Higher Degrees by Research Candidature Progression - Guidelines

1. Introduction

1.1 These guidelines build on the information provided in the Higher Degree by Research Candidature-Procedures and give specific detail on HDR program requirements and variations to candidature.

2. Scope and application

2.1 These guidelines apply to all higher degree by research (HDR) candidates.

2.2 These guidelines apply to all staff working in the HDR environment at the University.

2.3 These guidelines sit under the
Higher Degree by Research Candidature – Procedures

and the

Higher Degree by Research – Academic Policy

3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's

Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures

. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to this policy and are critical to its effectiveness:

Candidature Expiry Date

means the maximum allowed period of candidature has ended.

Condition

means program requirement.

Milestone

means a progress-related program requirement.

Standard Leave

– periods of leave included in the original program structure that will not suspend consumption of candidature and will not adjust future milestone due dates.

Candidates are entitled to up to two (2) weeks per year of medical leave and up to four (4) weeks of personal leave per full-time equivalent year of candidature.

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4. Candidature Requirements

4.1 Standard Conditions

4.1.1 HDR Induction

All commencing HDR students are required to complete the HDR Student Induction to ensure that they have the opportunity to be oriented with the University's research training context and student support services and systems. The materials are available online and students are expected to work through the content at their own pace prior to the next scheduled HDR Student Induction session following their commencement.

This condition is recorded as completed after attendance at the HDR Induction session and successful completion of the HDR Induction quiz.

4.1.2 Research Integrity and Ethics training

All candidates are required to complete the Research Integrity Online (RIO) module within two months of full-time equivalent candidature. No exemptions will be permitted.

This condition is recorded as completed when the submits their Completion Certificate after successful completion of the quiz at the conclusion of the module.

4.2 Other Conditions of Candidature

4.2.1 Advanced coursework and other structured learning components (other conditions of candidature) may be required. If this is the case, they will be listed in the Letter of Offer or for current candidates, these may be added in support of a candidate's progress via in written feedback following a milestone review, or a Show Cause response. Examples include (but are not limited to):

 • enrolment in relevant courses and workshops

 • training in specialist research skills

 • research end-user internships

 • laboratory rotations

4.2.2 When enrolling in approved courses within a HDR program:

 • the candidate does not incur any fee liability for the courses;

 • the approved courses must be completed to a satisfactory standard prior to the award of the HDR;

 • the total units of additional courses must not contravene the AQF stipulation for the appropriate component of research in the HDR program; and

 • the credit for courses undertaken as part of the HDR program cannot be transferred to other UniSC programs including Bachelor Honours, Postgraduate Coursework, or any other degree that does not lead to a HDR Program.

4.3 Milestones

Submission of documents to demonstrate the candidate's completion of candidature milestones is made using the relevant online form provided via the university student enrolment system.

4.3.1 Initial Plan

4.3.1.1 The Initial Plan milestone consists of:

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- Initial Plan template

- Project Plan/Schedule

- Role Perception Rating Scale

- Research Data Management Plan

4.3.1.2 The Initial Plan will be submitted by the HDR Candidate and reviewed and assigned a grade by the Principal Supervisor, and the Enrolling Unit's HDR Coordinator.

4.3.1.3 If approved by the HDR Coordinator the milestone will be recorded as Completed.

4.3.2 Progress Review

4.3.2.1 The Progress Review milestone consists of:

(a) Progress Review template

4.3.2.2 The Progress Review will be submitted by the HDR Candidate and reviewed by the HDR Coordinator.

4.3.2.3 The HDR Candidate's Principal Supervisor will also submit a Progress Review directly to the HDR Coordinator and both documents will be reviewed by the HDR Coordinator before a grade is assigned.

4.2.2.4 If the Progress Review is approved by the HDR Coordinator, the milestone will be recorded as Completed.

4.3.2.5 Progress Reviews are required at least every 12 months for Domestic HDR Candidates and at least every 6 months for International HDR Candidates.

4.3.2.6 The Initial Plan milestone and the Confirmation of Candidature milestone serve the purpose of reporting on progress, so Progress Review milestone due dates are planned around those milestones.

4.3.2.7 A HDR Coordinator may require a Progress Review milestone be inserted prior to the standard 12 months/6 months' timeline if they identity progression issues.

Table 0.1

PPR OUTCOME	ACTIONS
Exceeds Expectations	Academic progress is satisfactory, and the candidate is on track to submit subsequent milestones including thesis submission prior to scheduled milestone due dates.
	The next PPR is due within 6 months for international candidates, and 12 months for domestic candidates.
Meets Expectations	Academic progress is satisfactory, and the candidate is on track to meet subsequent milestones including thesis submission, by scheduled milestone due dates.
	The next PPR is due within 6 months for international candidates, and 12 months for domestic candidates.

