School of Information Technology

HDR Confirmation Guidelines

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Please note, PDF editable forms are available via the Staff Wiki https://wiki.deakin.edu.au/display/sit/Research

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HDR Confirmation

What is Confirmation?

All HDR candidates at Deakin are admitted on a provisional basis and must complete the candidature confirmation process satisfactorily at an early stage of candidature. The purpose of the confirmation process is to improve the candidates' chances of successfully completing their degree by:

- Assessing the likelihood of a quality thesis being completed within the candidature time limit, and
- Identifying any difficulties early and remedying them.

Additional benefits of confirmation for the candidate are that it:

- provides reassurance that their research direction is sound,
- encourages the habit of writing early in their candidature, and
- provides a chance to develop their presentation skills.

The confirmation process is not meant to be intimidating for candidates – the whole purpose is to improve the candidate's chances of success. A major reason why some HDR candidates do not finish their degree is that they never actually start (i.e. they get to the end of their candidature time with an incomplete literature review and no clear research question). Confirmation requires candidates to focus on a clear definition of their research question at a very early stage, and to plan the rest of the project (including the writing of thesis) on that basis.

Time Limit for Confirmation

The time limits by which confirmation must be completed are as follows.

Degree	Mode	Confirmation Limit	Aim to submit thesis within
Masters Degree	Full Time	6 Months	24 Months
Masters Degree	Part Time	12 Months	48 Months
PhD Degree	Full Time	12 Months	36 Months
PhD Degree	Part Time	18 Months	72 Months

Possible Outcomes

The flow diagram below shows the possible outcomes from the confirmation process. Candidates who are not successful in the first instance are given a second opportunity.

There are four possible outcomes for a PhD candidate. In the case of a masters candidate, the option of transferring to a masters degree would obviously not apply.
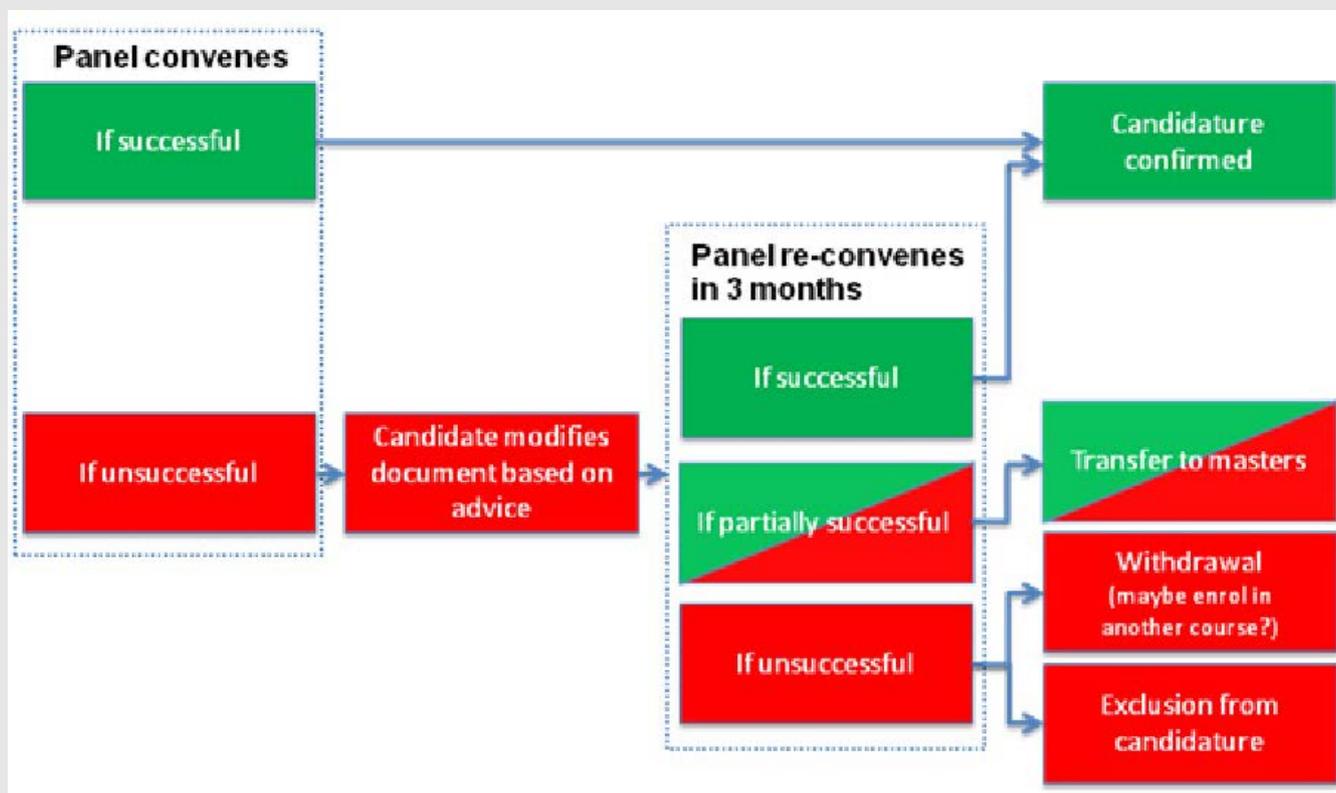
Further Information

