

## APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Academic Board

## RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

## DESIGNATED OFFICER

Dean, Graduate Research

## FIRST APPROVED

29 July 2014

## LAST AMENDED

15 May 2019

## EFFECTIVE START DATE

1 July 2017

## REVIEW DATE

30 May 2022

## STATUS

Active

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

Authorship and Dissemination of Research Findings - Procedures

Higher Degree by Research Accreditation - Academic Policy

Higher Degrees by Research Candidature - Procedures

Higher Degrees by Research Supervision - Procedures

Higher Degrees by Research Thesis Submission and Examination - Procedures

Human Research Ethics - Governing Policy

Human Research Ethics - Procedures

Intellectual Property - Governing Policy

Intellectual Property: Commercialisation - Procedures

Intellectual Property: Commercialisation Revenue - Procedures

Intellectual Property: Student IP - Procedures

Intellectual Property: Transfer of Rights to Creators - Procedures

Jointly Conferred Academic Awards - Academic Policy

Jointly Conferred Higher Degree by Research Programs - Procedures

Managing and Investigating Breaches of Responsible Research Conduct - Procedures

Research Centres and Research Institutes - Academic Policy

Research Data Management - Procedures

Research Training Program Scholarships - Managerial Policy

Responsible Research Conduct - Governing Policy

Student Academic Integrity - Governing Policy

Student Conduct - Governing Policy

Student Fees and Charges - Governing Policy

Student Grievance Resolution - Governing Policy

## SUPERSEDED DOCUMENTS

Research Master Degrees - Academic Policy | Doctoral Degrees - Academic Policy

## 1. Purpose of policy

This policy prescribes the structure, requirements, and management of higher degrees by research (HDR) at the University. It outlines responsibilities and good practice to support the highest quality HDR candidature experience and outcomes.

## 2. Policy scope and application

This policy and associated procedures apply to all Doctoral degrees and Research Master degrees. It applies to all students enrolled in, or proposing to enrol in a HDR. This policy and associated procedures apply to all staff working in the HDR environment at the University (including Supervisors). This policy does not apply to honorary Doctorates.

## 3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures.

Terms and definitions identified below are specific to these procedures and are critical to its effectiveness:

Candidate means a person admitted to undertake a HDR program at the University (also known as a "student").

Candidature means duration of enrolment in a higher degree by research program. A Research student is considered to be a "student" for the higher degree by research program in which they are enrolled. All research and related work towards fulfilment of the requirements for a higher degree by research must be completed during enrolled candidature.

Confirmed candidature means period of enrolment in a HDR program after the successful completion of the Confirmation of Candidature milestone, up to the date of expiry of candidature for that program.

Creative work means an original product designed, created or constructed by a candidate during candidature deriving from one or more of the creative arts including graphical and new media techniques.

Exegesis means a scholarly, critical commentary on the original creative work in dialogue with, and informing, that original work or collection of works, resulting from research undertaken and produced during candidature. The exegesis also includes explicit reference to the research methodologies employed in the creation of the original creative work.

Probationary candidature means period of enrolment in a HDR program up to and including the successful completion of the Confirmation of Candidature milestone, or the date of expiry of probationary candidature for that program (whichever comes first).

Significant research component means a substantial research project undertaken with appropriate research methodology.

Thesis means an original substantial piece of scholarly writing resulting from research undertaken by a candidate and produced during candidature to meet the requirements of the degree.

## 4. Policy Statement

4.1 USC is committed to the provision and continuous improvement of HDRs that offer significant research training activities and ensure internationally benchmarked outcomes.

4.2 The University shall award higher degrees by research in accordance with the practice and terminology used in the Australian higher education system.

4.3 Only students enrolled in accordance with the University's policy and procedures concerning research candidates will be eligible to proceed to the award of an HDR. Structure and requirements of HDRs are provided below.

4.4 The progression of HDR candidature must be managed in accordance with Higher Degrees by Research Candidature – Procedures.

4.5 For an award of a HDR, the thesis or exegesis and creative work must represent an original and significant contribution to knowledge of the subject area. The thesis or exegesis shall be submitted and examined in accordance with the HDR Thesis Submission and Examination – Procedures.

