

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



Graduate Research School



Higher Degree Research

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK 2016

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WELCOME

As the Dean of the Graduate Research School, it is my pleasure to welcome you as a higher degree by research candidate at Western Sydney University. Western is a large research-led university serving a growing and diverse metropolitan region.

The Graduate Research School is an integral part of the University's continued commitment to research excellence by continuing to expand our strong and dynamic research culture. We are committed to ensuring that you have the best possible research experience, research training and exposure to academics and industry professionals.

In your research training journey, you will not only develop outstanding research skills but also gain an interdisciplinary perspective that will prepare you for an ever-changing research and professional environment. We are also committed to providing you with appropriate facilities, support and supervision throughout your study.

Western Sydney University has renewed and redeveloped its research training program with the aim to prepare research candidates for the disruptive and rapid environment of today's world, by utilising four key proficiency cluster skills of Creativity and Innovation, Resilience, Teamwork and Design thinking. Further information about the workshop program is included in this handbook.

On a personal note, I found my research journey changed my view of the world. I made many wrong turns and errors. I also attended many seminars and workshops – some of which were only mildly connected to my research area. But each experienced extended my knowledge and skills and, in the end, I was very proud of what I had achieved.

I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities that Western has to offer. This booklet provides valuable information that will help you to do just that as well as where to access further support if needed.

I wish you every success in your research and beyond, and look forward to meeting you over the course of your candidature, particularly at events such as the 3 Minute Thesis Competition and Western Sydney University seminars and conferences.

Professor James Arvanitakis
Dean, Graduate Studies



GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

Launched in 2015, Western Sydney University's Graduate Research School (GRS) provides centralised services for the administration and support of all research degrees at Western Sydney.

The GRS exists to ensure you have a smooth journey into the University and through your studies as we look after all aspects of research candidature including:

- student recruitment, admission, enrolment and re-enrolment
- scholarship applications, conditions, stipend, allowances and variations
- candidature milestones including confirmation and progress reports
- submission and examination of thesis (we have an ever-growing 'Wall of Fame' we are VERY proud of)
- workshop and seminar series for all HDR candidates
- supervisor training for staff to ensure our students have the best supervisors possible.

Western Sydney's current Higher Degree Research candidates are essential to our increasing international research reputation.

All postgraduate research candidates are provided with numerous opportunities to gain superior skills and training through coursework options, seminars and workshops to ensure you are career-ready and highly competitive for global careers in:

- industry and business: researcher, consumer and social research, public relations, publishing, personnel work, training, marketing and human resources
- community and non-profit organisations: administration, overseas aid and development agencies, social research, policy development and lobbying
- government: policy development and analysis, general administration and social research
- academia: after completion of your PhD you will be able to pursue postdoctoral or lectureship positions.

Western Sydney University has also led the way in preparing our undergraduate students for careers that do not exist yet through our Academy program, focusing on skills around creativity, critical thinking, mistakability (learning from your mistakes) and interdisciplinary knowledge.

As a higher degree research candidate at Western Sydney University, these are also areas you will be developing.

The team at the Graduate Research School, along with your academic supervisors who are leading researchers in their field, are here to assist you to achieve in this vibrant research environment.

Website

westernsydney.edu.au/graduate_research_school

General queries

grs.enquiries@westernsydney.edu.au

Address

Building BA.1.20
Werrington South Campus

Western Sydney University
Locked Bag 1797
Penrith NSW 2751

INTRODUCTION TO HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH

Providing outstanding Higher Degree Research (HDR) training and education is essential for Australia's competitiveness in research and innovation.

Western Sydney University produces graduates with definable skill sets and attributes, with the responsibility for a positive candidature resting not only with the supervisor and the student, but with the whole university community of scholars and professional staff.

Higher Degree Research has moved on from the apprentice-master model of education to a culture that embraces supervision as a shared responsibility. Western Sydney University has well established frameworks and policies to assist candidates and staff. Schools and Research Institutes work closely with other departments to actively direct policy, resources and candidature management under the guidance of the higher degree governing body for the University and the Research Studies Committee, which is a standing committee of Academic Senate.

RESEARCH CULTURE

Western Sydney University is highly focused on building a rich research culture where research is highly regarded and where excellence in research is valued and actively promoted. For HDR candidates, it means working in an environment of good research practice and having the opportunity to present work and to participate in discussions about research and research practice.

