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| Last updated: 19 May 2022 |  |

Graduate Research Supervisory Agreement

# Section A: Expectations of graduate researchers and their supervisors\*

This supervisory agreement should be completed on commencement of candidature. This section of the agreement outlines expectations for all graduate researchers and their supervisors, and is based on relevant University policies (some of which are linked below) and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. These expectations underpin the specific supervision agreement in Section B.

At the University of Melbourne, supervisors are capable, trained, and registered to the standards set by the University. They are expert in the relevant field of study, and are responsible for ensuring a [safe, respectful, and inclusive working environment](https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1328).

## Supervision teams, with the support of the advisory committee, will:

1. Guide and support graduate researchers through all of the stages of candidature and provide access to necessary [resources and facilities](https://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/getting-started/facilities/principles-for-infrastructure-support) to complete graduate research projects.
2. Assist in the development of the research topic, questions, methodology, and milestones required for successful completion.
3. Provide constructive feedback on written work and oral presentations within a reasonable agreed timeframe and provide detailed, specific, and constructive feedback on thesis drafts.
4. Mentor candidates through the research process, providing support as they undertake new or unfamiliar tasks; and ensuring that administrative tasks such as ethics applications are completed or responded to without unreasonable delay.
5. Maintain an agreed schedule of regular individual meetings between supervision team members and the graduate researcher.
6. Help identify appropriate skills training and [professional development opportunities](https://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/#skills-development), such as academic skills, external engagement (internships, industry mentoring programs), sessional teaching, and PhD Program participation.
7. Help candidates to grow their professional networks by encouraging and supporting engagement with the research community locally and internationally. Examples include conference attendance and meetings and discussions with other academics, other graduate researchers, and industry partners.
8. Be accessible to a reasonable extent via email and other online tools or in person, should support be needed outside of the agreed meeting schedule.
9. Ensure prompt attention to administrative tasks such as progress reviews, requests for leave of absence, and consideration of candidature variation requests.
10. Be familiar with, introduce candidates to, and provide advice on all relevant University policies, including the [Graduate Research Training Policy](https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1321) and those on the conduct of research, ethical requirements, safe working practices, intellectual property and authorship.
11. Adhere to the [Principles of Respectful Supervisory Relationships](https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Postgraduate-Principles.pdf) and be considerate of wellbeing; and, where appropriate, alert candidates to wellbeing services.
12. Advise on where to seek confidential advice and explain the process of making a formal complaint if difficult situations cannot be resolved; and understand that candidates may consult other individuals, such as the Advisory Committee chair or confidential advisors, if they wish to raise any concerns.

It is common practice for different members of the supervision team to contribute to supervision in different ways, but the team as a whole is expected to support the graduate researcher in accordance with expected practice.

## Graduate researchers will:

1. Be self-directed in their learning and research, including maintenance of practicable timetables for completion of research and the thesis.
2. Make good progress. Graduate researchers are expected to meet deadlines and keep time commitments, in accordance with the [Graduate Research Training policy](https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1321#section-4.10). A full-time graduate researcher should spend on average 40 hours per week on studies, and 20 hours per week if part-time.
3. When seeking feedback from supervisors, provide written work in sufficient time to allow detailed review prior to agreed deadlines.
4. Be accessible to a reasonable extent via email and other online tools or in person, should contact be needed outside of the agreed meeting schedule.
5. Take advantage of professional development opportunities, including academic skills, external engagement, sessional teaching, and PhD Program participation.
6. Conduct [research ethically and responsibly](https://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/roles-and-responsibilities/responsible-research).
7. Discuss and agree with supervisors how [intellectual property](https://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/roles-and-responsibilities/responsible-research) will be managed including IP ownership, project funding and specified agreements, in accordance with the [Intellectual Property Policy](https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1320). See box 5 on page 4, Section B of this agreement below.
8. Discuss and agree with supervisors on the authorship of works arising from the project.
9. Understand the codes of conduct expected of staff and students, and cooperate in ensuring that the University is a safe and supportive working environment, as for example documented in the [Student Charter](https://students.unimelb.edu.au/explore/student-charter) and [Respect at the University](https://students.unimelb.edu.au/explore/respect).
10. Be aware of and access as necessary the University’s [support services](https://services.unimelb.edu.au/finder) for mental and physical health, including the University's [Counselling and Psychological Services](http://services.unimelb.edu.au/counsel), [Managing difficulties during candidature](https://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/home/problems-during-candidature) and the [Safer Communities](https://safercommunity.unimelb.edu.au/) program. Candidates should take leave in accordance with [entitlements](https://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/being-a-candidate/taking-leave#additional), after discussion with and approval by the supervision team.
11. Seek to [resolve problems](https://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/being-a-candidate/resolving-problems) – such as health issues, financial or personal difficulties, or disputes with supervisors – when they arise, and keep supervisors informed on obstacles to and delays in progress. Serious concerns, such as ethical or well-being issues, should be raised in an appropriate, positive, and respectful manner.
12. Stay informed. Formal information is communicated via University email accounts and the [Student Portal](https://my.unimelb.edu.au/). Ensure that contact details are kept up-to-date and check email regularly, at least once per week and preferably daily. Your faculty [Graduate Researcher administrators](https://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/key-contacts) are key advisors on where to go for help and when, and on relevant policies and procedures.

