THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
AUSTRALIA

Procedure:

Higher Degree by Research Candidature

Effective: 29 November 2023

Audience: staff and students

Policy category: academic
Policy sub-category: research

Key words:	Candidature, Research, Thesis
Procedure Owner:	Pro Vice Chancellor Research
Responsible Officer:	National Director Research
Review Date:	November 2026

Fremantle | Broome | Sydney

Contents

1   PURPOSE

1.1   This procedure supports the *Policy: Higher Degree by Research Supervision* and outlines the requirements and management for candidature of higher degree by research (HDR) students.

2   SCOPE

2.1   This procedure applies to higher degree by research (HDR) students and all staff involved in HDR student supervision, including general staff who administer HDR supervision or support HDR students.

3   CANDIDATURE

3.1   Admission

3.1.1   The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research may approve admission of an applicant to a higher degree by research on the recommendation of the relevant Associate Dean Research in consultation with the National Head of School of the School where the HDR student will be enrolled, in accordance with the *Policy: Admission and Credit* and the *Procedure: Admission*.

3.2   Concurrent enrolment

3.2.1   The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research may approve an HDR student's concurrent enrolment in a program or a course for another award of the University or of another higher education provider.

3.3   Transfer between HDR programs

3.3.1   The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research may approve the transfer of an HDR student to another HDR program, subject to the recommendation of the Principal Supervisor, endorsed by the National Head of School and the Faculty Research Committee in any of the following circumstances:

    3.3.1.1   transfer from a Masters Degree (Research) program to a Doctoral Degree program, or

    3.3.1.2   transfer from a Doctoral Degree program to a Masters Degree (Research) program, or

    3.3.1.3   transfer between Masters Degree (Research) programs, or

    3.3.1.4   transfer between Doctoral Degree programs.

3.3.2   Where an HDR student who is studying on an Australian student visa applies to transfer of a program at a lower AQF level they must first apply to the Department of Home Affairs for a new visa. Refer to the *Procedure: International Student Transfer (Change Education Provider)* for further requirements.

3.3.3   Transfer will normally be approved where the HDR student has completed no more than 200 units of credit in their program, which is equivalent of one year of study.

3.4   International student transfer to another provider

3.4.1   Transfer of HDR students who are studying on an Australian student visa to another higher education provider before completing six months of study in at the University

may only be approved in certain circumstances, in accordance with the *Procedure: International Student Transfer (Change Education Provider).*

3.5   Period of enrolment

3.5.1   Enrolment load is measured in EFTSL. A full-time student will normally be enrolled in 1 EFTSL. An EFTSL of less than 0.75 is defined as a part-time study load. An HDR student may transfer between part-time and full-time enrolment and vice versa during their program, but not during a semester period.

3.5.2   The minimum and maximum periods of enrolment permitted for an HDR program are specified in the relevant program regulations.

3.5.3   The maximum period for an HDR student who transfers from one HDR program to another will be assessed case by case.

3.5.4   In exceptional circumstances, the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research, on the recommendation of the Associate Dean Research, may approve an extension of the maximum time.

3.6   Withdrawal from an HDR program

3.6.1   An HDR student may apply to withdraw from their program in accordance with the General Regulation (section 2.20).

3.6.2   An HDR student may apply for a retro-active withdrawal from their courses in accordance with the General Regulation (section 2.18).

3.7   Orientation

3.7.1   All new and commencing HDR students must attend an orientation workshop within the first six months of their candidature.

3.8   Research proposal and confirmation of candidature

3.8.1   On admission to an HDR program, the student must develop a research proposal in consultation with their supervisory team.

3.8.2   The HDR student will then present the research proposal orally and in writing in accordance with the *Guideline: Format and Presentation of a Research Proposal for a Higher Degree by Research*.

3.8.3   The Principal Supervisor will present the HDR student's written research proposal with their support for endorsement by the relevant Faculty Research Delegate (FRD). This submission is expected to occur within the first six months (or part-time equivalent) of the HDR student's enrolment. The confirmation of candidature requires endorsement of the thesis proposal from the FRD prior to recommendation to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research may request that ethics approval is required for the project before the confirmation of candidature can be approved.

3.8.4   Two readers endorsed by the FRD, one of whom may be external to the University, will review the research proposal and advise whether it is of sufficient quality for the HDR student's candidature to be confirmed.

3.8.5   Where a potential conflict of interest in the appointment of a reader arises, FRD will

manage it in accordance with University's *Code of Conduct: Research* and the relevant conflict of interest policy, procedure and declaration will apply.

3.8.6 If the FRD determines the HDR student's research proposal meets the required standard, it will recommend confirmation of the HDR student's candidature to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research.