KNOWING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Relationships between candidates and academic advisors are expected to be flexible collegial, however, they also remain hierarchical. At the beginning of your candidature, your principal supervisor is your primary academic guide and mentor and your relationship is critically important. Your supervisors are responsible for guiding the direction and standard of your work.

University processes establish an operational framework so that staff and candidates understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from others. However, rules and policies can only go so far, candidates and supervisors are human and subject to the complexities of interpersonal relationships and personal styles.

The higher degree research environment is different from what you may have previously experienced as an undergraduate student. An intimate understanding of who is responsible and accountable within the University and where and when you should seek advice or assistance will make you a much more effective candidate and will enhance the relationship with your supervisor. It will enable you to make the most of a system that is designed to help you succeed. This is part of being an independent learner; taking initiative and actively directing your education and your relationship with the University.

Here are some questions to consider as you negotiate the HDR education environment:

- What are your responsibilities as a candidate?
- What are the academic governing bodies in HDR education and what are their responsibilities?
- What research activities, seminars, conferences etc., can you attend?
- Who is your School or Research Institute HDR Director?
- Who are the advocates for research candidates?
- Are there candidate representatives on governing bodies?
- What is the role of the candidate organisation?
- What roles do administrative units play?
- Who can you talk to if there are problems?
- How do you communicate officially with the University?
- What are the degree rules (policy) and what is the research conduct policy?
- How are you expected to report progress?
- Are there accredited courses or informal Courses/workshops that you can attend?
- What web resources and handbooks are available for you?
- What resources are you entitled to (books, photocopying, equipment allowances, specialist research advice, travel funds, office space or other physical university resources)?
- Are there web sites and/or email lists you can join?
- What services and resources are available from the Library?

Research candidates are members of the research community and you are invited to participate in the University research culture. You are encouraged to attend as many events as you can – workshops, skills training programs, orientation programs, seminars and talks.

Your suggestions or recommendations are also welcome and will help Western Sydney University to excel in HDR education. Please send any feedback or suggestions to grs.hdr@westernsydney.edu.au

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

The HDR Candidate Handbook is intended to be a reference guide on matters that are important to your candidature and to provide you with a source of information about how to get things done, who in the University to contact and to outline your terms of candidature.

It is your responsibility as a research candidate to understand Western Sydney University policies. Policies and updates are published on the website at:

westernsydney.edu.au/policy/policy_DDS

WHO TO CONTACT

If you are unsure about any parts of the higher degree research candidature process or you have questions or concerns, please talk to your supervisors, the Graduate Research School or your HDR Director as early as possible to avoid potential problems or delays in your candidature.

If you have specific questions for the Graduate Research School, you can email:

Higher Degree Research queries
grs.hdr@westernsydney.edu.au

Admission queries
grs.admissions@westernsydney.edu.au

Enrolment queries
grs.enrolments@westernsydney.edu.au

Scholarship queries
grs.scholarships@westernsydney.edu.au

Examination queries
grs.exams@westernsydney.edu.au

HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH DIRECTORS

Your School or Institute HDR Director is an important contact in the management of your candidature. They can help you find the right supervisory panel, provide advice about policies and procedures in your candidature and connect you with key events and people in your research area.

Visit the website to find the current HDR Director in your School or Institute.

westernsydney.edu.au/graduate_research_school/grs/higher_degree_research_students/find_a_supervisor



HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH

With a focus on contemporary social issues and scientific problems, our research degrees are designed to produce career-ready, solution-focussed researchers who can solve new problems and adapt to emerging opportunities in a constantly changing world.

MASTER OF RESEARCH

Western Sydney University is transforming research education and training by developing a frontier research training program.

The Master of Research is an elite research training degree that aligns with Asian, European and North American qualifications. As an internationally recognised qualification it allows you to be globally mobile in advancing your research education and employment opportunities.

The program will deliver an in-depth research training experience that combines specialist disciplinary knowledge, an advanced understanding of research methodologies, and a year of independent research conducted under expert supervision.

The program provides you with the necessary educational experiences and expert knowledge to enable a confident approach to PhD studies and your future career.

The Master of Research degree is completed in 2 years full-time, or part-time equivalent.

