

Higher Degree by Research Admission

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1.0 Purpose

This Procedure supports the *Higher Degree by Research Policy* by documenting the requirements and processes for admission into the University's higher degree by research (HDR) programs.

2.0 Scope

This Procedure applies to the University's HDR programs and applicants seeking admission into these programs.

3.0 Procedure

In its admissions to HDR programs, the University will:

- Make offers based on merit and demonstrated achievement. Academic achievement will be especially relevant, but the University may also take account of other factors that demonstrate research preparedness in the relevant area.
- Only make offers where there is an appropriate fit between the applicant, research environment, available resources and supervision.
- Ensure admission processes comply with relevant regulatory and reporting requirements.

The University may also seek to achieve strategic objectives through its admissions.

3.1 Minimum qualification requirements for admission

3.1.1 Provision of evidence

Applicants must provide documented evidence as part of their application for admission to demonstrate that they meet:

- The qualifications requirement for entry to that program:
 - The minimum qualification requirement for admission to the HDR program as set out on the University's [Degree Finder website](#); or
 - An equivalent level of attainment as specified in the *Equivalent Qualifications for HDR Program Admission Schedule*.
- Any other admission requirements specified on the specific HDR program requirements page on the University's Degree Finder website.

3.1.2 Requirements for qualifying degree

An applicant's qualifying degree or equivalent qualifying activity and/or outputs will:

- Be in the same discipline area as the proposed research topic; and
- Have been obtained or undertaken less than 10 years prior to application.

Where this is not the case, additional evidence will be required to determine the suitability of the applicant's background for the research they propose to undertake.

3.1.3 Requirements specific to international applicants

International applicants must also meet the English language proficiency requirements for admission to an HDR program (refer to section 3.2).

3.2 English language proficiency requirements

International applicants must provide documentary evidence of their English language proficiency in their HDR program application.

3.2.1 Minimum test scores

The minimum English language test score requirements for such applicants for entry to HDR programs¹ are the following in-person² tests:

- An overall band score of 6.5 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic with no band score less than 6.0;
- A score of 575 on the Paper-based Test of English as a Foreign Language;
- A score of 79 on the TOEFL iBT with no sub-score less than 19;
- A score of no less than 3+ in each skill of the International Second Language Proficiency Rating (ISLPR) (conducted by ISLPR Language Services only);
- A minimum overall score 176 (no score less than 169) on C1 Advanced or C2 Proficiency; or
- A minimum score of 58 in Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE) Academic, with no score less than 50.

3.2.2 Age of test

English test results must be no more than two years old prior to commencement of the program at Griffith University.

3.2.3 Exemption from test requirements

An applicant may be exempt from the requirement to provide an English language test score as detailed in section 3.2 if the applicant meets the English language entry requirements as outlined in the *Admission Schedule: English Language Proficiency*.

¹ While the test scores required by the University are the minimum for most discipline areas, some Elements may require higher levels of proficiency.

² Noting that IELTS (Academic) is accepted and not IELTS (Academic) Online, TOEFL iBT is accepted and not TOEFL iBT – Home Edition, PTE (Academic) is accepted and not PTE (Academic) Online.

3.3 Remote candidature and concurrent enrolment

3.3.1 Remote Candidature

An applicant may apply to undertake their HDR candidature as remote (off campus) mode. Remote candidature may be approved where the candidate:

- Has appropriate supervision and access to resources; and
- Is able to attend the University for periods of time where required for the HDR program and the research project.

3.3.2 Concurrent Enrolment

An applicant who intends to remain enrolled in any other program, including at another institution, while enrolled in a Griffith HDR program may apply for concurrent enrolment. Enrolment in another HDR program will not be permitted unless it is an approved Dual or Joint program arrangement.

3.4 Recognition of prior research undertaken in an HDR program

3.4.1 Criteria for recognition

Prior research undertaken while enrolled in an HDR program at this or another institution may be recognised towards the HDR program for which the applicant has applied where:

- The research has not been recognised for another award;
- The research has been undertaken at the same level as the program;
- The research has been undertaken within the last three years prior to lodging the application; and
- The applicant will have a minimum of one-year full time enrolment remaining to complete the HDR program.

Where the prior research was undertaken more than three years prior to application, recognition will not exceed one year full-time equivalent for doctoral programs, or six months full-time equivalent for masters (research) programs.

3.4.2 Reduction in the program submission dates

The following applies to the program submission dates where a request for recognition of prior research is approved:

- International candidates will normally not have the period deducted from their program submission dates.
- For domestic candidates, where the prior research was undertaken within the three years prior to application, the period will be deducted from the program submission dates as well as the period of [Research Training Program \(RTP\) Domestic Fee Offset](#) support.

