



## Faculty of Arts and Education Higher Degree by Research

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### Progress Support of 'At risk' HDR Candidates

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1. Deakin University has a commitment to identifying and assisting candidates who are not making satisfactory progress in their research studies and who are at risk of not completing their degree within the prescribed time limit.
2. Such candidates could include those who:
  - a) are not able to meet the confirmation preparation requirements
  - b) are identified as making unsatisfactory progress in the annual review
  - c) are identified at any time by the supervisor or senior staff in the School or Faculty as making unsatisfactory progress. Supervisors, the Head of School, Faculty Executive Dean, Associate Dean (Research), Associate Head of School (Research), Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Coordinator and other senior staff all have a responsibility to identify 'at risk' candidates
  - d) identify themselves as experiencing significant difficulties which have the capacity to adversely affect their progress.
3. The purpose of these guidelines is to:
  - a) support 'at risk' candidates in order to improve their chances of a timely completion and successful examination
  - b) enhance the University's academic and research quality
  - c) avoid the misuse of academic and research resources which may occur if a candidate who is not making satisfactory progress remains enrolled at the University
4. A progress support panel should be appointed for any candidate who is considered to be making unsatisfactory progress. The panel would be established by the Associate Dean (Research) or Faculty HDR Coordinator and would typically include one or more of the current supervisors, the Associate Head of School (Research) or the HDR Coordinator, and an experienced researcher from a related area (who could be from a different School). The establishment of a panel will be noted in the candidate's record in Research Master.
5. In the case of a candidate who was unsuccessful in the confirmation of candidature, the confirmation panel would fulfill the role of the progress support panel.

#### Notification of the candidate

6. The Associate Dean (Research) or Faculty HDR Coordinator must notify the candidate in writing that a progress support panel is to be appointed. This should be preceded by consultation with the supervisor(s) and the candidate.
7. The written notification to the candidate should include:
  - a) a brief statement as to why progress is considered to be unsatisfactory and why a progress support panel is necessary
  - b) reference to the possibility of exclusion from candidature if satisfactory progress is not established
  - c) the need for a meeting of the candidate and supervisor(s) with the panel

8. At the initial meeting, the panel will review the candidate's work, identify appropriate support that can be provided and specify the tasks that need to be completed within a specified timeframe in order to establish satisfactory progress. The candidate should be allowed an opportunity to raise any concerns about the tasks and targets set and the required timeframe. The panel will make the final determination with regard to the appropriateness of the established tasks and the timeline and may make adjustments to the tasks to be completed or the required timeframe where appropriate. The panel will also specify what follow-up actions (see below) will be taken. A written record of the meeting should be made and provided to the candidate and supervisor(s). The record must set out in sufficient detail the prescribed requirements and the time-frame in which the candidate must meet them.
9. **Follow-up actions** - to be taken will depend on the nature and extent of the problem faced by the candidate. Depending on the situation, a combination of actions might be required. Follow-up actions could include:
  - a) identifying support to be offered e.g. skills development workshops in writing, research methods, statistical analysis, etc.
  - b) working with current supervisors. The progress support panel may consider it appropriate for the current supervisor(s) to continue work with the candidate to complete the specified tasks within the prescribed time-frame. Written reporting to the panel at specified intervals is required
  - c) appointment of additional supervisor(s). One or more additional supervisors may be appointed to work with the candidate and the current supervisor(s) to assist with completion of the specified tasks. The new supervisors may be appointed on the basis of their seniority, experience in the area of research and/or experience with supervision
  - d) progress support review meeting. The panel may prescribe one or more further meetings with the candidate and supervisor(s) to review progress (in the case of confirmation of candidature, this written records of any meeting with the candidature and supervisor(s) need to be provided to all parties.

#### **Outcomes of progress support**

10. Outcomes of the progress support process, which must be communicated in writing to the candidate, may include:
  - a) disestablishment of the progress management panel and resumption of normal candidature in cases where satisfactory progress is established
  - b) prescribing an extended period of additional reporting by the candidate and supervisor (i.e. in addition to the normal annual review cycle)
  - c) a recommendation to the Research and Research Training Committee (RRTC) that the candidate be transferred from doctoral to masters candidature in the case where the candidate has not maintained a level of progress satisfactory for a doctoral degree
  - d) a recommendation to the RRTC that the candidate be excluded in the case where the candidate has not established satisfactory progress.