



**UNSW**  
Australian  
Human Rights  
Institute



**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM**

*Higher Degree Researchers - Interviews*

***Understanding HDR candidate-supervisor relationship challenges (Phase 2)***

*Professor Jan Breckenridge, Professor Belinda Hewitt, Professor Justine Nolan, Dr Allison Henry*

**1. What is the research study about?**

You are invited to take part in this research study. The research study aims to examine the workplace relationship issues commonly arising between Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidates (known as graduate researchers at some universities) and their supervisors (known as advisors at some universities), and how these issues are managed within Australian universities. Such issues include mismatched expectations, communication problems, bullying, supervisor and candidate performance, conflicts of interest, inappropriate relationships and attachments and sexual harassment and sexual assault. The results of this research study will help to address knowledge gaps, enhance understanding of the HDR experience, and provide the basis for training in more effective responses.

You have been invited because you are currently a HDR candidate at one of the 10 Australian universities participating in the study:

1. Australian National University (ANU)
2. James Cook University (JCU)
3. RMIT University
4. Swinburne University of Technology
5. The University of Adelaide
6. The University of Melbourne
7. The University of Sydney
8. The University of Western Australia (UWA)
9. University of New South Wales (UNSW)
10. University of Tasmania

**2. Who is conducting this research?**

The study is being led by the Australian Human Rights Institute and the Gendered Violence Research Network at UNSW Sydney. The research is being carried out by the following researchers:

- Professor Jan Breckenridge – Head of the School of Social Sciences, Co-Convener of the Gendered Violence Research Network, UNSW Sydney (CI).
- Professor Belinda Hewitt – School of Social and Political Sciences, Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne (CI).
- Professor Justine Nolan – Director, Australian Human Rights Institute, UNSW Sydney (CI).
- Dr Allison Henry – Research Fellow, Australian Human Rights Institute, UNSW Sydney (CI, Project Manager, Lead Researcher).

**Research Funder:** This research is being funded by the Australian Council of Graduate Research and individual Australian universities participating in the research (see above at 1).

**3. Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria**

Before you decide to participate in this research study, we need to ensure that it is ok for you to take part. The research study is looking recruit people who meet the following criteria:

- aged 18 years of age or older
- currently enrolled as a Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidate (ie undertaking Masters by research, PhD or Professional Doctorate) at one of the 10 participating universities
- currently located in Australia



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Participants who meet the following criteria will be excluded from the study:

- Participants that do not meet the above criteria.

**4. Do I have to take part in this research study?**

Participation in this research study is voluntary. If you do not want to take part in the interview component of the study, you do not have to.

Participation in this research study is separate from participation in your HDR program and choosing to/not to participate will not have any impact on your program of study.

If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the study at any stage.

If you decide you want to take part in the interview component of the research study, you will be asked to:

- Read the information carefully (ask questions if necessary);
- Sign and return the consent form if you decide to participate in the study;
- Take a copy of this form with you to keep.

**5. What does participation in this research require, and are there any risks involved?**

If you agree to participate you will be asked to complete the following research procedures.

**Screening:** Participants in interviews will have first completed the online survey for this research project and then indicated their willingness to be interviewed. The initial questions in the online survey, following consent, will serve as a screening questionnaire and ensure that participants meet the inclusion criteria for both the online survey and interviews.

**Interview:** A semi-structured online video interview, when you will be asked questions about your HDR candidate experience, explore views and perceptions of the HDR candidate-supervisor relationship, and how problems in the relationship are managed. The interview will take place will be conducted via online platforms such as Teams or Zoom and will take 30-45mins.

With your permission the research team would like to audio record the interview so that the data collected from you can be accurately documented. The audio recording will be transcribed and coded. Please see information below about how the audio recording and transcription documents will be accessed and stored.

Your consent to record the interview will be sought at the beginning of the interview. If you do not wish to be recorded but you would like to participate you can advise the research team and written notes will be taken instead.

You will receive an initial reminder and one follow up reminder.

**Additional Costs and Reimbursement:** There are no costs associated with participating in this research project, nor will you be paid.



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**Psychological Distress:** You may feel that some of the questions we ask are stressful or upsetting. If you do not wish to answer a question, you may skip it and go to the next question, or you may stop immediately. If you become upset or distressed as a result of your participation in the interview, the research team will be able to arrange for counselling or other appropriate support. Alternatively, a number of free contactable support services are included at section 10. Any counselling or support will be provided by qualified staff who are not members of the research team. This counselling will be provided free of charge.

**6. What will happen to information about me?**

By signing the consent form, you consent to the research team collecting and using information about you for the research study.

The research team will store the data collected from you for this research project for a minimum of 7 years after the completion of the research.

The information about you will be stored in a re-identifiable format where any identifiers such as your name and university will be replaced with a unique code.

