

Higher Degree by Research Confirmation of Candidature Schedule

1 Purpose

To establish the process and responsibilities for the confirmation of candidature for Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Students at the University.

2 Scope

This schedule must be read in conjunction with the Higher Degree by Research Student Progress Procedure and is subordinate to it.

3 Schedule

3.1 Provisional candidature

A Student or Applicant is admitted to an HDR program as a provisional candidate until successful completion of the confirmation of candidature process.

Students or Applicants transferring from another higher education institution will be admitted as a provisional candidate unless they provide evidence at the time of Admission of having successfully completed a confirmation of candidature process at the same program level at their previous institution. The Graduate Research School (GRS) will assess such evidence on a case-by-case basis and a determination will be made by the Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Coordinator as to whether a transferring Student will need to undergo the confirmation of candidature process at the University.

Cotutelle Students who are choosing to commence their study with a partner institution first will need to provide evidence of confirmation at the time of their commencement with the University.

Students who are approved to transfer Credit from an incomplete doctoral level program to another doctoral level program are expected to complete the confirmation of candidature requirement in the new doctoral program within six months (full-time equivalence) of Admission to the new Academic Program. This applies to any Student changing doctoral level programs, whether they are currently enrolled at the University or transferring from another institution.

3.2 Timing

Due dates for confirmation of candidature are calculated from the date of commencement in the Academic Program.

Doctoral Students are normally expected to complete the confirmation process within:

- one year of Full-Time Study (8 units); or
- two (2) years of Part-Time Study (8 units).

All masters degree by research Students are normally expected to complete the confirmation process within:

- six months of Full-Time Study (4 units); or
- one year of Part-Time Study (4 units).

Students should refer to the confirmation of candidature information on the University website for Program-specific dates.

If a Student has not completed the confirmation process within the allocated timeframe, they may be placed on conditional academic standing and given an extension of up to three months to complete the confirmation process.

A Student who has not completed the confirmation of candidature after this extension period may be sent a Show Cause Notice asking why they should not be Excluded from the Academic Program.

An exception to this process is in cases where the confirmation panel recommends candidature be reviewed. In these cases, a Student may be sent a Show Cause Notice without first being placed on conditional academic standing. Please refer to the Higher Degree by Research Student Progress Procedure for further details.

3.3 Provision of information for Students

Upon commencement, confirmation of candidature requirements including due dates are communicated to HDR Students via their StudyDesk dashboard. The HDR Student StudyDesk includes information on the format, expectations, scope, quality and length of work to be presented for confirmation of candidature. Students also receive a reminder via their University-issued email three (3) months prior to their due date.

Forms and guidelines students are required to utilise in the confirmation of candidature process are accessible via the Graduate Research School webpages of the University website.

3.4 Confirmation of candidature process

The confirmation of candidature process has three components:

1. Online submission of confirmation of candidature planning information by the student in

their Student Centre.

2. Online submission of a written confirmation proposal in a format consistent with the confirmation proposal guidelines.
3. An oral proposal presentation, normally of 30 to 40 minutes' duration, to a review panel leading to a recommendation on confirmation of candidature from the GRS.

3.4.1 Requirements for confirmation planning information

Twelve weeks prior to the confirmation due date, Students must have completed their online confirmation of candidature planning process and the following additional relevant components:

- completion of the online ethics training module;
- determination of ownership and disbursement of Intellectual Property, in accordance with the University's Intellectual Property Policy and subordinate procedures;
- completion of a Resource Requirement Plan;
- completion of a Research Integrity module;
- completion of the HDR Library and Information Tutorial; and
- any other requirements that are specified by the University or the GRS.

3.4.2 Requirements for confirmation proposal

The following areas will normally be addressed in the confirmation proposal:

- aims and objectives of the research;
- review of the relevant literature;
- proposed contribution to the field of research;
- details of the proposed research methods, including analysis of data;
- research ethics application, if appropriate;
- milestones and timelines;
- resources required to complete the research; and
- type of Thesis the Student intends to submit (e.g., standard Thesis, Thesis by

Publication, Thesis with Creative Works component).

Students should refer to the confirmation of candidature section of the University website when preparing their proposal.

The Student must seek feedback on, and the endorsement of, their written confirmation proposal from their HDR supervisory team prior to submitting to the GRS.

The HDR supervisory team is expected to have provided appropriate advice on the confirmation document and engaged in discussions about resources and other requirements with the Student.

The Student must provide their confirmation proposal to the GRS at least 10 University Business Days prior to the scheduled presentation, unless Special Circumstances apply or the confirmation of candidature is embedded within the Coursework structure of an Academic Program. Where the confirmation of candidature is embedded within the Coursework structure of an Academic Program, the timelines stipulated by the particular Academic Program should be followed.

