
Honours Degree Supervision Policy

Policy Code: ACA-044 **Version:** 5.0 **Effective Date:** 17 August 2015

Purpose:

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a structure to ensure quality supervision of students enrolled in a Bachelor (Honours) research qualification.

This Policy specifies the criteria and process for the appointment of supervisors for Honours students and the roles and responsibilities of supervisors.

Definition of “College” – *In the higher education sector, the Australian College of Natural Medicine Pty Ltd (ACNM) trades as Endeavour College of Natural Health, and Wellnation. For the purpose of this Policy, any reference to ‘College’ or ‘the College’ should be considered a reference to each or any of these respective trading names.*

Scope:

- All campuses (including online)
- All College-appointed supervisors of Honours students
- Director of Education
- Heads of Department / Associate Heads of Department
- Postgraduate Academic Liaison
- Postgraduate Subject Coordinators

Policy Statement:

The Bachelor (Honours) degree qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a specific context to undertake academic research work and serves as a pathway to research and further learning. The degree includes a significant research component and as such requires that students are supervised by highly qualified professionals in the relevant field.

The supervisor-student relationship can be one of the most rewarding aspects of academic life for both supervisor and student. There is no single way to supervise or to complete a research qualification and the supervision relationship may change over time as the needs of the student change. There are, however, some hallmarks of most successful supervision relationships including: good communication; agreed standards; professionalism; consideration of the needs of the other party; and ethical behaviour.

All students enrolled in a Bachelor (Honours) qualification (Honours students) at the College, upon admission into the respective degree, will be appointed at least two supervisors. Where possible, the appointment of a supervisory team should consider the topic and methodology of the proposed Honours project, the learning needs of the student and the expertise of the supervisors. As a primary focus, a supervisory team must provide appropriate support to the Honours student. Beyond this core goal, the potential for an experienced academic to provide mentorship to a less experienced academic should also be considered when building a supervisory collaboration.

Categories of research supervisors

The College has 5 main categories of supervisor. They are primary supervisor, co-supervisor, associate supervisor, joint supervisor, and panel supervisor.

Primary Supervisor

The primary supervisor will take primary academic responsibility for the student's research output and be the administrative contact for the College. All Honours' students must have a primary supervisor who is either a staff member or adjunct at the College and is on the Register of Honours Projects and Supervisors, has the qualifications and experience that enables them to direct the work of the student and ensure the student meets all administrative and academic requirements.

Co-supervisor

The co-supervisor shall have specific expertise that is useful to the student's research candidature and shall be available as an advisor to the student during the course of study. Students may have a co-supervisor to provide additional direction and input to the research. Co-supervisors are members of academic faculty or adjuncts at the College.

Associate Supervisor

A student may have an external co-supervisor as part of their supervisory team in

situations where there are identified gaps in skills and knowledge within the internal supervisory team which are needed to support the student. This supervisor will be known as the Associate Supervisor.

Joint Supervisors

Two joint supervisors who take equal responsibility for the research may be appointed when formal equal collaboration and sharing of resources to support the course of study and research will occur or where the student is working in a multi-disciplinary project and there are supervisors with expertise in the different aspects of the project in the same department. Joint supervisors:

- a) Will take equal responsibility for the research program and direction;
- b) Must ensure that one of the two meets the criteria for appointment as primary supervisor and that this supervisor is designated as the administrative contact.

Panel Supervision

A supervisory panel is comprised of more than two supervisors. Panels may be appointed that include a member of industry, or an external person. In these cases there must still be a primary supervisor appointed. Appointment of formal supervisory panels is appropriate in cases where there is an agreement between the College and external organisations regarding research. The role of each of the panel members must be agreed by the student and the Postgraduate Academic Liaison at the start of the course.

Supervisor Eligibility

The appointment of supervisors for Honours students at the College requires that supervisors comply with specific criteria of eligibility outlined below. Potential supervisors must apply to the Office of Research for approval as one of the supervisory categories below. In addition, permanent staff must gain line manager approval for taking on supervisory responsibilities, as indicated on the application form for supervisors. There may be classifications employed within these categories for internal use based on applications.

