Higher Degree by Research Student Progress Procedure

1 Purpose

To describe how the University monitors Progress and provides support to a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Student as they progress through their nominated program.

2 Scope

This procedure applies to all HDR Students and HDR supervisors.

3 Procedure Overview

This procedure outlines key milestones and reporting required prior to submission of a Thesis for examination. These include confirmation of candidature and annual Progress reviews.

Where an HDR Student is not making satisfactory Progress, an intervention process is activated to assist the Student to regain satisfactory progression.

This procedure aligns with:

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*: Standard 1.3 Orientation and Progression; Standard 4.2 Research Training

4 Procedures

All HDR Students are expected to maintain a satisfactory standard of academic achievement in order to progress through and complete their program of study within the required timeframe.

HDR Students and supervisors will need to develop an effective working relationship with clear communication to ensure satisfactory Progress is made. The supervisory team is there to guide HDR students through every part of their candidature, as well as sharing their expertise on the Research topic, offering advice and support and introducing HDR Students to the broader Research community.

Expectations and a communication plan for supervision should be completed by each Student and their principal supervisor after Admission and then periodically throughout the candidature.

The University reserves the right to require a Student to revisit an HDR project, including post-confirmation, if the project becomes non-viable due to supervisory changes and/or non-

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availability of required equipment.

Scholarship Students are expected to make satisfactory Progress in their studies. If the University does not consider Progress to be satisfactory, or Academic, General or Research Misconduct has been committed, the Scholarship may be withdrawn. Please refer to the Higher Degree by Research Student Scholarship Procedure for further information.

4.1 Progression milestones

HDR Students must complete three milestone reviews in accordance with the milestone review table.

4.2 Confirmation of candidature

Confirmation of Candidature represents the first milestone and is to be undertaken in accordance with the process set out in the Higher Degree by Research Confirmation of Candidature Schedule.

Oversight and guidance of the confirmation of candidature process is the responsibility of the Student's HDR supervisory team. However, it is the Student's responsibility to ensure that they prepare sufficiently and complete all requirements within the allocated timelines.

4.3 Progress reviews

Compulsory Progress reviews are used to monitor a Student's Progression in their HDR program. Progress reviews are an important record of a Student's Progress and may be referred to later in their candidature, for example, if requesting a variation to candidature.

4.3.1 Completing the Progress review

Progress reviews are completed by the Student in collaboration with their principal supervisor who will also consult with other members of the supervisory team.

Failure to submit a completed Progress review by the due date may result in the commencement of the process for unsatisfactory Progress review, outlined in section 4.5.

Based on the Information and ratings provided in the Progress review, the Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Coordinator will Assess whether the Student's Progress is deemed satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

4.3.2 Unsatisfactory Progress review

If the Student's Progress is not deemed satisfactory, the HDR Coordinator may require a candidate to attend a meeting to discuss the review. The Student may also be requested to:

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1. undertake additional courses, seminars or other activities; and/or

2. provide additional evidence of Progress at other times during the candidature.

Supervisors may also be required by the HDR Coordinator to attend a meeting to discuss the review or to provide additional written reports on Progress. In cases where the HDR Coordinator is also a candidate's principal supervisor, the Dean (GRS) will conduct the evaluation and any subsequent meetings.

Where Progress is assessed as unsatisfactory by the HDR Student and/or the supervisor, the Progress review will be escalated to the Dean GRS for evaluation. The Dean GRS may:

1. approve continuation of candidature;

2. approve continuation of candidature with the candidate to submit an Interim report;

3. approve continuation of candidature and place the candidate on conditional academic standing; or

4. recommend that candidature be terminated (refer to section 4.4.6 Termination of Candidature).

4.3.3 Interim Report

As an outcome of the evaluation of unsatisfactory Progress, a candidate may be required to submit an Interim Report. If this is required, within 10 University Business Days of the finalisation of the evaluation of the Progress review, an Interim Report Notice will be sent by the GRS to the HDR Student's University-issued email account, with a copy to the supervisory team, outlining conditions to be fulfilled in order to achieve satisfactory Progress.

HDR Students will be required to provide the GRS with a completed Interim Report 40 University Business Days after the date of the Interim Report Notice. The HDR Coordinator will determine if the candidate has adequately satisfied the conditions and, if so, the Progress review will be finalised as 'Satisfactory Progress' and the candidature will continue as normal.

If the HDR Coordinator determines that the candidate has not adequately satisfied the conditions, this will be referred to the Dean GRS and the candidate will be placed on conditional Academic Standing.

4.3.4 Supplementary Progress Review

Separate to the annual Progress review process, there may be indications that an HDR Student's Progress is at risk, or matters may be brought to the attention of the HDR Coordinator that may have an effect on an HDR Student's progression. This can be raised by the Student or any member of the supervisory team at any point during candidature.

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In these instances, the HDR Coordinator may request Supplementary Progress Reviews or further Information from the HDR Student and/or supervisor/s in order to evaluate Progress. The same process will be followed as for the annual Progress review.