The Deakin University website provides a series of information on how to prepare for the confirmation process.

deakin.edu.au/current-students/research/welcome

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HDR Confirmation Guidelines

General Information

Deakin University Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates are admitted on a provisional candidature basis and must undergo a confirmation process before being allowed to progress to full candidature. The purpose of the confirmation process is to assess progress and support candidates in the early stages, and to determine whether or not work to date indicates a strong likelihood of a quality thesis being completed in the required time.

The process will allow candidates to receive objective confirmation that their research direction is sound, the methodologies appropriate and the standard of writing satisfactory. Any difficulties that might impede successful completion can be identified and remedied. The process encourages candidates to start writing early in their candidature to overcome some of the barriers to preparing the thesis in a timely fashion. It also provides an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate oral presentation skills appropriate to the masters and doctoral levels of study. The process should be fair, equitable and supportive.

HDR candidates who commence candidature are required to undertake this confirmation process within 12 months of commencement of full-time candidature (or 18 months if part-time) for a PhD candidate and 6 months full-time for a masters candidate (or 12 months if part-time). PhD candidates should be aiming to submit their thesis within 3 years (including the period of provisional candidature leading up to confirmation) if enrolled full-time, or 6 years if part-time. Masters theses should be submitted within two years if full-time (four years if part-time). The confirmation process described in this document relates only to PhD and masters candidates.

In principle, a School of Information Technology Cloud (online, off-campus) student who is living in Australia should attend an on-campus confirmation, while a School of Information Technology Cloud (online, off-campus) student who is living outside Australia can apply for an Internet-based confirmation using systems such as Blackboard Collaborate, etc.

SIT HDR Confirmation Procedure

The School of Information Technology (SIT) will organize a confirmation of candidature as required, at Burwood and Geelong campuses. Candidates due for confirmation are expected to present an oral report to the panel members.

Normally, the SIT HDR confirmation procedure will include the following steps:

- **HDR Coordinators** will inform the candidates who are due for confirmation, around one month prior to the confirmation day;
- **Principal Supervisor** will discuss with the candidates, nominate the panel members and submit the nomination form to the HDR Coordinator;

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- **HDR Candidate** will prepare a written report and submit it to the HDR coordinator 2 weeks before the confirmation;
- **Associate Head of School (R), HDR Coordinators** will convene the Confirmation Panel for each candidate, distribute the candidate's written report to panel members, and arrange the confirmation venue and time;
- **HDR Candidate** will give an oral presentation (20-30 minutes) to the panel, followed by 10-15 minutes of question time from the Confirmation Panel;
- **Confirmation Panel** will discuss and make recommendations at the conclusion of the candidate's oral presentation and defence.

Panel Composition

The Panel shall typically be composed of the Head of School or Associate Head of School (Research) or nominee, 1-2 SIT senior researchers, 1 active researcher from outside the School, and the School HDR Coordinator will act as the secretary. The Panel will appoint a Chair, normally the Head of School or Associate Head of School (Research) or nominee.

It is on the advice of the principal supervisor that the HDR coordinators will select the panel members.

Confirmation Requirements

Each SIT HDR Candidate must submit to the Confirmation Panel a written document which will typically contain the following content:

- A critical review of recent work in the field.
- An updated research proposal and/or research question.
- A statement about the status of any relevant ethics approvals and/or intellectual property agreements, including ownership, location and storage of data.
- An updated plan of research, including progress made to date.
- An updated timetable for completion of the thesis.
- A statement of the resources and facilities required to complete the project within the appropriate candidature period.
- Deliver an oral presentation and verbal defence of the research proposal to the Confirmation Panel.

Written submissions are usually 10,000 -15,000 words in length. The candidate's completed technical reports, published papers (since their enrolment) can also form part of the written report.

The candidate presentation will typically be 20-30 minutes in length, followed by 10-15 minutes question time.

