

## Process for Confirmation of Candidature

For Department HDR Directors, confirmation panel members, and HDR students

**Note:** For off campus confirmations student must have *Skype for Business* installed.

### Overview

Confirmation is required for students to progress from provisional to full candidature. This document, which outlines the confirmation of candidature process to be used within the Faculty of Business and Law, is based upon the [Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Academic Progress Procedure – Schedule A: Confirmation of Candidature Standards](#).

### Confirmation timing

1. Confirmation will take place within 12 months of commencement for full-time students or within 18 months of commencement for part-time students. Students must have completed the compulsory Research Integrity training and the Research Induction before undertaking confirmation.
2. In exceptional circumstances a student may request a three (3) month extension to their scheduled confirmation due date. This request must be made in writing to the Faculty HDR Director and have the support of the supervisory team.
3. Coursework units should have been successfully completed before confirmation.

### Lead-up to the first confirmation presentation

4. The confirmation panel should include:
  - a. A Chair, who should be the Department HDR Director or nominee.
  - b. The student's supervisory team.
  - c. One or two senior researchers with content and/or methodological expertise relevant to the student's project from the Department/School. One of these researchers must be at an academic level equal to the supervisor with the highest academic level. These researchers should be selected by the Chair.
  - d. An experienced researcher from outside the Department. The Principal Supervisor will be responsible for selecting this external researcher.
5. At least one (1) month prior to the confirmation due date, the student will be advised in writing of:
  - a. The composition of their confirmation panel.
  - b. The possible outcomes of confirmation.
  - c. The specific date and location of their confirmation presentation.
6. Students will submit their confirmation document to PhDXtra and send a copy to the Research Services team no later than 10 working days before their scheduled confirmation presentation. **Your confirmation document will be reviewed in iThenticate and the report will be sent to the Chair and your supervisors.** This document must:
  - a. Be no more than 10,000 words, 1.5 spaced, 2.5cm margins, 12-point Times New Roman or Calibri), excluding references.
  - b. Contain at a minimum:
    - i. An Introduction.
    - ii. A Literature Review, which includes:
      1. A critical review of recent work in the field.
      2. A set of associated research questions and/or research hypotheses.
    - iii. A Methods section, which includes:

1. An overview of the proposed research methodology and addresses any other discipline-specific requirements, as required.
2. A statement about the status of any relevant ethics approvals and/or intellectual property agreements, including ownership, location and storage of data. If ethics approval and/or intellectual property agreements are not applicable, this should be noted.
3. If the project involves human research, a statement about compliance with Victorian and Commonwealth privacy law, including management of identifiable information.
- iv. An Implications section, which outlines the theoretical, social, and/or managerial implications arising from the proposed body of research.
- v. A Timelines, Resourcing, and Outputs section, which includes:
  1. A candidature timetable that charts a realistic path to submission within 3 years FTE of commencing candidature.
  2. A statement of the resources and facilities required to complete the project. This should include a plan outlining how students will use their HDR funds over the course of their candidature.
  3. A plan setting out the publications expected to be produced during candidature, including target journals and submission date(s).

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you propose to do a Three Essay Thesis, please see Appendix 1 for further guidelines about the structure of your Confirmation document.

7. PhDXtra will distribute the confirmation document to the confirmation panel the day after the due date. If the student misses the due date they must send their document to the Research Services team, who will circulate it to panel members and upload it to PhDXtra.

### **First confirmation presentation**

8. The student will deliver an oral presentation and verbal defence of their research proposal.
9. The confirmation presentation will be open to all members of the Department. An email notification advising the Department of the confirmation presentation should be sent by the HDR Director/Chair no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled presentation.
10. Unless the majority of the confirmation panel are based at another campus, the student will usually conduct their confirmation presentation on the campus of their enrolment (Burwood or Waterfront). Similarly, the Chair and the student's Principal Supervisor or Executive Supervisor are expected to physically attend the confirmation presentation. Deviations from these expectations must be approved in writing by the Faculty HDR Director.
11. The confirmation presentation will proceed as follows:
  - a. The Chair will introduce the student and ask:
    - i. The audience to provide the student with rigorous but constructive feedback, and to hold their questions until the Q&A session.
    - ii. The supervisory team to refrain from answering questions on behalf of the student unless prompted to do so by the Chair.
  - b. The student will deliver their oral presentation, which should be 20-30 minutes in length.
  - c. The Chair will initiate a Q&A session (no longer than 15-20 minutes) for members of the audience who are not on the confirmation panel. After this Q&A session, members of the audience who are not on the confirmation panel will be asked to leave.