4.3.5 Examination

All HDR Students will be allocated a Thesis submission date which is calculated based on their Admission date, study mode, and program. HDR Students will work with their supervisory team to submit their Thesis by the due date.

If a Student is unable to submit by their due date, they must submit a request for extension of candidature. In considering a request for extension of candidature, consideration will be given to the Progress made to date, the anticipated timelines for completion, any extenuating circumstances that have delayed the project and whether this was outside of an HDR student's control.

An extension of candidature must be endorsed by the HDR Student's supervisors and approved by the Dean (GRS). The Decision will be communicated to the Student in writing via the University-issued email account.

If an HDR Student has not submitted their Thesis by the due date and has not put in an extension request within 10 days of their Thesis due date, unsatisfactory Progress will be initiated, as per section 4.4.

4.4 Unsatisfactory Progress

4.4.1 Conditional Academic Standing

Where an HDR student is not making satisfactory Progress in relation to a required milestone and/or report, a Conditional Academic Standing (CAS) Notice will be sent to the Student's University-issued email account. The CAS Notice will outline conditions that the HDR Student must meet within a specified timeframe.

HDR Students should work with their supervisors to identify and plan appropriate actions to meet the conditions set out in the CAS Notice. Students are also encouraged to make use of available support services.

HDR Students placed on CAS who cancel their current program of study and apply for Admission into a new program will have their CAS status transferred to their new program and will continue to be monitored in accordance with this procedure. If an HDR Student applies to transfer into a Coursework-based program, they will be put on stage 2 as per 4.4 of the Student Academic Progress Procedure.

4.4.2 Show Cause

If the conditions set out in the CAS Notice are not met within the specified timeframe, the Student will be asked to Show Cause as to why they should not be Excluded for 12 months or

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their candidature terminated.

The Student will have 20 University Business Days from the date of the Show Cause Notice to submit their response to the Dean (GRS).

On receipt of the Student's Show Cause submission, the Dean (GRS) will Assess the submission and recommend or approve one of the following actions within 10 University Business Days:

Action	Approval Authority
Continue candidature	Dean (GRS)
Exclude the candidate for a period of 12 months	Dean (GRS)
Terminate candidature	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (DVC (R&I)) on the recommendation of the Dean (GRS)

4.4.3 Continued candidature

Where the Dean (GRS) approves continuation of candidature, the GRS will notify the Student via their University-issued email account, including any conditions and timelines associated with the continuation of candidature.

4.4.4 Exclusion

If the Dean (GRS) approves Exclusion, the Student will be notified by the GRS via their University-issued email account, with a copy to the supervisory team of the Decision and the reasons for the Decision.

In the case of International Students on a Student visa, the University is obliged to advise Students that a period of Exclusion for unsatisfactory Academic Progress will result in them being reported to the relevant Government departments for unsatisfactory Progress. This may result in the cancellation of the Student's visa, unless they can demonstrate:

1. Special Circumstances; and/or

2. that the University failed to follow relevant policies and procedures.

The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 requires that when the University notifies a Student of its intention to report the Student for not achieving satisfactory Academic Progress, the Student must also be informed that they are able to access the University's complaints and appeals process and have 20 University Business Days in which to do so. Responding to the Show Cause is deemed to be accessing this process, as per Stage 2 of the Student Grievance Resolution Procedure.

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The University may Exclude a Student from an Academic Program in accordance with the Research Code of Conduct: Management of Potential Breaches Procedure and Research Misconduct Penalty Schedule.

4.4.5 Readmission following Exclusion

Students seeking readmission from Exclusion must apply for readmission to their program of study or apply to transfer to another program of study based on the equivalent Admission requirements to gain entry to the relevant program at the time of the readmission application.

Students seeking to readmit will be required to demonstrate changes in circumstances and/or motivation to show that they are capable of successfully completing the program. Eligibility for readmission will be assessed by the Dean (GRS).

Following readmission, Students will be assigned Conditional Academic Standing (refer to section 4.4.1).

4.4.6 Termination of candidature

If the DVC (R&I) approves termination of a Student's candidature, the Student will be notified by the GRS, via their University-issued email account, with a copy to the supervisory team, of the Decision and the reasons for the Decision.

4.4.7 Termination due to non-enrolment

The Dean (GRS) may terminate a Student's candidature if the Student is not enrolled by the Census Date and is not on a University-approved Leave of Absence for the full Study Period.

If the Dean (GRS) approves termination of a Student's candidature, the Student will be notified by the GRS via their University-issued email account, with a copy to the supervisory team, of the Decision.

4.5 Student Grievances

A candidate who is dissatisfied with a Decision in relation to their HDR candidature may request a review of this Decision in accordance with the Student Grievance Resolution Policy.

5 References

Nil.

6 Schedules

This procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the

table below.

