SCOPE
This procedure applies to:

- All Monash graduate research students
- Monash-appointed graduate research supervisors, including Monash adjuncts and external supervisors.
- All campuses and teaching locations.

It does not apply to:

- Supervisors of coursework students, including students enrolled in Honours programs or research components of a graduate coursework degree.

PROCEDURE STATEMENT

- To outline the process for nominating and changing supervisors.

1. APPOINTING A SUPERVISOR

Supervisor considerations

1.1 As part of the appointment process, supervisors must:
   a. Declare to the relevant head of academic unit any conflict of interest in relation to supervising a graduate research student, in accordance with the University's Conflict of Interest Procedure and Conflict of Interest Examples and Actions Guideline.
   b. Not teach, supervise or assess the work of a student with whom they have a personal relationship, as defined under the Staff/Student Personal Relationships Procedure.
   c. Hold the requisite accreditation where required, and undertake their roles and responsibilities in accordance with the Graduate Research Supervision Policy.

1.2 Adjunct appointees (in addition to conditions in 1.1) may only be appointed main supervisors where they:
   a. Are undertaking teaching and/or research responsibilities expected of a member of the University's academic staff, and
   b. Have achieved Monash supervisor accreditation, and
   c. Are locally based (within commuting distance to the student's campus of enrolment). If residing interstate or overseas, the adjunct appointee cannot be the main supervisor, but can be an associate supervisor.

Student considerations

1.3 Students must ensure that they meet any obligations required of them under relevant policies and procedures relating to being a Monash student, including, but not limited to, the Graduate Research Supervision Policy.

Joint supervisor-student considerations

1.4 In relation to negotiating supervisor-student arrangements, supervisors and students are required to:
   a. Discuss and come to mutual agreement on the type of guidance and supervision required to support an individual student-supervisory project. (It is recommended that supervisory arrangements be reviewed at least annually and more frequently if required).
   b. Discuss and come to mutual agreement on appropriate working hours for the student, taking into consideration the research program, attendance requirements as required under Monash's regulations, OHS matters, family/life/work balance, and the Staff/Student Personal Relationships Procedure.
c. Observe the applicable ethics, policies and cultural sensitivity guidelines of both Monash University and the other organisation(s) where research is being undertaken as part of a joint collaboration with a partner organisation, ensuring that appropriate Intellectual Property and confidentiality provisions are in place according to University policies and procedures.

1.5 When determining appropriate supervisors and load, supervisors should consider the following in consultation with the student:
   a. Level, extent and breadth of expertise that the supervisor will provide to the student’s research project, including, but not limited to, their role in supporting the student to conceive and design the project; providing guidance in designing the research and interpreting research data; and reviewing the student’s written work.
   b. Assessment of the supervisor’s contribution against the roles and responsibilities of different supervisor types, as defined under the Graduate Research Supervision Policy. (For example, roles and responsibilities of a main supervisor in comparison to an associate supervisor).
   c. Whether the supervisor requires accreditation in order to undertake the role, in accordance with the Graduate Research Supervisor Accreditation and Re-Accreditation Procedure.

1.6 Different supervision loads may be appropriate at different stages of a student’s enrolment, but must be academically justifiable.

1.7 Occasionally, joint supervision is appropriate. However, one of the supervisors must still undertake the role of main supervisor.

2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERVISORS

Prior to admission

2.1 The proposed main supervisor must ensure that preliminary assessment of the applicant has been undertaken in relation to:
   a. The applicant meeting Monash’s admission requirements, including English Language Proficiency, and.
   b. The capacity of the academic unit to provide sufficient facilities and resources to support the applicant’s proposed research.

2.2 Where possible, the main supervisor should discuss with the applicant any existing or likely obligations or contracts - for example, funding or confidentiality requirements - that may impact on the applicant’s ability to undertake the proposed research, including any arrangements relating to Intellectual Property (IP).

At admission

2.3 Supervision appointments are made via the online admissions process.

At commencement of the student’s enrolment

2.4 The main supervisor is required to ensure that all members of the supervisory team meet and agree on their respective roles and responsibilities, with the main supervisor to clearly communicate these roles and responsibilities to the student.