\*In addition to the [Graduate Research Training Policy (MPF 1321)](https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1321), these expectations have been drawn from:

The University’s [Principles for Infrastructure Support](https://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/getting-started/facilities/principles-for-infrastructure-support);

[The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct for Research](file:///C:\\Users\\mrgreen\\AppData\\Local\\Microsoft\\Windows\\INetCache\\Content.Outlook\\S0Y16IYS\\c.%09https:\\www.nhmrc.gov.au\\about-%20us\\publications\\australian-code-responsible-conduct-%20research-2018);

The [ACRCR](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/file/14815/download?token=3NOsegN8) Guidance on Supervision;

The Australian Council of Graduate Research [Good Practice Principles](https://www.acgr.edu.au/good-practice/graduate-%20research-good-practice-principles/);

Universities Australia’s  [Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships](https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Postgraduate-Principles.pdf);

The Department of Education’s [Research Training Implementation plan](https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/implementationplan.pdf); and

Information published on the University’s websites including the [Graduate Research Hub](https://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/), [Graduate Research Staff Hub](https://staff.unimelb.edu.au/students-teaching/graduate-research) pages, and [Safer Community](https://safercommunity.unimelb.edu.au/about-us) information.

# Section B: Supervision Agreement

To be jointly completed by the graduate researcher and the supervision team.

Please read and complete each clause below, ensuring that details are recorded in the mandatory text boxes provided (where appropriate).

The University acknowledges that COVID-19 may constrain or disrupt regular working arrangements. It is recommended that expectations under these circumstances are outlined in the sections below.

#### 1. Frequency of meetings and preferred means of contact

The expected minimum frequency of individual meetings with members of the supervision team is monthly. There may additionally be separate research group or lab meetings.

If a different schedule is proposed, please identify below. (Otherwise write ‘agreed’.)

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|  | **Who will be present at these meetings** | | |
| **Where will these meetings take place** | Principal supervisor | Co-supervisors | External supervisor |
| On campus |  |  |  |
| Via Zoom/Skype |  |  |  |
| Other (please specify): |  |  |  |

Note that all graduate researchers can expect to have individual meetings in addition to meetings where other graduate researchers are present.

#### 2. Contact between meetings and cancelling of scheduled meetings

The graduate researcher may need to contact the supervisors between meetings, or they may need to contact the graduate researcher. Participants should advise as early as possible if unable to attend a scheduled meeting.

Two days’ notice is usually sufficient for meeting cancellation. If more notice is required, please record below. (Otherwise write ‘agreed’.)

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**Between scheduled meetings, the preferred means of contact is:**

Email/text

Call/Zoom/Skype

Drop by the supervisor’s workspace at any time or at specified times.

Drop by the GR’s workspace at any time or at specified times

Other (please specify):

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#### 3. Workplace attendance and working hours[[1]](#footnote-1)

Graduate researchers are expected to commit 40 hours per week (full-time enrolment) or 20 hours per week (part-time enrolment), and typically delivers this commitment in full or in part by attendance at campus in line with ordinary workplace practices.

Some projects require alternative arrangements, such as travel for fieldwork, weekend management of experiments, or working from home for defined periods. If such arrangements apply, please record them. (Otherwise write ‘agreed’.)

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Note that graduate researchers in general have the same entitlements as employees to evenings, nights, and weekends as time away from work, as well as annual, medical, and personal leave. Supervision meetings should only be scheduled at such times in exceptional circumstances.

#### 4. Turnaround times

Recognising that it may not always be possible for both parties to meet this part of the agreement due to work or personal pressures, it is still useful to set some expectations.

