ANU's plans for a new supervisor database

Consultation open to all
Responses by 13 June to nectar@anu.edu.au or to the Chair of the Supervisor Professional
Development Working Party, Inger Mewburn inger.mewburn@any.edu.au

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Cover letter from NECTAR

Dear colleagues,

At the NECTAR Retreat (Registrations now open) we will have a discussion on ANU's
Supervision Improvement Plan with ANU's new Dean of HDR Professor Imelda Whelehan.

**Nevertheless, the consultation process on this proposal, is due by 13 June. NECTAR is
compiling a collective response.** Hence, NECTAR would like to extend our invitation to you
and all affected parties (from Honours student to Dean, even external supervisors) to join
the following consultation.

ANU is currently considering changes to supervision, including the establishment of a
supervisor database to serve the following purposes:

- Supervisors: as a place to access data on their activities for PDR discussions and promotion
  applications.
- Academic managers: to access data on student load and performance.
- Prospective students: to access data about supervisor specialties and availability.

Please read the attached document carefully. It sets out various potential functions of the
proposed database, with a range of compliance options (low, medium, high), plus three main
questions for discussion:

1. What should be required to register as a supervisor?
2. Should registration recognize and have different steps or process for different roles on the
   supervisory team?
3. What performance criteria should be met for supervisors to stay registered?

Consultation document below.

I look forward to your advice.

Regards

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NECTAR – ANU's Network of Early Career Teachers, Academics and Researchers
Join the discussion: T: @NECTARatANU | W: http://nectar.anu.edu.au | E: nectar@anu.edu.au

Professional development of supervisors working party

Meeting three: models for a supervisor database at ANU
Author: Associate Professor Inger Mewburn

Aim

In March 2017, the HDRC approved in principle the establishment of a supervisor database. This meeting is to get feedback from the community about design options.

Purpose of the database

There are a range of stakeholders that have an interest in a supervisor database at ANU

> Supervisors: as a place to access data on their activities for PDR discussions and promotion applications.
> Academic managers: to access data on student load and performance.
> Prospective students: to access data about supervisor specialties and availability

Supervisor database models

The table below is the result of benchmarking study of the existing supervisor databases around the country and the world. The various functions of the data bases are listed in the column on the left. The three columns on the right show how this function might be carried out in a High, Medium and Low compliance way.

This table is offered to help us design a flexible, fit for purpose database. We should consider whether each function should be treated in a Low, Medium or High way, depending on the outcome we want to achieve.

This table is meant to aid discussions of what we want the database to achieve, not to work out the technical specifications, which will be carried out by ITS.

	Compliance Level		
Function	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**
Getting registered	Automatic enrolment on commencement of employment with an expectation that supervisors will ensure they comply with	Compulsory briefing about policy and procedures around research supervision before registration can be completed	Compulsory briefing about policy and procedures and completion of a course about how to be a good supervisor.

	relevant policies and procedures.		
Professional development activities	Completely voluntary	Once initial briefing has been completed, supervisors must only attend briefing sessions at nominated intervals.	Must complete a number of PD activities each year to stay registered. This may include central briefing sessions and/or college based PD activities
Research activity level	Simply linked to current statement of academic activity	Must meet a defined minimum research activity measure to register, then no further measurement.	Must pass a research activity measure applied at a nominal interval (ie: once every six years)
Level of membership	No levels, you're either on or off.	Membership according to level of academic appointment and experience/role within supervisory teams	Levels of membership are available according to experience and achievements: bronze, silver, gold
Continuance	All academic staff automatically stay on the register until termination of employment	Register is reviewed at regular intervals and people who have not supervised for a nominated period of years are automatically removed.	Renewal is not automatic unless PD and research activity test are met each year and/ or nominated period.
External supervisors	Anyone can be registered, regardless of their affiliation and have access to university systems.	If applicants are registered another university, they will be recognised, otherwise must undertake a short quiz or similar to get registered.	All external applicants must meet the appropriate requirements to register for their level of experience.

Suspension of registration	Can only be triggered as part of a formal disciplinary process	If the staff member gets a poor performance rating on their annual development review triggers a review and might lead to suspension.	Registration is suspended: - as part of a formal disciplinary process - If the staff member gets a poor performance rating on their annual development review. - at the request of management (ie: the dean of students, Dean HDR or HOS)
Trial periods	No trial period, membership means you can act in any role	If you already have experience, you can take on any role. If you have not yet graduated a student, you must have a nominated mentor for the duration of your first candidature.	Normally cannot be primary supervisor or panel chair until they have completed at least one student as a panel member.
Current and past students	No information about current and past students	Shows numbers of current and past students (and possibly capacity)	Shows numbers of current and past students (and possibly capacity) as well as information of student outcomes.

Questions for discussion:

1) What should be required to register as a supervisor?

2) Should registration recognize and have different steps or process for different roles on the supervisory team?

3) What performance criteria should be met for supervisors to stay registered?