- d. The Chair will initiate a second Q&A session for members of the confirmation panel. After the panel have concluded asking their questions, the student will be asked to leave.
12. After the presentation, and drawing on the material presented by the student during their presentation and in their written submission, the confirmation panel will deliberate to determine one of the following outcomes as per Clause 10 of the [HDR Academic Progress procedure](#):
    - a. Candidature is confirmed.
    - b. Candidature is confirmed subject to minor changes. The panel decides whether the minor changes need to be sent to all members of the panel or to the Chair only, for approval.
    - c. Candidature is not confirmed but the student is given an opportunity to revise their work and undertake a second confirmation process within three months FTE of the written notification of the outcome of the first confirmation process.
    - d. Candidature is not confirmed.
  13. Within five (5) working days of the presentation, the Chair will send a written report to the student and the Research Services team. This report should:
    - a. Advise of the outcome of confirmation.
    - b. Provide a summary of the feedback given to the student during the Q&A sessions of the confirmation of candidature presentation.
    - c. In the event that outcome (c) in Clause 11 was determined, outline:
      - i. With sufficient detail why the confirmation was not satisfactory.
      - ii. Any support that should be provided to assist the student before their second confirmation presentation. This could include:
        1. Identifying workshops or training sessions on academic writing, research methods etc. that the student should attend.
        2. Stipulating how often the student should meet with their supervisory team.
        3. Advising that the student and their supervisory team seek the advice of content or methodological experts.
        4. Recommending changes to the supervision team.
    - d. In the event that outcome (d) in Clause 11 was determined, outline with sufficient detail why the confirmation was not satisfactory.
  14. The student must acknowledge receipt of the report to the Chair and the Research Services team within two (2) working days of receiving the report.
  15. The Research Services team will upload the report to PhDExtra and save a copy of the report and the student's acknowledgement of receipt in the student's file.

### **Lead-up to the second confirmation presentation**

16. In the event that outcome (c) in Clause 11 was determined, a second confirmation presentation will be held within three (3) months FTE of the first confirmation presentation. This will be the second and final opportunity for the student to confirm their candidature.
17. At least two (2) months before the second confirmation presentation, the Chair or Department HDR Director will meet privately with the student to ensure the student is satisfied with the level of support they are receiving.
18. The composition of the second confirmation panel should ideally remain the same as that of the first confirmation panel.
19. The second confirmation presentation will be closed to the general Faculty; only members of the confirmation panel should be in attendance.
20. Within one (1) month of the confirmation due date, the student will be advised in writing of:
  - a. The composition of their confirmation panel.
  - b. The possible outcomes of confirmation.

- c. The specific date and location of their confirmation presentation.

And given clear advice about how to write a rejoinder that demonstrates where and how they have responded to the criticisms made at the first confirmation.

21. The student will submit their confirmation document to PhDXtra and send a copy to the Research Services team no later than 10 working days before their scheduled confirmation presentation. This document must meet the requirements outlined in Clause 5 outlined above, with one addition: an appendix outlining how the problems identified at the first confirmation meeting have been addressed should be included.

## **Second confirmation presentation**

22. The second confirmation presentation will proceed as per Clauses 7, 8, and 10 outlined above (excluding Clause 10c).
23. After the presentation, and drawing on the material presented by the student during their presentation and in their written submission, the confirmation panel will deliberate to determine one of the following outcomes as per Clause 10 of the [HDR Academic Progress procedure](#):
  - a. Candidature is confirmed.
  - b. Candidature is not confirmed.
24. If the student is not confirmed after the second attempt, the confirmation panel must make one of the following recommendations as per Clause 13 of the [HDR Academic Progress procedure](#):
  - a. That the student be transferred to masters candidature;\* or
  - b. That the student's enrolment be terminated:
    - i. For a minimum of twelve months of being formally advised of the termination;  
or
    - ii. With no right of re-admission to the course.
25. Within five (5) working days of the presentation, the Chair will send a written report to the student, the Research Services team, and the Faculty HDR Director. This report should:
  - a. Advise of the outcome of confirmation.
  - b. Provide a summary of any feedback given to the student during the Q&A sessions of the confirmation of candidature presentation.
  - c. In the event that outcome (b) in Clause 22 was determined, outline with sufficient detail why confirmation was not satisfactory.
26. The student must acknowledge receipt of the report to the Chair and the Research Services team within two (2) working days of receiving the report.
27. The Research Services team will upload the report to PhDXtra and save a copy of the report and the student's acknowledgement of receipt in the student's file.
28. If outcome (b) in Clause 22 is determined, the procedures outlined in Clauses 32-60 of the [HDR Academic Progress procedure](#) will be followed.

\*NOTE: The CRICOS Code for M800 needs to be reinstated before a student can be enrolled in a Masters.

### **Suggested Structure of “Three Essay” Confirmation Document:**

- Chapter 1 = Introduction
  - This chapter will provide an overall introduction, including a narrative that connects the three essays. The chapter will give a preview of the research topic and background, main research gap(s), overarching theoretical framework, contribution to theory and practice, and the dissertation structure.
  
- Chapter 2 = Essay 1
  - Substantially complete at the time of the confirmation presentation. It should outline the detailed research gap(s) and theoretical contribution as derived from the literature review, research question(s) and hypotheses (if relevant), and research method (if empirical study).
  
- Chapter 3 = Essay 2
  - Clear outline of the research gap(s), research question(s) and hypotheses (if relevant) as derived from the literature review, and research method (if empirical study).
  
- Chapter 4 = Essay 3
  - Clear outline of the research gap(s), research question(s) and hypotheses (if relevant) as derived from the literature review, and research method (if empirical study).
  
- Chapter 5 = Conclusion
  - This chapter will conclude the document and remind the reader of the narrative and connecting thread of the three essays, contributions (in areas such as theory / method / policy / managerial). The chapter should also mention how the budget will be spent, timelines, and other requirements of the monolithic thesis document.