Following feedback from the panel, the Student must return their revised written proposal to the GRS within the timeframe stipulated by the panel, unless Special Circumstances apply. The GRS will consider the Students' Enrolment status and additional time may be given to those Enrolled Part-Time. If a student does not return their revised written proposal within the timeframe stipulated by the panel, they will be put on conditional academic standing as per the Higher Degree by Research Student Progress Procedure.

Where major revisions are requested, the chair of the panel may reconvene the panel to review the revised submission and to confirm that the requested revisions have been addressed satisfactorily by the Student. Minor revisions will be approved by the principal supervisor and will not be sent for review to the panel.

For major revisions, the confirmation panel will review the revised submission within 10 University Business Days and provide a recommendation to the HDR Coordinator regarding whether the proposal is of an acceptable standard for the Student's candidature to be confirmed.

If a Student has not attended to the required revisions to the satisfaction of the panel, the panel may recommend that the Student not be confirmed. The Student may also be asked to Show Cause to explain why they should be allowed to continue in the program.

3.4.3 Requirements for the oral component

The oral component of the confirmation process provides Students with an opportunity to present their proposed research for peer review. This would normally include the confirmation panel, peers from the relevant discipline and members of the wider University community.

The oral presentation will be followed by question time from attendees to provide the Student

with an opportunity to experience academic discussion of research work.

Any expert and constructive advice from those in attendance at the oral presentation will be noted by the panel and may be provided for inclusion in the feedback to the Student.

3.5 Confirmation of candidature review panel

The confirmation review panel will consist of the chairperson, normally a senior academic Employee, and at least one other member with appropriate expertise. One of the panel members may be external to the University.

Panel members must not currently be, or have previously been, a member of the Student's HDR supervisory team or closely involved with the Student's research project. A proposed panel member must assess any actual or perceived Conflicts of Interest with regard to the Student, their research project or the confirmation of candidature process, in accordance with the University's Conflict of Interest Policy and the Australian Council of Graduate Research (ACGR) Good Practice Guidelines for Disclosing and Managing Interests in Graduate Research. Where an actual or perceived Conflict of Interest is declared, an alternative panel member or the HDR Coordinator may be appointed to the review panel.

3.5.1 Provision of written feedback

The panel chair will submit a feedback report and outcome via the online HDR module. The outcome will be one of the following:

- Pass - editorial corrections only
- Minor revisions (submit within four [4] weeks)
- Major revisions (submit within six [6] weeks)
- Resubmission (submit within nine [9] weeks)
- Candidature to be reviewed (fail)

The GRS will provide access to the feedback report and outcome in the Student Centre for the Student and their supervisory team.

Students are required to submit their response and revision documents online via their Student Centre, by the due date, unless Special Circumstances apply. The GRS will provide advice to Students regarding the requirements of submitting revisions. Failure to submit the correct documentation in the correct format may delay the approval of revisions.

3.5.1.1 Pass - editorial corrections only

In consultation with their principal supervisor, Students must provide a revised proposal addressing the review panel feedback to the GRS within two (2) weeks, unless Special Circumstances apply. The Student's principal supervisor and HDR Coordinator will review and approve the revisions via the online HDR module. This process is facilitated by the GRS.

3.5.1.2 Minor revisions

In consultation with their principal supervisor, Students must provide a revised proposal addressing the review panel feedback to the GRS within four (4) weeks, unless Special Circumstances apply. The Student's principal supervisor and HDR Coordinator will review and approve the revisions via the online HDR module. This process is facilitated by the GRS.

3.5.1.3 Major revisions

In consultation with their principal supervisor, Students must provide a revised proposal addressing the review panel feedback to the GRS within six (6) weeks, unless Special Circumstances apply. The confirmation review panel will assess the revisions and the chairperson and HDR Coordinator will approve the revisions via the online HDR module.

3.5.1.4 Resubmission

The Student will be placed on conditional academic standing, effective from the date the review panel's feedback is sent to the Student by the GRS. The Student should resubmit the proposal to the GRS within nine (9) weeks, addressing the feedback provided by the review panel, and complete all confirmation of candidature requirements within three (3) months. If a Student does not complete their resubmission within the timeframe stipulated, their candidature will be discontinued.

The confirmation review panel will assess the revisions and the chairperson and HDR Coordinator will approve the revisions via the HDR module. The panel may determine that an additional oral presentation is required for resubmitted proposals.

3.5.1.5 Candidature to be reviewed

The proposal, feedback, and other documentation associated with the Student's candidature will be reviewed by the HDR Coordinator, in consultation with the chairperson of the review panel.

