Candidate Guidelines – School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Preamble

With the introduction of the PhDXtra in October 2016 there have been a number of changes made to candidature that seek to provide additional support for candidates. The introduction of a mandatory coursework unit (AAE900 Essential frameworks of research) in the early phase of your candidature has sought to prepare you for the remainder of your PhD journey.

This document provides you with some general advice on PhDXtra expectations to support the development of your Confirmation of Candidature Research Proposal and your Oral Presentation. Please refer to the Faculty Confirmation Proposal and Procedures document for detailed requirements on the format for your confirmation documentation.

Faculty Confirmation Proposal and Procedures

There are three types of thesis structure options that candidates in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences may select:

- Conventional thesis
- Thesis by publication
- Folio format

Details about these various formats can be located at Your thesis and examinations.

Confirmation of Candidature

As per the Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) Academic Progress Procedure all HDR candidates (Master by Research and PhD) need to complete their confirmation of candidature. In the Faculty of Arts and Education, this occurs at 9 months for full time candidates, or within 18 months for part time candidates. For Masters Candidates, it is recommended that this occur within 6 months of candidature for full time candidates, and within 12 months for part time candidates. In the case of Masters Candidates seeking transfer to a PhD the PhD timelines apply.

Please note, prior to your confirmation of candidature all candidates need to have complete the compulsory training in Research Integrity.

Mandatory Coursework Unit: AAE900 Essential frameworks of research

For all candidates enrolled in the PhDXtra, completion of a mandatory coursework unit is required. The assessment for this unit has been developed with a view to supporting candidates to successful and timely completion of their Confirmation of Candidature. As such the assessment for this unit includes:

- Oral presentation – Public confirmation (Ungraded Pass)
Confirmation of Candidature Oral Presentation (Public Confirmation): 10 to 15 minutes

Each PhDXtra candidate is required to provide an oral presentation of their research proposal at a public confirmation before engaging in a private panel discussion of their work with the confirmation of candidature panel. This presentation will require the candidate to provide an overview of their research to their HDR peers and academics and will include a brief Question and Answer session prior to the one-hour private scholarly feedback session with members of the confirmation panel.

It is recommended that candidates consider the following in the preparation of their presentation:

- **Style of presentation:** How will the candidate convey key information about their proposed research (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi, other presentation formats)
- **Content:**
  - Researchable problem and relevant contextual information (including research question/s)
  - Significance of this research – what will be the contribution to knowledge that this research makes?
  - Outline of key research/theoretical debates about this research problem
  - Proposed methodology and research design (methods)
  - Tensions and blockages - what challenges do you face in conceptualising this research project

**Procedures: Confirmation of Candidature**

The confirmation of candidature panel is organised by the Faculty Research Services office in consultation with the (Executive) Principal Supervisor approximately 2 months prior to the scheduled date. The (Executive) Principal Supervisor is required to arrange a Chair and an external panel member. The panel generally comprises:

- Panel Chair drawn from the Professoriate or HDR team who will chair the meeting and compile the report of the meeting that conveys the recommendations of the panel
- (Executive) Principal or acting Principal supervisor
- Co-supervisor/s or associate supervisors (or other members of supervision panel such as external supervisor or research advisor if applicable)
- An independent and external academic (from another institution, Faculty, School of Independent practice)
- School of Humanities and Social Sciences representative

The candidate also has the option of inviting additional interested staff and/or students or supportive individuals to the confirmation although they will not be considered panel members and are usually observers.

Although it is desirable that the candidate attend the confirmation of candidature in person, in exceptional circumstances should he/she be unable to attend in person for reasons of distance (e.g., overseas off-shore candidate) or disability, then a video-conference or remote access option will be organised.

Panel members will be expected to have read the written document that will have been provided electronically at least two weeks prior to the confirmation of candidature and will engage in dialogue during the confirmation of candidature with the candidate and supervisors in order to:

- Confirm that the proposed project meets the expectations for early phase candidates
• Advise on appropriate modifications to the proposed project

The panel may wish to meet alone following discussion with the student in order to discuss the proposed research and/or its supervision and to formulate its recommendations. The candidate will be invited to join the panel following its deliberations in order to receive the proposed recommendations and discuss any implications, further requirements and conditions attached to the recommendation.

Outcomes: Confirmation of Candidature

Following the confirmation panel’s recommendation, the Chair of the confirmation panel will complete an online report. The Faculty HDR Co-ordinator will consider this. The outcome is then compiled into a written report that the Faculty Research Services administrative officer will send to the candidate and the confirmation panel.

If the confirmation panel requires any additional task(s)—forming Part Two of the confirmation proceedings—these tasks must be completed within up to three months of the original confirmation for all students and a face-to-face meeting (ideally) of the confirmation panel must take place. The student may or may not be asked to attend the Part Two meeting.

In summary, the outcomes of your Confirmation of Candidature are listed below and summarised in figure 1 below.

Confirmation outcomes:

1. **Confirmation recommended**
2. **Confirmation recommended pending submission of additional task(s)** — any additional requirements which must be completed prior to confirmation being approved triggers a part two confirmation. Additional tasks must be completed within three months of the initial confirmation meeting.
3. **Confirmation not recommended**
Figure 1: Possible outcomes of the confirmation process

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