For further information please visit:

westernsydney.edu.au/MResearch

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

The Master of Philosophy degree is primarily undertaken as a supervised program of original research, though the depth of the research required is less than that required for a PhD.

The degree is an opportunity to develop and enhance analytical and research skills through independent investigation in a specific field.

The Master of Philosophy degree is aimed at the professional development of the candidate, with particular emphasis on research methodology appropriate to the field of study. It is intended to provide candidates with the opportunity to develop their potential for research, enhance their skills of problem identification and specification, and their ability to develop and present solutions.

The Master of Philosophy degree is completed within 1-2 years full-time candidature.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree provides training and education with the objective of producing graduates with the capacity to conduct research independently at a high level of originality and quality.

A PhD candidate will uncover new knowledge either by the discovery of new facts, the formulation of theories or the innovative re-interpretation of known data and established ideas.

The award of a PhD is recognition of successful research experience of international standard in the discipline.

PhDs are completed within 3 years full-time candidature, with a maximum enrolment of four years full-time, or part-time equivalent.

Candidates undertake their independent research under the expert guidance of a panel of supervisors

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE

These degrees include the Doctor of Creative Arts, Doctor of Cultural Research and Doctor of Education.

Professional Doctorates provide extended and advanced training in professional fields where projects and investigations are more applied in nature and more obviously oriented to professional practice. The Professional Doctorate is designed to equip candidates to be critical consumers of research in a professional setting.

Doctorates are completed within 3 years full-time candidature, with a maximum enrolment of four years full-time, or part-time equivalent.

Candidates undertake their independent research under the expert guidance of a panel of supervisors.

ENROLMENT AND ADMINISTRATION MATTERS

STUDENT EMAIL ACCOUNT

All official university communication will be sent to your student email account. It is essential that you check your account regularly so that you do not miss important information or updates.

Please use your student email account when you are communicating with the university.

Students who are also Western Sydney University staff members will need to check both their staff and student email accounts.

ENROLMENT

You must re-enrol each year online via Western Central (Student Portal).

www.myc3.edu.au/#/login

Information about re-enrolment is sent to your student email account.

COMMENCEMENT OF CANDIDATURE DATE

You must submit a Confirmation of Research Commencement Date Form to indicate when you will commence study.

If the Graduate Research School is not advised of your commencement date within the first three months, you will be required to either defer your study or have your enrolment terminated.

This step is extremely important as it may affect the amount of time you have to complete.

VARIATIONS

Any changes to your candidature require approval from your supervisor and your School or Research Institute, including study mode changes (full-time/part-time), changes to your supervisory panel or for leave of absence.

Any changes to candidature details must be formally approved and recorded on the student record system (known as 'Callista').

Changes include the following:

- change of mode
- change of personal details
- change of supervisor/co-supervisor
- variation of thesis title
- leave of absence from candidature
- extensions of maximum candidature
- transfer from Doctoral Candidate to Research Masters
- upgrade from Research Masters to Doctoral Candidature
- vary research candidature or scholarship.

Changes to your candidature cannot be made online. Visit the website for forms relating to variations of candidature.

westernsydney.edu.au/graduate_research_school/grs/higher_degree_research_students/forms_policies_and_guidelines

TUITION FEES, INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

You should use Western Central MyC3 to access your Student Fees Account (Statement of Account). It details the units you are enrolled in, the total fees payable, the due date and methods of payment.

For further information visit:

westernsydney.edu.au/international/home/admissions/course_fees

STUDENT ID CARDS

Once you are enrolled, you will need to visit a Student Central office to get a student identification card.

Student ID cards are needed to access the Library and IT services. It may also be required to access buildings and facilities.

Student Central offices are located on all campuses.

westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/services_and_facilities/student_central

STUDENT SERVICES AND AMENITIES FEE

The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) provides Western Sydney University with a contribution towards the cost of providing student services and amenities.

All students are required to pay the fee which is charged twice per year and calculated on study load.

Information about SSAF will be sent to your student email account and a statement is available via Western Central (Student Portal).

STUDENT ADVOCACY

Advocacy is making sure students are aware and informed about their rights and responsibilities as members of the Western Sydney University community and have access to the right support and advice. Advocacy services available to you as a Western student can be either individual or broader level advocacy.

A key role of advocacy is to ensure that students are treated fairly by the University.