7 Procedure 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
Subordinate Schedules	Higher Degree by Research Confirmation of Candidature Schedule Higher Degree by Research Student Annual Progress Review Schedule
Approved Date	27/7/2021
Effective Date	8/8/2021
Review Date	8/8/2026
Relevant Legislation	*Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act (2000)* *Higher Education Support Act (2003)* *Information Privacy Act (2009)* National Code of Practice for Providers of education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Admissions, Enrolment and Graduations Policy Assessment Policy Code of Conduct Policy Student Academic Integrity Policy Student Communication Policy Student General Conduct Policy Student Grievance Resolution Policy
Related Procedures	Admissions Procedure

	Assessment Procedure Enrolment Procedure Grades Procedure Higher Degree by Research Student Admissions and Enrolments Procedure Higher Degree by Research Student Scholarship Procedure Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedure Research Code of Conduct: Management of Potential Breaches Procedure Research Training Program Scholarship Procedure Student Academic Misconduct Procedure Student Academic Progress Procedure Student Appeals Procedure Student Communication Procedure Student Discrimination, Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Response Procedure Student General Misconduct Procedure Student Grievance Resolution Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	Administrative Information for Higher Education Providers (AIP) Manual Exclude Internal Form (under review) Feedback, Complaints, Review of Decision and Appeals Graduate Research School Student Progress Reports UniSQ website (Graduate Research School) Student General Misconduct Procedure Penalty Schedule UniSQ Scholarship website
Definitions	**Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary**

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	Academic Program 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. Academic Progress Describes the status of a Student's progress towards successful completion of their coursework for each Study Period and towards completion of their program within the maximum given timeframe. Students who are successfully progressing through their studies would not be assigned to any of the Academic Progress stages outlined in the Student Academic Progress Procedure. Admission The process of submission and assessment of applications for entry to study at the University. Assess The process used to determine Student's achievement of expected Learning Outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration. Census Date The date on which the Student's enrolment related requirements must be finalised in line with the University's important dates. A Higher Education Provider must, for each unit of study it provides or proposes to provide during a year, determine for that year, a particular date to be the Census Date for the unit. Students are responsible for meeting the University's Census Date deadline and must check that all enrolment and payment details are correct on or before the Census Date. Coursework A method of teaching and learning that leads to the acquisition of skills and knowledge and does not include a major research component. Decision A determination made by an Employee, contractor or other authorised

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delegate in the course of their duties on behalf of the University.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research)

The person bearing that title including a person acting in that position.

Exclusion

Prohibition from enrolling in a Course or program for a specified period due to unsatisfactory academic progress.

Grievance

Typically defined as a concern or Complaint raised by an Employee against a process, action, omission or Decision within the responsibility and control of the University which relates to employment or related internal People Portfolio matters, which has or is likely to have an unreasonable negative impact on the ability of an Employee to undertake their duties, or similar impact on their career.

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.

Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Student

A Student enrolled in an HDR program.

Information

Any collection of data that is processed, analysed, interpreted, organised, classified or communicated in order to serve a useful purpose, present facts or represent knowledge in any medium or form. This includes presentation in electronic (digital), print, audio, video, image, graphical, cartographic, physical sample, textual or numerical form.

International Student

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A Student who is not an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen, an Australian Permanent Resident or the holder of an Australian permanent humanitarian visa.

Leave of Absence

An approval granted to a Student to cease formal study as an enrolled Student for a specified period of time.

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.

Overseas Student

A Student who is not a Domestic Student.

Research

Research is the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include the synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

Research Misconduct

Breaches of the University Research Code of Conduct and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research occur on a spectrum, from minor (less serious) to major (more serious). Some major/serious breaches may be regarded as 'research misconduct'.

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The University uses the definition recommended in the National Health and Medical Research Council Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and defines Research Misconduct as a serious breach of the Code which is also intentional or reckless or negligent. The use of the term Research Misconduct for serious breaches will be considered in the context of other institutional processes, Regardless of whether a Code investigation and an investigation done under an employment or student disciplinary agreement are separate or integrated, the University will take all reasonable steps to ensure that these do not conflict, or hinder the timely implementation of all corrective actions. Research misconduct does not include honest differences in judgement. Unintentional errors do not usually constitute research misconduct unless they result from behaviour that is reckless or negligent. Repeated or persistent breaches will likely constitute a serious breach, which will trigger consideration of Research Misconduct.

Scholarship

A Scholarship is Student recognition, typically based on Academic Merit, which provides a financial grant to a Student to undertake or complete a program of study at the University over a nominated period of time, in accordance with the selection criteria. A Scholarship may take the form of periodic payments to the Student or a reduction in specified costs, such as tuition fees for the duration of the Scholarship.

Semester

A period of time during which instruction is provided, learning is undertaken and Assessment is carried out. There are three Semester periods during an Academic Year, known consecutively as Semester 1, Semester 2 and Semester 3.

Show Cause

The Show Cause process is a formal process that allows a Student to present their case as to why they should not be Excluded from their studies due to unsatisfactory Academic Progress.

Special Circumstances

Matters which are, in most cases, beyond the control of the Student and which will impact their capacity to progress with their planned program of study or meet a submission deadline. In some legislation, Special Circumstances are referred to as “compassionate and compelling circumstances”.

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	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'. 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 procedure only
	Progress Satisfactory completion of course work and research based courses.
Keywords	Exclusion, excluded, conditional academic standing, Show Cause, Progress report
Record No	21/257PL

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