3.4.3 Credit for Coursework

A candidate can apply for credit at the point of admission. Applications for credit are to be made via the *Online Credit Application*.

The inclusion of a coursework component in a doctoral or masters (research) program, and provision for award of credit, will be specified in the admission and program requirements of the HDR program as set out on the University's [Degree Finder](#) website.

For doctoral programs:

- Credit may be granted for prior doctoral-level coursework; and
- The maximum amount of credit that may be granted towards the program will not exceed one-year full-time or equivalent (80CP).

Refer to the *Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure* for credit requirements and amounts for masters (research) programs.

Coursework undertaken in Griffith HDR programs which allow for a conversion to another HDR program (see section 3.6.7 (Program Transfers) of the *Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Variations to Candidature Procedure*) may be counted towards satisfying the coursework requirements of the program to which the candidate has transferred. In such program transfers, a separate application for credit does not need to be lodged and the limit on credit towards a doctoral program as specified above will not apply.

3.5 Application Assessment and Selection

Decision-makers in the assessment of applications and selection of applicants for admission to an HDR program are specified in the *HDR Academic Decisions Schedule*.

3.5.1 Selection requirements

By recommending an offer of admission to be made to an applicant, the enrolling Element confirms that:

- The applicant has demonstrated that they have an appropriate level of research preparedness to successfully complete the program;
- The proposed research project is appropriate for an HDR program, and the program of work can be completed within the maximum period of candidature for the degree;
- Where the applicant's project is to be undertaken as an embedded HDR research project with an industry partner, the arrangements comply with the *Work Integrated Learning Policy and Procedure*;
- It has the appropriate discipline expertise to house the research;
- It has the necessary space, resources, facilities and research environment to support the applicant for the duration of the program, in accordance with the *HDR Minimum Standard of Resources, Facilities and Other Support Guideline*; and
- It has the capacity to provide adequate supervision for the duration of the program, in accordance with the *Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedure* and the *Code of Practice for HDR Candidature*.

3.5.2 Compliance with the Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference

In making an offer of admission to an applicant for an HDR program, the decision-maker confirms that the proposed research will not expose the University to a risk of contravening any law, including any international embargoes, sanctions or controls and will not place the University at an unacceptable risk of non-compliance with the *Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector*.

3.5.3 Assessment guidance

Guidance for academic decision-makers for the assessment of applications for admission is set out on the [Guidelines for the assessment of applications for HDR admission and scholarship](#) webpage (staff access).

3.6 Admission and Readmission Procedures

3.6.1 Withdrawal of application and offers

In making an application for admission to an HDR program, an applicant must declare that all information provided is true and correct.

The University reserves the right to withdraw any application and/or any offers made to an applicant and terminate any enrolment where the offer has been made:

- on the basis of inaccurate, incomplete, fraudulent, or misleading information supplied by the applicant or a certifying authority, including misleading information concerning their citizenship status;
- to an applicant who is excluded from any higher education institution or higher education program at any time and has not advised the University; or
- where an international applicant is identified as not being a Genuine Student as defined by the Department of Home Affairs.

In such circumstances, the person will not be eligible to apply for admission to the University for a period of two years, with the exception of a person who provides fraudulent information who will not be eligible to apply for admission to the University.

3.6.2 Readmission after withdrawal from HDR program

Applicants who have previously withdrawn from an HDR program at this institution will need to seek readmission to their program and follow admission policies and procedures applicable at the time of application. Refer also to section 3.8 of the *Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Variations to Candidature Procedure* for further information on withdrawal due to lapsed candidature.

Applicants seeking readmission to a masters (research) or professional doctorate program must do so within the maximum period for completing the program as specified in the University's *Enrolment Procedure*.

3.6.3 Readmission after candidature termination

Section 3.9 of the *Higher Degree by Research Academic Progress Procedure* sets out the timeframe and requirements for applicants applying for readmission where their candidature had previously been terminated by the University.

3.6.4 HDR examination outcome of 'Fail'

Applicants who have previously been enrolled as an HDR candidate at this or another university who have failed the examination for the degree will not be admitted as a candidate.

3.7 Admission Offers

3.7.1 Deferral

Following approval of an application for admission, an offer letter will be issued for commencement in the next Trimester start date, or the next two research intakes. Commencement can be deferred to the subsequent Trimester, or the next two research intakes. The offer will lapse if the applicant has not enrolled or sought a deferral to the commencement date by the date specified in the letter of offer.

3.7.2 Additional training

An offer of admission to the Doctor of Philosophy or Master of Philosophy programs may include a requirement for the candidate to complete discipline-specific skills training, in addition to the research component of the program.

