

Higher Degree by Research

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1.0 Purpose

This Policy sets out the principles and responsibilities of the University in offering higher degrees by research (HDR).

2.0 Scope

This Policy applies to HDR programs offered by the University, applicants for admission to an HDR program, HDR candidates, and all University staff and other individuals responsible for the supervision, administration and management of HDR programs and candidates at the University.

3.0 Policy statement

HDR candidates are vital to the research fabric of the University and are valued members of the research community. The University will offer higher degrees by research that:

- are consistent with the requirements of the *Australian Qualifications Framework 2013, Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018*;
- provide high-quality research training to candidates;
- promote a research culture of excellence, integrity, respect and professionalism;
- contribute to the University's research strategy; and
- provide opportunities for candidates to engage with scholarly communities, both within the University and globally.

3.1 Admission

3.1.1

Applicants will be admitted to an HDR program only where they have demonstrated the required standard of research preparedness and where there is an appropriate fit between the applicant, research training environment, available resources, and supervision.

3.1.2

Admission decision and processes will be applied fairly and consistently, with decision-making undertaken with integrity and impartiality by University staff who have relevant knowledge, skills and training.

3.1.3

Admission to an HDR program will be conducted in accordance with the *Higher Degree by Research Admission Procedure* which documents the minimum criteria for admission and selection of applicants into the University's HDR programs.

3.2 Candidature

3.2.1

The University will provide each candidate with a supervisory team, at least one of whom will be a suitably qualified and experienced member of the University's academic staff taking the role of administrative principal or co-principal supervisor. Registration and appointment of supervisors will be in accordance with the requirements set out in the *Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedure* and the supervision of candidates will be conducted in accordance with this procedure and the *Code of Practice for the Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Candidates*.

3.2.2

The University's *Minimum Standards for the Provision of Resources, Facilities and Other Support* ('Minimum Standards') details the minimum requirements regarding candidate access to workspaces, facilities and resources. Enrolling elements will report annually to the Board of Graduate Research on the provision of resources and support to HDR candidates in compliance with the Minimum Standards.

3.2.3

The University will support candidates to develop their research skills to conduct independent research as well as broader transferable skills for academic and non-academic careers.

3.2.4

A candidate's progress will be formally reviewed through candidature milestones. Candidates are required to satisfactorily complete milestones by their due date to progress in their HDR program. Review of a candidate's progress will be conducted in accordance with the *HDR Academic Progress Procedure*.

3.3 Examination and completion

3.3.1

The University will ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the examination of HDR theses. The examination of HDR theses will be conducted in accordance with the *Higher Degree by Research Examination Procedure*.

3.3.2

Assessment of an HDR thesis will be by examiners of international standing in the field of research, who are independent of the conduct of the research, competent to undertake the assessment, and appointed in compliance with the *Appointment of HDR Examiners and Chairperson of Examiners Guidelines*.

4.0 Roles, responsibilities and delegations

Core responsibilities and decision-making accountabilities for HDR programs and candidature are set out below. The *HDR Academic Decisions Schedule* supports this policy by outlining detailed authorities for academic decisions in HDR matters.

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|--|---|
| Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School (GGRS) | Responsible for providing leadership of the University’s research training performance and overseeing the governance of the University’s HDR programs. The Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School makes decisions on: Doctoral program admission, admission and change of topic for applicants from sanctioned countries, HDR thesis examination outcome, and downgrade or termination of candidature. |
| Dean (Research) | Responsible for providing leadership within their Group to HDR activities; fostering high quality HDR programs; and assuring and enhancing the experience of candidates and their supervisors. The Dean (Research) makes decisions on: masters (research) program admission; appointment of, and changes to, the supervisory team; confirmation of candidature and candidate progression; HDR program transfer; assignment and assessment of a Progress Support Plan; extension to maximum submission date and scholarship tenure; submission of the thesis; and appointment of the thesis examiners. The Dean (Research) makes recommendations to the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School on doctoral program admission. |
| Group HDR Director | Deputises for, and supports, the Dean (Research) in the execution of the Dean’s (Research) responsibilities with regard to research training. Specific decision-making accountabilities are determined by the Dean (Research) and are subject to the approval of the Group Pro Vice Chancellor. |
| Head of Element | Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight of the performance of HDR programs within the Element; • The provision of adequate supervision and resources required for the HDR candidate and their research project in accordance with the <i>HDR Supervision Procedure</i> and the Minimum Standards for the Provision of Resources, Training and Other Support; • The management of HDR supervision within the Element; and • The management of any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest with HDR candidates and HDR supervisors in accordance with the <i>Conflict of Interest Policy</i>. |
| HDR Convenor | <p>The designated authority for the management of HDR programs and candidature within the Element. The HDR Convenor’s responsibilities are set out in the <i>Role Statement: Higher Degree by Research Convenor</i> and the <i>Code of Practice for the Supervision of HDR Candidates</i>.</p> <p>The HDR Convenor makes an assessment of the HDR applicant quality, project viability and resourcing, and supervision and recommends an applicant to the Dean (Research) for admission. The HDR Convenor provides recommendations and makes decisions on candidature progression as well as variations to HDR enrolment conditions and candidature.</p> <p>The HDR Convenor is responsible for the provision of Element-specific orientation and induction to newly-enrolled candidates.</p> |