3.8.7 If the FRD determines the research proposal does not meet the required standard it may recommend that

3.8.7.1 the HDR student be given permission to resubmit, and may set conditions for resubmission within six months, or

3.8.7.2 the HDR student's enrolment be terminated.

3.8.8 Where an HDR student who is studying on an Australian student visa is not progressing as expected with regard to confirmation of candidature, will have an intervention strategy activated by the relevant National Head of School of the School where the HDR student is enrolled or Research Institute Director in accordance with the *Procedure: Intervention Strategy*.

3.8.9 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research will then decide whether to

3.8.9.1 approve confirmation of candidature, or

3.8.9.2 terminate the enrolment, based on the FRD's recommendation to do so.

3.8.10 The HDR student, guided by the Principal Supervisor, must submit a research data management plan (RDMP) after the confirmation of candidature, in accordance with the *Policy: Research Data Management* and the *Procedure: Research Data Management*.

3.8.11 Changes to an HDR student's approved research proposal, after candidature is confirmed, may be made at any time, subject to the approval of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research.

3.9 Ethics and integrity

3.9.1 Where the HDR student's research project requires ethics approval, the Principal Supervisor will submit an application in accordance with (as relevant) the *Policy: Ethics Approval for Research Human Participants,* and the relevant procedures supporting the policy.

3.10 Progress reviews and reporting

3.10.1 The HDR student and supervisor are jointly responsible for holding regular discussions on the progress of the research.

3.10.2 The HDR student and the supervisor must provide detailed progress reports annually by the published date, to the Pro Vice Chancellor Research.

3.10.3 Progress reports must be submitted every six months for those HDR students whose status is conditional and/or their period of candidature is beyond the standard duration.

3.10.4 Where an HDR student who is studying on an Australian student visa is not progressing as expected with regard to confirmation of candidacy, an intervention strategy will be activated by the relevant National Head of School of the School

where the HDR student is enrolled or Research Institute Director in accordance with the *Procedure: Intervention Strategy*.

3.10.5 Based on the recommendation of the Associate Dean Research, in consultation with the National Head of School of the School where the HDR student is enrolled, the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research will approve the academic progress of HDR students either as 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'.

3.10.6 An HDR student whose progress is assessed as unsatisfactory will be assigned a conditional academic status and the Associate Dean Research will notify the HDR student and their Principal Supervisor.

3.10.7 An HDR student who does not submit an academic progress report by the published due date will be considered to have made unsatisfactory progress and placed on conditional academic status.

3.10.8 An HDR student may appeal a decision to change their academic status to conditional following accordance with the *Policy: Student Appeal.*

3.11 Termination of candidature

3.11.1 The University will terminate the candidature of an HDR student who fails to achieve satisfactory progress and remains on conditional academic status for two enrolled progress reporting periods in succession.

3.11.2 In exceptional circumstances the FRD may recommend, to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research termination of candidature for an HDR student who fails to achieve satisfactory academic progress after one enrolled progress reporting period.

3.12 Leave of absence

3.12.1 An HDR student may apply for leave of absence during their candidature in accordance with the General Regulation (clause 5.3).

3.12.2 An HDR student who does not apply for leave or re-enrol by the published enrolment date will be recorded as 'absent without leave' (AWOL).

3.12.3 An HDR student recorded as AWOL will be managed in accordance with General regulations (section 5.4).

3.13 Thesis

3.13.1 On completing their research project, a candidate will submit a thesis that embodies the results of their work and must:

3.13.1.1   be prepared under supervision,

3.13.1.2   be the sole work of the candidate, except where due reference is made in the thesis,

3.13.1.3   demonstrate a thorough understanding of the subject matter of the thesis,

3.13.1.4   contribute to knowledge (theoretical or practical) and understanding in the field of study concerned, and

3.13.1.5   demonstrate the capacity of the candidate to carry out research.

3.14 Thesis submission requirements

3.14.1 The supervisory team will guide the candidate in preparing their thesis, which will:

    3.14.1.1 be consistent with the approved research proposal and relevant program requirements,

    3.14.1.2 be the work of the candidate alone and clearly reference any contributions that are not the candidate's work,

    3.14.1.3 contribute to knowledge and understanding in the field of research, practice or creative field, and

    3.14.1.4 demonstrate the candidate's achievement of the program learning outcomes relating to research.

3.14.2 In submitting the thesis, the candidate will also submit a signed thesis declaration.

3.14.3 Requirements for thesis formatting and submission are stated in the *Guideline: Presentation and Submission of Research Theses.* HDR students who are completing the thesis by publication should refer to the *Guideline: Thesis by Publication* and follow a published referencing and style guide.

