



THE UNIVERSITY  
of ADELAIDE

2023

# Higher degree researcher strategy





At a time of significant economic, social and technological transformation, a workforce equipped with high-level analytical and critical thinking skills is essential for future prosperity.

Higher Degree by Research graduates are future-makers, powered by research skills and curiosity. Our graduates emerge ready to take leading roles, not just in higher education but across all parts of the economy and society—regionally, nationally, and globally.

The University of Adelaide’s Higher Degree by Research (HDR) pathways will **inspire, develop, and enable the researchers and innovators of the future.**

Aligning with the University’s Strategic Plan (2022-2023 update), we will build on our existing strengths and transform the experience of our Higher Degree Researchers (HDRs) so that the University of Adelaide stands out as an institution of choice—not only because of our research excellence but also due to the excellence of the HDR candidature experience we provide.

The success of this strategy will depend on how we jointly drive progress toward excellence across all areas of the University and with our external partners. Our approach will be built on a solid foundation: the University’s values of integrity, respect, collegiality, excellence and discovery, and the University of Adelaide’s Strategic Plan.

The three pillars of our HDR strategy are:

- Research and Innovation Future Makers
- Experience Excellence
- Future-making Community.

# Research and innovation future makers

The University of Adelaide's HDR pathways will support graduates to create their own paths, build a collaborative future, and achieve unrivalled impact.

## Research impact through research excellence and engagement

The future of research and innovation lies in the hands of the researchers we inspire and train now. It is they who will help shape the future of our society, economy, culture, and environment. It is they who will educate future researchers.

The University will maintain a sharp focus on **research excellence** and meaningful contributions to knowledge.

Simultaneously, our engagement with external partners such as businesses, governments, non-governmental organisations, communities, and community organisations will increase to become an integral part of all HDR experiences, with a clear focus on the important impact of research.

We will:

- embed engagement-focused learning into all our research training programs
- reconsider program learning outcomes and related assessments
- establish research internships as an integral element of our PhD program
- increase the number of industry-embedded research training opportunities
- develop an HDR Industry Engagement Community of Practice and ambassador network.

## Research entrepreneur pathway

Undertaking research at the cutting edge of knowledge opens many doors, including opportunities to start a business.

Embedding entrepreneurially-minded HDRs into the University's flagship business incubator, ThinkLab—and the state's thriving entrepreneurial community and innovation precincts—will offer unique opportunities for HDRs to embrace and develop entrepreneurial mindsets and skills.

For those who want to not only complete their HDR but also build a business and a future as an entrepreneur or intrapreneur, we will:

- develop a Research Entrepreneur Pathway as part of our research training programs
- embed HDRs in ThinkLab and the state's thriving entrepreneurship communities and support systems
- encourage an entrepreneurial mindset and skills broadly across the HDR cohort and in HDR supervisors.

## Future careers

Given the growing diversity of roles in the workforce open to research graduates, it's vital that we offer more opportunities for our HDRs to improve their readiness for academic (education and research) and non-academic careers. This will include greater access to career guidance and mentoring.

We will:

- facilitate learning opportunities that advance readiness for a diversity of career options
- offer career mentoring specific to HDR graduates.

## What will change?

We will:

- embed engagement and impact-focused learning as a core element of all HDR experiences
- develop and support unique entrepreneurial opportunities through a new Research Entrepreneur Pathway
- advance career readiness, planning and support for all HDRs.

# Experience excellence

The University of Adelaide will deliver an HDR experience that combines research and innovation excellence with an outstanding candidature experience.

## Culture

As a University, we have committed to demonstrably strengthening our culture of integrity, respect, collegiality, excellence, and discovery.

To strengthen our culture—as explicitly experienced by our HDRs—we will:

- improve the quality lens on supervision practice and the promotion of positive HDR-supervisor relationships
- further advance the postgraduate coordinator role and network
- develop mechanisms to set expectations for, and monitoring of, the HDR experience over time
- proactively seek feedback from, and jointly work with, our HDRs in shaping their experience.

## Experience innovation

We will continue to improve the experience our HDRs have during their time at our University.