2.5 Where the student is enrolled via external (off-campus) mode, this meeting may be conducted via video.

2.6 Topics to discuss and confirm at this meeting include, but are not limited to:
   a. The specific contribution each supervisor will make to the student’s research; establishing protocols around meetings with supervisors, including who should attend meetings and how frequently all or some of the supervisors are expected to attend.
   b. How communication will be maintained between supervisors and the student between meetings, for example, whether all supervisors will be copied into every email.
   c. Agreement on the person the student should contact in relation to reading thesis work.
   d. The need to establish and maintain a written record of meetings with students, including actions arising. (The supervisor may ask students to write the record, but supervisors should keep a copy).
   e. Any other issues relevant to the student’s study (for example, specific arrangements that may need to be put in place to accommodate students with disabilities; part-time students; students with carer responsibilities; students with health or other issues etc.).

Throughout the student’s enrolment

2.7 In collaboration with the other supervisors, the main supervisor is required to provide ongoing guidance and advice to the student on:
   a. Intellectual property (IP) and the implications of IP on their research as required.
b. The availability of relevant academic and other support services provided by Monash or via a third party; academic and research integrity matters, including issues around plagiarism and its avoidance and consequences.

c. Requirements for progress reviews; and the selection of any coursework and/or professional development training activities forming part of the Monash Doctoral Program (where relevant).

d. The student’s progress, ensuring any advice given is sufficiently detailed, honest and constructive to support the student to meet progress and other thesis milestones in accordance with time-frames outlined under paragraph 2.2(c) of the Graduate Research Supervision Policy.

e. Support services where a need or skill shortage is identified for the purposes of completing the research. (For example, referring the student to English Connect; the University Library; and relevant training activities offered through myDevelopment).

f. Monash support services where the supervisor has concerns about the student’s well-being or behaviour, seeking input from the Graduate Research Coordinator/head of academic unit, the Safer Community Unit or the Monash Graduate Research Office as required.

2.8 In addition, the main supervisor is required to:

a. Intervene to support the student where progress is not up to standard or the student has disengaged with their studies, with the supervisor seeking advice from their Graduate Research Coordinator/Head of academic unit in the first instance.

b. Maintain a schedule of regular contact with the student in accordance with paragraph 2.2(a) of the Graduate Research Supervision Policy.

c. Fulfil their responsibilities as required under the Graduate Research Thesis Examination Policy and associated procedure.

3 CHANGING A SUPERVISOR/S DURING ENROLMENT

Change of supervisor initiated by student

3.1 Students initiate a change of supervisor process via submission of the relevant form.

3.2 In seeking alternative supervisory arrangements, students should consider the following:

a. Whether there are in fact alternative suitable and available supervisors in their academic unit/faculty/Monash;

b. The impact of a change of supervisor(s) on:

- the student’s ongoing enrolment in their course of study (and where they are a doctoral student, the specific Monash Doctoral Program in which they are enrolled).
- the student’s progress, including any impending progress milestones.
- their approved research project.
- scholarship, IP and other funding arrangements, including, but not limited to, ongoing access to data or other sets.
- access to particular laboratories and resources, particularly if these laboratories/resources are linked to the withdrawing supervisor or to a particular grant to which the withdrawing supervisor is linked (for example, in a Chief Investigator capacity).
- the appropriateness of taking a period of approved leave while seeking alternative supervision arrangements. (Students should refer to separate leave provisions in the relevant Doctoral or Research Master’s Handbook to ensure they are aware of options and restrictions in relation to leave types).
- relationship status changes (e.g. intimate personal relationship etc.) which will be managed in accordance with the Staff/Student Personal Relationships Procedure.

3.3 Except for compelling circumstances, the existing supervisor is expected to:

a. Continue to actively supervise the graduate research student during this transition.

b. Withdraw from supervision where alternative supervisory arrangements have been approved, and

c. If required, assist in negotiating alternative supervisory arrangements for the student.

