

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 (CoC) 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: by 9 months full-time study or 18 months for part-time study;
- **Master** candidates: by 6 months for full-time study or 12 months for part-time study;
- **DPsych** candidates: before 12 months for full-time study.

The candidate is required to submit a written document (two weeks prior to the confirmation date) and give an oral presentation to the Confirmation Review Panel, which is followed by a discussion with the candidate. Through the written documentation and oral presentation, the candidate should provide clear evidence of their ability to complete the requirements of the award and that progress is such that it is reasonable for them to achieve this within the time allowed.

The School HDR coordinator or HOS is responsible for the selection of the Confirmation Review Panel. The supervisor will normally provide suggestions for the external panel member, and assist with the organisation of the confirmation of candidature.

On advice from the School HDR coordinator the School Administrative Officer, (Research and Research Training) should ensure the Confirmation of Candidature is scheduled on Deakin University's online CoC administrative system (scheduling and records management tool), and on the advice of the Chair of the Confirmation Panel ensure all documents and outcomes are uploaded to the online CoC administrative system.

The Confirmation/Review Panel, will normally include at least:

- the School HDR coordinator/Associate HOS Research or Professorial nominee of HOS as the Chair, **and**
- the supervision team, **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. This appointment should be a disinterested expert (i.e. not a personal friend or significant collaborator)

The Confirmation of Candidature Panel should acknowledge and record any potential conflicts of interest at the start of the meeting.

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.

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.

3. The Turnitin report resulting from the checking of the Confirmation of Candidature document.

Students should submit the Confirmation of Candidature (CoC) document to Turnitin for checking and provide the report to the CoC panel. Students can go to the following link to submit their own work to check and obtain a report:

<https://d2l.deakin.edu.au/d2l/home/93041>

Students should go to ASSESSMENT Tab and use the dropbox there.

Note: Large documents take a significant amount of time to be checked.

(The link that supervisors can use to submit their students' work to Turnitin is:

<https://d2l.deakin.edu.au/d2l/home/93083>

then go to the ASSESSMENT Tab and use the dropbox there.)

The primary supervisor and HDR candidate, with the assistance of the 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 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 and design of the study, the intended outcomes with an indication of current progress, and proposed timelines.

The presentation will be attended by the Confirmation Review Panel. 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 is designed to discuss any further aspects/comments/concerns raised by the panel or supervision team, and finalise a

recommendation on confirmation. It is recommended that a School Administrative Officer take minutes of the discussion with the candidate and the private meeting of the panel.

The panel will provide oral and written feedback on the written material and the presentation and discussion to facilitate preparation of a written report for the candidate which will be drafted by the primary supervisor, circulated to the panel members and finalised by the chair.

The written report on the work and the panel's comments should be drafted by the primary 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, note any potential conflicts of interest and be finalised by the panel chair. The primary supervisor and chair should sign the final report.

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 or the candidate's enrolment is confirmed subject to addressing recommendations provided by the panel to the satisfaction of the chair of the panel (within a maximum of 6 weeks);
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; or
3. The candidate's enrolment is terminated.

For (1) and (2) above, copies of the written report should be signed and upload to the online CoC administrative system, identifying any action required, and a copy of the written report provided to the candidate. If the recommendation is (2) the candidate must also be given clear guidelines in writing by the chair, in consultation with the supervisor, detailing the requirements to be completed and the format of the second review.

It is the responsibility of the chair/school admin officer to ensure all documentation is recorded on the online CoC administrative system. If the recommendation is (3) the chair of the panel must advise the Faculty HDR Coordinator and Associate Dean-Research, who will make a recommendation to Deakin University Research and Research Training Committee, and the University will inform the candidate in writing of their decision.