This experience affects much more than their wellbeing and progress during their candidature; it shapes their future research leadership and thus the experience of future generations within and outside higher education.

We will:

- renew our IT systems for a better HDR experience
- better capture the voice of our HDRs, i.e. introduce an annual experience survey to steer continual improvement
- support innovative ideas and actions to improve experience
- implement oral examinations for PhDs, alongside internally and externally facing presentations during candidature
- celebrate the diverse achievements of our HDRs.

## HDR support

Our HDRs receive high-quality research training and pastoral support, with access to world-class facilities and learning opportunities, such as the Career Research and Skills Training (CaRST) program.

We will further improve access to relevant new development and support opportunities in relation to research and related skills.

Furthermore, experience excellence will be characterised by a robust support system designed to foster the health and wellbeing of our HDRs.

We will:

- promote and, as necessary, expand health and wellbeing offers and support structures for our HDRs
- continue driving improvement across infrastructure and support systems.





## Supervisor support

The experience of our HDRs is closely connected to the support they receive from their supervisors, dedicated advisors who guide them throughout their candidature.

Beyond the research training, it is the quality of the interactions, the mentoring and advice, and the pastoral care offered by the supervisory team that elevates the experience from good to excellent.

To better enable and empower our supervisors in this critical role, we will:

- introduce a comprehensive professional development program
- improve supervisor experience by upgrading our IT systems
- introduce new ways of recognising, inspiring and celebrating supervision quality, mentoring and innovation of individuals and groups.

## What will change?

We will:

- further strengthen a positive culture founded on the University's values, driving respectful and collegial interactions, as well as an inspiring and inclusive environment for our HDRs to learn and succeed
- improve and innovate the experience of our HDRs
- strengthen high-quality support to foster both academic achievements and wellbeing
- develop new ways of offering professional development, support, and recognition of supervisory excellence.

# Future-making community

The University of Adelaide will create an environment where HDRs feel a strong sense of community and belonging.

## Communities

The University offers unique opportunities for embracing and developing strong cohorts and supportive networks as part of the broader University and research communities.

Active community building will ensure our HDRs pursue their passion while feeling part of relevant communities and cohorts, including and beyond their disciplinary area.

We will:

- proactively build communities and interdisciplinary cohorts in line with the University's strategic plan and FAME (*'foci and magnets of excellence'*) areas – sustainability, agrifood and wine, healthy societies, and Digi+
- further develop interdisciplinary HDR communities aligned to our world-class research institutes
- strengthen and expand discipline- and school-based HDR associations and networks
- develop a wide-ranging social events calendar and peer support network.

## International

Research is a global endeavour. Being a researcher means joining an international community of individuals, groups and institutions seeking to advance knowledge and make meaningful contributions to history.

The University values a globally integrated community empowered by strong international partnerships and global learning opportunities.

We will:

- enhance opportunities for HDRs to participate in, and contribute to, the global research and innovation community
- strengthen international HDR connections through strategic partnerships.

## Diversity

Being a diverse and inclusive community is our strength; and one we seek to encourage further and support. We will continue to strengthen diversity and inclusion across our HDR cohorts and relevant support communities.

We will:

- strategically support diversity in our HDR recruitment efforts and across our HDR community
- provide support that facilitates a sense of community for all.