A Student who has been recommended for review of candidature will receive a Show Cause Notice asking them to detail any extenuating circumstances that led to the outcome and proposed strategies to mitigate or eliminate these circumstances in future.

Students who fail to respond to a Show Cause Notice within the specified timeframe, unless Special Circumstances apply, or who do not provide reasonable grounds for the continuation of their program, will have their candidature discontinued and their Enrolment cancelled.

A candidate who is dissatisfied with a Decision to discontinue their candidature may have grounds to Appeal the Decision in accordance with the Student Grievance Resolution Policy

and its subordinate procedures.

Where the Dean (GRS) accepts the Student's response to a Show Cause Notice, the GRS will notify the Student that they are allowed to continue as a provisional candidate for a further period of three (3) months, on the condition that the Student successfully completes all confirmation of candidature requirements within that timeframe.

Resubmitted proposals will be reviewed by the reconvened confirmation review panel, which may determine that an additional oral presentation is required.

If a Student fails to successfully complete the confirmation of candidature process within three (3) months, unless Special Circumstances apply, their candidature will be discontinued.

3.6 Panel recommendation

Following review by the confirmation review panel of a revised proposal resulting from an outcome of major revisions or resubmission, the panel will make one of the following recommendations to the HDR Coordinator:

- candidature is confirmed; or
- candidature is terminated (fail).

The HDR Coordinator will consider the confirmation review panel recommendation and advise the GRS of the outcome. The GRS provide a Notice to Students regarding the outcome of the confirmation process.

3.6.1 Candidature confirmed

Where a Student's candidature has been confirmed, the University commits to providing agreed appropriate and reasonable resources to allow the Student to complete the HDR Academic Program.

3.7 Student Grievances

A Student who is dissatisfied with a Decision in relation to their HDR candidature should refer to the Student Grievance Resolution Policy and its subordinate procedures.

4 References

Nil.

5 Schedule Information

Accountable Officer	Dean (Graduate Research School)
Responsible Officer	Dean (Graduate Research School)
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Higher Degree by Research Student Policy
Approved Date	24/1/2025
Effective Date	24/1/2025
Review Date	25/5/2027
Relevant Legislation	Electronic Transactions Act 1999 Higher Education Support Act 2003
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Academic Programs and Courses Quality Policy Admissions, Enrolment and Graduations Policy Assessment Policy Intellectual Property Policy Marketing and Brand Policy Research Code of Conduct Policy Student Grievance Resolution Policy
Related Procedures	Assessment of Special Circumstances Procedure Assessment Procedure Commercialisation of Intellectual Property Procedure Intellectual Property Procedure Student Academic Progress Procedure Student Grievance Resolution Procedure Website Procedure
Related forms,	HDR forms and guidelines

Failure to comply with this Policy or Policy Instrument may be considered as misconduct and the provisions of the relevant Policy or Procedure applied. A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled and may not be current as UniSQ the University regularly reviews and updates its Policies and Policy Instruments. The latest controlled version can be found in the UniSQ's [Policy and Procedure Library](#).

publications and websites	ACGR Disclosing and Managing Interests in Graduate Research Higher Degree by Research Student Annual Progress Review Schedule
Definitions	<p>Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary</p> <p>Academic Program</p> <p>An approved Higher Education Award of the University, consisting of a combination of Courses the successful completion of an offering of which, together with any credit transfers and Exemptions in accordance with the relevant requirements, will fulfil the prescribed requirements for that particular Award.</p> <p>Appeal</p> <p>A formal, written request made by a Student or Employee to a higher authority to have a Decision overturned.</p> <p>Conflict of Interest</p> <p>If a University Member has an interest that conflicts or may conflict with the discharge of the University Member's duties the University Member should Declare the nature of the interest and the conflict to the University Member's Supervisor as soon as practicable after the relevant facts come to the University Member's knowledge and must not take action or further action relating to a matter that is or may be affected by the conflict until authorised. An Executive Leader may direct a University Member to resolve a conflict or possible conflict between an interest of the University Member and the University Member's duties. A reference to an interest or to a Conflict of Interest is a reference to those matters within their ordinary meaning under the general law, and, in relation to an interest, the definition in the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, Schedule 1, does not apply. A Conflict of Interest will arise when a University Member's Private Interests conflict with their duty to the University or to serve the public interest as a University Member. The risk of having a conflict of interest increases where a University Member's responsibilities include the authority to make decisions. A conflict of interest may be potential, perceived or actual - when a University Member is in a role where future decision making may be influenced by their Private Interests if a certain condition is fulfilled, they have a potential conflict of interest; a perceived conflict of interest arises where it appears that decisions a University Member make in the course of their University employment may be influenced by their Private Interests, whether or not this is in fact the case; an actual conflict of interest exists where a University Member's actions could be unduly, improperly or excessively influenced by their Private Interests. Serious misconduct can occur</p>

when a conflict of interest is concealed, understated, mismanaged or abused.