3.14.4 The FRD must endorse the thesis as suitable for examination on the recommendation of the Principal Supervisor in consultation with the other supervisors.

3.14.5 After submitting a thesis, a candidate may not withdraw it from examination unless the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research permits this on the advice of the National Head of School of the School where the HDR student is enrolled.

3.15 Thesis examination

3.15.1 Nomination and appointment of examiners are managed in accordance with the *Procedure: Nomination of Thesis Examiners for a Higher Degree by Research*.

3.15.2 Where a candidate and/or supervisor raises a potential conflict of interest in the appointment of an examiner the Research Office must be informed. This will then be managed in accordance with *Australian Council of Graduate Research Conflict of Interest Guidelines*.

3.15.3 To protect the integrity of the thesis examination process, supervisors should avoid contacting examiners. In the event of such an occurrence, the Research Office must be informed and this will be managed in accordance with the University's *Code of Conduct: Research.*

3.15.4 Each thesis examiner will provide a report that addresses the examination criteria and includes one of the following recommendations:

    3.15.4.1 that the thesis be classified as passed unconditionally,

    3.15.4.2 that the thesis be classified as passed conditionally, subject to corrections identified in the examiner's report being made to the satisfaction of the Principal Supervisor,

    3.15.4.3 that the thesis be classified as passed conditionally, subject to changes identified in the examiner's report being made to the satisfaction of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research,

    3.15.4.4 that the thesis be resubmitted in a revised form for re-examination taking into account the comments and changes identified in the examiner's

report, or

      3.15.4.5 that the thesis be classified as failed, without the right to resubmit the thesis, on the basis that substantial further research work and/or major changes will not raise the thesis to an acceptable standard.

3.15.5 If an examiner does not provide a report on the thesis within the requested time frame, the Director of Research Office may appoint a new examiner, on advice from the Associate Dean Research.

3.15.6 When all examiners' reports have been received, they will be considered by the Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee (RDSC), who will make a recommendation to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (PVCR) on outlined examiners reports and recommendations (clause 3.15.4).

3.15.7 As part of its recommendation the RDSC may specify that a candidate will undergo further oral, written or practical examinations.

3.15.8 A candidate may appeal against a thesis examination decision in accordance with the *Policy: Student Appeals*.

3.16 Re-examination

3.16.1 Where a candidate is permitted to resubmit their thesis for re-examination with specified revisions and subject to specified conditions, they must complete and/or meet these to the satisfaction of their Principal Supervisor and the FRD within the specified time frame.

3.16.2 If the FRD expresses reservations about the suitability of the thesis for re-examination, the process will be managed in accordance with 3.12.6 above.

3.16.3 At the discretion of the RDSC, a thesis can be submitted for re-examination by the same or different examiners.

3.16.4 A thesis submitted for re-examination may be assessed by RDSC, as either:

      3.16.4.1 passed, with no corrections, or

      3.16.4.2 passed, with minor corrections to the satisfaction of the Principal Supervisor, or

      3.16.4.3 failed.

3.17 Thesis completion

3.17.1 Based on the RDSC recommendation, HDR students will be given a timeframe in which to complete their final revisions of the thesis as specified by the outcome letter.

3.17.2 HDR students who fail to meet the specified timeframe to complete their final revisions of the thesis as specified by the outcome letter will be referred back to the RDSC for further decision.

3.17.3 Once the final revisions have been approved and the Research Office is notified, the HDR student will receive their final outcome letter and be advised to apply for graduation.

3.17.4 The final version of the thesis, with approved corrections, will be sent to the Research Office for submission to the online thesis repository, as per the details in

the *Thesis Declaration Form*.

4   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1   HDR students:

4.1.1   must be aware of and comply with the university and government's research-related legislative documents,

4.1.2   who are also UNDA staff members must comply with the conditions of their employment,

4.1.3   must maintain the progress of their work and ongoing arrangements with the supervisory team,

4.1.4   must ask for support to seek resolution as soon as practicable, where there are factors that might impact their research studies,

4.1.5   must disclose any conflicts of interest as soon as they become apparent, and

4.1.6   are expected to dedicate an average of 38 hours a week to their graduate research program (if enrolled full-time) or a minimum of 20 hours a week (if enrolled part-time)

4.2   Postgraduate Research Coordinators will:

4.2.1   in conjunction with the Associate Dean (Research), manage all stages of HDR progression and quality assurance procedures at the Faculty level, including admission, confirmation of candidature, progress reviews and submission, and

4.2.2   develop support resources for HDR students and supervisors across the School, Institute and Faculty.

