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Issue Eighteen, August 2008

Introduction

Welcome to our eighteenth issue of "arts'n'edVISOR" in which we maintain a focus upon issues of concern to those of us currently (or potentially) acting as postgraduate supervisors.

Should you wish to respond to any of the items featured in this or previous issues, your comments or questions are always welcome. Copies of the previous "arts'n'edVISOR" newsletters may be accessed from:

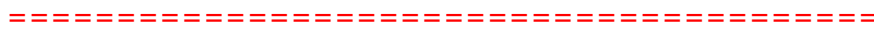
<http://www.deakin.edu.au/arts-ed/research/news.php>
via Faculty > Research > Newsletters

Also, if you are aware of new members of staff in your particular discipline, area, or centre, it would be much appreciated if you would advise them of this and past issues as well as sending the Faculty Research Office [email: arts-ed-researchdegrees@deakin.edu.au] their names and contact details for future issues.

Amongst the items in this issue is the revamping of Annual Reviews, the three phases of Research Training workshops, redefining "active" research, and improving candidates' publication records amongst other items. At the request of a couple of our postgraduates recently, also reproduced below is "Concept Mapping," which originally appeared in Issue Four, August 2003.

Not only do we invite contributions to "arts'n'edVISOR," but we also invite you to copy relevant excerpts for postgraduates in your charge.

Dr Ron Goodrich, <godric@deakin.edu.au>



I] 2007/2008 Annual Reviews & Completion Checklist

The online Annual Reviews will begin on **Monday, 15 September** for three weeks, closing to candidates and supervisors on **Friday, 3rd October** and can be accessed from anywhere in the world. Thereafter, School Heads, Deans, and R.R.T.C. Chair (or their nominees) enter their comments.

For any staff not familiar with the online annual review the following link provides information about the review relevant to supervisors:

http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/admin/hdradmin/annual_review_faq_sup.php

The following diagram provides an overview of how the online review operates:

http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/admin/hdradmin/instructions_sup.php

When the annual review system opens on Monday, 15th September, it can be accessed from the following URL:

http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/admin/hdradmin/annual_review.php

Navigating the annual review system, access issues, log-in or password queries, please contact:

Email: hdr-annual-review@deakin.edu.au

Phone: 03 5227 2633

Procedural matters such as candidate progress issues or content queries please contact:

Email: research-hdr@deakin.edu.au

Phone: 03 9251 7124

Please also note that the FAQ section on the Annual Review webpage has been expanded so our candidates are encouraged to consult this in the first instance. Answers to queries received previously are detailed here. The link is http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/admin/hdradmin/annual_review_faq.php

Introducing the 'Completion Checklist'

In this year's University Annual Review, candidates who state that they plan to submit their thesis before 31 December 2009 will be required to respond to a **Completion Checklist**. As (actual or acting) Principal Supervisor, we will be asked to comment on the candidate's responses.

1. Have you completed all fieldwork and/or data collection and/or experimentation (subject to limited confirmations)? If not, what is the date on which you plan to do so?
2. Have you finished your analysis of all fieldwork and/or data collection and/or experimentation (subject to limited confirmations)? If not, what is the date on which you plan to do so?
3. Can you complete the following: My research question is: (one sentence)? If not, what is the date on which you plan to do so?
4. Can you complete the following: My three main conclusions are:
 - a. One sentence
 - b. One sentence
 - c. One sentence
 If not, what is the date on which you plan to do so?
5. Have you a complete first draft? If not, what is the date on which you have agreed to provide this to your supervisor(s)? What is the date on which they have agreed to return it to you with their comments?
6. Have you a detailed (chapters and sub-headings) Table of Contents? If not, what is the date on which you plan to do so?
7. Have your supervisors secured the consent of potential examiners? If not, when is this going to happen?
8. Is your supervisor going on study leave or extended leave of any sort before 20th December 2009? If so, what arrangements have been made for your supervision while they are away?

II] Research Training ["H.D.R."] Workshops – Three Phases

As many of us would be aware, Deakin is aiming to lift postgraduate numbers from 2.9% of total enrolment at present to 5.0% by or before 2012. As part of this aim, a number of projects are afoot:

- > The establishment of the Institute of Research Training under the direction of Richard Ingleby to provide a range of practical programmes supporting candidates and their supervisors.
- > The promotion of Honours and other relevant programmes and pathways such as the coursework Masters with a research option to increase numbers of students looking to postgraduate research masters and doctorates.
- > An increase in the number of domestic and international research scholarships on offer and the waiving of tuition fees for international students in specifically targeted areas of research.