If **oral** feedback is needed on written work for discussion at a scheduled meeting, the author of the work will provide it to the other participants where possible at least two days in advance. If other timelines are appropriate, what are they? (Otherwise write ‘agreed’.)

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If **written** feedback is needed on written work, the author of the work will provide it to the other participants where possible at least a week in advance, and feedback will be provided within 7 days. If other timelines are appropriate, what are they? (Otherwise write ‘agreed’.)

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#### 5. Intellectual Property (IP)

Supervisors and candidates need to be aware of the University’s [IP policy](https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1320) (as also noted in the online Commencement Checklist), act on it as appropriate, and read the relevant sections of the [GR Hub](https://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/roles-and-responsibilities/responsible-research).

1. Where research relates to externally funded work, such as an ARC or NHMRC grant, or a direct grant from industry or government, or where there is another University agreement in place regarding the IP, the University will own the IP.
2. If a research project produces teaching material, then the IP created in that material (other than scholarly work copyright) is owned by the University.
3. Some projects require access to unprotected Intellectual Property held by the University. In these cases, candidates may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement in relation to the unprotected Intellectual Property and/or assign ownership of improvements based on the unprotected Intellectual Property to the University as a precondition for accessing that Intellectual Property.

Discuss and record any relevant agreements that apply to the research project here, including any background IP or commercial restrictions on research materials obtained under a materials transfer agreement. If you are enrolled through a collaborating institution, that institute may own the IP in your project.  Please record (yes/no) whether IP assignment is required under item (iii) above and, if yes, whether it has taken place.

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Supervisors and graduate researchers need to be familiar with the University’s [Conflict of Interest](https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1366/) frameworks, as also noted in the Commencement Checklist.

#### 6. Authorship

Supervisors and graduate researchers need to be familiar with the University’s [authorship policy](http://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1181), as noted in the Commencement Checklist.

Please record any discussion of [authorship arrangements](https://gateway.research.unimelb.edu.au/resources/ethics-and-integrity/research-integrity/research-integrity-in-practice/authorship-and-publication-practices), recognition of other contributions, acknowledgements of sponsors (including scholarships) and the declaration of any conflicts of interest. In some cases, it may be appropriate to attach an [authorship agreement](https://gateway.research.unimelb.edu.au/resources/ethics-and-integrity/research-integrity/research-integrity-in-practice/authorship-and-publication-practices):

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#### 7. Research Ethics and Integrity

Graduate researchers must undertake [Research Integrity Online Training (RIOT)](https://staff.unimelb.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity/research-integrity/research-integrity-training) prior to confirmation, as also noted in the Commencement Checklist.

If the graduate researcher requires any additional specific training, such as laboratory training or statistics, please record here. Similarly, please record whether ethics approvals need to be lodged or if there is a need for regulatory approvals such as a ‘Working with Children’ check. (Write N/A if not applicable.)

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#### 8. Facilities and funding[[2]](#footnote-2)

The following items have been provided at the start of candidature in accordance with University guidelines and local practice.

Desk/workspace facilities/resources (copier/printing, lab supplies, computer, and so on).

Workplace IT access, software, and systems, and research data management resources.

**Some graduate researchers have additional requirements.**

What research-specific facilities need to be accessed? Will travel or fieldwork for the research be necessary? If so, please provide details. (Write N/A if not applicable.)

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Is the graduate researcher eligible for additional funding for specific activities if required? If so, please provide details. (Write N/A if not applicable.)

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**As a record of the agreement, please sign and date below.** It can be used as a reference for future progress discussions and should be reviewed at least annually and updated as requirements change during candidature, or if the supervisory team changes. Signing of this agreement confirms that the graduate researcher and the supervision team understand the University policies and mandatory elements of supervision as set out above. Electronic signatures are accepted or a principal supervisor may sign on behalf of all co-supervisors if there is evidence elsewhere that all co-supervisors have agreed to the above.

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|  | **Name** | **Signature** | **Date (dd/mm/yyyy)** |
| **Graduate researcher** |  |  |  |
| **Principal Supervisor** |  |  |  |
| **Chair Advisory Committee** |  |  |  |
| **Co-supervisor(s)** |  |  |  |
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1. The University acknowledges that COVID-19 may constrain or disrupt regular working arrangements. It is recommended that expectations under these circumstances are outlined in this agreement. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The University acknowledges that COVID-19 may constrain or disrupt regular working arrangements. It is recommended that expectations under these circumstances are outlined in this agreement. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)