

Faculty of Health

Doctor of Philosophy and Masters by Research

Procedures for Confirmation/Review of Candidature and Conversion to PhD

The responsibility for matters relating to Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidature rests with the University Research and Research Training Committee, however the regulation and procedures includes an expectation of the School and Faculty to monitor progress of candidature. The confirmation of candidature process provides an opportunity for the candidate to submit and obtain recommendations on a plan for the structure of their research program, describe the investigative program and identify the range of expertise necessary to complete the research.

The Faculty of Health requires all HDR candidates to complete Confirmation of Candidature, as follows:

- **PhD** candidates: at 9 months full-time study or before 18 months for part-time study;
- **Master** candidates: before 6 months for full-time study or 12 months for part-time study;
- **DPsych** candidates: before 12 for full-time study.

The candidate is required to submit a written document and to give an oral presentation which is followed by discussion. The candidate should provide clear evidence to a Confirmation/Review Committee that they have the ability to complete the award and that progress is such that it is reasonable for them to do this within the time allowed. The supervisor and School HDR coordinator (or HOS) are responsible for the selection of the Confirmation/Review Committee. The supervisor will normally assist with the organisation of the confirmation/review.

Format of written document.

A **guide** to the **overall** length (excluding references) is 5000 – 7000 words for a Masters and 6000-10000 for a PhD.

This should include:

1. A critical literature review with a reference list, including:
 - A clear rationale for the work to be undertaken, and its originality and significance;
 - A hypothesis or hypotheses, or a clear statement of the questions that will be addressed by the research;
 - The aims of the research.(For PhD review, this may be in the form of one or two chapters if appropriate.)
2. A document of at least 2000 – 3000 words outlining:
 - The research plan to be used;
 - Details of the methodology;
 - A report on the work undertaken to date and the skills obtained;
 - An outline of the future work to be undertaken and an indication of the time frame;
 - A comment on any new skills which will need to be acquired;
 - A statement that Ethics Committee approval has been obtained or comments on the ethical implications of the study and proposed submission date for approval (if required).
 - Expected outcomes and a research publication plan.

PhD candidates should also include a brief discussion of the originality of the work;

The supervisor and HDR candidate (School Administrative Officer, Research and Research Training) are collectively responsible for ensuring that the written materials are forwarded to the Confirmation/Review panel members at least 2 weeks prior to the date of the oral presentation.

Oral presentation

The candidate is also required to give an oral presentation of approximately 15 - 20 minutes duration. This presentation should clearly outline the aims and objectives of the research, the questions being addressed, the rationale, the choice of methodology, the intended outcomes with an indication of current progress, and the proposed timelines.

The presentation will be attended by the Confirmation/Review Committee, which will normally include at least:

- the supervisor, **and**
- the School HDR coordinator/Associate HOS Research or Professorial nominee of HOS as the Chair, **and**
- the Head of School, or nominee (a nominee being an active researcher, preferably at Professor/Associate Professor level), **and**
- a researcher from outside the School (or University).
- Associate and Research supervisor(s) should be present if possible.

Following the presentation there will be up to 30 minutes allocated for questions and discussion with the panel.

A private meeting of the panel following the presentation will be used to discuss any further aspects or supervisor's comments/concerns, and to finalise a recommendation on confirmation. The panel will provide oral and written feedback on the written material and the presentation and discussion to facilitate the preparation of a written report for the candidate which will be prepared by the supervisor/chair.

The written report on the work and the panel's comments should be completed by the supervisor within one week of the presentation, in discussion with any associate/co-supervisors. The written report should include an overview of the comments, advice and recommendations from the review panel. This report should identify the panel members and be signed/authorised by the supervisor and the panel chair.

Recommendation and report

The report when forwarded to the School and Faculty should include a recommendation, which will be one of the following:

1. The candidate's enrolment is confirmed;
2. The candidate's enrolment is maintained and extended for a maximum period of three months full time equivalent enrolment during which time a second review will occur;
3. The candidate's enrolment is terminated.

For (1) and (2) above, copies of the written report should be sent to the Head of School or nominee for signature, identifying any action required. The panel chair/supervisor/school admin officer is required to provide a copy of the written report to the candidate. If the recommendation is (2) the candidate must also be given clear guidelines in writing by the supervisor detailing the requirements to be completed and the format of the second review.

For (1), (2) and (3), a copy of the written report, accompanied by the written information submitted to the panel by the candidate, will then be forwarded to the Faculty (Manager Collaborative Programs and Research) for processing. This is the responsibility of the chair/supervisor/school admin officer. For (1) and (2) the Faculty will formally inform the candidate of the outcome, and record the decision in Research Service's Research Master HDR database. If the recommendation is (3) the Associate Dean-Research will make a recommendation to Deakin University Research and Research Training Committee, and the University will inform the candidate in writing of their decision.

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