Change of supervisor due to change in supervisor circumstances

3.4 The head of the academic unit (or their academic delegate, such as the Graduate Research Coordinator) must initiate the appointment of a new supervisor where an existing supervisor is unable to carry out their duties for 6 or more consecutive weeks. (For example, the supervisor is on extended leave, has resigned/retired from the University, has passed away, is subject to disciplinary suspension, or their supervision accreditation is cancelled or suspended).
3.5 Where a supervisor intends to leave the University, the head of the academic unit (or their academic delegate) must make all reasonable efforts to ensure alternate supervision arrangements are finalised prior to the supervisor’s departure.

3.6 The head of academic unit should also consider the capacity of the academic unit to provide sufficient facilities and resources to support the student’s research.

### Change of supervisor due to change of research direction

3.7 A change of research direction leading to a change of supervisor/s may occur for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to: withdrawal of funding to access laboratories/data sets; failure to get ethics approval for a particular component of the research etc.

3.8 A change may also be mandatory in order to meet external regulatory or legislative requirements, for example, to ensure compliance with sanctions legislation.

3.9 Where such a change is required, the head of academic unit (or their academic delegate) should consider the following to minimise impact on the student:

   a. Holding a meeting with the student and relevant stakeholders (head of academic unit or their academic delegate) to determine what supervisory expertise is required in order to support the new project, and whether such supervision is available at Monash.

   b. The implications of a change of supervision on any funding arrangements (for example, departmental scholarships linked to an individual supervisor).

   c. The stage of the student’s research project, and how best to respond to the student’s needs and expectations in progressing their research.

   d. Implications of any change of supervisor for existing Intellectual Property (IP) arrangements, or existing approvals (including, but not limited to, human and/or ethics approvals and publications in progress).

   e. Where the student is at within their candidature – for example, whether such a change of direction will impact on any pending progress milestones; and if separate action should be taken to request an extension to a milestone.

### Changes due to a breakdown in the student-supervisory relationship

3.10 A change to supervision may be required because the student-supervisory relationship has irretrievably broken down, despite interventions to resolve the conflict in accordance with Section 4 (Resolving conflicts) below.

3.11 Where the student wants to seek alternative supervisors as a result of the breakdown in the student-supervisory relationship, they are encouraged in the first instance to seek independent advice from the Monash Postgraduate Association (MPA).

3.12 Students should also consider the impact of seeking alternative supervisory arrangements in accordance with paragraph 3.2 of these procedures.

### All other changes

3.13 Other changes to the supervisory team may arise because the student needs additional supervisory support.

3.14 It is expected that any such changes be negotiated in consultation with the student, involving the relevant stakeholders (for example, the main supervisor, where an additional associate supervisor is being recommended; the head of academic unit or their academic delegate where a change of main supervisor is being negotiated etc.).

### Requirements on the head of academic unit

3.15 It is expected that the head of academic unit (or their academic delegate, such as the Graduate Research Coordinator) must have sought to identify alternative suitable supervisors where changes to supervision are required.

3.16 Where a head of academic unit is unable to identify alternative suitable supervisors, they are required to advise the student of this in writing, describing the efforts made to seek a supervisor. The student must be advised that in the event of the academic unit being unable to secure a supervisor, the student’s enrolment may be terminated under regulation 51 of the Monash University (Academic Board) Regulations.

### RESOLVING CONFLICTS

4.1 Where a conflict arises between students and their supervisor/s, both parties are strongly encouraged to attempt to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance, unless there is a compelling reason not to do so, and to actively seek to resolve the conflict in a professional way.

4.2 Students can access support in dealing with a conflict through independent advocacy provided by the Monash Postgraduate Association (MPA).
4.3 If a conflict remains unresolved, a student should refer the issue to:
   a. Their Graduate Research Coordinator/Program Director for informal resolution in the first instance, or
   b. Their head of academic unit (where the supervisor is the Graduate Research Coordinator/Program Director or the Graduate Research Coordinator/Program Director is unavailable), or
   c. Their Faculty Associate Dean (Graduate Research) where the conflict appears intractable, and is more appropriately handled at the faculty level.

4.4 Where the conflict remains unresolved, students may lodge a grievance under Monash’s Student Complaints and Grievances Procedures.