Amongst the reasons for low completion rates at Deakin (under 60%), Richard Ingleby in discussions with colleagues over many months would include:

- (a) not formulating an overarching research question or problem early enough (if at all);
- (b) a tendency to accumulate too much data or irrelevant data (often suggesting a mismatch between the research question and the methodology employed to resolve it);
- (c) a resistance to full drafting (often stemming from an attitude of "I've done all the research; now all I need to do is write it up" which misconstrues drafting as one single or uniform act).

With this in mind, the Institute of Research Training now proposes to divide the process of candidature into three main phases as follows:

Phase One: Formulating Research Question

Newly admitted candidates participate in the Institute's induction workshops as long as is needed to develop two documents in consultation with their supervisory panel:

- [1] Initial statement of Research Question [5,000 – 7,500 words]:
Including its key concepts, connexion to debate in the area of enquiry ("literature review"), its significance, theoretical framework(s) and methodological approach to be adopted.
- [2] Candidature Agreement:
Including research plan & timetable, key milestones, monitoring mechanisms.

Phase Two: Completing Data Collection & Analysis

Although this phase will of course vary depending upon the weighting and scope of the research—empirical or theoretical, quantitative or qualitative, discursive or exegetical—the candidate remains under the sole direction of his or her supervisory panel, but is free to attend writing and other relevant workshops.

For most of our students, Phase Two co-incides with a time when drafting a literature review or a chapter can be converted into a solo or joint potential refereed conference or journal paper or both [see Item (5) below].

Phase Three: Writing Up

This phase usually begins with the earliest occurrence of the following:

- 1) Acting on the advice of the (actual or acting) Principal Supervisor, Faculty H.D.R. Co-ordinators or nominees signal that the candidate has collected all data and completed its analysis;
- 2) Acting on the advice of the (actual or acting) Principal Supervisor, Faculty H.D.R. Co-ordinators or nominees signal that the candidate intends submitting within the next twelve months;
- 3) The University's Annual Review states that the candidate intends submitting within the next twelve months.

At this stage, the candidate re-joins the Institute for workshops on completion strategies.

III] Concept Mapping & Reading Actively

Having outlined the first phase of "Formulating Research Questions," it seems timely to re-produce (at the request of some postgraduates recently) a set of useful Canadian websites on concept mapping and reading actively:

* J.A. Parsons & David Palmer-Stone of Counselling Services - University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada have produced a series of short but practical guides covering a range of skills we all too often take for granted and are well worth drawing to the attention of our postgraduates. These include:

Concept Mapping (2003)

http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learn/program/hndouts/Map_ho.html

"Concept-Mapping" is a tool for assisting and enhancing many of the types of thinking and learning that we are required to do at university. To create a map, write the main idea in the centre of the page -- it may be a word, a phrase, or a couple of juxtaposed ideas, for example -- then place related ideas on branches that radiate from this central idea.

Reading Books (2003)

<http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learn/program/hndouts/readbk.html>

How do we navigate our way around a book? What cues are there? How do we know whether it is exactly what we need?

Reading & Understanding Texts (2003)

<http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learn/read.html>

How do we transform ourselves from passive to active readers? Why do we need to read and re-read?

Reading to Comprehend & Learn (2003)

<http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learn/program/hndouts/psq5r.html>

So many people seem to have developed formulae for effective reading comprehension. "But would it work for me?" remains the question. "PSQ5R" is a formula that you might want to consider.... The P stands for Purpose, the S for Survey, the Q for Question, and the 5 Rs for Read Selectively, Recite, Reduce-Record, Reflect, and Review

IV] Defining "Active & Successful" Researchers @ Deakin

Currently being debated at University level are the criteria for classifying staff as "active and successful in research" rather than simply "active," the vast majority of whom are involved in postgraduate research supervision. The latter attribute since 2002 in effect classified approximately 39% of academic staff across all Faculties as "active." However, the ultimate aim by 2012 is to see that percentage rise to approximately 70% in our Faculty.

From the University's point of view, members of staff in the non-science Faculties will be considered to be "research active" if they satisfy one of the following:

- At least one article as a major contributor (i.e. 0.5 or more) in a refereed journal in the top 50% of the field as determined by the ERA ranking, a book chapter of comparable quality, or other comparable creative work in the relevant year; or
- One book in the past three years; or
- External research income of at least \$30,000 in the relevant year; or
- A major external award or prize for research in the past three years.