If you believe that you have been unfairly treated during the implementation of any University policy or procedure you should contact a Student Welfare officer or the Student Rights Advocate.

For more information about individual advocacy visit:

westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/services_and_facilities/advocacy_@_uws/individual_advocacy

For more information about University-wide advocacy visit:

westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/services_and_facilities/advocacy_@_uws/university_wide_advocacy

SCHOLARSHIPS

If you have a scholarship you must observe the Conditions of Award as well as University Policies. You will have received a copy of your Conditions of Award and you can discuss them at any time with the Scholarships Team at grs.scholarships@westernsydney.edu.au

In addition, there is a generic Scholarships Policy that applies to all award holders: Research Higher Degree Scholarship Policy – Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents

Scholarship holders should view their candidature as their main occupation and focus of their income. There are strict limitations to the amount of paid work that can be undertaken. Part-time candidature is permitted only in extraordinary circumstances and according to the Australian Taxation Office is subject to tax (stipends for full-time study are tax free). Previous enrolment time prior to receiving an award will be deducted from the duration of the award. It is a good idea to discuss the conditions of your award with your supervisors to determine how those conditions may impact on the management of your candidature.

Candidates must notify the Scholarships Officer if they intend to take annual leave and the principal supervisor will be asked to confirm the dates of leave.

If you have not completed your doctoral thesis within the 3 year scholarship period, in some limited circumstances where your research has been delayed, it may be possible for you to seek an extension for up to six months. There are strict criteria for any consideration of an extension and applicants must have sound evidence to support any claim. In some circumstances, there will need to be documented evidence throughout the candidature of events that led to the delay and an explanation of why the time plan could not be adjusted to compensate for whatever difficulty was experienced. Please consult your individual award for exact conditions. Please note that personal mishaps or illness cannot be used to seek an extension and if you find personal circumstances affecting your progress you should seek a leave of absence.

Extensions are not approved automatically.

Please note that scholarship extensions are not available to Master of Philosophy candidates.

OVERSEAS RESEARCH

You are considered to be a Western Sydney University traveller if you are conducting work overseas that contributes towards your degree, whether funded by Western Sydney University or not.

You must apply for permission to your School or Research Institute to travel overseas to conduct field work at least three months before the proposed date of departure.

Visit the overseas travel page for more information.

westernsydney.edu.au/graduate_research_school/grs/higher_degree_research_students/overseas_field_research

APPLYING FOR PERMISSION TO TRAVEL

All candidates travelling overseas to conduct research should apply using the Application to Vary Research Candidature/Scholarship form.

westernsydney.edu.au/graduate_research_school/grs/higher_degree_research_students/forms,_policies_and_guidelines

International candidates are advised to contact Western Sydney University International Office to ask about the validity of their visa if they leave Australia for any period. Applications for travel by international candidates must be endorsed by an International Student Advisor.

Australian citizens and permanent resident scholarship holders may take up to 12 months field work overseas and remain in receipt of their scholarship. However, certain conditions must be met regarding supervision during that period and relevance of the work to completion of the degree. Refer to the Research Higher Degree Scholarship Policy.



CANDIDATE RESPONSIBILITIES

You have a responsibility to understand the requirements for the degree in which you are enrolled and the objectives of that degree.

You are strongly encouraged to access Western Sydney University policy documents at the website:

westernsydney.edu.au/policy/policy_DDS

The supervisory panel will expect that you understand:

