



# THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COORDINATORS

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<b>Modifications</b>	
<b>Superseded Documents</b>	Roles & Responsibilities for School Postgraduate Research Coordinators (AB03/53) Guidelines for Generic Administrative Support Requirements for Postgraduate Research Coordination in Schools (AB03/53)
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<b>Associated Documents</b>	UNSW Delegations of Authority

## 1. Introduction

The Postgraduate Research Coordinator serves a critical role in the overall experience of higher degree research students. As the central point of contact for research students, this position is recognised by the University as a significant administrative position that has a high associated workload, particularly in large Schools where research student numbers are in the range 50-130. In recognition of this role, Heads of School are expected to provide an appropriate level of administrative support commensurate with the student load and discipline. Training and support for new and current postgraduate research coordinators is provided by the Graduate Research School.

## 2. Definitions

The Postgraduate Research Coordinator is an experienced senior member of the academic staff of the School competent to act as the Head of School's delegate in making academic, administrative and, in some cases, resource decisions across the range of disciplines covered by the School.

The Postgraduate Research Coordinator advises the Head of School on all higher degree research matters, is a member of the Faculty Higher Degree (or equivalent) Committee, and is the School's point of contact with the Graduate Research School. In addition, the Postgraduate Research Coordinator will typically have responsibility for reviewing and advising the Head of School on the Schools' higher degree research profile, formulating school higher degree research policy, establishing appropriate procedures for monitoring research students' progress and advising on facilities and appropriate levels of resources.

### 3. Policy Statement

#### 3.1 Delegations

The authority delegated to the Dean of Graduate Research is to take action on the recommendation of the Head of School or Postgraduate Research Coordinator of a School or Associate Dean (Research/Research Training) to:

- i Approve the admission of a student to a research program of study
- ii Approve the student's research area and changes to the research area
- iii Appoint supervisors, co-supervisors, supervisory panels and other supervision arrangements and changes to supervision arrangements
- iv Approve a student's progress as satisfactory
- v Approve leave from the program for up to 2 semesters
- vi Approve periods of fieldwork away from the University for up to 3 semesters
- vii Approve deferment of enrolment from one admission period to another
- viii Approve results of assessment in any coursework undertaken
- ix Approve variations to a student's agreed program of study
- x Approve transfers of enrolment between full-time and part-time attendance
- xi Discontinue enrolment at the student's request

Postgraduate Research Coordinators should verify with their Head of School and/or Associate Dean regarding which of the above academic decisions they have been delegated authority to approve.

The Postgraduate Research Coordinator is a member of the Faculty Higher Degree Committee which considers and makes decision on all other higher degree research matters.

#### 3.2 Candidature Management and Administration

The following duties are normally performed by the Postgraduate Research Coordinators. In large Schools, some of these duties (eg., Scholarship ranking and assessment) may be assigned to another person. Upon appointment, new Postgraduate Research Coordinators should meet with the Head of School/Associate Dean Research and confirm which of the following duties they are expected to perform, other discipline specific duties (eg. industry-related research) and to be advised of any Faculty procedures that differ from those outlined below.

##### 3.2.1 Prospective Research Higher Degree Students

- i Manage the recruitment of potential high-quality applicants by liaising with, and providing advice to, supervisors as required;
- ii Provide applicants with advice on eligibility requirements, possible research topics, available resources, School research strengths, and advisor availability;
- iii Make formal recommendations on applications for admission, including any special conditions of candidature

##### 3.2.2 Enrolled Higher Degree Research Students

- i Coordinate annual progress reviews;
- ii Approve variations to candidature (including program leave, suspensions, coursework requirements, change in attendance from full-time to part-time or vice versa, change to remote status, withdrawal, and supervision changes, visa extensions), and approve re-enrolment annually;
- iii Monitor progress towards completion by all candidates enrolled in the School;
- iv Keep candidates and supervisors informed of relevant policies, procedures, due dates;
- v Coordinate the dissemination of information about relevant workshops, seminars, scholarships and other opportunities;
- vi Coordinate and/or conduct School Induction programs for graduate students that complement the UNSW Orientation to Postgraduate Research with School specific information;
- vii Ensure that the School policies and procedures, including space, resources and

facilities as outlined in *Minimum Resources for Postgraduate Research Students* are available on the School web site linked to the Graduate Research School for University policies and general information.

- viii Act as the School's point of contact for the Associate Dean (Research/Research Training) and the Dean of Graduate Research in resolving problems and formal grievances.
- ix Make recommendations on student cases to the Faculty Higher Degree Committee

### **3.2.3 Scholarships**

- i Be familiar with the UNSW Research Scholarship conditions (APA/UPA; EIPRS/UIPA) and able to advise scholarship holders about them;
- ii Make recommendations on applications for extension, suspension, time overseas, sick/maternity leave;
- iii Score scholarship applications (including justification of Honours I equivalence) for APA/UPA, EIPRS/UIPA applications.

### **3.2.4 Thesis Examination**

- i. Prior to submission, coordinate requests for confidentiality agreements in examination, and coordinate nomination of examiners;
- ii. During examination, assist the Graduate Research School in obtaining examination reports from overdue examiners;
- iii. After examination, consult with the supervisor on the examiners' reports and make an appropriate recommendation to the Head of School and liaise with supervisor and candidate about outcome;
- iv. After corrections, coordinate the checking of the corrections to thesis; and
- v. Provide advice to the Faculty Higher Degree on whether the candidate has satisfied the conditions for the award of the degree

## **4. Advice and Support**

### **4.1 Induction and training for new postgraduate research coordinators**

The following training programmes and resources are provided by the Graduate Research School:

- i. Postgraduate Coordinators Handbook
- ii. Graduate Research Forums held twice a semester as a forum to update Postgraduate Research Coordinators
- iii. Induction session with Graduate Research School staff for all newly appointed Postgraduate Research Coordinators

### **4.2 Support for postgraduate research coordinators**

The Head of School must ensure that the Postgraduate Research Coordinator has the necessary administrative support and training required to fulfil the role and take into account the workload implications of this appointment in the assignment of teaching and other administrative duties to the Postgraduate Research Coordinator.

The administrative support should be defined as part of a full-time position that may involve other responsibilities. For a cohort of 50 postgraduate students, a typical minimum of 40% of the allocated time for the administrative assistant's time is recommended. The percentage allocated time will depend on the level of the appointment and overall position description.

*The above policy is based on the University of Queensland document Role of the Postgraduate Coordinator*