Needless to say, in negotiating workload arrangements within Schools and Faculties variations upon the above can be expected.

V] Improving Our Candidates' Publication Record

As all of us are aware, the Federal Government basically recognises four kinds of research publication:

- A1 Books (weighting of 5)
- B1 Book chapters (weighting of 1)
- C1 Articles in refereed journals (weighting of 1)
- E1 Articles in refereed conference proceedings (weighting of 1).

As surveyed by Grant Michie, the numbers of postgraduates—and hence proportion of those enrolled usually ranging between 5% and 9%--in our combined Faculty publishing in the four categories were in recent years:

19	(16)	[2003]	
17	(10)	[2004]	
17	(8)	[2005]	() = refereed journals [C1]
25	(15)	[2006]	
27	(15)	[2007]	

The above numbers are significantly fewer than in other Faculties. Perhaps this reflects two noticeable tendencies: that our postgraduates look to convert their theses into books after completion and that they publish outside the four government-stipulated categories, especially those in the creative and performing arts. As expected, in the years cited above, full-time candidates generally published at 2.5+ times the rate of part-time and scholarship-holders doing so more than their full-time counterparts.

In his August 2007 report, Grant Michie concludes:

1. ...There are numerous advantages to publishing. For those candidates aiming for a postdoctoral fellowship or academic career, publications give them a head start in terms of a track record. Even if candidates are not intent on an academic or research career, publications build confidence, put them in a stronger position at the time of examination... The peer review process is a valuable source of feedback on a candidate's work.

At the University level the following approaches are being adopted:

- 'Chapter Week' events run by the Director, Research Training include specific discussion of the requirements for publication and students are encouraged to bring draft papers for advice and assistance.
- The Neil Archbold Memorial Travel Award and Medal, an annual scheme, has been introduced to reward candidates with the best journal papers. It is hoped that this will encourage others to publish.

Another possibility could be to set a formal target for student publications. These could be combined with financial incentives or could be made a requirement to be monitored via the Annual Review process.

2. ...Supervisors in all faculties should ensure that student publications are reported. They need to be aware of their student's publishing activity and request that a copy be submitted to Deakin. It should also be noted that a student who is a staff member at another university is able to report their publications to both institutions. Both institutions are permitted to claim the full * value of such publications.
3. ...The low publication rate of off campus candidates needs to be addressed. If it is simply a case of under reporting, then point 2 above should help. If it is a case of such students being generally disconnected from the academic environment, the challenge is greater.

The low publication rate in the Faculty of Arts & Education also needs to be addressed. Given that this Faculty has a high percentage of off campus candidates (57% compared with 17% for the other three faculties), there is a substantial degree of overlap between the target groups. Supervisors can play an important role. They should be encouraged to start their students on the publishing track by means of co-authorship...

* *Where a publication shows that an author has affiliation to more than one University (eg Janet Harvey, Tutor in Economics, University of X; PhD student, University of Y), each Australian University named in that by-line can each count the publication in its respective Research Publication Return.*

Slated for discussion at the Faculty's next Research Training Sub-Committee meeting is the question of making publication a mid-phase milestone for our candidates. If you wish to comment on the "what," "how," and "why" of such a proposal, please feel free to email your School H.D.R. Co-ordinators:

S.C.C.A.: Drs Sudesh Mishra <sudesh> & Katya Johanson <katya>

S.Educ.: A'Prof Chris Hickey <chick>

S.H.H.S.: Dr Andrew Vandenberg <vanden> & A'Prof Stan van Hooft <stanvh>

S.I.P.S.: Drs Tina Murphy <tinam> & Joost Cote <jcote>

VI]

NATIONAL FILM & SOUND ARCHIVE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

APPLY NOW FOR 2009

SCHOLARS AND ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE AT THE
NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) invites research proposals from academics, performers, artists, audiovisual industry and archive professionals to draw fresh, innovative perspectives from the national audiovisual collection. Fellows will use the NFSA's collection to create a new sound or moving image work, a publication, an exhibit, a live audiovisual event or a combination of these and other approaches.

The Fellowships offer specially facilitated access and research into the national collection; close collaboration with NFSA curatorial and technical experts; access to the Library; modern accommodation; and a fully equipped work space provided on-site.

