

ARMS 2024 CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Theme: Effective collaboration with external stakeholders

Title: Governance and operating principles for the Industry PhD – from fragmentation to coherence

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Abstract:

Researchers from UNSW and the University of Melbourne have a long history of industry engaged PhD projects, which vary greatly depending on the external partner relationship. Across disciplines, industry engaged PhDs have varying agreements, funding models, reporting capabilities and expectations of the candidate and external supervisors. There are few unifying principles for industry engagement in a PhD.

Since 2022, universities have been asked to formally document a minimum of three months industry-focussed R&D in their PhDs, which are to be rewarded with “bonus” points at completion. This is an incentive to increase engagement with research end-users and advance research translation and commercialisation.

This requirement has naturally led to a level of scrutiny on policy and procedure surrounding the establishment and ongoing practice of industry engaged PhDs.

Central units such as the UNSW Graduate Research School and UoM’s Graduate Research Industry team can provide leadership, advice and clear operating and governance principles for what makes a “good” industry engaged PhD. Clear guidelines clarify expectations, minimise risk and facilitate a higher quality experience for candidates, the university, and the external partner.

The expectation is that industry engaged research degrees will be an important ongoing component of the national HDR landscape. It is essential that clear governance and operating principles be established to encourage key principles to be followed.

Representatives from the Industry PhD area at both UNSW and UoM will relate their experience and initiatives in this space with the goal to share practice in this important and evolving space.