Appointment of Primary Supervisors

A person is eligible to be appointed as a primary supervisor of an Honours student provided that all of the following criteria are met:

- a) They are a permanent or contract employee of the College within the academic faculty or have a formal affiliation with the College as an Adjunct Fellow

- b) They are able to fulfil the roles and responsibilities of supervision
- c) Their academic contract or adjunct agreement exceeds the expected duration of the course of study or can be mutually agreed by the supervisor and College to be extended to align with the expected duration of the supervision (e.g. contract academics)
- d) They are located in the academic department in which the student is enrolled or a department supporting the student's academic department
- e) They have expertise in the proposed field of study as determined through joint decision by the Director of Education and Postgraduate Academic Liaison
- f) They have an active and continuing participation in scholarly activity and research
- g) They hold a research qualification at AQF level 9 (Masters by Research) or higher and have an appropriate record of scholarly publications.

Where the primary supervisor has not had previous experience in successful supervision of Honours students or Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidates to completion:

- a) A co-supervisor or joint supervisor must be appointed who is an experienced supervisor (i.e.: have successfully supervised two or more Honours students or HDR candidates to completion), and
- b) Professional development and participation in College supervision training programs or other relevant activities must be undertaken as specified by the Postgraduate Academic Liaison.

Appointment of Co-supervisors and Associate Supervisors

A person is eligible to be appointed as a co-supervisor or associate supervisor if they:

- a) Hold an appointment that satisfies the eligibility conditions for the appointment as a primary supervisor, or
- b) Are an Emeritus Professor, holding a visiting or adjunct position at the College, or are retired but remain active in research, or
- c) Have appropriate expertise and experience in the field as determined through joint decision by the Director of Education and Postgraduate Academic Liaison.

Appointment of an associate supervisor who has no formal affiliation with the College is allowed to provide additional expertise for a research project, or when it is planned that a student spend time in an external laboratory or studio as part of a collaboration. Such researchers could include leading researchers from institutions such as government

departments, research institutions, libraries, museums or industry.

Appointment of Joint Supervisors

Appointment of two joint supervisors requires that:

- a) At least one of the joint supervisors must satisfy the conditions for appointment as a primary supervisor;
- b) Where one of the joint supervisors is external to the College, the College joint supervisor must satisfy the conditions for appointment as a primary supervisor.

Special Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, the Postgraduate Research Co-ordinator may recommend the appointment of a person who does not meet the eligibility criteria in this Policy for appointment as a primary supervisor or approve alternate supervisory arrangements, provided that compelling reasons are presented in writing from the discipline Head of Department / Associate Head of Department and the appointment is endorsed by the Director of Education. The Research Degrees Board must approve such appointments.

Conflict of interest

Staff who agree to undertake the role of supervisor have a responsibility to assess students' work fairly, objectively and consistently. A personal, family or other relationship with a student has the potential to compromise this responsibility by creating a conflict of interest. A staff member who considers that they have a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest should bring this to the attention of the Director of Education as soon as possible. The Director of Education should record their decision on the matter.

Supervisory Load

A primary supervisor may supervise more than six (6) students full-time at any one time only if they have:

- a) Evidence of adequate time for supervision taking into account teaching, research and administrative responsibilities; and
- b) A track record of successful Honours and / or HDR completions within two (2) years; and
- c) Approval by the Head of Department / Associate Head of Department of their department

Supervisory loads will be monitored by the Office of the Director of Education and an

annual report provided to the College Council via the Research Degrees Board.

Remuneration of Supervisors

Academics will be remunerated for each appointment as the Primary Supervisor of an Honours student. The total remuneration sum will be provided in three stages which align with milestones in the student's candidature:

- a) Continued enrolment after first census date (20%)
- b) Successful completion of all coursework subjects (20%)
- c) Successful submission of the final bound Honours thesis following examination (60%)

Adjunct and Contract academics will be remunerated at each stage through Payroll or Accounts Payable as appropriate. Permanent teaching academics will have the same value allocated to an internal account which will be made available for the academic to spend on resources to reduce their teaching and marking load or dedicate to an approved research project. The disbursement of funds from this account must be approved by the Director of Education and the Associate Director, Research.

