

Conflict of Interest Guidelines for HDR Examiners

Listed below are examples of different types of conflict of interest that may arise between the examiner and various parties including the candidate, the supervisor/advisor, the University, the subject matter itself and another examiner. The list is indicative and is not to be considered exhaustive.

Source: [Australian Council of Graduate Research \(ACGR\) Good Practice Guidelines for Disclosing and Managing Interests in Graduate Research](#). Adapted where required to align with the University's [Thesis and Examination of Higher Degrees by Research Policy 2015](#).

A. Conflict with the Candidate

<i>Working relationship</i>		
A1.	Examiner has co-authored a paper with the candidate within the last five years	MAJOR
A2.	Examiner has worked with the candidate on matters regarding the thesis e.g. previous member of the advisory team	MAJOR
A3.	Examiner has employed the candidate or been employed by the candidate within the last five years	MAJOR
A4.	Examiner is in negotiation to directly employ or be employed by the candidate	MAJOR
A5.	Examiner has acted as a referee for the candidate for employment	MAJOR
<i>Personal relationship</i>		
A6.	Examiner is a known relative of the candidate	MAJOR
A7.	Examiner is a friend, associate or mentor of the candidate	MAJOR
A8.	Examiner and the candidate have an existing or a previous emotional relationship of de facto, are co-residents or are members of a common household	MAJOR
<i>Legal relationship</i>		
A9.	Examiner is or was married to the candidate	MAJOR
A10.	Examiner is legally family to the candidate (for example, step-father, sister-in-law)	MAJOR
A11.	Examiner is either a legal guardian or dependent of the candidate or has power of attorney for the candidate	MAJOR
<i>Business, Professional and/or Social Relationships</i>		
A12.	Examiner is currently in or has had a business relationship with the candidate in the last five years (for example, partner in a small business)	MAJOR
A13.	Examiner is in a social relationship with the candidate, such as co-Trustees of a Will or god-parent	MAJOR
A14.	Examiner has a current professional relationship, such as shared membership of a Board or Committee (including editorial and grant decision boards), with the candidate	MINOR
A15.	Examiner has had personal contact with the candidate that may give rise to the perception that the examiner may be dealing with the candidate in a less than objective manner	MINOR

B. Conflict with the Supervisor/Advisor

<i>Working relationship</i>		
B1.	Examiner was a candidate of the supervisor within the past five years	MAJOR
B2.	Examiner has co-supervised with the supervisor in the past five years	MAJOR
B3.	Examiner holds a patent with the supervisor granted no more than eight years ago and which is still in force	MAJOR
B4.	Examiner had directly employed or was employed by the supervisor in the past five years	MAJOR
B5.	Examiner holds a current grant with the supervisor	MAJOR ¹
B6.	Examiner has co-authored a publication with the supervisor in the past five year	MAJOR ²
<i>Personal relationship</i>		
B7.	Examiner is in negotiation to directly employ or be employed by the supervisor	MAJOR
B8.	Examiner is a known relative of the supervisor	MAJOR
B9.	Examiner and the supervisor have an existing or a previous emotional relationship of de facto, are co-residents or are members of a common household	MAJOR
<i>Legal relationship</i>		
B10.	Examiner is or was married to the supervisor	MAJOR
B11.	Examiner is legally family (for example, step-father, sister-in-law) to the supervisor	MAJOR
B12.	Examiner is either a legal guardian or dependent of the supervisor or has power of attorney for the supervisor	MAJOR
<i>Business, Professional and/or Social Relationships</i>		
B13.	Examiner is currently in or has had a business relationship with the supervisor in the last five years (for example, partner in a small business or employment)	MAJOR
B14.	Examiner is in a social relationship with the supervisor, such as co-Trustees of a Will or god-parent	MAJOR
B15.	Examiner has a current professional relationship, such as shared membership of a Board or Committee (including editorial and grant decision boards), with the supervisor	MINOR
B16.	Examiner has had personal contact with the supervisor that may give rise to the perception that the examiner may be dealing with the candidate in a less than objective manner	MINOR

¹ Mitigating circumstances may exist, for example where the grant in question is held by a large consortium of relatively independent researchers

² Mitigating circumstances may exist, for example where the paper in question has a large author list and where the examiner and supervisor have not collaborated directly.

C. Conflict with the University

<i>Working relationship</i>		
C1.	Examiner is currently in negotiation with the University for a work contract (other than examining thesis)	MAJOR
C2.	Examiner is currently working for the University pro bono (for example, on a review)	MINOR
C3.	Examiner has examined for the University two or more times in the past 12 months and/or five or more times in the past five years	MINOR
<i>Other relationship</i>		
C4.	Examiner has received an Honorary Doctorate from the University within the past five years	MAJOR
C5.	Examiner graduated from the University within the past five years	MAJOR
C6.	Examiner has/had a formal grievance with the University	MAJOR
<i>Professional relationship</i>		
C7.	Examiner is a current member of staff or has a current Honorary, Adjunct or Emeritus position with the University or has had such a position during the candidature of the candidate or in the past two years	MAJOR
C8.	Examiner has a current professional relationship with the University (for example, membership of a Board or Committee)	MINOR
C9.	Examiner has a current Visiting position with The University or has had such a position during the candidature of the candidate or in the past five years	MINOR

D. Conflict with the subject matter

<i>Research</i>		
D1.	Examiner has a direct commercial interest in the outcomes of the research	MAJOR

E. Conflict with other examiners

<i>Working relationship</i>		
E1.	Examiner works in the same department/school as another examiner	MAJOR
<i>Personal relationship</i>		
E2.	Examiner is married to, closely related to or has a close personal relationship with another examiner	MAJOR
<i>Professional relationship</i>		
E3.	Examiner has a professional relationship with another examiner	MINOR