
Higher Degrees by Research Policy

Table of Contents

1. Purpose
2. Framework
3. Scope
4. Policy statement
 - 4.1. Admission eligibility
 - 4.2. Admission applications
 - 4.3. Supervision
 - 4.4. Enrolment
 - 4.5. Enrolment duration
 - 4.6. Variations to enrolment conditions
 - 4.7. Withdrawal of enrolment
 - 4.8. Student progression
 - 4.9. Research integrity
 - 4.10. Examination
 - 4.11. Award requirements
5. Student complaints
6. Authorities
7. Supporting procedures and documents

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the principles which apply to admission, enrolment, progression, examination and completion for a University higher degree by research (HDR) award.

2. Framework

The University's research training policy framework comprises:

- [Course Rules](#) for HDR awards
- this Higher Degrees by Research Policy
- [HDR Supervisor Policy](#)
- [Research Training Program Scholarships Administrative Rules](#)
- [Supporting procedures and documents](#)
- [Charter for HDR Student and Supervisor Responsibilities](#)
- [Research Integrity Policy](#)

3. Scope

- a. This policy applies to all HDR courses which lead to the HDR awards listed in the [Award Courses Policy](#).
- b. Except as stated in c. and d., an HDR course is one where at least two-thirds of the assessable components of the total course are based on a time-based research project, resulting in a thesis undertaken during the student's HDR candidature.
- c. In special circumstances only, the assessable components of the Doctor of Philosophy course may be based on work published prior to admission to candidature.
- d. All higher doctorates are based on work published prior to admission to candidature – see [Higher Doctorate Course Rules](#).

4. Policy statement

4.1. Admission eligibility

- a. Eligibility for admission to any HDR candidature requires attainment of the following (or their equivalents as determined by the University):
 - i. the minimum academic qualifications and/or requirements as prescribed in the [Course Rule](#) for that course, and
 - ii. the minimum prescribed English language proficiency levels for that course.
- b. Admission of an eligible applicant to an HDR candidature will be based on the University's assessment of whether the applicant is reasonably likely to be able to successfully complete the requirements of the award in the proposed field of research within the maximum duration (see section 4.5).
- c. Exceptions to admission eligibility requirements may be approved by an authorised delegate for individual applicants in special circumstances.

4.2. Admission applications

Applications are made in accordance with the [HDR Admission and Enrolment Procedures](#) or the [Higher Doctorate Procedures](#).

4.3. Supervision

- a. All HDR students must have at least two supervisors, except those in a PhD by Prior Published Work or a Higher Doctorate who must have one, as specified in the [HDR Supervisor Policy](#) and related procedures.
- b. Changes to supervisor arrangements must be made in accordance with the [HDR Supervisor Procedures](#).

4.4. Enrolment

- a. To be an enrolled HDR student, a successful applicant to an HDR candidature must enrol in accordance with the [Enrolment Policy](#) and the [HDR Admission and Enrolment Procedures](#).
- b. As stated in the [Enrolment Policy](#), only an enrolled student of Flinders University is able to participate in formal University learning and research activities, have their research output assessed, and qualify for an award.

4.5. Enrolment duration

- a. Unless approved otherwise, the minimum, expected and maximum duration of candidature is as set out below.
- b. Duration is measured from the date of enrolment to the date of submission of the thesis (excluding any periods of approved intermission).

	Minimum	Expected	Maximum
i. Masters degree by research			
Full-time	1 year		2 years
Part-time*	2 years		4 years
ii. PhD (with time-based research project)			
Full-time	2 years	3 years	4 years
Part-time*	3 years	6 years	8 years
iii. PhD (Clinical Psychology)			
Full-time	3 years		4 years
Part-time*	6 years		8 years
iv. Professional Doctorate			
Full-time	3 years		3 years
Part-time*	6 years		6 years
v. PhD by Prior Published Work**			
Full-time or part-time online	6 months		1 year
vi. Higher Doctorate (by prior published work only)**			
Full-time online	3 months		1 year

*Part-time candidature is not available to in person international students who are studying in Australia on a student visa due to Australian Government requirements, except in special circumstances, as per the [HDR Admission and Enrolment Procedures](#).

**PhD by Prior Published Work and Higher Doctorate degrees are only available in online mode.

4.6. Variations to enrolment conditions

Any changes to enrolment must be approved, as per the [HDR Admission and Enrolment Procedures](#) or the [Higher Doctorate Procedures](#). This includes: changes to study mode full-time / part-time; delivery mode in person / online plus placement/intensive / online; candidature extensions, intermissions and reductions; and transfers between HDR courses.

4.7. Withdrawal of enrolment

An HDR student's enrolment may be withdrawn by either the student or the University, in accordance with the [HDR Admission and Enrolment Procedures](#) or the [Higher Doctorate Procedures](#).