You will be asked to provide your consent for the research team to share or use the information collected from you in future research that will be an extension of, or closely related to, the original project; or is in the same general area of research.

Your information will only be shared in a format that will not identify you.

- Information collected from you in an electronic format will be stored on a UNSW password protected OneDrive only accessible to the approved research investigators.
- Audio or video recordings will be stored on a UNSW password protected OneDrive only accessible to the approved research investigators and will be made available to a professional transcription service. Recordings will only be made available after a confidentiality agreement has been signed.

The information you provide is personal information for the purposes of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW). You have the right of access to personal information held about you by the University, the right to request correction and amendment of it, and the right to make a complaint about a breach of the Information Protection Principles as contained in the PPIP Act. Further information on how the University protects personal information is available in the [UNSW Privacy Management Plan](#).

**7. How and when will I find out what the results of the research study are?**

The research team intend to publish and report the results of the research. All Information will be published in a way that will not identify you.

A copy of the results of this research will be emailed to all HDR candidates and supervisors at the participating universities at the completion of this research project.



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**8. What if I want to withdraw from the interview component of the research study?**

If you do consent to participate, you may withdraw at any time. You can do so by completing the 'Withdrawal of Consent Form' which is provided at the end of this document or you can contact the research team and tell them you no longer want to participate. Your decision not to participate or to withdraw from the study will not affect your relationship with UNSW Sydney, your own university or the Australian Council of Graduate Research. If you decide to leave the research study, the researchers will not collect additional information from you. You can request that any identifiable information about you be withdrawn from the research project.

**9. What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the research study?**

If you have a complaint regarding any aspect of the study or the way it is being conducted, please contact the UNSW Human Ethics Coordinator:

**Complaints Contact**

<b>Position</b>	UNSW Human Research Ethics Coordinator
<b>Telephone</b>	+ 61 2 9385 6222
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:humanethics@unsw.edu.au">humanethics@unsw.edu.au</a>
<b>Reference Number</b>	iRECS4393

**10. What should I do if I have further questions about my involvement in the research study?**

The person you may need to contact will depend on the nature of your query.

**Support Services Contact Details**

If at any stage during the study, you become distressed or require additional support from someone not involved in the research please call:

<b>Name/Organisation</b>	1800 RESPECT
<b>Telephone</b>	1800 737 732

<b>Name/Organisation</b>	Lifeline Australia
<b>Telephone</b>	13 11 14

**Research Team / Chief Investigator Contact Details**

If you require further information regarding this study or if you have any problems which may be related to your involvement in the study, you can contact the following member of the research team:

<b>Name</b>	Dr Allison Henry
<b>Position</b>	Research Fellow, Australian Human Rights Institute, UNSW Sydney
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:allison.henry@unsw.edu.au">allison.henry@unsw.edu.au</a>



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**Consent Form – Participant providing own consent**

**Declaration by the participant**

- I understand I am being asked to provide consent to participate in this research study;
- I have read the Participant Information Sheet, or someone has read it to me in a language that I understand;
- I understand the purposes, study tasks and risks of the research described in the study;
- I understand that the research team will audio record the interviews; I agree to be recorded for this purpose.
- I provide my consent for the information collected about me to be used for the purpose of this research study only.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received;
- I freely agree to participate in this research study as described and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the study and withdrawal will not affect my relationship with any of the named organisations and/or research team members;
- I would like to receive a copy of the study results via email or post, I have provided my details below and ask that they be used for this purpose only;
- I understand that I will be given a signed copy of this document to keep.
- I would like to receive a copy of the study results via email, I have provided my details below and ask that they be used for this purpose only.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Optional Consent for reuse of data and future research:**

- I provide my consent for the information collected about me to made available to other researchers as described at section 6 of this document.

**Participant Signature**

Name of Participant (please print)	
Signature of Research Participant	
Date	

**Declaration by Researcher\***

- I have given a verbal explanation of the research study; its study activities and risks and I believe that the participant has understood that explanation.

**Researcher Signature\***

Name of Researcher (please print)	
Signature of Researcher	
Date	

**\*An appropriately qualified member of the research team must provide the explanation of, and information concerning the research study.**

**Note: All parties signing the consent section must date their own signature.**



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**Form for Withdrawal of Participation**

I wish to **WITHDRAW** my consent to participate in this research study described above and understand that such withdrawal **WILL NOT** affect my relationship with The University of New South Wales, my own university or the Australian Council of Graduate Research.

- I am withdrawing my consent and I would like any identifiable information collected about me which I have provided for the purpose of this research study withdrawn.

**Participant Name**

Name of Participant (please type)	
Date	

**The section for Withdrawal of Participation should be forwarded to:**

CI Name:	Dr Allison Henry
Email:	<a href="mailto:allison.henry@unsw.edu.au">allison.henry@unsw.edu.au</a>
Postal Address:	Australian Human Rights Institute UNSW Sydney Sydney NSW 2052