ACGR Checklist for the Management of Graduate Research Industry Internships

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ACGR

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF GRADUATE RESEARCH

Determining Institutional Strategy

The Federal Government is deeply committed to growing the partnership between the university and business sectors to support the economic growth and productivity of our nation. Specifically, it recognises that engagement between industry, HEPs and research doctorate students can strengthen links between the latest research and industry innovation.[1]

The growth of industry internships for graduate research candidates is expected to drive early engagement between industry, HEPs and research doctorate students, strengthen links between the latest research and industry innovation and grow the pipeline of highly skilled research doctorate students into employment in industry based, non-academic roles.[2]

Through the 2021-2022 Budget, the Government announced the introduction of a RTP internship weighting. A weighting of 2.0 has been incorporated into the existing HDR completions weightings within the current RTP funding allocation formula for all those PhD candidates who undertake a Department of Education eligible industry internship.

The benefits to be derived from internship collaborations for the candidates, industry partners and the HDR program as a whole will be different for each university and each institution must make its own assessment of how all internships (RTP eligible or not) fit within their wider industry engagement strategy.

This requires executive level, strategic decision making and whole of institution commitment to the determined approach.

The current and expected levels of participation in HDR internships, KPIs for both RTP eligible and other internships and the delegation of responsibility to meet these must be agreed, clearly articulated and promulgated before the business of "making internships happen" can commence.

The following pages present a range of matters for consideration to help those subsequently held responsible for the implementation of this strategy to determine their own processes for the development of robust internship programs in their institution. Resourcing and communication of the strategy are considerations that are common to all sections.

Thank you to the academic and professional staff that contributed to the development of this document.

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[1] Australian Government Depart of Education, Skill and Employment University Research Commercialisation Action Plan 2022

[2] https://www.dese.gov.au/research-block-grants/research-training-program

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1. INSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS *Information in this section is intended to guide institutional decision making around research internship strategy, program implementation and activity management to inform subsequent considerations throughout this document*	

Institutional strategy	Your institution should review its current approach to research internships and its alignment to the RTP internship weighting:
	• Are research internships currently part of your institution's strategy and policy frameworks for:
	    ○ industry engagement
	    ○ research degrees
	    ○ work integrated learning?
	• Will you establish targets to monitor research internship activity? If so:
	    ○ What metrics will be used to measure activity?
	    ○ How will these be monitored and reported?
	    ○ Who will be responsible for this?
	• Does your institution engage with external internship providers currently i.e. APR:Intern, iPrep?
	• What support, if any, will your institution provide to PhD candidates, supervisors and/or industry partners to incentivise research internship activity that meets the RTP weighting criteria?
	• What support, if any, will your institution provide to candidates who undertake internships which do not meet the DESE criteria for additional RTP weighting?
	• Have you considered the impact of the research internship incentive on your current RTP allocation?

Responsibility & resourcing	Once you have considered your approach to research internships, it may be helpful to understand what resources currently exist, and what may be required to support this activity. This will guide considerations across other sections of this document. • Who is responsible for managing research internship activity within your institution (central team (either graduate research or WIL), devolved to faculty-based teams, or a hybrid model)? • Will research supervisors have any accountability for creating internship opportunities or encouraging/assisting candidates to seek them out? How will they be informed of this, and how will it be managed? • What resources exist or are required for:

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	o Mapping the process of a research internship from start to finish o Identification and engagement of all key stakeholders o Creation and exploration of internship opportunities with industry partners o Promotion of opportunities to candidates and supervisors o Connecting candidates to partners o Establishment of agreements and contracts (or extension of existing contracts?) o Training to prepare candidates for working with industry o Administration of internship activity (contracts, insurance, payments) o Recording and reporting
Internship activity guidelines	Decisions made here will guide strategies for engagement and communication (section 3) and internship activity management (section 4) • By what mechanism will candidates be encouraged to undertake an internship? Via an application and selection process, self-sourced and/or external provider? • How does undertaking a research internship impact the candidature timeline, if at all? • How are candidates supported to engage with internships i.e. part-time, those with access plans, internationals with visa limitations on ability to take leave • What internal approvals are required before the internship commences? Do these vary depending on the internship source? • Are there any pre-internship training requirements? • Will candidates need to enrol in a shell course? • What is required as evidence of completion? • Will candidates receive any recognition of the completed internship? • How will internship activity be managed and monitored? • What happens if the internship is not completed?

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2. DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS *Information in this section is intended to guide decision making around the generation of internship opportunities for PhD candidates*	

Creating research internship opportunities	What opportunities exist to create opportunities for research internships?
	• Leveraging existing relationships
	   o Existing networks & previous in-house partnerships
	   o Existing WIL partnerships and identifying appropriate opportunities for HDR students
	   o Optimising associated industry precincts etc
	   o Alumni networks
	   o Supervisors
	   o HDR students
	• Establishing new relationships
	   o Identifying potential partners
	   o Cold calling

Responsibility for internship sourcing	Consider who is responsible for driving industry engagement in your institution, and how research internships could be embedded in the broader industry engagement opportunities your institution wishes to promote.
	• Who will drive this?
	   o Partnership/business development managers?
	   o Research supervisors?
	   o HDR candidates?
	   o Professional staff i.e. Graduate Research School, WIL staff
	• What accountability will they have for this, and how will that be monitored?
	• What information do they need to promote research internships as an opportunity?

