Roles and Responsibilities of Postgraduate Research Coordinators Guideline

1. Introduction and Scope
This Guideline outlines the roles, responsibilities and typical duties of the Postgraduate Research Coordinators/Directors (hereafter referred to as Postgraduate Research Coordinators or PGC) and gives guidelines on the support that should be available for PGCs to assist them in carrying out their role. PGCs serve a critical role in the overall experience of higher degree research (HDR) candidates. At UNSW, PGCs make recommendations on academic management of HDR candidates to the Dean of Graduate Research on behalf of the Head of School/Centre (hereafter referred to as Heads of School). This Guideline applies to Heads of School and PGCs and may be used for training and induction of new PGCs.

2. Definitions

2.1 Postgraduate Research Coordinator:
This position is recognised by the University as a significant academic and administrative position. The role involves substantial academic judgment and interpersonal relationships. The PGC acts on behalf of the Head of School in making academic, administrative and, in some cases, resource recommendations relating to HDR candidatures across the range of disciplines covered by the School/Centres (hereafter referred to as School).

2.2 Support for PGC:
As the key point of contact for research students the PGC has a high associated workload, particularly in large Schools with high numbers of HDR candidates and...
the position requires significant support. In large schools there may be more than one PGC.

2.2.1 Administrative support and workload
To enable the academic to provide substantial academic input into the role Heads of School are expected to:

(i) Provide an appropriate level of administrative support commensurate with the student load and discipline. For a cohort of 50 postgraduate students, a typical minimum of 40% of an administrative assistant’s time is recommended. The percentage allocated time will depend on the level of the appointment and overall position description.

(ii) Take into account the workload implications of this appointment in the assignment of teaching and other administrative duties, and in reference to the provision of the above administrative support.

2.2.2 Training and guidance
Head of School and/or Associate Dean Research Training should provide the PGC with the following resources:

(i) Advice and guidance for new and current PGCs.

(ii) Access to management training required to fulfill the role such as Conflict and Dispute Resolution training.

The Graduate Research School provides the PGCs with the following resources:

(iii) Information Pack for Postgraduate Research Coordinators (see GRS website for details of how to obtain this pack)

(iv) Graduate research forums and practice sharing sessions held to update PGCs.

(v) Induction session with Graduate Research School staff for all newly appointed Postgraduate Research Coordinators.

3. Roles and Responsibilities
The PGC should be a senior researcher experienced in HDR supervision who is a member of the academic staff of the School, and is adjudged competent to act on behalf of the Head of School in matters related to HDR candidatures. In some instances, for example in small Faculties with only one school, Head of School and/or PGC responsibilities for HDR recommendations may be given to an Associate Dean Research Training or equivalent senior position/s. Where such variations are implemented, they should be documented in Faculty guidelines.

3.1 Roles of the PGC

(i) The School's point of contact with the Associate Dean Research Training or equivalent and the Graduate Research School.

(ii) Advisor to the Head of School on all higher degree research matters.

(iii) Advisor to supervisors on all higher degree research matters.

(iv) Advisor to HDR candidates on academic and administrative matters relating to their candidature.

(v) Member of the Faculty Higher Degree Committee (HDC) or its equivalent committee.
3.2 Responsibilities of the PGC

(i) Review the Schools' higher degree research profile and advising the Head of School on related matters.

(ii) Establish and implement appropriate School procedures and guidelines for monitoring HDR candidate progress.

(iii) Coordinate recruitment and admission of HDR candidates at the School level.

(iv) Advise supervisor and candidates on all HDR related matters including facilities and appropriate levels of resources.

(v) To encourage the students' research opportunities

3.3 Duties of the PGC

Upon appointment, new PGCs should meet with the Head of School/Associate Dean Research Training or equivalent and confirm the duties they are expected to perform, including any other discipline-specific duties and to be advised of any specific Faculty procedures and guidelines. The following duties are normally performed by the PGC:

3.3.1 Recruitment and Admission

(i) Manage recruitment of high-quality applicants by providing advice to supervisors and supporting recruitment activities as required.

(ii) Provide applicants with advice on eligibility requirements, possible research topics, available resources, School research strengths and supervisor availability.

(iii) Make formal recommendations on applications for admission, including any special conditions of candidature.

(iv) Monitor recommendations on the approval of admission of candidates to ensure adherence to policies relating to admission, supervision and provision of resources.

3.3.2 Candidature Management and Development

(i) Coordinate confirmation and annual progress reviews and monitor timely progress towards completion by all candidates enrolled in the School.

(ii) Recommend 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, supervision changes, visa extensions).

(iii) Manage annual re-enrolment.

(iv) Be aware of and keep candidates and supervisors informed of policies, procedures, due dates and other relevant information.

(v) Coordinate the dissemination of information about relevant workshops, seminars, scholarships and other opportunities.

(vi) Coordinate and/or conduct School Induction programs for HDR students that complement the UNSW Postgraduate Researcher Induction with School specific information.
(vii) Act as the initial point of contact for the Associate Dean Research Training or equivalent and the Dean of Graduate Research in resolving candidature problems and formal grievances.

(viii) Act as a confidential advisor for HDR supervisors experiencing difficulty with any aspect of their students candidatures.

(ix) Act as a confidential advisor for HDR candidates experiencing difficulty with any aspect of their candidature including supervision and access to resources.

(x) Where required, make recommendations to the Dean of Graduate Research Training directly or via the Higher Degree Committee (or equivalent) according to the Register of Delegations on admission, research areas, supervision, progress, deferment and variations to candidature including leave.

(xi) Make recommendations on student cases to the Faculty Higher Degree Committee.

(xii) Ensure that the School practices 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.

(xiii) Provide, and/or facilitate, opportunities for research training of HDR cohorts in professional and academic skills.

(xiv) Facilitate and encourage student led initiatives for HDR cohorts relevant to both research training and research culture.

3.4 Scholarships

(i) Be familiar with the UNSW Research Scholarship conditions (APA/UPA, IPRS/UIPA, TFS and APA(I)'s) and able to advise scholarship holders on matters relating to these conditions.

(ii) Make recommendations on applications for extension, suspension, time overseas, sick/maternity leave for scholarship holders.

(iii) Where required, score scholarship applications (including justification of Honours I equivalence) for local and international scholarship rounds.

3.5 Thesis Examination

(i) Coordinate requests for confidentiality agreements in examination, and coordinate nomination of examiners prior to submission.

(ii) Liaise with supervisors regarding the nomination of examiners and recommend examiners to the Faculty Higher Degree Committee on behalf of the School. PGC should ensure that examiners nominated do not have a perceived or real conflict of interest in accordance with policy.

(iii) Facilitate timely submission of nomination of examiners to the Faculty Higher Degree Committee.

(iv) Follow up on late examiners reports and liaise with GRS to organise extensions.
(v) Consult with the supervisor on the examiners’ reports and make an appropriate recommendation to the Head of School after examination.

(vi) Liaise with supervisor and candidate about outcome after examination.

(vii) Verify thesis revisions after thesis examination.

(viii) Provide advice to the Faculty Higher Degree Committee (or equivalent) on whether the candidate has satisfied the conditions for the award of the degree.

4. Acknowledgements
The following external source was used for preparing this document:
The Role of Postgraduate Coordinators, University of Queensland

Appendix A: History

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<tr>
<th>Version</th>
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Guidelines for Generic Administrative Support Requirements for Postgraduate Research Coordination in Schools