

HDR Admission and Enrolment Procedures

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1. Governing Policy

[Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#)

2. Purpose

These procedures specify the requirements for:

- prospective students to apply for admission to a higher degree by research (HDR) candidature
- admitted students to enrol, vary their enrolment, transfer between candidatures or withdraw from enrolment.

3. Definitions

College HDR Committee	the College-level committee with responsibility for HDR matters within that College.
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4. Admission

4.1. Prospective student pre-application requirements

Before starting an application for HDR candidature, all prospective students must read the [Apply for an HDR](#) webpage and:

- a. check their eligibility to start a higher degree by research in the relevant [Course Rules](#)
- b. identify a potential research supervisor using the University's [find a supervisor](#) facility, and then prepare a research outline in the prescribed [format](#), their academic qualifications transcript, and details of their research experience to that supervisor. If a supervisor cannot be identified, contact the Office of Graduate Research.
- c. check for potential [scholarships](#)
- d. check whether application closing dates apply.

4.2. How to apply

- a. To apply for admission to all HDR candidatures except Higher Doctorates:
 - i. For domestic students: apply through the domestic [How to Apply](#) website.
 - ii. For international students: apply through the international [How to Apply](#) website.
- b. Applications for a scholarship can be combined with the admission application.
- c. To apply for admission to a Higher Doctorate, refer to the Higher Doctorate Procedures (*under development*) and [Course Rule](#).

4.3. Application assessment

- a. All applications for admission to candidature will be assessed to determine whether:
 - i. the applicant meets all the eligibility requirements for admission
 - ii. the applicant is reasonably likely to be able to successfully complete the requirement of the course in the proposed field of research within the maximum permitted duration, and
 - iii. if the applicant is compliant with any University policy, legislative or Government requirements.
- b. In assessing a.ii., the following matters will be taken into account:
 - i. whether a supervisory and study environment of research/creative activity, inquiry and scholarship can be provided for the applicant
 - ii. in the case of an applicant applying for candidature as an external student, whether the resources available to the student are of an acceptable standard, and
 - iii. the likelihood that the student will be able to complete the candidature within the time available.

4.4. Offer of admission

- a. Only authorised University officers may approve offers of admission.
- a. All applicants will be notified whether their application has been accepted or not.
- b. An applicant who receives an offer of admission to candidature must log into the [Student Information System](#) within the specified time, as stated in the letter of offer, and follow the prompts to:
 - i. accept or decline the offer, or
 - ii. apply for a deferral.

- c. An offer which is not accepted within the time specified will lapse.

4.5. Withdrawal of offer of admission

4.5.1. Inaccurate or incomplete information provided by applicant

- a. Where an applicant has been offered a place in a course as result of the provision of inaccurate or incomplete information, the offer may be withdrawn and any consequential enrolment cancelled.
- b. Prior to withdrawing an offer, the delegated authority must:
 - i. give the applicant an opportunity to explain the inaccuracies or omissions in the information provided, and
 - ii. take into account the degree to which the applicant has contributed to the inaccuracies and omissions and the stage through the course at which the errors are detected.

4.5.2. Supervision team no longer available

Where the identified supervision team is no longer available in accordance with the [HDR Supervisor Procedures](#) 3.c.ii., the offer may be withdrawn, provided the applicant has not completed their enrolment.

4.5.3. Administrative error by University

- a. Where an applicant has been offered a place in a course as a result of an error by a University staff member, the University may withdraw the offer and cancel any consequential enrolment.
- b. At the time of withdrawing an offer, the delegated authority must attempt to facilitate an offer of admission to a suitable alternative course.
- c. Where no suitable alternative offer can be made the University will refund any tuition fees paid.

4.5.4. Internal international student withdrawal of offer: consequences

Changes to an internal international applicant's Confirmation of Enrolment resulting from confirmed withdrawal of an offer will be reported to the Australian Government. This may have an impact on their student visa.

4.6. International student transfer

4.6.1. International students

- a. Where an internal *international* student seeks to transfer to Flinders University from another Australian registered CRICOS institution *before completing 26 weeks of their principal course*, the University will consider the application only if:
 - i. the original registered institution has ceased to be registered or the course in which the student was enrolled has ceased to be registered; or
 - ii. the original registered institution has provided a letter of release; or
 - iii. the original registered institution has had a sanction imposed on its registration by the Australian government or state or territory government that prevents the student from continuing their principal course; or
 - iv. any government sponsor of the student considers the change to be in the student's best interest and has provided written support for the transfer.

5. Enrolment in candidature

- a. Successful applicants who accept an offer of admission will follow the instructions on [My HDR: Getting Started](#).
- b. Applicants must enrol in their candidature by the date specified in the letter of offer of candidature. Failure to enrol by the date specified means that the authority to enrol lapses and the application process ends.
- c. Enrolment in the time-based research project of an HDR candidature, or a PhD by Prior Published Work, is by appointment, in person or via technology, with the Office of Graduate Research.