Protecting participants and relationships	There is reputational risk for the institution associated with any external engagement. Consider the safeguards needed to protect: • Candidates • University relationships with industry partners • Intellectual property How will relevant parties (candidates, supervisors, industry partners, professional staff) be informed of their obligations?

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3. ENGAGING CANDIDATES, SUPERVISORS & INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Information in this section is intended to guide the approach to engaging candidates, supervisors and industry partners with research internships as a mechanism for PhD-research end-user engagement

"What's in it for me?"	The language you use to describe the value proposition and create buy-in for research internships will be different depending on your audience – what is it about a research internship that will resonate for each group of stakeholders? How will you describe the purpose of a research internship to: • Candidates • Supervisors • Industry partners • University staff?
Communications strategy	• Who is responsible for promoting research internships? • What information is available for those who are responsible for promotion of research internships? • How and when will the program of research internships be promoted to the different audiences? • How will specific research internship opportunities be promoted? • Will you promote the RTP-eligible research internships specifically (bearing in mind specific eligibility criteria), or as part of broader industry engagement opportunities?
Resources	Do you need to prepare internal or external marketing material? • Booklets • Website • Presentations • Content to embed in other information sources ie. Research degrees handbook, induction material, industry engagement promotional material

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4. INTERNSHIP ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT

Information in this section is intended to guide the development of information and resources which will support the management and administration of research internship activity,

Roles & responsibilities	What are the roles and responsibilities of these parties in a research internship? • PhD candidate • PhD supervisor • Industry partner • University Examples of roles and responsibilities include (but are not limited to): • Sourcing and promoting internship opportunities • Establishing internship agreements • Development of the internship project plan • Monitoring the project • Completion of project deliverables • Supervision and duty of care for the candidate during the internship
Internship processes & procedures	What processes exist to support the research internship, and who is responsible for these? • Application and selection of a candidate for an internship (internally or externally provided) • Approval for a candidate to undertake an internship, where they have self-sourced the internship • Training: university and/or industry partner requirements i.e. expectations for engaging with industry partners on behalf of the university • Record keeping: enrolment in a shell course or other record keeping processes • Reporting: on completion of the internship, and on completion of the PhD
Recognition of completion	How will completion of the research internship be recognised? • Certificate of completion • Entry in skills development record • Record on academic transcript Is evidence of completion of the internship required? What happens if the internship cannot be completed?
Funding or other incentives	Is there any funding available, or other incentives to encourage internship activity? • Who are these incentives for? • What conditions apply? • Who provides the incentives?

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	• How are they accessed i.e. scholarship payment or extension, payment to supervisor, tax incentives for industry partner
Impact on candidature	A research internship must be completed during the period of PhD enrolment; if candidature has not been suspended (i.e. via a period of leave), the internship time counts towards the maximum period of RTP support.

Options for internship structure	What are the options for structuring a research internship over and above the DESE guidelines designed to enable flexibility? These should be negotiated between all parties to optimise internship experience and project outcomes.
	• "Integrated":
	  o Internship is structured as part of PhD in a cognate area
	  o Undertaken as part of consumed load; no leave taken
	  o May be funded or unfunded
	  o Existing scholarship payments continue
	• "Standalone":
	  o Internship is structured as a standalone project separate from the PhD; may be in a non-cognate area
	  o Taken during a period of leave
	  o May be funded or unfunded
	  o Existing scholarship payments will cease

Intellectual property ownership	Ownership of intellectual property should be managed through the establishment of an appropriate agreement and/or contract between the parties to the internship.

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5. COMPLIANCE CONSIDERATIONS	
Information in this section is intended to guide considerations relating to embedding internship activity into institutional policy and compliance frameworks	
Institutional policies	How do research internships fit into your existing policy suite? • Research degrees • Work integrated learning • Industry engagement
Risk management	To ensure PhD candidates undertaking a research internship are adequately protected by university risk management frameworks, the following items may require specific consideration: • Insurance coverage (voluntary WIL, suspension of candidature, overseas internships) • WHS • Candidature and enrolment i.e. visa conditions re candidature suspension for internationals • Delegated authority to enter into agreements and contracts • Information custodianship and intellectual property considerations • Clarity on the difference between an internship and an employment relationship (i.e. Fair Work Act)
Governance	• Who will oversee adherence to and relevant policies and procedures? • Who will be responsible for ensuring research internship agreements are established and executed, and conditions are adhered to? • Can research internships be built into broader research collaboration agreements? • What resources are available to support agreement/contract establishment i.e. templates and guidelines? • How will relevant parties (candidates, supervisors, industry partners, professional staff) be informed of their obligations?

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	6. MANAGEMENT OF RECORD KEEPING & REPORTING
	Information in this section is intended to guide the development of record keeping and recording processes, to optimise institutional RTP funding allocations
Systems & processes	• Can your HDR student system host relevant internship information? • What, if any, systems (i.e. InPlace, SONIA) exist in your institution to manage internship activity? • Can your internship existing system be adapted to record HDR internship activity?
Record keeping	• How will eligibility with DESE requirements be recorded and monitored? • What information is required as evidence of meeting DESE eligibility requirements? • Who will be responsible for recording the relevant information? • How will this information be maintained for auditing purposes? • How are you capturing information for current candidates who will complete in 2022 and may have already completed an internship?
Reporting	• Who is responsible for DESE reporting in your institution? • How will they access the relevant information?
Monitoring internship activity	• Has the institution established targets for internship activity? • What metrics will be used to measure activity? • How will these be monitored and reported? • Who will be responsible for this?

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