**UPDATES ON RESEARCH SUPERVISION**

by Simon Moss

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| **Introduction** |

We realise that many supervisors are too busy to read all the policies and guidelines that are available on the web or distributed over email. So instead, this document merely

* outlines the key changes and developments that have been implemented during the last year that are pertinent to research candidates
* summarises the materials that are available on the web—so that research supervisors know which materials to read if various challenges unfold

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| **Availability of scholarships to domestic applicants** |

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|  | Unlike previous months, not all domestic candidates who are eligible to enrol in a PhD can be allocated an RTP scholarship. Instead, CDU will rank both domestic and international scholarship applications twice a year—and only a subset of eligible applicants will receive a scholarship. At this time, domestic applicants are likely to receive a scholarship if   * their research is compatible with the research priorities of CDU or * their track record is equivalent to a first class Honours |

**So which research projects are compatible with the research priorities of CDU?**

Research is deemed to be compatible with the research priorities of CDU if the research is

* conducted in one of the existing, or planned, research institutes or research centres
* compatible with the key priorities of business and law, education, and nursing research

**How can applicants determine whether their record is equivalent to first class Honours**?

To evaluate applicants, the Board of Graduate Studies considers a range of attributes, including tertiary qualifications, research publications, research employment, patents, and prizes. Roughly speaking, however, applicants are regarded as first class Honours if

* they achieved 80% or more in an Honours degree overall
* they achieved 80% of more in a coursework Masters degree overall or in the thesis units
* they have completed a Masters by Research
* they have published at least a scholarly book or two refereed journal articles

**If a candidate does not receive a scholarship, could their fees be waived?**

Fees can be waived in some circumstances. In particular

* domestic candidates do not need to pay fees until their candidature expires
* international candidates do not need to pay fees if their research is compatible with the research priorities of CDU—until their candidature expires

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| **Stipends to part time candidates** |

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| A picture containing indoor, sitting, table, holding  Description automatically generated | CDU tends to offer RTP stipends only to candidates who are enrolled full time rather than part time. That is, if candidates are enrolled full-time, the return on these stipends tends to marginally exceed the expenditure—and only if these candidates have accrued the requisite qualities and resources to thrive. In contrast, if candidates are enrolled part-time, the return on these stipends is less likely to exceed the expenditure because   * the deferred completion can diminish the utility of this research * the likelihood of unresolvable impediments increases over time * the Commonwealth Government taxes these stipends if candidates are enrolled part-time, diminishing the effect of this scholarship |

As these considerations imply, when candidates are enrolled part-time, the return on these stipends could exceed the expenditure if three conditions are fulfilled:

* The utility of this research is unlikely to change appreciably over time—perhaps because the problem or issue under investigation is relatively timeless
* The project is not dependent on resources, individuals, or organizations that could be unreliable
* The candidate is still likely to complete a significant portion of this project, such as a third, full time—and, hence, the stipend is likely to be vital to their living expenses

Therefore, if at least two, and preferably three, of these conditions are fulfilled, RTP stipends may sometimes be extended to candidates who are enrolled part time.

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| **Number of supervisors and end users** |

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|  | In the past, every candidate at CDU had to be assigned a minimum of three approved supervisors including one principal supervisor. In the future   * to enroll, each candidate must be assigned at least two approved supervisors including one principal supervisor * then preferably, before confirmation of candidature, candidates should seek at least one more approved supervisor or an end user * an end user can be someone from government, business, or another organization that could benefit from the research   End users can be very informative. Their suggestions could help the candidate design research that is more useful to industry. And they might help the candidate develop stronger relationships with industry as well. |

**Quality of supervision**

The university is gradually introducing more initiatives to improve the quality and impact of research. To achieve this goal, candidates need to be assigned at least one supervisor who has recently published books or articles that are considered high in quality. In general

* at least one supervisor should have published two Q1 journal articles in the last five years—or can justify equivalent quality of output in a request to the Dean of Graduate Studies
* Q1 is defined according Scimago, the Australian Business Deans Council (A\*/A), and the Deakin list of law journal (A\*/A).

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| **Guidelines to support confirmation of candidature** |

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|  | To achieve confirmation of candidature, candidates need to complete a supervision agreement, research proposal, and oral presentation. We have released some guidelines to help the principal supervisor, panel of assessors, chair, and other individuals manage these oral presentations effectively—available at <https://www.cdu.edu.au/files/2020-07/Helpful%20guidelines%20to%20conduct%20CoCs.docx> . For example   * these guidelines specify the precise sequence of activities these individuals need to complete * the guidelines indicate that, for various reasons, research candidates can choose whether or not they would like the audience to extend beyond the panel of assessors and supervisors, although larger audiences may be encouraged * the guidelines clarify the criteria that should be applied to evaluate the oral presentation—such as suitability of the supervision panel, feasibility of the research, and scope of the research |

**Supervision agreement**

To construct supervision agreements between supervisors and candidates, we have released a series of clauses that should be considered. These clauses are available at <https://www.cdu.edu.au/files/2020-07/Supervision%20agreements_0.docx>. Importantly

* some of these clauses are essential and should be included in all agreements—although they could be modified slightly to accommodate specific circumstances
* these clauses are designed to help supervisors fulfill the supervision supplement of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

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| **Seeking examiners** |

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|  | Principal supervisors often experience challenges when they need to arrange examiners. A few changes could address these challenges. For example   * at [www.cdu.edu.au/research-and-innovation/higher-degree-research/useful-materials/submission-supervisor](http://www.cdu.edu.au/research-and-innovation/higher-degree-research/useful-materials/submission-supervisor), we present more information on how to decide whether examiners may pose a conflict of interest * on this webpage, we also present more information on how to decide which examiners may be suitable—such as advise supervisors to seek experienced examiners * we have also provided some guidelines to candidates on how to identify potential examiners and thus assist principal supervisors on this task—as discussed at <https://www.cdu.edu.au/files/2020-07/Networking.docx> |

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| **Summary of materials** |

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| Image result for light bulb icon | For more information about research supervision, visit <https://www.cdu.edu.au/research-and-innovation/higher-degree-research/useful-materials>. This webpage includes links to documents about   * how to decide whether an applicant is suitable and eligible * how to recruit potential research candidates * which matters to cover in the first or second meeting with candidates * how to motivate, support, and inspire challenging candidates * how to help candidates upgrade from Masters by Research to PhD * how to improve the writing of candidates   Supervisors might also benefit from reading material that was developed to assist candidates—such as materials on various research methodologies and methods |