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Needs improvement	Academic progress does not meet expectations at this time and remedial actions are required. The candidate must undertake research and research training activities as specified by the supervision panel and approved by the Dean, Graduate Research.
	The next PPR must be submitted within 3 months to document remedial actions undertaken. A student has a maximum of 6 months from the initial Needs improvement outcome, to achieve an outcome of Meets Expectations, otherwise progress is deemed Unsatisfactory.
Unsatisfactory	The candidate will be invited to show cause as to why their candidature should not be terminated. Refer to HDR Candidature Procedures for information on Response to Show Cause.

4.3.3 Confirmation presentation and Confirmation of candidature

4.3.3.1 At this time, Candidates will demonstrate that their research project is viable and will be completed within the requirements of the program structure.

4.3.3.2 Candidates cannot move from Probationary Candidature to Confirmed Candidature unless they have successfully completed this milestone.

4.3.3.3 Candidates will be assessed by a Confirmation Panel on their written work and on their oral presentation.

4.3.3.4 The Confirmation Panel will consist of:

• Enrolling Unit HDR Coordinator (Chairperson of the Panel)

• Supervision Panel members

• Independent Reviewer

4.3.3.5 Candidates will be responsible for scheduling their Confirmation Presentation.

4.3.3.6 Candidates will be responsible for submitting required documents. Required documents include:

• Confirmation Document

• Report from the Independent Reviewer

• Candidate's Response to the Independent Reviewer's feedback

• Additional documents may be required by the Chairperson of the Panel.

4.3.3.7 Following the Confirmation Presentation and review of the required documents, the Chairperson of the Panel determines an outcome which will be recorded on the Candidate's record.

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4.3.3.8 Outcomes:

Table 0.2

	OUTCOME	ACTIONS
(a)	Exceeds Expectations	Candidature is confirmed, with the supervision arrangements confirmed and the thesis title approved.
		Academic progress is satisfactory, and the candidate is on track to submit subsequent milestones including thesis submission prior to scheduled milestone due dates
(b)	Meets Expectations	Candidature is confirmed, with the supervision arrangements confirmed and the thesis title approved.
		Academic progress is satisfactory, and the candidate is on track to meet subsequent milestones including thesis submission, by scheduled milestone due dates.
		Minor adjustments to the proposed research may be required which can be made during confirmed candidature (without the need for revision and resubmission of the written research proposal).
(c)	Needs Improvement	Candidature is not confirmed. The candidate is required to continue enrolment as a probationary candidate to revise the written research proposal and where applicable, to undertake further research work or training in accordance with the detailed feedback provided by the review panel.
		The candidate is required to complete revisions to the satisfaction of the review panel within the remaining period of probationary candidature.
		If the candidate does not complete the confirmation process to the satisfaction of the review panel before probationary candidature expires, the candidate will receive a confirmation outcome of Unsatisfactory.
(d)	Unsatisfactory	Where a candidate's application for progression to confirmed candidature is assessed Unsatisfactory, the Head of School or Head of School delegate will determine whether to:
		(i) where judged to be appropriate, a probationary doctoral candidate may be offered the opportunity to be admitted as a confirmed candidate to one of the university's research Master degrees; or
		(ii) invite the candidate to show cause as to why their candidature should not be terminated. Refer to the HDR Candidature Procedures for information on Response to Show Cause.

4.3.4 Intention to Submit and Thesis Submission

4.3.4.1 The Intention to Submit milestone serves to prompt candidates and supervisors to plan for on-time thesis submission, including the nomination of Thesis Examiners. It occurs eight (8) weeks prior to the Thesis Submission Due Date.

4.3.4.2 Prior to thesis submission, Candidates must submit their draft of the thesis to the Principal Supervisor with enough time for the Independent Academic Review of the final draft thesis. Refer to the €57

Higher Degrees by Research Independent Academic Reviews – Guidelines

4.3.4.3 After the above steps have been completed, the candidate will submit their thesis through USC Central. The thesis submission will be reviewed by the Principal Supervisor and the Dean, Graduate Research before being approved as ready for external examination.

4.3.4.4 Upon thesis submission, consumption of candidature is suspended.

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4.3.5 Final thesis seminar

4.3.5.1 A candidate is required to present their research and HDR candidature experience at a seminar prior to completing their program. The presentation is intended to provide feedback to the candidate preceding thesis examination and be a celebration of the candidate's research training journey. The content of the presentation may include (but is not limited to):

• a description of the research conducted, its findings, and significance;

• their research training experience (e.g., development of the Research Graduate Attributes); and

• reflections on their personal and professional development during their HDR.