- a. The requirements for the degree in which you are enrolled and the objectives of the degree.
- b. That a doctorate or Master of Philosophy degree is research training with an output in the form of a thesis or major work which measures the success of that training. It should be planned and carried out within a clear time frame. Part of the training is to be able to plan and execute a project within defined time limits.
- c. That the degree is undertaken under supervision. You have a responsibility to establish agreed methods of working and to fulfil your side of any agreement with the principal supervisor and other members of the supervisory panel.
- d. That you must complete all compulsory reporting milestones; Early Candidature Plan, Postgraduate Essentials, Confirmation of Candidature and Annual Progress Reports.
- e. That you must provide evidence of progress to the panel at regular intervals, in addition to the formal reporting milestones mentioned in the preceding clause. You and your panel should plan together how and when material will be presented and how progress will be evaluated against the timeline.
- f. That you must participate in such activities as are determined by the School or Research Institute Research and Higher Degrees Committee. Involvement in the University's research culture is important for your development and candidates have much to offer the University; to supervisors, as models for other candidates and as contributors to the intellectual environment at Western Sydney University.
- g. That you are responsible for ensuring that you understand and abide by relevant policies such as the Research Code of Practice, the Research Ethics Policies and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.
- h. That you are responsible for notifying the principal supervisor if you have any difficulties. You should be aware of the mechanisms that exist to resolve problems.
- i. You are responsible for obtaining approval to take time away from candidature or vary your record of candidature.
- j. You must ensure that you meet all the administrative requirements of the University, for example, re-enrolling each year and regularly accessing your student email account.
- k. You must work with your panel to construct a reasonable timeline and to decide how to judge progress against it and make adjustments when necessary.
- l. Scholarship recipients must abide by their Conditions of Award, in addition to the degree policy.
- m. You are solely responsible for the content, style and presentation of the thesis or work that is finally presented and for certifying its originality.

CANDIDATURE LENGTH

		EFTSL	Full-time years	Full-time sessions	Part-time years	Part-time sessions
MPhil	Minimum	1	1	2	2	4
	Maximum	2	2	4	4	8
PhD, Prof Doc	Minimum	3	3	6	6	12
	Maximum	4	4	8	8	16

You must work with your supervisory panel to construct a reasonable timeline and to decide how you judge your progress and to make adjustments when necessary.

You are encouraged to write early and write often throughout the length of your candidature. Your supervisors will provide you with advice and support, however, you are responsible for ensuring that you have sufficient time to finish and write up the thesis or exegesis, and that you know what is necessary in terms of content, style and presentation.

FEES FOR EXTENSIONS

If you are enrolled on a fee-paying basis you will incur fees for any extension of maximum time.

If you are a domestic funded student, you may apply for a fee-free extension of one session but for any following sessions that you remain enrolled fees will apply.

westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/fees/higher_degree_research_fees

This means that a domestic funded doctoral candidate may potentially be enrolled for up to four and half years full-time without having to pay fees, provided that the explanation of the delay is accepted and the extension of candidature approved. Any further period of enrolment will automatically attract fees.

FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that a full-time candidate will normally spend a minimum of 35 hours per week on their study and that part-time candidates will spend 20 hours per week. This is offered as a guideline, circumstances may change at different periods of the candidature.

Managing a heavy load is a significant consideration for many doctoral candidates. For part-time candidates, finding twenty hours a week of effective working time can be difficult. This means time with minimal interruptions, when you are fresh and alert and the time is long enough at a stretch to be useful. Some people are late night intellectual workers, others are best early in the morning.

Candidates with heavy family responsibilities need strategies for sharing the load and finding effective study time. Fellow candidates and candidate organisations can be very supportive.

SCHOLARSHIP TIME

Doctoral scholarships are usually for three years full-time. Some, but not all, scholarships have provision for a one semester extension if there has been a delay not of a personal nature, beyond the control of the candidate and directly related to the research. The Conditions of Award signed at the beginning of the scholarship has information about the possibility of an extension.

It is possible to exhaust scholarship time but still have up to one EFTSL of candidature time remaining.

CANDIDATE RESOURCES

Western Sydney University provides financial support for candidature expenses under the Research Higher Degree Candidature Essential Resources Policy.

APPLYING FOR CANDIDATURE SUPPORT FUNDS

For advice on how to apply for funding email your School or Research Institute Professional Staff contact.

CANDIDATURE SUPPORT FUNDS

HDR Candidature Support Funds are allocated to Schools and Research Institutes through the University's Research Investment Framework (RIF). The funds provide financial support to Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidatures for expenses related to research.

The Candidature Support Funds scheme is designed to be flexible in addressing the requirements of candidates working across a wide range of academic enquiry and in establishing consistency across the University to ensure equity of access for all candidates.

Candidature Support Funds are funds that can pay for costs relating to a specific candidature.

Normally claims of up to \$2000 per candidate per full-time year in low cost disciplines may be supported. In consumable-intensive high cost areas the allocation may be up to \$7000.

The maximum of \$7000 should be viewed as an upper limit and be considered in view of other resource expenses over the duration of the candidature.

Higher sums include other resource costs (e.g. access to specialised equipment), which can be substantial.

