

Higher Degree by Research Academic Progress

1.0 Purpose

2.0 Scope

3.0 Procedure

3.1 HDR supervisory meetings | 3.2 Candidature milestones | 3.3 Early candidature milestone (ECM) | 3.4 Confirmation of candidature | 3.5 Thesis and candidature review milestone (TCRM) | 3.6 Progress reports | 3.7 Publication during candidature | 3.8 Progress Support Plan (PSP) | 3.9 Unsatisfactory Progress | 3.10 Review of Decision

4.0 Definitions

5.0 Information

6.0 Related policy documents and supporting documents

1.0 Purpose

This procedure supports the *Higher Degree by Research Policy* by outlining the requirements for academic progress for higher degree by research (HDR) candidates.

2.0 Scope

This procedure applies to the University's HDR programs and HDR candidates enrolled in these programs.

3.0 Procedure

HDR candidates will have the progress of their research project regularly monitored through:

- Regular supervisory meetings (see section 3.1); and
- Formal assessment of progress through candidature milestones (see sections 3.2 to 3.6).

Candidates enrolled in the coursework component of an HDR program will also have their progress in this component monitored and assessed in accordance with the University's *Assessment Policy* and supporting *Assessment Procedure for Students*.

Candidates will be supported to develop a publication plan which will be monitored through candidature milestones and will include the development of at least one peer-reviewed publication or other research output produced under supervision (doctoral candidates only (see section 3.7)).

3.1 HDR supervisory meetings

3.1.1

Supervisors are required to monitor their candidates' overall academic progress and their preparedness for milestone reviews and thesis examination through regular meetings and review of work submitted at regular intervals.

3.1.2

A candidate and their supervisory team will agree on a supervision meeting schedule.

3.2 Candidature milestones

3.2.1

A candidate's progress will be formally assessed through candidature milestone reviews: the Early Candidature Milestone; Confirmation of Candidature; the Thesis and Candidature Review Milestone

and the Progress Report (applicable to part-time candidates only). See sections 3.3 to 3.6 for an outline of these milestones. The application and timing of each milestone is dependent on the HDR program in which the candidate is enrolled.

3.2.2

All milestones provide an opportunity to:

- Assess the progress of the research in the context of the program requirements and timeframe to completion;
- Reflect on and review supervisory arrangements (refer to the *Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedure* for the requirements and procedure for making changes to supervisory arrangements);
- Identify and address any issues or potential issues affecting progress; and
- Consider the professional development needs of the candidate in the context of the research project and career pathway as well as monitor and support the candidate's Professional Development Plan.

3.2.3

Candidates can view their milestone due dates via myGriffith; supervisors can view their candidates' milestone due dates on the [HDR Supervision Dashboard](#).

3.2.4

Candidates are required to complete the milestone no later than one month after the specified due date or, for the Thesis and Candidature Review Milestone, within the maximum timeframe specified in the candidate's myGriffith portal.

3.2.5

Candidates may request an extension to a milestone due date for reasons directly related to the research (such as a major change in the direction of the project) or for other reasons beyond their control, and may do so for up to:

- Three months full-time equivalent for a masters (research) candidate; or
- Six months full-time equivalent for a doctoral candidate.

3.2.6

Decision-makers for the assessment of HDR milestones are as specified in the *HDR Academic Decisions Schedule*.

3.3 Early Candidature Milestone (ECM)

3.3.1 Objectives

The Early *Candidature* Milestone (ECM) provides an opportunity to:

- Review the initial research questions, literature review and proposed research methodology for the project;
- Preliminarily assess if the proposed research project is viable and appropriate for the HDR degree; and
- Identify if additional resources or training are required by the candidate to undertake the project.

3.3.2 Requirements

The candidate will complete the ECM form which will then be discussed at a planned milestone review point. This review point may take the form of a meeting or seminar and will be attended by the candidate, their supervisory team and the relevant HDR Convenor.

The requirements for completing the ECM form and meeting/seminar, responsibilities of parties involved in the process, and the program exemptions from completing this milestone are detailed on the University's [HDR Milestones webpage](#).

3.3.3 Outcomes

The outcomes of the ECM assessment may be:

- **Outcome One:** satisfactory – milestone is completed.
- **Outcome Two:** unsatisfactory – milestone not completed. A Progress Support Plan will be assigned to support the candidature (see section 3.8), with progress and ECM outcome to be reassessed at the end of the Progress Support Plan period.

