



MRes Candidate & Supervisor Collaboration Agreement

Background

This agreement serves to provide a framework for MRes Candidates and their Supervisors to establish a working relationship over the period of MRes candidature.

The document offers a set of general guidelines that are broadly applicable across all disciplines. However, it is acknowledged that some aspects of the agreement may be more appropriate in certain disciplinary or individual contexts.

Why should Candidates and Supervisors maintain a formal agreement?

The Master of Research (MRes) is an exciting but challenging degree. On the one hand, it offers students their first opportunity to conduct independent research under the guidance of a supervisor, with the eventual aim of creating knowledge that is useful and beneficial to society. On the other hand, the degree is highly demanding in terms of both time and complexity, with major collaborative effort required from both Candidate and Supervisor.

As a result of these challenges, it is common for conflict and tension to arise between Candidates and Supervisors in situations where expectations, roles and responsibilities are unclear or mismatched.

For this reason, the MRes Teaching Team has provided the following template **to minimise the potential for misunderstandings by clarifying the individual expectations of both Supervisors and Candidates.**

How to complete this document

This document is circulated when a new student/supervisor relationship is initiated in the Master of Research. The document is also sent to the MRes coordinator for your School/Institute, who will retain a record of the completed agreement. The GRS retains a copy of all agreements for archival purposes.

Step 1	Student: Please read the document carefully before arranging a meeting, and take note of any particular points you wish to discuss with your Supervisor.
Step 2	Students arrange a meeting with Primary Supervisor as soon as possible upon agreeing to work together.
Step 3	<i>Candidate and Supervisor work through the document together, and establish agreement on each particular point as necessary. Supervisors may reach out to the GRS for training. It is the Primary supervisor's responsibility to explain Western's policies and may wish to refer to the Supervision of Research Candidates Procedures 2021.</i>
Step 4	The student fills out the form for the last column. The student and (primary) supervisor both sign. The final (i.e. completed & signed) copy of the agreement must be included in the Ethics Assessment as part of the assessment. It must be a PDF document. You can use Adobe Acrobat to electronically sign this agreement. Students may be assessed on their understanding of these policies.

1. Candidate Responsibilities

Communication	I, the candidate understood?
Develop a collaboration/study plan with the assistance of Supervisor	
Establish the regularity of meetings and what preparation is needed by student and Supervisor, including how the lead time for requesting a meeting	
Need to establish a purpose for meeting, possibly aided by an agenda prepared by student and agreed by the Supervisor.	
Submit material (e.g. drafts) by agreed deadlines to allow Supervisor time to review and provide feedback.	
Seek guidance and assistance from Supervisor, especially when making important decisions in relation to the research.	
Email the Supervisor a summary of any meeting discussion within an agreed timeframe (e.g. 48 hours) following every meeting.	
Participate in departmental meetings, seminars and training in consultation with Supervisor.	
Complete any MRes progress milestones in the Research Stage, working with Supervisor to prepare the documents.	
Interpersonal and Professional Conduct	I, the candidate understood?
Be receptive to advice or suggestions given by Supervisor.	
Interact with fellow candidates, both graduate and undergraduate, staff and faculty in a professional and respectful manner in accordance with Western Sydney University codes of conduct.	
Advise Supervisor, in a timely manner, of any issues that may impact the candidature, including any difficulties, absences, or periods of leave.	
Understand policies, rules and regulations in effect at the University that apply to HDR and MRes candidature.	

Publication		I, the candidate understood?
Discuss possibilities for presenting research results that are publishable in reputable, externally refereed journals, with a focus on quality over quantity.		
Refer to Research Services for advice when any discussion of intellectual property emerges.		
Maintain appropriate confidentiality concerning research activities, in accordance with the existing practices and policies of the University.		
Safety, Ethics and Etiquette		I, the candidate understood?
Comply with Workplace Health and Safety requirements, including undertaking any required training course(s).		
Follow and abide by all requirements in the <i>National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research</i> when applying for Human Research Ethics Review		
Follow and abide by all requirements in the <i>Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes</i> when applying for Animal Research Ethics Review.		
Maintain clean and tidy workspaces, respect the space of colleagues, and participate in periodic office and/or laboratory clean-ups.		
Understand that space and equipment is shared, that care must be exercised at all times, and that problems must be reported as they arise.		
Refrain from borrowing the materials of others and/or removing items without permission.		
Use computers and other equipment in accordance with University policies and guidelines.		
Research Integrity		I, the candidate understood?
Be accountable for presenting a transparent, defensible, and appropriately qualified account of findings and results in the thesis and any associated publications.		
Be familiar with the ethical precepts, including Plagiarism and the practice defined in the <i>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research</i> , the <i>Singapore Statement on Research Integrity</i> , any related disciplinary codes of conduct, and uphold such precepts at all times during candidature.		