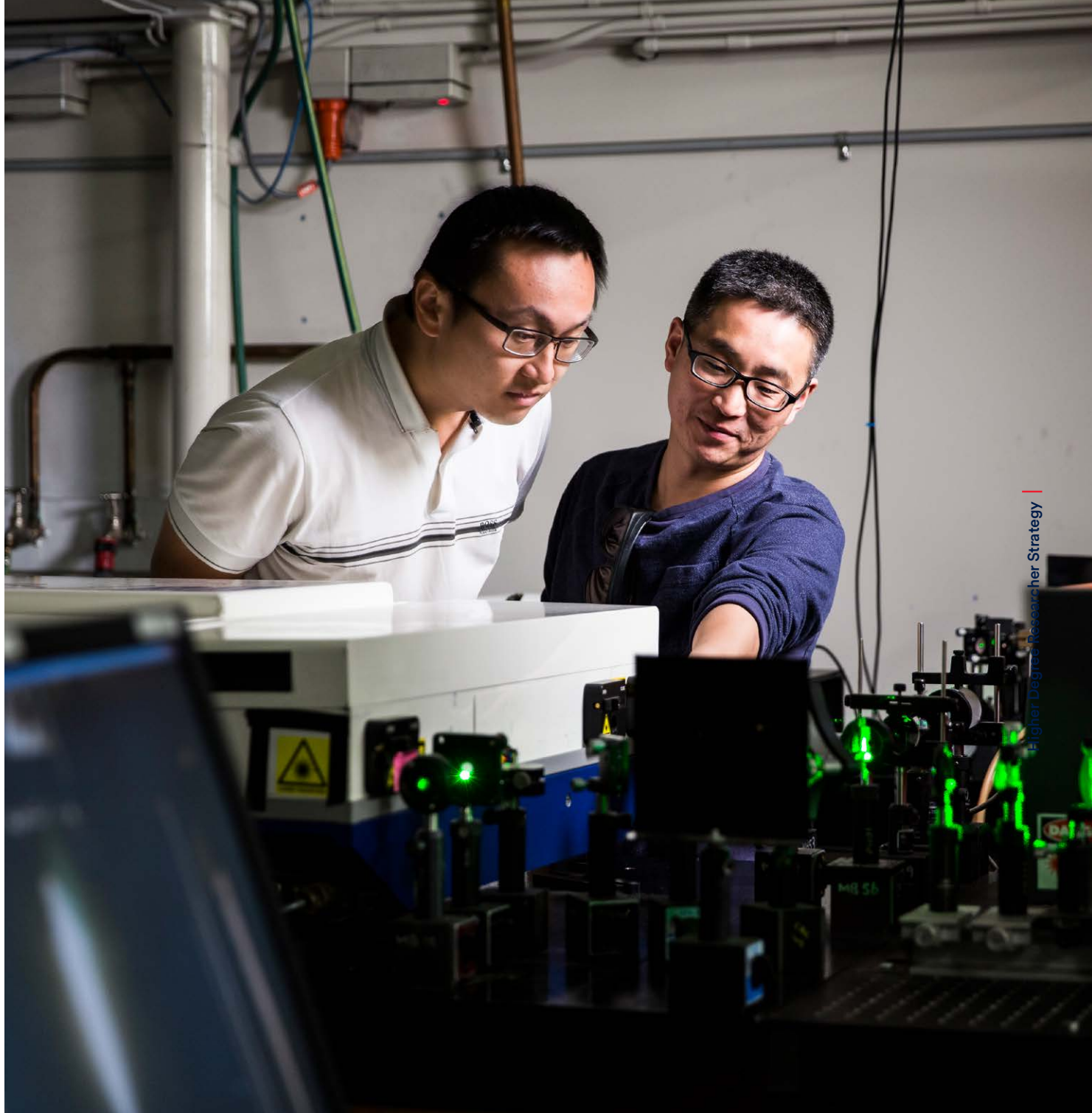
## Lifelong

Being part of our community begins with accepting the offer—and it doesn't end when the thesis is submitted, or the degree conferred.

We will ensure that our HDRs feel part of our community as soon as they decide to join—and remain an important part of it throughout their careers.

We will:

- proactively engage with our HDRs as part of the University community from the time they accept their offer
- strengthen our engagement with graduates as part of a lifelong community of learners and future-makers.



## What will change?

We will:

- proactively develop a strong community fabric
- co-create interdisciplinary FAME communities and cohorts alongside disciplinary networks
- enhance opportunities for our HDRs to participate in, and shape, the international research and innovation community
- encourage and support diversity and inclusion in our HDR community
- build earlier and longer-lasting connections.

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### **Kaurna acknowledgement**

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Kaurna people, the original custodians of the Adelaide Plains and the land on which the University of Adelaide's campuses at North Terrace, Waite, and Roseworthy are built. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of the Kaurna people to country and we respect and value their past, present and ongoing connection to the land and cultural beliefs. The University continues to develop respectful and reciprocal relationships with all Indigenous peoples in Australia, and with other Indigenous peoples throughout the world.