Making Appointments

The Postgraduate Academic Liaison recommends the appointment of a primary supervisor, co-supervisor, associate supervisor, joint supervisor or supervisory panel to the Director of Education. In cases where the proposed supervisor has not previously supervised an Honours Degree student at the College, a curriculum vitae or other supporting material must be provided and approved.

Recommendation of appointment must be on the basis of appropriate space, resources and expertise being available to support the proposed research by the student. Where only a primary supervisor has been proposed, the Director of Education will request a second supervisor be included in a supervisory team.

Replacement of Supervisor/s during the Course

Changes to supervisory arrangements are subject to the approval of the Director of Education and Postgraduate Academic Liaison.

If appointment of a new primary supervisor is required then an existing member of the supervisory team shall be appointed. Such situations will be assessed on a case-by-case

basis to ensure that the student is not being disadvantaged. The suitability of the replacement primary supervisor to be appointed must be discussed with the student. In certain cases, it may be necessary to appoint a supervisory panel.

If a breakdown of the supervisory relationship occurs, appropriate attempts at mediation should be made by the Director of Education or the Postgraduate Academic Liaison. The Director of Education must be advised of the issues that have arisen and be involved in mediation if the issue is not able to be resolved by the Postgraduate Academic Liaison. Independent mediators may also be used.

A supervisor must be a fit and proper person to provide supervision to Honours students. In rare cases, the College may remove or suspend a supervisor from their role if the supervisor is no longer considered a fit and proper person to provide supervision. The Postgraduate Academic Liaison will inform the supervisor and give the supervisor reasons for the decision and the opportunity to respond to those reasons. This applies to all categories of supervisors.

Roles and Responsibilities

Supervisors have responsibilities across the full course of a student's enrolment starting at the commencement of the course and continuing throughout the course including research project preparation, examination and revision.

Commencement of the Course

At the commencement of the course, the Primary Supervisor is responsible for:

- (a) advising on and discussing with the student the research process, aims, scope and presentation of the research project, timelines and any orientation, course work or supplementary training necessary for the research project;
- (b) assisting the student to prepare applications for ethics and other approvals from the appropriate College committees as required;
- (c) clarifying the student's and the supervisor's respective expectations of supervision and of the operation of the supervisory panel if applicable;
- (d) assisting students in planning an appropriate course of collateral reading, suggesting relevant background reading and giving advice on the literature review;
- (e) ensuring that students are thoroughly familiar with the College resources available to them and that they are able to make full and proper use of literature sources;

- (f) identifying specific areas in which the student requires further development of their skills (e.g.: computing, academic writing, statistics, English language) and referring the student to the appropriate sources of assistance.

Throughout the Course of Study

Throughout the course of study, the Primary Supervisor is responsible for:

- (a) monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress;
- (b) arranging acceptable meeting times with students for formal discussions and constructive evaluation of progress;
- (c) initiating and holding frequent and adequate discussions with the student on the student's research program. Supervisors must discuss, assess and guide the progress of their students at regular intervals and should encourage students to provide a regular written progress report on what has been achieved and to indicate objectives for the next period;
- (d) requiring written work from the student on a pre-arranged and agreed schedule; monitoring the progress of the work in accordance with the agreed schedule; discussing the progress of the work, and any impediments to maintaining the agreed schedule, with the student at regular intervals;
- (e) ensuring that any major decisions about the student's research program made in conversation between the supervisor and the student, or any major variations to agreed expectations and guidelines, are confirmed in writing and a copy given to the student, and to any other supervisor or advisor;
- (f) advising the student about any plans for extended supervisor's absence from supervisory duties (e.g.: on study leave, long service leave) during the course of study and research, and the proposed arrangements for supervision during this absence, where possible with at least six months' notice and preferably on enrolment;
- (g) encouraging the student to be, and as far as possible ensuring that they are, actively engaged in the research program in a manner likely to produce significant results by the time the Honours thesis is due to be submitted, or advising the student in writing that progress is unsatisfactory and identifying improvements necessary for continuation of study in this course;
- (h) addressing the College's duty of care for students, bringing any serious concerns about the student's professional wellbeing or conduct to the immediate attention

of the Postgraduate Academic Liaison or Director of Education;

- (i) continuing to assist the student to prepare applications for ethics and other approvals from the appropriate University committees as the need arises.