3.4 Confirmation of Candidature

3.4.1 Objectives

The objectives of Confirmation of Candidature are to:

- Assess if the research project is achievable and appropriate for the degree in which the candidate is enrolled. In some cases, the assessment may include a recommendation for a program variation (see the *Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Variations to Candidature Procedure* section 3.6.6);
- Assess the candidate's progress on the research project and their academic preparedness, capacity and capability to successfully complete the HDR program within the maximum candidature period;
- Allow for constructive feedback to the candidate on the confirmation documents and seminar, including from an assessor with relevant expertise who is independent of the project; and
- Assess whether additional resources or training will be required by the candidate to ensure timely completion.

3.4.2 Requirements

The candidate will complete a written submission and present a research seminar to meet the requirements of the confirmation process.

- Confirmation will be assessed by a panel consisting of:
- The HDR Convenor (chairperson);
- The administrative principal supervisor and other members of the supervisory team; and
- An independent assessor, appointed by the Dean (Research).

The requirements for the written submission and seminar components of confirmation, responsibilities of parties involved in the confirmation process, and the exemptions from completing confirmation of candidature are detailed on the University's [HDR Milestones](#) webpage.

3.4.3 Outcomes

The outcomes of the Confirmation of Candidature may be that:

- **Outcome One:** candidature is confirmed.

- **Outcome Two:** candidature is not confirmed but the candidate is given an opportunity to revise their work within a set deadline, which will be within six months of notification of the outcome of the confirmation process. A Progress Support Plan may also be assigned to support the candidature for the period of the revision work (see section 3.8). This revision may take the form of the candidate:
 - revising their confirmation written submission only for consideration by the panel; or
 - revising their written submission and undertaking a second confirmation seminar.

- **Outcome Three:** candidature is not confirmed.

Confirmation of Candidature may only be re-attempted once.

Where candidature is not confirmed in accordance with Outcome Three, the HDR Convenor, as Chair of the assessing panel, provides this recommendation to the Dean (Research) who will either accept this recommendation or instead confirm any of the other outcomes set out in section 3.4.3. Where the Dean (Research) accepts the recommendation of Outcome Three, they will recommend to the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School, in accordance with requirements set out in section 3.9, that either:

- The candidate's enrolment in a doctoral program be transferred to masters (research) candidature:
 - with candidature in the masters (research) program confirmed; or
 - with the requirement that Confirmation of Candidature in the masters (research) program be undertaken within a set timeframe; or
- The candidate's enrolment be terminated.

3.5 Thesis and Candidature Review Milestone (TCRM)

3.5.1 Objectives

The Thesis and Candidature Review Milestone (TCRM) is a formative review of the candidate's work completed towards the thesis and remaining activities planned. It provides an opportunity for:

- A review of the candidate's work on the research project and thesis in the context of the learning outcomes and requirements for the award of degree;
- A review of the candidate's completion plan;
- A review of the candidate's publication plan, including in the context of the publication requirement for doctoral candidates (see section 3.7);
- The candidate to present their preliminary research findings; and
- The provision of constructive feedback to the candidate, including from a reviewer with relevant expertise and who is independent of the project.

3.5.2 Requirements

The candidate will complete a written submission and present a research seminar to meet the requirements of the TCRM process.

The TCRM seminar and written submission will be reviewed by a panel consisting of:

- The HDR Convenor (chairperson);
- The administrative principal supervisor and other members of the supervisory team; and
- An independent reviewer appointed by the Dean (Research).

The specific requirements for the written submission and seminar components of TCRM; and responsibilities of parties involved in the TCRM process are detailed on the University's [HDR Milestones](#) webpage.

3.5.3 Outcomes

The outcomes of the TCRM assessment may be:

- **Outcome One:** milestone is completed.
- **Outcome Two:** milestone is completed with conditions.
- **Outcome Three:** milestone is completed with conditions and a Progress Support Plan will be assigned to support the candidature (see section 3.8).

3.6 Progress reports (part-time HDR candidates only)

Part-time candidates will complete a progress report in each year of candidature where they will not be undertaking a candidature milestone. The progress report will be due on the anniversary of the candidate's date of commencement in the program.

3.6.1 Requirements

The candidate will complete the Progress Report form. The candidate and principal supervisor/s will meet to review the Progress Report form before the administrative principal supervisor provides a recommendation on progress to the relevant HDR Convenor as the report assessor. The Progress Report form may be accessed via the University's [HDR Milestones](#) webpage.

3.6.2 Outcomes

The outcomes of a progress report assessment may be:

- **Outcome One:** progress is satisfactory.
- **Outcome Two:** progress is unsatisfactory.

Where candidature is assessed as unsatisfactory, the HDR Convenor will provide this outcome as a recommendation to the Dean (Research) to decide whether:

- Continuation of candidature is approved;
- Continuation of candidature is approved with specific conditions;
- Continuation of candidature is approved and a Progress Support Plan will be assigned to support the candidature (see section 3.8); or
- To recommend to the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School that the candidate's enrolment in the HDR program be terminated (see section 3.9).