Candidature Support Funds are not a direct payment to candidates on the basis of their enrolment.

Candidature Support Funds may not be used to fund living expenses, this includes travel to the University, for any purpose.

Candidature Support Funds should be carefully argued and agreed to by the supervisory panel as part of the candidature management.

The supervisory panel should take a leading role in determining how candidature project funds will contribute to the candidature.

In assessing the application the supervisory panel and HDR Director should consider the timing of the request (for example, international travel may have greater benefit if taken later in the candidature).

The supervisory panel and candidate are encouraged to take a "whole of candidature" view of anticipated expenses.

Schools and Research Institutes consider the requirements of the candidature in its entirety as one year may be more resource intensive than other years.

Not all candidates require the full nominal sum each year. Candidature Support Funds are not an entitlement that must be used.

Higher Degree by Research candidates must outline Candidature Support Funds requirements at the Confirmation of Candidature and in Annual Progress Reports (APR). Nonetheless, expenses and opportunities may arise that had not been anticipated at the time of Confirmation or the APR and they may be allowable.

Applications are made to the School or Institute and must be endorsed by the Principal Supervisor before submission for approval by the HDR Director.

Equipment purchased will remain the property of Western Sydney University and is to be returned to the School or Research Institute upon completion of study or withdrawal from candidature.

Changes to the direction of a candidate's work will not automatically guarantee additional resources and any changes to estimated resource requirements must be negotiated within the School or Research Institute.

Scholarship holders may be entitled to access thesis production funds specifically described in their Conditions of Award. Enquiries may be directed to the Scholarships Officer at grs.scholarships@westernsydney.edu.au

HDR Candidates are considered Western Sydney University travellers and must abide by the Western Sydney University Travel Policy.

Expenditure should not be made in anticipation of approval. An application for funds must be endorsed first. Conference and workshop travel must be first approved in principle as expenditure and then processed via TEMS.

Candidature Support Funds are also available for a range of items including, but not only, skills development, research materials or equipment, field work, transcription costs, participant reimbursement, travel for conference attendance, other travel, consumables, registration fees, writing skill development, technical costs associated with exhibition, recording, filming, thesis binding,

special software purchases, access to external facilities, access to vehicles for field trips, specialist software, postage, acquisition of data sets, photocopying, office materials and, in some areas of research endeavour, editing services, software licenses, mandatory Work Health and Safety (WHS) awareness and training.

REPORTING ON PROGRESS

FIRST YEAR MILESTONES

The University has a structured first year to help candidates focus early in their candidature which comprises the Early Candidature Plan (ECP) and the Confirmation of Candidature (CoC). Both milestones are compulsory for all candidates and non-compliance may jeopardise your continued enrolment.

EARLY CANDIDATURE PLAN (ECP)

The Early Candidature Plan requires you to work with your principal supervisor or panel to identify the goals that you would like to achieve in the first 3 to 6 months of your candidature. It is one of the first tasks you will complete in your candidature and will establish a framework that can be used to assess your progress in the early stages of your research project.

Further information about the ECP can be found at:

westernsydney.edu.au/graduate_research_school/grs/higher_degree_research_students/early_candidature_plan

CONFIRMATION OF CANDIDATURE

All candidates must complete the Confirmation of Candidature within the first year of enrolment.

Confirmation of Candidature is a formal and comprehensive process that reviews the progress and plan of the candidature from commencement to completion. The process may identify improvements that can be made and it is an opportunity to give positive feedback on progress.

Further information about the Confirmation of candidature can be found at:

westernsydney.edu.au/graduate_research_school/grs/higher_degree_research_students/confirmation_of_candidature

ANNUAL REPORTS

All continuing candidates must complete an Annual Progress Report. First year candidates in some schools may not be required to write an Annual Progress Report if their Confirmation of Candidature has been recently completed.

Further information about the APR process can be found at:

westernsydney.edu.au/graduate_research_school/grs/higher_degree_research_students/annual_progress_reports

THESIS SUBMISSIONS

You are solely responsible for the content, style and presentation of the thesis or work that is finally presented and for certifying its originality.

EXAMINATION

It is important for all candidates to become familiar with the HDR examination process and understand all the requirements for a successful submission. Preparing your thesis for examination can be a time consuming process so it is a good idea to start thinking about this well in advance of your submission date.