Preparation of the Research Project

In preparation of the research project, the Primary Supervisor is responsible for:

- (a) recognising that the research project is the student's own work, that the student is the sole author of the research project under the mentorship of the supervisor, and that the role of the supervisor in preparation of the research project is to be a guide, advisor and critical reviewer rather than co-author or editor;
- (b) acknowledging that, while it is highly desirable for students to publish their work throughout the course of study, preparation of material for publication should not be at the expense of timely submission of the research project;
- (c) developing with the student a timetable for preparation and submission of the research project within the time allotted for the course of study;
- (d) discussing the form and content of the research project, and the processes of research project planning and writing, freely with the student, and, where necessary, assisting the student with strategies for planning and writing the research project;
- (e) advising on the outline of the research project and providing guidelines and feedback about appropriate style, accuracy and use of English to assist students to develop their own writing style and proficiency in editing and correcting their own work;
- (f) where necessary, referring the student to appropriate sources of assistance with such matters as English expression, academic writing and statistical analysis and interpretation, and doing so as early in the course of study as the need for this assistance is identified;
- (g) commenting on the content and the drafts of the research project and, at the time of submission, certifying that the research project is properly presented, conforms to the Regulations and is, therefore, prima facie, worthy of examination;
- (h) developing with the student a timetable for preparation and submission of material for publication and assisting to prepare these, with appropriate agreements about co-authorship.

Honours Thesis Examination and Revision

Throughout the Honours thesis examination and revision process, a supervisor is responsible for:

- (a) recognising that the role of the supervisor as guide, advisor and critical reviewer, rather than co-author or editor of the research project extends through the Honours thesis examination and review processes;
- (b) when so requested, assisting the Postgraduate Academic Liaison to prepare advice for the Research Degrees Board that will help it to classify the Honours thesis appropriately in the event that the Board has received diverse or adverse reports from the examiners;
- (c) advising the student on how best to revise the Honours thesis after classification to bring it to the required standard and providing feedback about the revisions that have been made and the student's Report of Revisions.

Other Support

Throughout the period of a course of study, a supervisor is responsible for the following other support:

- (a) aiming to be an accessible advisor, available to counsel, provide support or references to appropriate other areas of the College on both academic and personal matters;
- (b) suggesting ways in which the student can make the most effective use of time;
- (c) recognising personal strengths and limitations and, in particular, identifying situations in which a student needs to be referred to colleagues for assistance;
- (d) committing the time necessary to allow for maintaining the close and regular contact with the student (which for internal students shall normally include at least monthly face-to-face meetings) and establishing at the outset the basis on which contact will be made;
- (e) encouraging students to give presentations and to submit articles for publication;
- (f) developing strategies for contact with and introductions to other researchers in related areas, including external agency, industry, or other institutional links;
- (g) advising the student on doctoral research, post-doctoral research, visiting fellow appointments or other career options, and on any prospective publications arising from the final Honours thesis;
- (h) in consultation with the Postgraduate Research Co-ordinator, and after giving the student an opportunity to comment on possible examiners for the Honours thesis,

Honours Supervisor Fund Allocation Form

Related Legislation: Not applicable

Guidelines: Not applicable

Policy Author:	Associate Director, Research
Policy Owner:	Director of Education
Contact:	Director of Education andrea.bugarcic@endeavour.edu.au
Approval Body:	College Council Meeting date: October 2018
Policy Status:	Revised
Responsibilities for Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Education • Postgraduate Academic Liaison • Postgraduate Research Co-ordinator
Key Stakeholders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Staff • Dean and Operations Director • Director of Education • Honours Students • Postgraduate Academic Liaison • Postgraduate Research Co-ordinator • Research Degrees Board