4.3.5.2 To maximise the benefit of feedback, the presentation should occur prior to the due date for thesis submission (but not more than three (3) months before thesis submission). In exceptional circumstances in which the thesis submission would be delayed and with the approval of the HDR Coordinator, the Final Thesis Seminar may occur following thesis submission while the candidate is awaiting the examination result.

4.3.5.3 Presentation at external conference(s) is not a accepted reason for exemption from the Thesis Seminar.

4.3.5.4 The candidate in liaison with the supervision panel and the enrolling unit, organises the time for the Thesis Seminar using the Presentation Planner online form.

4.3.5.5 Candidates must present a seminar to the satisfaction of the Enrolling Unit's HDR Coordinator before their program requirements can be considered complete. The enrolling unit reports the date of the final thesis presentation on the thesis submission forms and confirms completion of the requirement by providing feedback to the candidate on their presentation using the 'Presentation Feedback Form'.

4.3.5.6 The Graduate Research School confirms that this program requirement has been met before progressing with the examination.

4.4 Missed Milestones

4.4.1 Missed milestones are those which are not submitted by the due date and where an extension request has not been approved.

4.4.2€57Missed milestones that have not been resolved within three months FTE for Doctoral candidates and one month FTE for Masters candidates following the due date indicate unsatisfactory progress and will result in the candidate being invited to show cause to the Head of Enrolling Unit as to why their candidature should not be discontinued.

4.4.3 Where the Head of the enrolling unit is a candidate's supervisor, or where another conflict of interest arises, then the show cause request will be delegated to another Head of School or more senior staff member to consider.

4.4.4 The Graduate Research School will monitor candidate's for missed milestones and will issue invitations to show cause accordingly.

5. Candidature Variations

A variation is a change to the original program structure. All requests for variation to candidature are submitted using the relevant online form provided via the university student enrolment system.

5.1 Leave of Absence

5.1.1 After Standard Leave has been exhausted and if additional leave is required, HDR candidates can submit a Leave of Absence request.

5.1.1.1 HDR Candidates can normally access up to a combined total of 12 months (FTE) of approved leave throughout their candidature. At the discretion of the Principal Supervisor additional leave may be approved if exceptional circumstances apply.

5.1.1.2 Candidates on an externally funded scholarship (not an RTP Scholarship or UniSC Research

Scholarship) are responsible for liaising with the funding provider for advice about periods of

approved leave.

5.1.2 Leave of Absence Reasons:

TABLE

Medical	Medical leave beyond the 2 weeks standard medical leave included in the program structure. Must be accompanied by a medical certificate
Parental	Maternity, paternity, or adoption leave. Must be accompanied by supporting document – medical certificate, statement of birth, or adoption certificate
Personal	Personal leave (e.g., Childcare, family reasons, employment, financial, severe personal reasons, other) beyond the 4 weeks standard leave included in the program structure: Supporting documentation is not required, unless requested by the Principal Supervisor

5.1.3 An approved Leave of Absence will suspend consumption of candidature and relevant milestone due dates will be adjusted.

5.1.4 See

Higher Degrees by Research Candidature - Procedures

, for reasons a Leave of Absence might be approved.

5.1.5 A Leave of Absence will be requested by the HDR Candidate and reviewed by their Principal Supervisor.

5.1.6 If approved by the Principal Supervisor, the period of approved leave will be recorded on the Candidate's record.

5.1.7 Leave of Absence requests from International candidates on a Student Visa must comply with the requirements for a Suspension of Studies and will be reviewed by Student Services & Engagement and the International Office before being recorded on the Candidate's record.

5.1.8 Leave of Absence requests from HDR Stipend Scholarship recipients will be processed according to the leave entitlements detailed in their Scholarship Conditions.

5.1.9 Consumption of candidature will resume automatically after a period of approved leave has ended.

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5.2 Study Load Change

5.2.1 Candidates may request a change from Full-time study load to Part-time study load, or vice versa.

5.2.2 A Study Load Change will adjust the rate that candidature is consumed and will adjust future-dated milestone due dates.

5.2.3 A Study Load Change will be requested by the HDR Candidate and reviewed by their Principal Supervisor as the approval authority.

5.2.4 If approved by the Principal Supervisor, the Study Load Change will be recorded on the Candidate's record.

5.2.5 Study Load Change requests from International candidates on a Student Visa will also be reviewed by the International Office before being recorded on the Candidate's record.