Applications for the Fellowships are due by 15 November 2008. For further information and application forms, please visit <http://www.nfsa.gov.au/sar> or contact Belinda Hunt at belinda.hunt@nfsa.gov.au

VII] Don't Starve Innovation's Foot Soldiers

Les Field | **The Australian**, vol. 44, no. 13,596, June 11, 2008, p. 23.

In his HES article last week, Garry Jennings, president of the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes, took a sanguine view of the Rudd Government's first budget and the extent to which it might reflect a significant change in research priorities and policies.

Jennings pointed to the decision to open the \$11 billion Education Investment Fund to research institutes and the vocational education and training sector, as well as universities, as a sign of a new process of "simultaneous evolution and revolution" for the research community. I don't disagree with the decision to open the fund to MRIs and the VET sector. Nor can I argue with Jennings's contention that the main driver of grant allocation should be the community benefits of research and education, rather than where the money should be spent. But I think it is too early to say the revolution is on, or that we can at this stage predict the shape it might take.

The Government's first budget was safe: the ALP honoured its election promises and gave the universities welcome additional funding under the infrastructure renewal initiative. What it did not do was give any clear indication of where the Government is heading on research funding policy, or what the sector can expect more broadly from the education revolution.

The mechanism driving change at this stage is a whole range of reviews, including the Bradley review of higher education, the national innovation system review and the inquiry into research training and research workforce issues, to name just three.

The next six months will be the critical time for a final framework for the revolution to emerge, as the various inquiries report and the Government responds.

The University of NSW particularly welcomes the inquiry into research training as an opportunity to address a critical issue: how to support the cost of recruiting, training and retaining higher degree research students.

PhD students are the engine room of research activity, but Australia lags behind its international competitors in recognising the importance of university research training and research careers in driving the national innovation agenda. Funding that can be identified with a PhD completion has declined by more than 30 per cent a student over five years.

The ranking of six Australian universities in The Times Higher Education Supplement's world top 50 is compelling evidence of the quality of the Australian higher education sector. The research performance of our top universities has shown remarkable growth, despite the decline in funding.

But how have we managed this? The country's leading Group of Eight research-intensive universities now contribute 70 per cent to 80 per cent of all research activity across the sector. Over the past five years, we have increased our research output only by heavily cross-subsidising research activity from other sources, including revenue from undergraduate fee-paying international students.

The dangers of relying on continued growth in international student numbers to subsidise research performance are obvious. And the chickens are coming home to roost. The number of Australian commencing PhD students across the sector decreased by 30 per cent between 1995 and 2006.

UNSW has advised the research training inquiry that if this trend continues, Australia will face a severe shortage of highly qualified professionals, researchers and academics in core sectors, including science and engineering, and in fields critical to tackling national issues such as health and the environment.

PhD graduates are essential to the workforce that supports emerging industry sectors, including nanotechnology, advanced manufacturing and the biomedical and pharmaceutical industry. Failure to attract and retain PhD students in these areas will adversely affect Australia's competitiveness, and therefore our economy and our future.

The reviews of research and research training must take into account the real cost of undertaking research. We need a complete shake-up of how research is funded: research support, including grants, should fully cover the real cost of doing research and training the next generation of researchers.

At present the funding we receive to support our research students comes from a fixed pie: although the number of research students in the system has increased, funding to support them has not. This means that, in real terms, funding per student has declined dramatically.

Consideration should be given to the merits of a completely new funding model for higher degree research students that could mirror the funding scheme for undergraduate places.

There should be an agreed amount to support each research student, and the number of research students supported should reflect, among other factors, the research performance of the institution and the critical mass of research support that goes with a strong university research environment.

HDR scholarships must be higher in value if we are to compete on the international stage for the best candidates, and they should take account of the higher cost of living in capital cities. In addition, universities should be given more flexibility in how to manage HDR scholarships, so they are awarded at the appropriate value to the best students, both local and international.

A significant increase in the number of research fellowships is also critical, to create a career path for PhD graduates.

We suggest the Government consider amending the Migration Occupations in Demand List to include university teaching and research in the defined areas of anticipated skill shortage, to encourage international students completing Australian research degrees to remain in Australia.

The Rudd Government has placed the education revolution at the centre of its blueprint for the future. It has recognised that it is essential for Australia to maintain a strong university research sector. We have an opportunity to carefully assess what has worked for the sector so far, and what we need to change.

Overhauling the way we fund research, and in particular how we support HDR students, is fundamental to any effort to address key areas of skills shortage and to drive innovation.

Les Field is deputy vice-chancellor (research) at the University of NSW.