

POLICY FOR DOCTORAL SUPERVISION

Section	Office of the Provost
Contact	Dean, Research
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Purpose:

To provide a coherent set of research supervision expectations and guiding principles to underpin doctoral research supervision practices.

Background:

Massey University provides academic guidance, advice and support for each research candidate through the appointment of supervisors. Research supervision, as a unique and personalised approach to teaching and learning, is the highest level of study within the university. Supervision is described, invariably, as a distinctive form of teaching and learning, mentoring, providing apprenticeship opportunities, developing researchers, advising student research, or scaffolding student projects.

In Māori culture, the interactions between research candidates and supervisors may be shaped by a tuakana-teina structure. Tuakana-teina, or elder-younger, builds on the concept of an expert guiding those with less experience. When applied to research supervision, and mediated by ako (to teach and to learn), supervisors and candidates each have a role in the learning and teaching process, as researchers learning from one another, guided by informed supervisory practices and deliberate reflection.

This policy outlines expectations and principles of research supervision which have been developed to:

- ensure high quality research experiences and success for candidates;
- acknowledge disciplinary methods and expressions of research (e.g., creative works);
- build research supervision capability and capacity; and
- differentiate supervisory roles and responsibilities.

Policy:

Doctoral research candidates will be provided with a supervisory team, consisting of a main Massey University supervisor and one or more co-supervisor(s), who may have different roles and responsibilities, as outlined in the following sections.

The Supervisory Team

The supervisory team will comprise at least two members, and should have a mix of expertise in the discipline(s) of the candidate's research and the relevant research methods (including Kaupapa Māori principles and practices, as appropriate). The main supervisor will be a Massey University academic staff member, and, preferably, the second supervisor will be a Massey University academic staff member.

The supervisory team should:

- actively assist and support the candidate's research;
- meet the academic and administrative requirements of the Doctoral Research Committee;
- tailor their practice to the needs of individual candidates within their disciplinary context;
- support facilitate culturally responsive and respectful research supervision; and
- and encourage researcher learning and development and pastoral care.

Additional expertise outside the supervisory team may be sought or appointed to support the candidate by way of content, methodological, and/or cultural advisor(s) or an advisory group.

Eligibility and Role of the Main Supervisor

The supervisory team will be co-ordinated by a main supervisor who is:

- an academic staff member of Massey University (including Emeritus Professors);
- suitably qualified or experienced in their discipline (including relevant cultural knowledge and skills);
- actively engaged in research of national standing, as evidenced in written research outputs and creative works;
- experienced in all aspects of doctoral processes; and
- engaged in ongoing supervision development, as evidenced by accreditation.

The main supervisor should take overall responsibility for co-ordinating the supervisory team, ensure transparent and consistent communication amongst all team members, ensure administrative requirements for the degree are met, and may have a role in mentoring other supervisors.

Eligibility for Co-Supervisors

Co-supervisors, including external supervisors, are expected to be:

- an academic staff member of Massey University (including Emeritus Professors) or a research associate, sponsor, partner or other active working relationship with Massey University research (including Honorary and Adjunct positions)
- suitably qualified or experienced in their discipline (including relevant cultural knowledge and skills);
- actively engaged in research; and
- engaged in ongoing supervision development, as evidenced by accreditation.

Supervisor Accreditation

All supervisors will be accredited by the Doctoral Research Committee, within a reasonable timeframe of commencement of supervision responsibilities. Accreditation will be initially gained through an application providing evidence of supervisor experience, learning and development. Ongoing accreditation will be maintained by supervisors through differential engagement in supervision development, which may be facilitated by the Graduate Research School, College, academic unit or an external body (e.g., Quality in Postgraduate Research conference), and approved by the Doctoral Research Committee. Supervisor accreditation will be determined based on supervisory role (e.g., Main Supervisor, Co-supervisor). Supervisors who engage in leading doctoral education, supervisor development and supervisory teams with early career researchers may be accredited as Mentor Supervisors.

In addition to Supervisor Accreditation, supervisors at Massey University may also seek accreditation through the Higher Education Academy as part of their continuing professional development for teaching, of which supervision is a form.

The Graduate Research School will manage the accreditation process and facilitate learning and development programmes for supervisors.

Appointment of Supervisory Teams

The appointment of supervision will be the responsibility of the Head of Unit (or delegate) in the school/institute/department in which the candidate is enrolled. The supervisory team should work together with the Head of Unit (or delegate) to determine the roles and responsibilities, how they will work together and why this is the right team for the candidate. Any perceived or real conflicts of interests should be disclosed and managed, as part of the appointment of a supervisory team. Conflicts of interest include personal, business or academic relationships between members of the supervisory team or candidates and supervisors that may negatively impact the research candidate, research process or outcomes. The final approval of supervisory teams will be given by the Doctoral Research Committee.

Research supervision should be formally and transparently recognised in workload formulae. Supervision should be balanced in terms of other workload responsibilities (e.g., teaching, research, service), with time allocated, dependent upon supervisory roles and responsibilities. The Performance and Development Process (PDP) should help supervisors review and improve their supervision performance, and identify appropriate supervisor development opportunities.

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