5.2.6 Study Load Change requests from HDR stipend recipients may require additional approval from the Dean, Graduate Research if remaining at a Full-time study load is a condition of the scholarship.

5.3 Extension

A candidate who anticipates being unable to meet a milestone due date or to complete the requirements of their degree within their period of candidature they may request an extension.

5.3.1 Extensions will be considered if there have been research-related delays that have impeded progress. Extensions to candidature or to milestones will not be approved for personal circumstances or work commitments. Candidates experiencing non-research-related delays may consider other variations to their candidature (e.g., Leave of Absence or Study Load Change).

5.3.2 Milestone extension

Milestone extensions will extend the due date of the specified milestone within the approved program duration.

5.3.2.1 A Milestone Extension will be requested by the HDR candidate and reviewed by the Principal Supervisor.

5.3.2.2 If approved by the Principal Supervisor, the extension will be recorded on the Candidate's record.

5.3.2.3 Milestone Extension requests from International candidates on a Student Visa will also be reviewed by the International Office before being recorded on the Candidate's record.

5.3.2.4 Refer to the

Higher Degree by Research Candidature – Procedures

for more information on milestone extensions.

5.3.3 Candidature extension

Candidature extensions provide additional time allocated to the original program duration. Candidature extensions do not suspend consumption of candidate (see leave of absence).

5.3.3.1 A Candidature Extension will be requested by the HDR candidate and reviewed by both their Principal Supervisor and the Dean, Graduate Research.

5.3.3.2 If approved by the Dean, Graduate Research, the extension will be recorded on the Candidate's record.

5.3.3.3 Candidature Extensions from International candidates on a Student Visa will also be reviewed by the International Office before being recorded on the Candidate's record.

5.3.3.4 Candidates on an externally funded scholarship (not an RTP Scholarship or UniSC Research Scholarship) are responsible for liaising with the funding provider for advice about extension to scholarship funding (if required).

5.3.3.5 Refer to the

Higher Degree by Research Candidature – Procedures

for more information on candidature extensions.

5.4 Supervision panel change

5.4.1 Candidates may request changes to their Supervision Panel, provided the changes comply with the requirements in the

Higher Degree by Research Candidature – Procedures

5.4.2 A Supervision panel change will be requested by the HDR Candidate and reviewed by the Head of their Enrolling Unit.

5.4.5 If approved by the Head of the Enrolling Unit, the changes to the supervision panel will be recorded on the Candidate's record.

5.4.6 If a Candidate, with support from their enrolling unit, cannot find appropriate supervisors to fulfil a compliant supervision panel, thereby providing adequate support to complete the program, the Candidate may consider withdrawing from Program.

6. Candidature Reviews

6.1 Candidature reviews are initiated by enrolling units (most commonly the Principal Supervisor) when a candidature is not progressing as expected and the candidate has not participated in meetings/discussions with the supervisory team to resolve issues. Candidature Reviews provides a mechanism for enrolling units to resolve abandoned candidature or unsatisfactory progress by discontinuing enrolment and subsequent accumulation of fee liability for the candidate.

6.2 Enrolling units are required to submit details of the candidate's circumstances leading to a review using the€57

Candidature Review

€57form.

6.3 Enrolling units are required to inform the candidate that a review of their candidature is being submitted to the Dean, Graduate Research.

6.4 Reviews that are being submitted due to the candidate not demonstrating satisfactory progress must include:

• a clear explanation of the progression issues and the reason for the recommendation;

• evidence to support the allegations of unsatisfactory progress, such as meeting notes, email exchanges, or academic work undertaken in the HDR program; and

• evidence to demonstrate how the enrolling unit has attempted to assist the candidate to improve their progress and address identified deficiencies.

6.5 Reviews that are being submitted due to the candidate no longer having a suitable supervision panel must include:

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• a clear explanation of the circumstances that led to the candidate not having a supervisor; and

• evidence to demonstrate how the enrolling unit has attempted to appoint an alternative supervisor or assisted the candidate with locating an alternative supervisor.

6.6 Following receipt of a candidature review from an enrolling unit, the Graduate Research School will contact the candidate regarding the issues raised in the Candidature Review and provide them with ten (10) working days to respond to the Head of Enrolling Unit.

6.7 If a candidate does not respond within the time allowed, the Dean, Graduate Research may initiate the Discontinuation process – described in the

Higher Degrees by Research Candidature – Procedures

END

SUPERSEDED DOCUMENTS

• Higher Degrees by Research Confirmation of Candidature - Guidelines

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