3.7 Publication during candidature

Doctoral candidates are required to have at least one peer-reviewed publication or creative research output published or accepted for publication during the period of candidature. The University's [Publishing during candidature](#) webpage details the specific requirements and process for lodging evidence of publication.

3.8 Progress Support Plan (PSP)

3.8.1

A Progress Support Plan (PSP) will be developed and implemented when a candidate's satisfactory progress is at risk. The plan allows for a period of enhanced planning, action and support to assist

candidates who are experiencing issues that are impacting on their candidature, or who are not progressing as expected.

3.8.2

A PSP may be assigned from a milestone outcome recommendation, or a candidate, principal supervisor, HDR Convenor, HDR Director or Dean (Research) may request the assignment of a plan in the following circumstances:

- There are documented circumstances beyond the candidate's control which are impeding their academic progress;
- The candidate has an overdue milestone;
- The candidate consistently fails to attend regular, scheduled supervision meetings without notice;
- There is documented evidence of failure by the candidate to consistently produce work requested for review by their supervisor to the required standard or otherwise follow their research plan; and/or
- The candidate does not submit their thesis by the original maximum submission date.

3.8.3

The PSP should not be used for student conduct matters. Refer to the *Student General Conduct Procedure* and the *Student Breaches of Academic Integrity Procedure*.

3.8.4 Requirements

Upon receipt of a request or milestone recommendation, the Griffith Graduate Research School will initiate a PSP Assignment request for consideration by the Dean (Research), who may decide to approve or reject the request.

If the Dean (Research) approves the request, they will also confirm the duration of the PSP, which may be up to a maximum of six months.

The Griffith Graduate Research School will provide notice in writing to the candidate and their supervisors of the approval of the PSP assignment, including the requirement that a meeting be arranged to develop and agree on the arrangements for the PSP period. These arrangements will be set out in the PSP document, outlining required action for the candidate and their supervisors to enable them to redress the risk of unsatisfactory progress, as well as any additional support to be provided.

The meeting will be chaired by the HDR Convenor and attended by the candidate and their supervisors.

The PSP document is the formal record of this meeting and of the University's commitment to provide support.

Where a candidate does not attend the PSP meeting, the supervisory team and HDR Convenor will complete the PSP document and provide an electronic copy to the candidate.

The University's [Progress Support Plan](#) webpage sets out the procedure for assignment of a PSP.

3.8.5 Outcomes

At the end of the PSP period, the Dean (Research) will determine if the plan has been adhered to and if the candidate is progressing satisfactorily in their program. If the candidate:

- Is deemed to be making satisfactory progress, the PSP will end.
- Continues to require additional support, the PSP may be extended or a new PSP developed.

- Fails to make satisfactory progress, a recommendation may be made to:
 - Transfer doctoral candidature to a masters (research) candidature (see section 3.9); or
 - Terminate candidature (see section 3.9).

3.9 Unsatisfactory Progress

3.9.1

A candidate may have their enrolment in an HDR program terminated (termination of candidature) for:

- Failure to make satisfactory academic progress during the period of candidature, including timely completion of milestones; and/or
- Failure to comply with any condition imposed upon the candidate's enrolment in the HDR program.

3.9.2

A candidate may be discontinued from their doctoral program and offered enrolment in a masters (research) program where:

- The candidate has not demonstrated, through satisfactory progress on the research project, the academic preparedness, capacity and capability to successfully complete the doctoral program, however has demonstrated the academic preparedness, capacity and a capability to complete a masters (research) program; and
- The research project (as proposed or delivered) will not meet the program requirements for the award of a doctoral degree.

3.9.3

Termination of candidature on the grounds set out in sections 3.9.1 or transfer of candidature from a doctoral to master (research) program as per section 3.9.2 must be preceded by a reasonable attempt by the candidate's principal supervisor/s and the Dean (Research) to ensure that the candidate has been:

- Clearly warned of shortcomings in performing the research and/or in meeting candidature requirements;
- Advised of ways in which such shortcomings might be remedied; and
- Given an opportunity to respond to these warnings.

3.9.4

Upon receiving a recommendation through a termination request, milestone outcome or PSP outcome to terminate or transfer candidate from a doctoral to masters (research) program on the basis of unsatisfactory progress, the Dean (Research) will provide notice in writing to the candidate, telling them:

- About the recommendation; and
- That the candidate may provide a response to this recommendation to the Dean (Research) within the period specified in the notice.