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Possible Outcomes of the Confirmation Process

There are three possible outcomes of the initial confirmation process:

1. Candidature is confirmed, and the candidate's enrolment is converted to full candidature.
2. The candidature is not confirmed, but candidates are given an opportunity to revise their work and submit to a second confirmation process. The Panel will document any aspects that it considers were inadequate, and the updated confirmation document should address these aspects. The Chair of the Confirmation Panel will determine details of the second confirmation procedure, and the candidate will be advised in writing. The candidate will normally be required to undergo the confirmation process again within three months. The Panel may appoint an Adviser to assist the candidate with preparation for the final submission to the Confirmation Panel.
3. The Confirmation Panel deems that confirmation has not been completed satisfactorily.

At the conclusion of a second confirmation process following outcome 2 on the first confirmation, outcomes 1 or 3 would be the only outcomes available.

For candidates who do not satisfactorily complete the confirmation process (outcome 3), possible options include:

- for provisional PhD candidates, a transfer to masters by research candidature;
- withdrawal from HDR candidature (possibly accompanied by enrolment in another course such as a coursework masters or graduate diploma);
- exclusion from candidature.

If the recommendation is that candidature should not be confirmed, the Panel will discuss with the candidate the options available to them. If exclusion from candidature is recommended, the Panel will make that recommendation to the Research and Research Training Committee, providing copies of earlier documentation and all correspondence relating to the candidates confirmation. Candidates may request a review of the Committees decision and may also appeal.

The review and appeal processes are outlined in the Deakin University HDR Academic Progress Procedure. It is important that candidates are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the HDR Procedures and that the process for confirmation is conducted in a fair and equitable manner. All candidates are provided with a copy of the Deakin University Guide to Candidature: Higher Degrees by Research on enrolment, and can access a copy on the web.

deakin.edu.au/current-students/research/guide-to-candidature

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APPENDIX – HDR Candidate Confirmation Forms

In this appendix, you can find the following forms:

- HDR Candidate Confirmation Panel Member Nomination and Approval
- HDR Candidate Confirmation Recommendation

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Panel Member Nomination and Approval

[Month/Year] ☐ **Q1**   ☐ **Q2**   ☐ **Q3**   ☐ **Q4**

Student Name: _____   **Student ID:** _____

Email Address: _____   **Enrolment Date:** _____

Course Code: _____   **Full/Part Time:** _____

Supervisor to complete, noting the Panel will be formed by Head of School or Associate Head of School, School HDR Coordinator(s), the Candidate's Supervisors, and 2 to 3 school senior researchers, and 1 active researcher from another school.

Nominated Panel Members: **Email Address:**

1. _____
   [SIT Academic Staff]   _____

2. _____
   [SIT Academic Staff]   _____

3. _____
   [SIT Academic Staff]   _____

4. _____
   [External]   _____

_____   ___/___/___

Signature: Principal Supervisor   Date:

**HDR Coordinators Use Only**

Date Received: ___/___/___   ☐ _Burwood_   ☐ _Geelong_

**Confirmed Panel Members:**   _**Email Address:**_

1. _____
   [Chair]   _____

2. _____
   [SIT Academic Staff]   _____

3. _____
   [SIT Academic Staff]   _____

4. _____
   [SIT Academic Staff]   _____

5. _____
   [External]   _____

6. _____
   [HDR Coordinator]   _____

**Supervisors:**   _**Email Address:**_

7. _____
   [Principal]   _____

8. _____   _____

9. _____   _____

_____   ___/___/___

Signature: HDR Coordinator   Date:

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Recommendation

☐ Q1	☐ Q2	☐ Q3	☐ Q4

_____
[Month/Year]

Student Name: _____   Student ID: _____

Email Address: _____   Enrolment Date: _____

Course Code: _____   Full/Part Time: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Place: _____

Based on the written report, the oral report and defines, we the members of the Confirmation Panel for the above named student make the following comments and suggestions to the student:

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

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We the members of the Confirmation Panel for the above named student make the following recommendation to the Research and Research Training Committee:

☐ The Candidature is confirmed, and the candidate's enrolment is converted to full candidature.

☐ The Candidature is not confirmed, and is required to revise the work and submit to a second confirmation process.

☐ The Candidature is not confirmed.

_____

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Confirmation Panel

The Recommendation form must be signed by a majority of the Confirmation Panel*.*

HDR Coordinators Use Only

Date Received: _____

Signature: _____

☐ *Burwood*   ☐ *Geelong*

_____   _____

Confirmation Panel Chair Signature: *Date:*

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