4.3   Associate Deans Research will make recommendations to the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Research about:

4.3.1   admission of an applicant to a higher degree by research,

4.3.2   academic progress of HDR students,

4.3.3   readiness of thesis for examination, and

4.3.4   extension of the maximum time for a candidate, in exceptional circumstances.

4.4   Faculty Research Delegate will provide advice on:

4.4.1   confirmation of candidature, and

4.4.2   submission of theses for examination.

4.5   The Research Office is responsible for:

4.5.1   managing the implementation of the policy and procedures relating to graduate research training; and

4.5.2   administration of HDR candidature from application to thesis examination.

4.6   National Director Research Office will:

4.6.1   appoint examiners of the HDR thesis on advice of the Associate Dean Research.

4.7   The Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee will review the reports of examiners and make recommendations on:

   4.7.1   awarding of higher degrees by research, and

   4.7.2   thesis revision and re-examination.

4.8   The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research will:

   4.8.1   confirm the HDR student's candidature,

   4.8.2   approve the academic progress status of HDR students,

   4.8.3   approve changes to programs, and

   4.8.4   recommend awarding of higher degrees by research, to the Vice-Chancellor.

4.9   Additional responsibilities relating to supervision of HDR students outlined in the *Procedure: HDR Supervision* also apply.

4.10   General staff, such as Library staff, with a responsibility to support HDR students will assist in the development of research and professional skills.

5   RELATED DOCUMENTS

5.1   This procedure should be read in conjunction with any relevant regulations, codes, policies and   procedures including the following:

   5.1.1   *Policy: Higher Degree by Research Supervision*

   5.1.2   *Procedure: Higher Degree by Research Supervision*

   5.1.3   *Code of Conduct: Research*

   5.1.4   *Code of Conduct: Students*

   5.1.5   *Employee Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour*

   5.1.6   *Policy: Ethics Approval for Research Involving Human Participants*

   5.1.7   *Procedure: Nomination of Thesis Examiners for a Higher Degree by Research*

   5.1.8   *Policy: Research Data Management*

   5.1.9   *Policy: Intellectual Property*

   5.1.10   *Policy: Student Appeals*

   5.1.11   *Procedure: Student Grievance*

   5.1.12   *Procedure: Intervention Strategy*

   5.1.13   *Policy: Adjunct, Clinical Academic and Visiting Appointments*

   5.1.14   *Policy: Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment*

   5.1.15   *Procedure: Disclosing Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment*

   5.1.16   *Guideline: Format and Presentation of a Research Proposal for a Higher Degree by Research*

   5.1.17   *Guideline: Presentation and Submission of Research Theses*

   5.1.18   *Guideline: Thesis by Publication*

   5.1.19   *General Regulations*

   5.1.20   *Policy: Admission and Credit*

   5.1.21   *Procedure: Admission*

5.1.22 *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018*

5.1.23 *Supervision: A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*

5.1.24 *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*

5.1.25 *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018*

5.1.26 *Australian Council of Graduate Research Conflict of Interest Guidelines*

5.1.27 *National Health and Medical Research Council Conflict of Interest Guide*

5.1.28 *Universities Australia Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships*

6 DEFINITIONS

6.1 For the purpose of this procedure, the definitions outlined in the *Policy: HDR Supervision* and *Procedure: HDR Supervision* apply.

6.2 The following additional definitions apply to this procedure:

Candidacy means a period of enrolment as a HDR Student.

EFTSL means Equivalent Full Time Student Load.

Faculty Research Delegate (FRD) means the three faculty staff members comprising the relevant Postgraduate Research Coordinator, relevant National Head of School and Associate Dean Research. All three must approve specified actions relating to HDR students and their program candidature. The FRD may take advice and recommendations from relevant school or faculty committees or panels to support their decision-making.

Research Degree means a degree in which an original research investigation is undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding. The degree shall entail a minimum two thirds research component. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of the professions and industry, as well as to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances and artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved material, devices, products and processes, including design and construction.

Research Proposal means a formal proposal of an HDR student, written under the supervision of the Supervisory Team.

Research Data Management Plan means a document that describes how a researcher will collect, organize, manage, store, secure, back up, preserve and share your data during and beyond the lifecycle of the Research Project. It deals with matters such as retention and disposal, archiving, accessing, sharing or publishing the data, and conditions or restrictions for data reuse.

Version	Date of approval	Approved by	Amendment
1	29 November 2023	Vice Chancellor	New procedure replaces the *Procedure: Supervision and Candidacy Process for Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Students* and the rescinded *Research Regulations*.