3.9.5

The notice:

- Will include a reference to this procedure;

- Will provide a timeframe of at least 10 working days from the date of the notice for the candidate to provide a response; and
- Will advise that, should the candidate wish to respond to this notice, their response may be made in writing or at an in-person or video-conferenced meeting where the candidate may take a support person to attend (legal representation is not permitted).

3.9.6

After considering any response provided by the candidate, and within 10 working days of receiving the response (or from the deadline for response set out in the notice to the candidate), the Dean (Research) will advise the candidate of their decision, which may be:

- Continuation of candidature is approved;
- Continuation of candidature is approved with specific conditions, which may include the assignment of a Progress Support Plan (see section 3.8);
- Recommendation to the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School that the candidate's enrolment in the doctoral program be transferred to masters (research) candidature; or
- Recommendation to the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School that the candidate's enrolment be terminated.

3.9.7

If recommending downgrade or termination of candidature, the Dean (Research) will also provide to the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School the original recommendation and supporting material; their correspondence with the candidate; and the candidate's response where one has been provided.

3.9.8

After considering all available evidence, and within 10 working days of receiving the Dean's (Research) recommendation, the Dean Griffith Graduate Research School will make a decision to:

- Take no further action, thus allowing the candidate to continue in their candidature;
- Allow candidature to continue subject to specific conditions (which may include the assignment of a Progress Support Plan (see section 3.8);
- Offer a doctoral candidate enrolment in one of the University's masters (research) with discontinuation from the doctoral program; or
- Terminate the candidate's enrolment in the HDR program.

3.9.9

The Griffith Graduate Research School will provide notice in writing to the candidate of the decision of the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School.

3.9.10

Where candidature is terminated, a candidate may apply for readmission to their program or for admission to a new HDR program providing that at least one year has elapsed since termination of candidature.

3.9.11

A noted of 'Candidature Terminated on (date)' will be recorded on the candidate's Unofficial Academic Transcript for a period of five years from the date of termination.

3.9.12

The *Student General Conduct Procedure* and the *Student Breaches of Academic Integrity Procedure* set out the process for addressing allegations of student misconduct and HDR academic misconduct respectively, and the penalties that may be applied by the University where a finding of misconduct is made.

3.10 Review of Decision

3.10.1

A candidate has the right to request a review of a milestone outcome or termination of candidature decision where the outcome impacts the candidate's eligibility to continue in and graduate from the HDR program and in accordance with the *Student Review and Appeals Policy* and *Student Review and Appeals Procedure*.

3.10.2

A request for review of a decision must be made by completing and lodging the **Review of Decision Form** (Appeal) within 10 working days of notification of the original decision, in accordance with the *Student Review and Appeals Procedure*.

4.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this procedure and related policy documents, the following definitions apply:

Administrative principal supervisor is the academic staff member in a co-principal supervisory arrangement who has responsibility for candidature administration and coordination of the supervisory team. Other principal supervision responsibilities are shared between co-principal supervisors more or less equally.

Coursework is a method of teaching and learning that leads to the acquisition of skills and knowledge that does not include a major research component.

Coursework component means those components of an HDR program other than the research component.

HDR Convenor is the designated authority for the management of HDR programs and candidature with the School or Department.

Principal supervisor means the individual who has primary responsibility within a supervisory team for ensuring a candidate receives appropriate guidance during their research project and support towards successful completion of the thesis and its examination.

Research component means the courses within an HDR program through which the research project is progressed and that culminate in the submission of the thesis.

Satisfactory academic progress is where a candidate continues to satisfactorily complete required HDR milestones and key research events for their candidature by the due dates and it is expected that they will submit their thesis for examination by the maximum program duration.

Unsatisfactory academic progress is where a candidate does not meet the requirements of satisfactory progress.

5.0 Information

Title

HDR Academic Progress Procedure

Document number	2023/0000396
Purpose	This procedure supports the <i>Higher Degree by Research Policy</i> by outlining the requirements for academic progress for higher degree by research (HDR) candidates.
Audience	Public
Category	Academic
Subcategory	Research
Approval date	16 November 2023
Effective date	1 January 2024
Review date	2029
Policy advisor	Senior Manager, HDR Operations, Griffith Graduate Research School
Approving authority	Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School

6.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Policy	Student Charter Framework Higher Degree by Research Policy Assessment Policy Student Academic Integrity Policy Student Review and Appeals Policy
Procedure	Equivalent Qualifications for HDR Program Admission Schedule Higher Degree by Research Admission Procedure Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Variations to Candidature Procedure Higher Degree by Research Examination Procedure Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Supervision Procedure

Assessment Procedure for Students

Academic Progress Procedure

Student Breaches of Academic Integrity Procedure

Student General Conduct Procedure

Student Misconduct Procedures

Student Review and Appeals Procedure