4.6 The University supports and encourages the appropriate mentoring and supervision of research students, acknowledging their importance in the development of research excellence, integrity, professionalism, mutual respect and recognition. Supervision of all research higher degree candidates shall be conducted according to the Australian Code of Responsible Conduct of Research with supervision requirements provided in the Higher Degree by Research Supervision – Procedures and the Research – Academic Policy.

4.7 The University will provide each candidate with resources to support their research activities as provided in the University's Statement of Resources for Higher Degree by Research Candidates. The University reserves the right to refuse admission where required resources are not available.

4.8 The University is responsible for providing relevant comprehensive research skills training opportunities for candidates undertaking a HDR.

4.9 The University equally protects and promotes candidates rights and responsibilities. Candidates who are dissatisfied with the outcome of any aspect of their HDR candidature should lodge their concern in accordance with the Student Grievance Resolution – Governing Policy.

[usc.edu.au/policy](http://usc.edu.au/policy)

4.10 Policy on higher degree research is consistent with the principles of the University Quality and Standards Framework.

4.11 Candidates will have ownership of intellectual property directly related to their research project or creative work, unless other arrangements have been mutually agreed in advance by the candidate and the University.

## 5. Structure of higher degrees by research

### 5.1 Doctoral degrees

Doctoral degrees offered by this University meet the Australian Qualifications Framework specifications at Level 10. USC's doctoral degrees are research degrees that require the candidate to make a substantial original contribution to knowledge through research, scholarship and investigation in one or more fields of learning.

### 5.2 Research master degrees

Research master degrees offered by this University meet the Australian Qualifications Framework specifications at Level 9. USC's research master degrees require the candidate to apply an advanced body of knowledge to produce a significant contribution of merit through a program of advanced research in a scholarly field of learning, providing a pathway for further learning.

### 5.3 Research content

HDRs must include a major research component that comprises at least two thirds of the total candidature requirements.

Activities which may be included in calculating the research content:

- Literature review in the area of the major research thesis
- Formulation of research proposal; development of research plan
- Production of the thesis (in print or other media)
- Research seminars, involving the student presenting their research work as a seminar
- Production of an original creative work (performing and/or visual arts) (in accordance with the University's interpretation of 'research' in the performing and creative arts area), together with any exegesis of the creative work
- Research project(s) in addition to and separate from the major research project

Activities which may not be included in calculating the research content:

- Research methodology training courses
- Courses involving reading a selection of research literature in an area and producing a report
- Clinical practice; professional practice; internship
- Courses discussing the general research ethos or current research issues in a particular area
- A course involving the setting of a topic or problem which may be individual to a student and the student is required to locate relevant published material and produce a report on that topic.

### 5.4 Coursework

Compulsory coursework in HDR

Where the requirements of a specific HDR, as approved by the Academic Board, include coursework to be undertaken by all candidates, the approved program requirements shall include the number of units required to be successfully completed, and any course(s) required to be undertaken and/or the set of courses from which the candidate may select their study program.

Candidates may be required to achieve a grade higher than a pass for coursework components in order to satisfy the degree requirements; if so, the minimum grade to be achieved shall be approved by the Academic Board.

Courses included in a HDR shall be postgraduate level courses.

In approving a specific HDR, the Academic Board may approve variations to the normal arrangements specified above, where the School proposing the degree presents arguments to support the proposed variations in terms of the aims and objectives of the specific program, and where the proposed variations support the overall quality of the program and the experience of candidates.

Required coursework

A candidate for a HDR where coursework is not included in the structure of the program may be required to undertake coursework, such as a research methodology course or other specified courses, seminars, modules or reading activities, in addition to and as a support for their research.

Where such activities are required, they shall be specified as a condition of candidature by the Research Degrees Committee and undertaken under the direction of the relevant Head of School. The Head of School or nominee is required to advise the Research Degrees Committee that the additional requirements have been satisfactorily completed.

Tuition fees for coursework undertaken at USC as part of HDR program requirements (compulsory component of a specific HDR or required as a condition of offer) will be included in the HDR program tuition fee.

## 5.5 Requirement for originality in research

The program of advanced research and production of work for a HDR must not contain as its main content any work or material which is embodied in a thesis or dissertation previously submitted by the candidate or any other person for a University degree or other similar qualification at this or other higher education institution, unless the Research Degrees Committee approves otherwise.

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