3.7.3 Types of places

Admission offers are made for the following types of places:

- **Domestic Candidate Places**

Research Training Program (RTP) support is provided for those HDR programs the University determines will receive such support. Domestic candidates who are offered a place in an RTP-supported HDR program at Griffith University will be provided with an RTP Domestic Fee Offset

place, as per the University's [Research Training Program \(RTP\) Domestic Fee Offset Guidelines](#)³.

Domestic candidates enrolled in programs that the University determines will not receive RTP support are required to pay tuition fees as detailed in the *Fees and Charges Procedure* and the *Fees and Charges Schedule*.

- **International Candidate Places**

International candidates are required to pay tuition fees as detailed in the *Fees and Charges Procedure* and the *Fees and Charges Schedule*.

3.8 Review and Appeal

Unsuccessful applicants for admission to an HDR program may request a review of the decision in accordance with the *Student Review and Appeals Policy* and *Student Review and Appeals Procedure*.

4.0 Definitions

AQF qualification is a completed University accredited program of learning that leads to formal certification that a graduate has achieved the learning outcomes as described in the AQF.

Components of a qualification refer to units of academic work or courses, the completion of which leads to an AQF qualification.

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. For the purpose of this policy, the inclusion of coursework in a program is also referred to as the Coursework Component or Structured Learning.

Discipline refers to a defined branch of study or learning consistent with the field of education classification in the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED). The ASCED includes 12 broad fields of education with each classification further divided into narrow and detailed fields of education. Some discipline qualifications are designed to deepen knowledge, skills and application and different discipline qualifications are designed to broaden knowledge, skills, and application through further learning.

Domestic candidate refers to an HDR candidate who is an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen, or an Australian permanent resident or holder of an Australian Permanent Humanitarian visa.

Elective component - HDR candidates may undertake research internships, industry placements and professional practice activities that are approved by the Dean (Research) as part of their eligible HDR program. The research internship, industry placement, or professional practice activity will run for no more than six months duration during the period of enrolment.

Genuine Student (GS) is a student who intends to obtain a successful educational outcome and has the language, educational and material background to have a reasonable chance of achieving this educational outcome. A person applying to study in Australia must be both a GTE and a GS.

Higher Degree by Research (HDR) refers to a Research Masters or Research Doctorate where a:

- Research Masters means a Level 9 qualification as described in the AQF and where a minimum of two-thirds of the program of learning is for research, research training and independent study.

³ Domestic candidates supported through an RTP Fee Offset place are liable for the Student Services and Amenities Fee in accordance with section 3.4 of the *Fees and Charges Procedure*.

- Research Doctorate means a Level 10 qualification as described in the AQF and where a minimum of two years of the program of learning, and typically two-thirds of the qualification, is research.

International candidate refers to an HDR candidate who is **not** an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen or an Australian permanent resident or holder of an Australian Permanent Humanitarian visa.

Research comprises systematic experimental and theoretical work, application and/or development that results in an increase in the dimensions of knowledge, culminating in a thesis, dissertation, exegesis or equivalent that is formally examined. The term **research** includes original, exploratory, experimental, applied, clinically or work-based and other forms of creative work undertaken systematically to increase knowledge and understanding, deploying a range of research principles and methodologies. Research is specified in the AQF learning outcomes for the Masters Degree (Research) and Doctoral Degree. The inclusion of research in a program is also referred to as the Research Component or Research Outcome.

Research Training Program is funded by the Commonwealth Government through the provision of block grants on a calendar year basis to Higher Education Providers (HEPs) to support the research training of domestic and international HDR candidates. The allocation and management of RTP funding is in accordance with the Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2017. It is at the discretion of the University to determine how many scholarships it will support, the HDR programs that will receive support and the process by which this support is managed. Support provided may include fee offsets, stipends and allowances to assist HDR candidates with ancillary cost of an HDR program.

5.0 Information

Title	Higher Degree by Research Admission Procedure
Document number	2026/0000377
Purpose	This Procedure supports the <i>Higher Degree by Research Policy</i> by documenting the requirements and processes for admission into the University's higher degree by research (HDR) programs.
Audience	Staff; Students; Public
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Policy advisor	Senior Manager Operations, Griffith Graduate Research School
Approving authority	Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School

6.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Legislation	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector
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Policy

Higher Degree by Research Policy
Admission Policy
Student Review and Appeals Policy

Procedure

Admission Schedule: English Language Proficiency
Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure
Enrolment Procedure
Fees and Charges Procedure
Fees and Charges Schedule
Higher Degree by Research Academic Progress Procedure
Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Variations to Candidature Procedure
Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedure
Higher Degree by Research Scholarship Procedure
Qualifications Procedure
Student Review and Appeals Procedure
