



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.

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 higher degree by research candidate and their supervisor/s is unique. The relationship includes collegiality and instruction; in the relationship's closeness over an extended period; and in the unique power imbalance between supervisor and candidate, these factors represent.

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 amongst members of the supervision team. All LaTrobe University supervisors will normally carry a minimum load of 20% (twenty percent) of the supervision responsibility. External supervisors need not be formally assigned supervision load as long as there are two active LaTrobe 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 Head of School, contact HR Assist or consider referring to the University's [Safer Community](#) service, who can also help navigate sensitive conversations.

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.

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 Head of School 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 Head of School will organise alternative arrangements.