4.8. Student progression

- a. All HDR students, except those enrolled in a PhD by Prior Published Work or Higher Doctorate candidature, must make satisfactory progress and satisfactorily complete the Milestones for each stage of their candidature, as specified in the [HDR Progression Procedures](#).

- b. Failure to do so may lead to the student being identified as experiencing difficulty progressing in their candidature. In the case of ongoing/escalating difficulty progressing, the student may be subject to a formal review of their progress, which may result in termination of their candidature or, if appropriate, transfer to another degree.

4.9. Research integrity

Throughout their candidature HDR students must comply with the [Research Integrity Policy](#). Any complaint about breach of that policy will be dealt with in accordance with the [Breach of Research Integrity Procedures](#).

4.10. Examination

- a. Only an enrolled HDR student may submit work for examination for the award of a higher degree by research.
- b. All HDR students must submit a digital copy of their thesis in the format and location specified in the [HDR Thesis Rules](#) for examination.
- c. The student's thesis must comply with the University's [Research Integrity Policy](#) and [Student Academic Integrity Policy](#).
- d. At least two independent, qualified, research-active examiners with international expertise in the discipline/s being examined must be appointed to examine the work submitted by an HDR student.
- e. The identity of examiners must remain confidential from the time that they are formally nominated to the Office of Graduate Research.
- f. An HDR student must not attempt to identify or communicate with any examiner or potential examiner of their thesis, either before or during the examination process.
- g. Supervisors must not communicate with the examiners, and individual examiners must not communicate with each other, about any aspect of the examination during the examination process.
- h. Each examiner must provide the University with a report on the prescribed form with a recommendation for one of the outcomes listed in Table 1 below.
- i. After consideration of the examiners' reports, the University will make a determination based on Table 1 below (noting that determination **D** will result in re-examination and further consideration by the University).

Table 1: Examination determinations*

A: Award: that the degree be awarded, subject to satisfying any coursework requirements (if applicable).

B: Award: that the degree be awarded, subject to the completion of *minor* amendments to the thesis (as specified by the examiner), and subject to satisfying any coursework requirements (if applicable).
Minor amendments may include the correction of spelling or typographical errors and small changes to the text.

C: Award: that the degree be awarded, subject to the completion of *major* amendments to the thesis (specified by the examiner), and subject to satisfying any coursework requirements (if applicable).
Major amendments are those where the examiner determines that the thesis is sound but changes to the structure and/or substance of some chapters of the thesis would improve it.

D: Revise and resubmit: that the degree not be awarded but the student be permitted one opportunity to revise and resubmit the thesis for re-examination.

E: Award alternate degree: that, where the thesis submitted is for the degree of PhD or Professional Doctorate, an appropriate Masters degree or designated exit award be awarded, subject to any minor or major amendments to the thesis (as specified by the examiner).

F: Non Award: that the degree not be awarded and the student not be allowed to present for the degree again.

* B, C, D and E are not available for Higher Doctorates

- j. Implementation of these principles must occur in accordance with the [HDR Examination Procedures](#) or the [Higher Doctorate Procedures](#).

4.11. Award requirements

Following a determination to award a degree after the thesis examination, and the University's acceptance of any amendments to the thesis, the student will qualify for the award of the degree, provided the student has:

- a. satisfied all coursework requirements (if applicable) specified in the [Course Rule](#), and
- b. uploaded into the [University Library's digital thesis repository](#), in the prescribed format in accordance with the [HDR Examination Procedures](#) or [Higher Doctorate Procedures](#), a digital copy of their thesis which will serve as the authoritative version.

5. Student complaints

Complaints about breaches of this policy may be made in accordance with the [Student Complaints Policy](#) and [Student Complaints Procedures](#).

6. Authorities

Delegate	Authority
Academic Senate	Approve minimum English language proficiency requirements for HDR candidature.
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Approve supporting procedures under this policy.

7. Supporting procedures and documents

Supporting procedures and documents are part of this policy and provide additional detail to give practical effect to the policy principles.

[HDR Admission and Enrolment Procedures](#)

[English Language Proficiency Requirements for HDR Candidature](#)

[HDR Progression Procedures](#)

[HDR Examination Procedures](#)

[HDR Thesis Rules](#)

[Cotutelle Arrangement Procedures](#)

[HDR Sanctions Procedures](#)

[Higher Doctorate Procedures](#)

Related documents:

[HDR Supervisor Policy](#) and supporting procedures

See also:

Documents referred to under [section 2, Framework](#).

Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Responsible Officer	Dean of Graduate Research
Approval Date	28 June 2021
Effective Date	28 June 2021
Review Date*	June 2024
Last amended	Dean of Graduate Research, 12 April 2023
CM file number	CF18/260

*** Unless otherwise indicated, this procedure will still apply beyond the review date.**

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