4.5 Where the conflict relates to alleged unacceptable behaviour in the workplace, the student may report the matter to the Safer Community Unit of Campus Community Division.

4.6 Where the conflict relates to intellectual property, a student may refer to the University’s Intellectual Property – IP Commercialisation, Revenue Sharing Provisions and Dispute Resolution Policy and supporting Intellectual Property – Dispute Resolution Procedures.

### DEFINITIONS

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| **Adjunct appointee**             | means a person appointed an adjunct of Monash in accordance with Monash’s Adjunct Appointments Procedure. An adjunct appointee will only be appointed as a main supervisor where all the following criteria are met for the duration of the supervisory appointment:  
   a. are undertaking teaching and research responsibilities expected of a member of the University’s academic staff; and  
   b. have achieved Monash supervisor accreditation; and  
   c. are locally based (that is, they reside within commuting distance of the student’s campus of enrolment, not interstate or overseas). |
| **Associate Dean (Graduate Research)** | means the person undertaking this role as specified in the Graduate Research Roles and Responsibilities.                                                                                                   |
| **Associate supervisor**          | means a person of recognised standing in the relevant field of research who may be a Monash academic staff member or adjunct of Monash.                                                                    |
| **External (non-accredited) supervisor** | means a person without formal affiliation to Monash (that is, who is not a Monash staff member, adjunct or affiliate) who is employed or associated with one or more other higher education providers. Includes supervisors appointed as part of a formal joint PhD arrangement. |
| **External research end-user (non-accredited) supervisor** | means a type of supervisor who is external to Monash who will directly use or directly benefit from the output, outcome or results of the research.  
Excludes individuals from other higher education providers or from organisations that are affiliates, controlled entities or subsidiaries (such as Medical Research Institutes) of a higher education provider. (See HEIMSHHELP). |
| **Graduate research**             | means a master’s by research or doctoral degree of the University. Interchangeable with higher degree by research.                                                                                           |
| **Graduate Research Committee (GRC)** | means the committee (however designated) established in accordance with Part 4 of the Monash University (Vice-Chancellor) Regulations.                                                                     |
| **Graduate Research Coordinator** | means an academic staff member delegated the functions of the Head of the Academic Unit / School or Program in relation to graduate research student matters.  
Depending upon the specific configuration of the academic unit, the role may include the responsibilities of a Program Director, who provides overall academic leadership to a Monash Doctoral Program. It may also be held by the Associate Dean (Graduate Research), or equivalent, in single-school faculties or institutes. Cannot be a professional staff member or adjunct appointee. |
| **Head**                          | in relation to an academic unit or other university body, means the person appointed to lead and manage the unit or other body. Is responsible for the performance management, mentoring and staff development of all academic staff within their unit/school/department/centre. This responsibility includes where appropriate, the counselling of academic staff for unsatisfactory performance and/or conduct, consistent with clauses 64 and 53.5 of the Monash University Enterprise Agreement (Academic and Professional Staff) 2014 (see also the Probation, Performance and Promotion Policy and supporting procedures). |
Joint supervision means having two supervisors each with equal (50:50) responsibility. However, one of these supervisors must undertake the role and functions of the main supervisor.

Main supervisor means the person taking on primary administrative and academic responsibility for the student, who must either be a Monash academic staff member or Monash adjunct.

Program Director: see definition under Graduate Research Coordinator.

Staff member in relation to this procedure means a person employed by the University.

Student in relation to this procedure means specifically a graduate research (higher degrees by research) student, as defined in the Monash University (Council) Regulations.

Supervisor in relation to this procedure means a person appointed to supervise a graduate research student in either a main, associate, or external or research end-user supervision capacity.

GOVERNANCE

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Procedure owner

| Procedure owner                  | Chair, Graduate Research Committee |

Legislation mandating compliance

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Category

| Category                  | Academic Quality and Standards |

Approval

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| **Endorsement** | Chair, Graduate Research Committee |
| **Date effective** | 14 November 2018 |
| **Review date** | 14 November 2021 |
| **Version** | 1.0 |

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