

## RESEARCH ACTIVE IN THE SCD POLICY

### Background

The Research Active Policy was first formulated in 2007 with reference to several Australian university research policies with the primary intention of setting out criteria according to which SCD faculty might be invited to supervise research degree theses. The policy was reviewed in May 2011, updated substantially in October 2012, and reviewed with minor amendments in January 2017 to ensure that it continues to make appropriate provision for the supervision of SCD postgraduate research theses both to comply with the 2017 Higher Education Standards and to meet the needs of the SCD community. Further minor amendments in March 2019 explicate expectations in relation to the distinction between research and scholarship (as described in TEQSA's Guidance Note: Scholarship and Guidance Note: Research and Research Training and similarly in SCD's Research Policy).

### Definition

As well as holding a doctorate, a 'research active' academic engages in ongoing research as an inherent part of his or her academic role including curriculum development and teaching.

Academics at each level of classification are required to show a degree of research and publication consonant with that level. The highest output is expected from academics at levels D and E, while faculty at level C should also show substantial research. Evidence of research activity is required for promotion.

To be recognized as 'research active', faculty apply to the Academic Board through the Research Committee using the *Research Active* application form for either *Experienced Researchers* (after five years full-time or part-time equivalent) or *Early-Career Researchers* (up to five years full-time or part-time equivalent). An application may be made at any time during the year. The Research Committee makes a recommendation to the Academic Board, which confirms or denies research active recognition.

Recognition as being 'research active' entitles the faculty member to be included in the *Register of Supervisors* and undertake supervision of research degree theses at the invitation of the Research Committee, acting through the Research Director.

As a general rule, a research active person holding a PhD or ThD may be invited to supervise any SCD research degree relevant to their expertise, while a research active person holding a DMin degree may be invited to supervise a DMin or an MPhil in a Ministry area.

### Duration

Research active status is retained for five years after initial recognition, after which it is reviewed by the Research Committee in light of relevant information provided in the annual *Research and Professional Activities Report*. The faculty member will be informed in advance that such a review is to

take place and may wish to submit a statement. If it appears that requirements for ongoing recognition have not been met, the Research Director will discuss the situation with the faculty member concerned to ascertain whether there are pending publications or demonstrated advances in a long-term research project or other relevant circumstances that would justify continuing recognition, subject to subsequent satisfactory outcomes. The Research Director will report to the Research Committee, which will reach a decision (i) to confirm continuing recognition as research active, (ii) to confirm continuing recognition as research active subject to particular conditions, or (iii) to cease to recognize the person as research active until a further application is received and reinstatement is deemed appropriate.

The faculty member will have the opportunity to appeal to the Dean for reconsideration.

If a person currently performing the role of Principal Supervisor for a thesis ceases to be recognized as research active, the Research Committee will consider the circumstances and decide in the best interests of the student whether (i) to permit the supervision arrangements to continue through to completion, (ii) to permit the supervision arrangements to continue while providing supplementary supervision or specific support to the supervisor and candidate, or (iii) to replace the supervisor by the following semester.

This process of review has been in operation from first semester 2013.

## **Conditions of Employment**

To be recognized as research active and eligible to undertake thesis supervision, a person's employment by SCD itself or a Member Institution must be ongoing or subject to a contract for at least twelve months full-time or part-time equivalent. In addition, the person's role will have in-built provision for research. This involves an appropriate allowance of research time in employment loading and/or provisions for sabbatical, with consequent processes of accountability. There may also be other provisions for research activity, such as supportive timetabling of teaching and administrative duties and/or conference funding, again with consequent processes of accountability.

## **Criteria for Research Active Recognition**

The SCD has agreed to adopt the criteria for inclusion in HERDC as published by the University of Sydney. From the University of Sydney *Criteria for Inclusion in HERDC*, September 2012:

### *Definition of Research*

Research is defined as the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings.