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|----------------|---|
| HDR Supervisor | Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and supporting the academic progress of candidates; • Guiding candidate conduct in accordance with the <i>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018</i>; • Supporting opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the production of high-quality research outputs based on their research; ○ professional development; and ○ research end-user engagement • Discharging their responsibilities in accordance with the <i>HDR Supervision Procedure</i> and the <i>Code of Practice for the Supervision of HDR candidates</i>; and • Declaring and managing any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest with candidates, other members of the supervisor team, or examiners in accordance with the <i>Conflict of Interest Policy</i>. |

5.0 Definitions

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

Academic Group is the highest and largest element in the academic structure of the University. There are four academic groups: Arts, Education and Law, Griffith Business School, Griffith Health and Griffith Sciences.

Candidate is a student enrolled in an HDR program of the University.

Confirmation of candidature is a milestone within the first 12 months of candidature (FTE), with the purpose of determining whether the research project indicates a strong likelihood to result in a high quality thesis completed within the duration of candidature.

Element is an academic unit of the University, comprising a School, Department or Research Centre/Institute.

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 Australian Quality Framework (AQF) and where a minimum of two-thirds of the program of learning is for research, research training and independent study;
- 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.

Milestone a formal process for the review of the academic progress of an HDR candidate, scheduled at a specific point in candidature.

Program is an approved course of study leading to an award of the University. An HDR candidate is admitted to an HDR program, and on successful completion of all program requirements is awarded the degree to which the program relates.

Research, as defined by the [Australian Research Council](#), is the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies or understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

Research End-User is an individual, community or organisation external to academia that will directly use or directly benefit from the output, outcome or results of the research project.

Research Training, as a term used by TEQSA's *Higher Educations Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*, is a formal course of graduate study leading to the acquisition of advanced skills, techniques and knowledge in the conduct of research. Research training also builds towards the production of a contribution to the field of research or creative or professional practice.

Research Training Environment refers to the scholarly and physical environment and research culture supporting the HDR candidate and their candidature within their enrolling element, any affiliated research centre or institute and any research end-user partner in the research.

Thesis is an independent written work based on, or manifested in rigorous experimental, theoretical, creative, empirical and/or design inquiry, submitted for examination.

6.0 Information

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| Title | Higher Degree by Research Policy |
| Document number | 2023/0000399 |
| Purpose | This Policy outlines the principles that guide the effective delivery of research training and the management of Higher Degrees by Research at Griffith University. |
| Audience | Staff; Students; Public |
| Category | Academic |
| Subcategory | Research |
| Approval date | 16 November 2023 |
| Effective date | 1 January 2024 |
| Review date | 2027 |
| Policy advisor | Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School |
| Approving authority | Academic Committee |

7.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

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| Legislation | Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018 Australian Qualifications Framework 2013 Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 |
| Policy | Conflict of Interest Policy Responsible Conduct of Research Student Charter Framework |
| Procedure | Academic Records Procedure |

HDR Admission Procedure
HDR Supervision Procedure
HDR Enrolment and Candidature Variations Procedure
HDR Academic Progress Procedure
HDR Examination Procedure
HDR Scholarship Procedure
HDR Academic Decisions Schedule
Program Attributes and Requirements Procedure
Qualifications Procedure
Student Breaches of Academic Integrity Procedure

Guidelines

Appointment of HDR Examiners and Chairperson of Examiners Guidelines
Code of Practice for the Supervision of HDR Candidates
Minimum Standard of Resources, Facilities and Other Support: Guideline

Local protocol

HDR Candidate Experience Survey: Local protocol
