MPA Audit of stressors for HDRs
March 2019

Personal stressors	Potential concerns as reported by HDRs	Existing program/service	Action recommended/comments
Social interaction			
	Lonely, isolated	MPA HDR social night	
		MPA Free lunches	
		MPA Daytrips	
		MPA Volunteering program	
		MPA Mentoring program	
		MPA Sports program	
		MPA postgrad groups	
		MPA Yoga	
		School/Faculty social events	See school culture section
	Overwhelmed		Establish quiet space/relaxation rooms
	Struggling with English (verbal)	English Connect	
		MPA social events	
		School/Faculty social events	
	Looking for like-minded HDRs	MPA Indigenous HDR group	
		MPA Queer social program	
		MPA Postgrad parents group	
			Investigate establishing HDR women's group

Personal stressors	Potential concerns as reported by HDRs	Existing program/service	Action recommended/comments
Health			
	Lack of energy	MPA Sports programs	
		MPA Yoga	Encourage daily exercise
		MPA end-of-semester massages	
		Monash Sports	
	Access to affordable healthy food	Wholefoods restaurant	Establish more healthy food options
	Not making sensible diet choices		Encourage healthy eating
	Chronic illness	Uni medical centre, Counselling	Establish quiet space/relaxation rooms
	Permanent/temporary disability	DSS registration	Requires improvement and expansion to HDR
	Diagnosed/suspected mental illness	Uni medical centre, Counselling	Improve referral network & links
Career			
	Failing to secure employment in academia	Tutoring, RA work Publications grant	No specific training in obtaining academic jobs, other than some Faculty-led initiatives
	Failing to secure employment	Careers connect	Seem to be less effective for HDRs
Headspace			
	Lack of motivation	Supervisor/counselling	
	Imposter syndrome	Supervisor/counselling	

Personal stressors	Potential concerns as reported by HDRs	Existing program/service	Action recommended/comments
Finances			
		HDR scholarships available	Lobby to increase HDR scholarships
		Tutoring and RA positions available	Transparent appointment process for tutoring/ RA positions needed across all schools
		MPA postgraduate employment	Increase number of positions available
		Careers Connect	Establish HDR focus
	Homeless	Monash Connect assistance	
	Unable to afford food	MPA grocery support	
		Monash Connect assistance	
	Unable to pay bills	MPA emergency fund	
		Monash Connect assistance	
	Unable to afford a laptop	MPA laptop borrowing scheme	
	Unable to afford child-care	Uni subsidised child-care	Establish low-cost on-campus occasional child-care centre
	Unable to attend conference	University travel grants	Investigate top-ups for HDRs on low incomes
	Unable to afford graduation fees		Investigate graduation fee subsidies

Personal stressors	Potential concerns as reported by HDRs	Existing program/service	Action recommended/comments
Family			
	Family member ill	Paid carers leave in scholarship	
		Uni medical centre	
	No access to child-care	University child-care centres	Establish low-cost on-campus occasional child-care centre
	Family violence	Paid leave in scholarship	
		Access to SECASA support	
		Safer Communities	
		Counselling	
	Spouse feeling isolated	English connect classes for spouse of HDRs	Establish social network of international HDR spouse
	Feeling homesick	Paid annual leave in scholarship	Establish social network of international HDRs from the same country
		MPA social events	
		School/Faculty social events	

Institutional stressors	Potential concerns as reported by HDRs	Existing program/service	Action recommended/comments
Supervision			
	Poor academic relationship with supervisor	MPA advocacy service	
		MPA supervisor-relationship workshops	
		MGRO training for supervisors	
	Pressure to publish		
	Sexual assault and/or harassment	RNA modules for students MGRO training for supervisors Safer Communities/SECASA	No support for students when reporting to Safer Communities
Lab culture			Establish agreements between students and supervisors about behaviour within labs
	Pressure to publish		
	Pressure to work long hours		Can result in no time for a part-time job which leads to financial distress
	Pressure to not take leave entitlements		
	Pressure to undertake unpaid RA work		
	Pressure to not take paid employment outside the uni		Can lead to financial distress

Institutional stressors	Potential concerns as reported by HDRs	Existing program/service	Action recommended/comments
School culture			
	Poor culture operating in school/department - HDRs feel lonely, excluded, disrespected or not valued.	Some schools take deliberate measures to establish a healthy culture including: running social programs; considering layout and space allocations; demonstrating respect for HDRs through the demeanour and actions of staff.	This varies enormously across schools. Develop a "good practice' guide which lists practical ways in which schools can work towards improving the culture.
Time			
	Experimental work fails		
	Run out of candidature		
	Run out of scholarship funding		
	Time lost due to milestones preparation		
	Time lost due to compulsory professional development		
	Irrelevance of compulsory professional development		
	Time lost to compulsory coursework		
	Irrelevance of compulsory coursework		

Institutional stressors	Potential concerns as reported by HDRs	Existing program/service	Action recommended/comments
Professional staff support			
	Poor relationship with graduate coordinator	MPA mentor programs (peer and alumni)	
		Support from other staff in school	Investigate establishing mentor/support staff member for HDRs (other than their supervisors).
		MGRO training for graduate coordinators	
Specialist staff support			
	Lack of specialised advice and support on mental illnesses, bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual abuse and family violence.	Students sent to Safer Communities without any independent support or advice being provided.	Safer Communities not resourced to deal with minor infractions. Establish, train, advertise and support a network of specialist advisors across all faculties.

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University governance			
	Policies do not support all students, especially those with mental illnesses	Uni Standing Committee on Mental Health puts forward proposal that all policies must consider mental health conditions	This does not always play out at the level where policy is created and amended.
		MPA lobbies university for policy change	May or may not be successful