- d. Enrolment in any credit-based topics that are specified as program requirements in the HDR [Course Rule](#) is done directly by the student by following the enrolment instructions on [MyFlinders](#).

6. Candidature variation, transfer and withdrawal

- a. Approval is required for all variations to candidature enrolment from those stated in the student's Enrolment Verification, as provided in the sub-sections below.
- b. For all applications to vary their candidature enrolment, the student must review the information below and complete the appropriate online form in [Inspire](#), together with:
- a recommendation from the principal supervisor, and
 - a justification to support the reasons for the request and evidence (if applicable).
- c. If the student and supervisor disagree, the student may still apply, and the Office of Graduate Research will determine an appropriate course of action.
- d. The application will be reviewed by the Office of Graduate Research.
- If the application is clearly consistent with the relevant provisions of the [Course Rules](#) for the degree and the [HDR Policy](#) and these Procedures, including the maximum permitted duration of the candidature, the Office may approve the application.
 - If the application does not fit within d.i., or the Office otherwise considers it should not make a decision to approve, the Office must refer the application to the relevant College HDR Coordinator, who may either:
 - make a decision, after obtaining such advice as the HDR Coordinator considers appropriate, or
 - refer it to the College HDR Committee for decision.
- e. The Office of Graduate Research will notify the student of the outcome of the application, and any implications for the other conditions of candidature, including any impact on RTP support eligibility or tuition fees payable, and any consequential changes to Milestone dates.
- f. Any consequential change to enrolment in any credit-based topics as a result of an enrolment variation must be done directly by the student on [MyFlinders](#).

6.1. Transfer from part-time to full-time status and vice-versa

- a. The student must apply as per 6.b. above.
- b. Additional approval is sought from the Scholarships Committee via submission of the online form in [Inspire](#) for scholarship holders to transfer from full-time to part-time, as stated in the conditions of award for the scholarship. Approval will only be given if a student can provide sufficient evidence that there are extraordinary circumstances which preclude full-time study.
- c. For internal *international* students, part-time candidature will only be approved in compassionate or compelling circumstances beyond the control of the student (e.g., serious illness or injury, or bereavement of a close family member) and must be supported by documentary evidence.

6.2. Transfer of status from internal to external and vice-versa / change of enrolment location

A student's Enrolment Verification will specify whether the student is internal or external and the location at which the student is to undertake their candidature.

6.2.1. External to internal

- a. To change from external to internal, the student must apply as per 6.b. above.
- b. External *international* students:
- may be required to meet further admissions requirements determined by the University in accordance with legislative or government requirements before being accepted as an internal student, and
 - will need to apply for a student visa from the Australian Government with a Confirmation of Enrolment from the University.

6.2.2. Internal to external and change of location

- a. To change from internal to external (including being absent from the specified location for a period of **3 consecutive months or more** in any one year):
 - i. the student must apply as per 6.b. above, and
 - ii. the student and supervisor must also complete the external status form available from the [Office of Graduate Research](#).
- b. If the *internal to external* application is for the purpose of *writing up the thesis* away from the student's location, the principal supervisor must certify that:
 - i. all experimental work has been completed
 - ii. the student no longer requires physical access to the University's resources (other than consultation with the supervisors), and
 - iii. the student has completed the research required to write the first draft of the thesis.
- c. If the absence is approved:
 - i. scholarship holders must contact Student Finance Services, and
 - ii. Milestone dates will remain unchanged (unless approval under another category above has been given).
- d. For internal *international* students, a change to external status will be notified to the Australian Government. This may have an impact on the student's visa.

6.3. Significant amendment to research topic

- a. The student must apply as per 6.b. above.
- b. Refer to the [HDR Supervisor Policy](#) and [HDR Supervisor Procedures](#) if the change requires a change in supervisor.

6.4. Intermission of candidature

- a. In special circumstances, such as illness or another reason preventing the student from carrying out the work for the degree, the student may apply for intermission as per 6.b. above. Periods of intermission must not accumulate beyond 12 months for the whole of the candidature, except in extraordinary circumstances.
- b. Internal *international* students must discuss their reasons for intermission with Flinders International before making an application. Intermission will only be approved in compassionate or compelling circumstances beyond the control of the student (e.g., serious illness or injury, or bereavement of a close family member) and must be supported by documentary evidence. Approved intermission will result in cancellation of the Confirmation of Enrolment and will be reported to the Australian Government. This may have an impact on the student's visa.
- c. A student is not an enrolled student for the duration of the period of intermission.
- d. Intermission approval for scholarship holders is sought from the Scholarships Committee, via submission of the online form in [Inspire](#).