2. Supervisor Responsibilities

Communication		I, the candidate understood?
Agree upon a schedule for regular meetings with Candidate and ensure that the schedule is upheld.		
Ensure that the Candidate is aware of relevant policies, procedures and guidelines for the conduct of research.		
Monitor the accuracy, validity, and integrity of the Candidate's research, and respond in a timely manner with feedback to any work submitted by the Candidate.		
Be available to meet with the Candidate at a negotiated time to provide support towards the progress and completion of the degree.		
Ensure arrangements of continuity of supervision are in place for periods of extended supervisory leave or other absences.		
Candidature Progression and Thesis Submission		I, the candidate understood?
Ensure that Research Stage progress milestones (circulated by the GRS) are completed in a timely manner.		
Discuss possible examiners with Candidate, and ensure formal nomination of examiners is provided to the GRS in a timely manner (i.e. well before thesis is submitted).		
Ensure that Candidate is progressing towards on-time submission of MRes thesis, and immediately advise both HDR Director and GRS if delays are expected in order to allow sufficient time for extension requests.		
Interpersonal and Professional Conduct		I, the candidate understood?
Establish a professional and respectful working relationship to guide the Candidate in their approach to research, including the language used in all communications.		
Avoid personal or business relationships that may constitute a conflict of interest. If a conflict of interest arises, it must be reported to the School Dean, Institute Director, or Dean of Graduate Studies.		
Explain the Supervisor responsibilities under the Western Supervision Policy (https://policies.westernsydney.edu.au/document/view.current.php?id=353).		
Take appropriate precautions to ensure the safety and support of the Candidate in their research.		

Safety and Ethics		I, the candidate understood?
Assist the Candidate in determining if any additional safety and/or ethics training is required for their research, and ensure they attend any required courses and/or workshops.		
Take responsibility as Chief Investigator / Principal Supervisor for ethics applications, as per WSU processes, by supporting the Candidate to develop the ethics application and monitoring adherence to any ethics approvals.		
Academic Development		I, the candidate understood?
Be familiar with the pool of MRes elective units and advise the Candidate about the most appropriate elective units to take in the Coursework Stage.		
Be familiar with content and nature of MRes core units, and support the Candidate in the development of key threshold assessments in RD1 and RD2, along with other assessment that involve disciplinary content (see MRes Supervision Handbook for further details).		
Develop a collaboration/study plan in collaboration with the Candidate.		
Advocate for the Candidate to be given access to suitable resources, equipment and a workspace within the School/Institute.		
Provide timely feedback to thesis drafts and other submissions from the Candidate in accordance with established milestones and/or agreements.		
Work with the Candidate to identify the most appropriate data-gathering and analysing techniques for their research.		
Be open, honest and fair with the Candidate when academic performance is not meeting expectations.		
Provide appropriate mentorship and guidance throughout the candidature.		
Professional Development		I, the candidate understood?
In case of shared work, give credit in an appropriate manner to the Candidate's contributions to scholarly activity, whether presented at professional meetings, in publications, or in applications for grants.		
Discuss an authorship process for shared and non-shared work and identify the importance of first authorship for the Candidate.		
Work with the Candidate to identify opportunities to attend suitable conferences and present research findings, and seek funding sources for associated travel and attendance costs.		

Identify opportunities for the Candidate to participate in non-academic programs for the purposes of professional development.	
Research Integrity	I, the candidate understood?
Be accountable for ensuring that the Candidate presents a transparent, defensible, and appropriately qualified account of findings and results in the thesis and any associated publications.	
Be familiar with the ethical precepts in documents such as the <i>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research</i> and the <i>Singapore Statement on Research Integrity</i> , along with any related disciplinary codes of conduct relevant to the Candidate, and uphold such precepts at all times.	
3. Higher Degree Associate Dean / Director HDR / MRes Coordinator Responsibilities	I, the candidate understood?
Be available for Candidates to raise concerns about progress, candidature management, the relationship with the Supervisor.	
Be available for Supervisors to raise concerns about a Candidate's progress, candidature management, the relationship with the Candidate.	
Monitor the performance of Supervisors and ensure they are acting in accordance with University policies and GRS expectations.	
Report to the Graduate Research School any matters where an issue has been identified and a resolution cannot be reached, or a candidature is considered to be at risk.	
4. Graduate Research School Responsibilities	I, the candidate understood?
Clearly communicate information and advice about MRes candidature requirements, and research policies and procedures.	
Provide clear mechanisms for raising and resolving problems that arise between Candidates and Supervisors, and/or other members of the University.	

Agreed frequency of meetings:

_____	_____	_____
<i>MRes Candidate Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
_____	_____	_____
<i>MRes Supervisor Name (primary or nominee)</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>