### *Characteristics of a Research Publication*

- scholarly activity, as evidenced by discussion of the relevant literature, an awareness of the history and antecedents of work described, and a format which allows a reader to trace sources of the work through citations, footnotes etc;
- originality, that is, it is not a compilation of existing works;
- veracity/validity through a peer review processes or commercial publisher process;

- increasing the stock of knowledge; and
- being in a form that enables dissemination of knowledge

The key criteria for recognition as research active in SCD include four specified by DIISRTE for HERDC collection in Table A and B institutions (a.-d. below). Although SCD is not currently placed in either of these Tables, the research goals and standards espoused by SCD are aligned as far as possible with those of Table A and B institutions. There are various systems in Australian universities for quantifying research activity. Quantifying of research activity in the SCD takes particular account of (i) the attributes of the broad discipline of Theology as benchmarked with current standards in the sector, (ii) the more general attributes of the Humanities in which Theology is located, (iii) the specifications of DIISRTE, and (iv) the fact that the SCD is currently ineligible to receive Australian Competitive Grants.

Research active recognition in SCD for both experienced and early-career academics requires a weighting of *five* within *no more than* a five-year full-time period (or part-time equivalent), from the following criteria based on peer review (weighting in brackets):

- Research book from a commercial publisher (5)
  - Chapter in a research book from a commercial publisher (1)
  - Research article in a refereed journal (1)
  - Chapter in proceedings of a conference (1)
  - Published translation with commentary of a scholarly text (3)
  - Performance or showing of a creative work as recognized and peer-reviewed within the discipline (1)
- Additional criterion for early-career researchers*
- Successfully completed doctoral thesis (not published as a book) (3)

In addition, experienced researchers must have achieved at least *one* of the following in the same five-year period (or part-time equivalent):

- Further publications in the first six categories above (a.-f.) with a total weighting of at least three
- Supervision to successful completion of *at least one* research higher degree candidate
- Associate supervision to successful completion of *at least two* research higher degree candidates
- Examination of *at least one* higher degree research thesis
- External research income of more than \$10,000
- One* external research grant from a scheme on the Australian Competitive Grants Register in partnership with a colleague in a Table A or B institution

In special circumstances, other evidence of research activity may also be taken into consideration by the Research Committee provided that the specific requirements set out above are almost entirely met and provided that such other evidence is substantial. Such other evidence may pertain to (i) scholarly pursuits that reflect standing in the field, (ii) research supervision and training, or (iii) exceptional personal circumstances.

*(i) Scholarly pursuits*

- Keynote address to a conference or invited public lecture pertaining to the area of academic expertise

- b. Refereed conference papers
- c. Successful grant applications for amounts under \$10,000
- d. Editorial role on a refereed journal
- e. Citations demonstrating scholarly reception of published work
- f. Invited reviews in peer-reviewed journals

*(ii) Supervision experience and training (experience and ongoing training)*

- a. Supervision of a research higher degree candidate in progress outside SCD
- b. Participation in professional development on supervision provided by the College

*(iii) Exceptional evidence*

- a. Successful completion of, or demonstrable progress towards completion of, a second doctorate or a research master's degree in an associated field
- b. Leadership role in an educational or church institution that involves oversight of the peer-reviewed research of others, development of an institutional research plan, or determination of major professional documents to support church law, doctrinal statements, or ministry planning.

## Variations Related to Employment

Academics who have substantial administrative roles within SCD and the Member Institutions, such as Principals of a Member Institution, the Dean and Directors in the Office of the Dean, or the Dean of Studies (Korean School of Theology), will be expected to meet the set criteria during their time of tenure at a reduced rate, typically but no more than 50%. Other substantial administrative roles, such as Academic Dean, may also attract a reduction of up to 50% subject to an individual case being made to the Research Committee. For academics in part-time employment the requirements will be calculated on a *pro-rata* basis.

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<b>Last Approval (Date)</b>	Standing Committee of Academic Board (25 October 2012)
<b>Date for Review</b>	October 2017
<b>Previous Approval(s)</b>	Academic Board (2007), reviewed May 2011
<b>Minor Amendments from 1 January 2017</b>	Standing Committee of Academic Board (25 January 2017), Academic Board (25 March 2019)