6.5. Bridging extension for PhD students beyond 3 years FTE

Only applicable for PhD students enrolled from 2017 onwards.

Students must apply as per 6.b. above for a bridging extension of six months (FTE). Only two bridging extensions of six months (FTE) are available. Approval is subject to the authorised delegate being satisfied that there is an appropriate plan in place for completion within the period of the bridging extension.

6.6. Extension of candidature beyond the maximum permitted duration

6.6.1. Domestic and external international students:

- a. Students must apply as per 6.b. above for an extension of up to six months full-time or twelve months part-time. Approval is subject to the authorised delegate being satisfied that there is an appropriate plan in place for completion within the period of the extension.
- b. Further extensions of up to six months may only be approved in extraordinary circumstances and under specific conditions determined by the authorised delegate, in consultation with the Office of Graduate Research.
- c. *Note:* As such extensions are likely to result in Research Training Program-supported students exceeding their period of support, the student will be required to pay fees during the extension period as determined by the University. International students will be required to pay tuition fees during the extension period.

6.6.2. Internal international students:

- a. Internal international students must complete their course within the duration specified in their Confirmation of Enrolment (COE) unless an extension is approved following application under 6.b. above.
- b. Approval will only be given if there are compassionate or compelling circumstances beyond the control of the student, and supported by documentary evidence (e.g., serious illness or injury, or bereavement of a close family member).
- c. *Note:* Internal international students will be required to continue paying tuition fees throughout the period of extension. Any change to the Confirmation of Enrolment will be reported to the Australian Government. This may have an impact on the student's visa.

6.7. Transfer between candidatures – enrolled Flinders University students

- a. For the transfer of enrolled Flinders University students:
 - from Masters by Research candidature to PhD or Professional Doctorate candidature
 - from PhD to Professional Doctorate candidature or Masters by Research candidature
 - from Professional Doctorate to PhD candidature or Masters by Research candidature—the student must complete the Transfer of Candidature or Project application form in [Inspire](#), with a recommendation from the principal supervisor.
- b. International students must also:
 - i. make a new application for admission to candidature as per Procedure 4.2, and
 - ii. submit an application to transfer to a new degree on the prescribed Transfer Degree Form available from Flinders International.
- c. The supervisor will arrange for an independent academic expert external to the discipline (not necessarily external to the University) to provide a written assessment of, and letter of recommendation on, the written work submitted with the online application.
- d. If the student and supervisor disagree, the student may still apply, and the Office of Graduate Research will determine an appropriate course of action.
- e. The application will be forwarded to the HDR Coordinator for assessment and decision. The HDR Coordinator may refer it to the College HDR Committee for assessment and decision. Assessment must take into account the relevant provisions of the [Course Rules](#) for the degrees, and any other University policies, including admission criteria.
- f. In the case of an application to **transfer from a Masters by Research candidature to a doctorate**, assessment of the application will be against the following criteria:
 - i. the student has demonstrated a capacity to undertake work at the more advanced level, in the form of either:
 - draft chapters, or

- evidence, in the form of written reports, of progress in fieldwork, research or data analysis, or
 - written seminar or conference papers, dealing with the substance of the thesis, that have been presented formally
- ii. the nature of the proposed research topic is substantial enough to warrant the expansion of the research framework, and
 - iii. the definition of the project is such that the student has a reasonable prospect of completing a doctoral thesis that will make a significant contribution to knowledge or, in the case of a Professional Doctorate, knowledge and/or professional practice.

[Note that a case for upgrading which simply asserts that the area is large enough to warrant an expanded scale of activity, without demonstration that the analytical framework has been expanded and is appropriate, will not be considered.]

- g. In the case of an application to **transfer from a doctorate to a Masters by Research candidature**, assessment will include:
 - i. whether the student has demonstrated they do not have capacity to reach the standard required of a doctoral program, and/or
 - ii. whether the scale, scope, level and originality of the work have been reviewed by the supervisor and student to ensure it is appropriate for a Masters by Research candidature.

For domestic students, dependent upon the duration of candidature and the amount of Research Training Program support already used by the student, tuition fees may apply. For international students, tuition fees will continue to apply.

- h. The Office of Graduate Research will notify the outcome to:
 - i. the student
 - ii. If the student is a scholarship holder, Student Finance Services, and
 - iii. if the student is an international student, Flinders International, which will issue a new offer which must be accepted by the student before a new Confirmation of Enrolment with the correct CRICOS code and duration of study for the course can be issued.
- i. A **transfer to a designated exit award candidature** (if available) cannot be made on application by the student. It will only be made following a Show Cause process under the [HDR Progression Procedures](#).

