Graduate Research Supervision Policy

Schedule A - Expectations for Graduate Research Supervisors and Candidates

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

This Schedule outlines the expectations and responsibilities of graduate research supervisors and candidates at La Trobe University regarding personal conduct and behaviour as members of the graduate research community. This Schedule should be read in conjunction with the Graduate Research Supervision Policy.

Section 2 - Scope

Applies to:
- All campuses
- All supervisors of graduate research candidates
- All graduate research candidates

Section 3 - Statement of Expectations

Universities are places of safety and respect, and all members of the graduate research community at La Trobe are entitled to pursue their research in a supportive environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification, victimisation, violence and other forms of unacceptable behaviour.

This is true of all members of the La Trobe community. However, the relationship between a graduate research candidate and their supervisor(s) is unique. Factors contributing to that uniqueness are that the relationship includes both collegiality and instruction; the relationship's closeness over an extended period; and in the unique power imbalance between supervisor and candidate.

Supervisors have a responsibility to be aware of their behaviours; to make sure they conduct appropriate relationships within the research community, and actively contribute to a culture of respect and safety at La Trobe. We emphasise that these responsibilities are central to the role of supervisor and researcher.

The Principal Supervisor will normally carry the highest load. No individual La Trobe supervisor should have more than eighty percent (80%) of the load and a minimum load of ten percent (10%) of the supervision responsibility. External supervisors need not be formally assigned supervision load as long as there are two active La Trobe University supervisors.

Graduate research candidates also have a responsibility to foster and participate in a culture that promotes these values and treats both fellow graduate researchers, academic colleagues and all staff and students at La Trobe with respect.

The University expects all members of the graduate research community to adhere to these principles as well as to the various codes designed to promote and apply them, including:

- The Australian Code for the Conduct of Responsible Research
- The Code of Conduct
- The Workplace Behaviours Policy
- The Student Behaviours Policy

Everyone has a right to raise issues or make an enquiry or complaint reasonably and respectfully without being victimised.

If you have any concerns about a potential conflict of interest or are aware of inappropriate behaviour you should speak with your Dean, contact HR Assist or consider referring to the University's Safer Community service, who can also help navigate sensitive conversations.

Managing flexible work arrangements

Supervisors and candidates should be aware of and cooperatively manage any flexible work arrangements that are in place. In recognition that supervisors and candidates may not be required to be physically on campus every weekday, or have flexible hours during weekdays, expectations regarding the frequency and format of meetings, laboratory supervision and training should be discussed and agreed upon in advance between all members of the supervisory team and candidate.

Managing collaborations and voluntary work

Supervisors should support candidates to reasonably engage in the academic life of their school, department, research centre or group. This engagement helps to develop valuable skills and knowledge that can contribute to both research training and future postgraduate employment.

Any voluntary work undertaken by a candidate that is not directly related to their research project must be both fair and reasonable in the context of their research training. Any agreed voluntary work should be clearly managed to provide a beneficial experience to the candidate and avoid any unreasonable demands which may take undue advantage of the unique relationship between a candidate and supervisor, or between graduate researchers and other students.

For example:

- A candidate working in the field, laboratory or studio may require new materials for their project. It is reasonable for them to be able to order such materials directly, providing a beneficial experience in navigating vendors and University processes. The candidate should not, however, be the person responsible for all orders required by others in the field, laboratory or studio.
- A candidate should know how to use and maintain, or assist in the maintenance of, any equipment used for their project to increase their technical expertise. The candidate should

not be made responsible for the use, training or maintenance of equipment used primarily by others in the absence of other technical support.

- A candidate may elect to collaborate with, or provide a degree of training for, another candidate where there is clearly a joint intellectual effort that leads to co-authored publications or other research outputs. The candidate should not be expected to attend fieldwork or train other students (either candidates or honours students), however, where there is no mutual benefit to the collaboration.

Managing conflict of interest

The University expects all graduate research supervisors and candidates to act ethically, with integrity, and maintain the highest professional standards at work under our Code of Conduct and values. All staff must do everything possible to avoid conflicts of interest.

Having a conflict of interest does not, in itself, imply improper motivation or individual wrongdoing. However, any conflict of interest must be properly identified and managed per the Graduate Research Supervision Policy, the Conflict of Interest Policy and this Schedule.

Should an actual, potential or perceived conflict exist, staff should take action in accordance with the
Procedure, such as:

a. remove themselves from the conflict and/or

b. ensure appropriate controls are in place to manage the conflict

and/or c. where required, disclose the conflict or improper conduct

If a conflict of interest is identified, the Dean (or nominee) must determine what measures, if any, are most appropriate to manage or remove that conflict of interest. These measures should be tailored to individual circumstances and could include one or more of the following:

a. requiring the public disclosure of the interests, for example when presenting or publishing the research

b. involving an appropriate individual to oversee some or all of the research activity

c. requiring the researcher to absent themselves from any deliberative decision making regarding the research

d. requiring the researcher to play a different or reduced role in some or all of the research

e. requiring the researcher to relinquish financial or other interests.

Supervisors who employ candidates as a Research Assistant must be

mindful of:

a. the potential for conflict of interest if a candidate is often required to prioritise paid work for the supervisor over their research; and

b. the differences between supervisor/candidate and employer/employee relationships. If difficulties arise, the Dean (or nominee) will organise alternative arrangements.

A supervisor must not normally be in a close personal, intimate or romantic relationship with

another member of a candidate's supervisory team or progress committee chair. Where such a relationship develops during candidature, the supervisor must declare a conflict of interest, after which the Chair, BGR will take appropriate steps to ensure that appropriate supervisory arrangements are in place for the candidate. The normal expectation is that supervisors who have a close personal relationship will not engage in the supervision of the same candidate.

Section 4 – Associated Information

Associated information includes:

    a.   [Fair Work Ombudsman Factsheet – Unpaid Work](#)