Decision

A determination made by an Employee, contractor or other authorised delegate in the course of their duties on behalf of the University.

Enrolment

The process of admitting Students to one or more Courses for the current Academic Year.

Full-Time Study

A Student will be deemed to be in Full-time Study where they are enrolled in at least 75% of the equivalent full-time load (8 Units) during an Academic Year. These Units can be taken in any Study Period during the year.

Higher Degree by Research (HDR)

A Research Doctorate or Research Masters program for which at least two-thirds of the Student load for the program is required as research work.

Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Coordinator

The HDR Coordinator is responsible for managing and supporting HDR candidates within an organisational unit. For UniSQ Schools, the HDR Coordinator is the Associate Head of School (Research) or nominee/s. For UniSQ Centres, the HDR Coordinator is the Associate Centre Director or nominee/s. For UniSQ Colleges, the HDR Coordinator is the Head of College or nominee/s.

Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Student

A Student enrolled in an HDR program.

Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Supervisor

A member of a Student's HDR Supervisory Team. An HDR Supervisor may hold the position of Principal HDR Supervisor or Associate Supervisor.

Intellectual Property

The result of an individual's intellectual endeavours that is capable of

being protected by legal rights. Examples include, but are not limited to: inventions and discoveries in relation to new products and processes that can be protected by a patent; Copyright in Teaching Materials; other works in which Copyright subsists including literary works (including computer programs), dramatic works, musical works, artistic works, films, sound recordings, broadcasts, published editions and certain types of performances; industrial designs, which protect the shape, configuration, pattern or ornamentation of a product, that is, what gives a product a unique appearance; plant breeders' rights, which protect varieties of plants and trees; trademarks, which protect the branding, reputation and goodwill of products and services; circuit layout rights, which protect the layout plans or designs of electronic components in integrated circuits, computer chips, or semi-conductors used in personal computers and computer-reliant equipment; and trade secrets and know-how, that is, knowledge about products, processes, and inventions and discoveries: prior to the time they are incorporated into a publication or become the subject of a patent or design application; or which are never made the subject of an application for Intellectual Property registration.

Notice

A Notice from the University is a document, whether physical or electronic. A Notice may be: given by hand to the addressee or delivered to the address provided by the addressee to the University; or sent by registered or pre-paid mail to the address provided by the addressee to the University; or sent by electronic communication to the University-issued email account provided by the University to a Student during the period of Enrolment until the completion of their program; or sent by electronic communication to the email address provided to the University by an addressee not enrolled at the University. A Notice is taken to be received if: given by hand to the addressee or delivered to the address provided to the University by the addressee; or sent by registered or pre-paid mail - three University Business Days after the date of posting; or sent by electronic communication - at the time that would be the time of receipt under the Electronic Transactions Act 1999 or its succeeding legislation. A Notice that would be deemed to have been received out of business hours or on a non-University Business Day will instead be deemed received on the next University Business Day.

Part-Time Study

Enrolment in less than .75 EFTSL in any year shall be deemed to be Part-Time Study.

Student

A person who is enrolled in a UniSQ Upskill Course or who is admitted to an Award Program or Non-Award Program offered by the University and is: currently enrolled in one or more Courses or study units; or not currently enrolled but is on an approved Leave of Absence or whose admission has not been cancelled.

[Thesis](#)

Also known as a Standard Thesis, is the material outcomes of a program of research. It is also referred to as a 'dissertation'.

[Thesis by Publication](#)

A Thesis where some chapters are in the form of research papers published in, or submitted to, peer-reviewed journals.

[Thesis with Creative Works](#)

A Thesis with Creative Works includes original work such as multimedia, film, exhibition, performance, musical composition, novel, play or other Faculty approved production, in addition to an Exegesis.

[University](#)

The term 'University' or 'UniSQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.

[University Business Days](#)

The days of Monday to Friday inclusive between 9am and 5pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST), with the exclusion of gazetted Public Holidays for the relevant campus location, plus the closure of the University between 25 December and 1 January in the following year inclusive as specified in the Enterprise Agreement, as well as any closure of the University either at one or several campuses in accordance with a direction of the Crisis Management Team.

Definitions that relate to this schedule only

Keywords	PhD, dissertation, thesis, doctoral
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