6.8. Withdrawal from candidature

6.8.1. By student

- a. Students may withdraw from candidature at their discretion (except in circumstances covered by 4.5) by completing the online form in [Inspire](#), but are encouraged to discuss an intention to do so with their supervisor/s and the relevant College HDR Coordinator, to see whether the reasons can be addressed by the University.
- b. The supervisor/s and HDR Coordinator must consider the reasons provided by the student during any such discussion, and:
 - i. make an attempt to resolve any difficulties in the study environment which may have prompted the student to consider withdrawing, and
 - ii. draw the student's attention to the option of a designated exit award, if available.
- c. Once the student withdraws, the Office of Graduate Research will arrange for the student's withdrawal to be acknowledged, for the student's supervisors to be notified, and for any follow-up action to be taken.
- d. A student who has withdrawn and who subsequently wishes to re-enrol must apply to the University for re-admission. It is at the University's discretion whether the student will be re-admitted and whether the period of candidature will be adjusted to take account of the previous candidature.

- e. An internal international student who seeks to withdraw from Flinders University and transfer to another registered CRICOS institution *before they have completed 26 weeks of their candidature* must apply for approval to transfer in accordance with the [International Student Transfer Procedures](#).

6.8.2. By University

An authorised University delegate may administratively withdraw a student from HDR candidature for any of the following reasons:

- a. the student was admitted on the basis of inaccurate or incomplete information (in accordance with Procedure 4.5.1)
- b. the student was admitted due to an error by a University staff member (in accordance with Procedure 4.5.3)
- c. the student failed to pay due fees or charges by the applicable date as specified under the [Students with Outstanding Debt Policy](#) and the [International Student Tuition Fees Procedures](#)
- d. the student was precluded for unsatisfactory academic performance under the [HDR Progression Procedures](#)
- e. the student was found to have committed an act of misconduct under [Statute 6.4: Student Conduct](#) and the [Policy and Procedures for Handling a Matter Under Statute 6.4: Student Conduct](#)
- f. the student is not able to withdraw in a timely fashion (e.g., because of a serious medical condition or death) and the College HDR Coordinator or the Dean of Graduate Research deems it in the best interests of the student in order to mitigate financial or academic risk.

6.8.3. Consequence of full withdrawal for internal international students

If an internal international student withdraws from, or the University administratively withdraws such a student from, their candidature, the University will cancel the student's Confirmation of Enrolment and notify the Australian Government. This may have an impact on the student's visa.

6.9. Enrolment status following thesis submission

- a. When an HDR student submits their thesis for examination, the student remains enrolled but their enrolment status is changed to 'Under Examination'.
- b. This means that:
 - i. a Research Training Program (RTP) supported student will no longer be entitled to RTP, and/or will not be charged tuition fees, and
 - ii. an international student will not be charged tuition fees.
- c. If an internal international student's Confirmation of Enrolment has not already expired at the time the student submits their thesis, the University will cancel the Confirmation of Enrolment and notify the Australian Government. This may have an impact on the student's visa.

7. Authorities

Delegate	Authority
a. Admission	
College HDR Coordinator or sub-delegate appointed in accordance with the Delegations Policy .	For <i>domestic</i> applicants, approve equivalency of Australian and international qualifications, and equivalency of other English language proficiency tests or qualifications, to specified admission requirements.
Vice-President and Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) or sub-delegate appointed in accordance with the Delegations Policy .	For <i>international</i> applicants, approve equivalency of Australian and international qualifications, and equivalency of other English language proficiency tests or qualifications, to specified admission requirements.

Delegate	Authority
College HDR Coordinator	Approve, reject or withdraw applications for admission into an HDR course. <i>[Actual offers will be issued, in light of the College HDR Coordinator decision, by the Office of Graduate Research (for domestic applicants) or the International Centre (for international applicants).]</i>
Dean of Graduate Research	Approve, in special circumstances, on advice of the relevant HDR Coordinator, an offer of admission to an individual applicant who does not meet the specified admission eligibility requirements.
College HDR Coordinator	Approve or reject an application for deferral of offer of admission.
b. Candidature variations, transfers and withdrawals	
Office of Graduate Research College HDR Coordinator College HDR Committee	Approve variations to enrolment on application by student, as per Procedure 6. For <i>international</i> students this approval is in conjunction with the Vice-President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (International) or sub-delegate.
College HDR Coordinator College HDR Committee	Approve or reject applications for transfers between candidatures.
Office of Graduate Research	Administratively withdraw a student, if satisfied the reason for withdrawal has been made out, after consultation as appropriate, as per Procedure 6.8.

8. Forms

Refer to the [Office of Graduate Research](#) or [Inspire](#)
[Equivalency of English Language Proficiency Request – International HDR Applicants](#)

Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Responsible Officer	Dean of Graduate Research
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* Unless otherwise indicated, this procedure will still apply beyond the review date.

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