentations, seminars, conferences, retreats, social events and other HDR events in consultation with the ADHDR.

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