Detailed information is provided in the Higher Degree Research Examination Handbook. This document should be your first reference point for all the information you need about the examination process. This handbook explains each step in the process of a research higher degree examination including what to expect, how to proceed and who is responsible for various tasks.

The handbook also has advice about a wide range of specific topics including:

- How to choose your examiners
- Conflict of interest guidelines
- Format and presentation of your thesis
- Thesis lodgement
- Examination results and reports.

You may also find it useful to review the advice given to examiners for more information about the examination process and what your examiners expect from your thesis.

HDR EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

HDR WORKSHOPS

Western Sydney University provides HDR candidates with a comprehensive package of workshops, online modules and seminars. The program will take you from the first days and weeks of your candidature through to all aspects of your candidature, with much of the program designed so that you can engage on a 'need it now' basis.

All aspects of the program are free to HDR candidates and it is reviewed and updated each year based on feedback from candidates and the latest research in the field of doctoral pedagogy. Discipline specific parts of the program may be delivered in the Schools and Research Institutes and your supervisor will be able to advise you on these. Broader skills, knowledge and practice based programs are offered by the Graduate Research School.

You may also be able to access high quality programs delivered by other consortia for discounted rates and may use your Candidature Support Funds to attend such courses, for example, Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Incorporated (ACSPRI).

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

There is detailed information about the HDR Education and Professional Development Program posted on the GRS website.

westernsydney.edu.au/graduate_research_school/grs/higher_degree_research_students/workshops

Notices about the workshop program are advertised in the GRS newsletter, Resonate, which is emailed out to all HDR students monthly to your student email account.

When you register, you are committing to attending the course or workshop. Unless there is an emergency, please ensure that you attend. If you realise you cannot attend, please send an email before the training to grs.hdr@westernsydney.edu.au as there is usually a waiting list.

Please note that should you not attend and not provide advanced notice, the fee for the training may be charged to your Candidature Support Funds.

ONLINE RESEARCH TRAINING

The Graduate Research School provides a range of online workshops and resources to support you through your candidature.

The Research Training vUWS site provides extensive resources including videos, slides, worksheets, research tools, recommended blogs to follow, suggested books, readings, coverage of events and access to the Turnitin plagiarism checking tool.

All new candidates are required to complete the following compulsory online orientation modules:

- Postgraduate Essentials: outlines all of the administrative and planning processes you need to undertake early in your candidature
- Responsible Conduct of Research Training: explains your responsibilities in relation to ethics as a research candidate

Depending on your field of research and the specific requirements of your project, you may also need to complete the following module:

- Good Clinical Practice: training for researchers undertaking clinical research trails involving human participants.

You can access the online workshops and resources via:

vuws.westernsydney.edu.au

If you have ideas or requests for training that is not currently being offered, please email the Graduate Research School at grs.enquiries@westernsydney.edu.au



THREE MINUTE THESIS COMPETITION

The Three Minute Thesis Competition (3MT) is a yearly event held across Australian universities.

3MT is an opportunity to showcase the work of HDR candidates in an entertaining and informative format. The 3MT is an exercise in good communication skills – an essential skill for researchers.

Entrants present the 3MT as a compelling three minute oration on their thesis topic and its significance in language suitable for an intelligent but non-specialist audience. A single slide is permitted to support the presentation.

For more information about 3MT visit:

westernsydney.edu.au/three_minute_thesis/3mt/2015_3mt_event

All current higher degree research candidates are encouraged to compete. Cash prizes are awarded and the winner represents Western Sydney University at the Trans-Tasman Grand Final.

RESONATE NEWSLETTER

RESONATE is the Graduate Research School newsletter featuring stories about our research candidates and including information about upcoming events, scholarships and interesting stories from around Western Sydney.

RESONATE is emailed to your student account on a monthly basis. We welcome ideas for stories and student contributions, contact us at grs.enquiries@westernsydney.edu.au

LIBRARY

Western Sydney University provides an outstanding range of resources, facilities and services for HDR candidates.

The Research Services Coordinator can provide you with information about Library services including research skills development, bibliographic management, referencing and impact reporting.

library.westernsydney.edu.au/uws_library/help/contact-us/research-services-coordinator

RESEARCH ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

Western Sydney University maintains the highest standards of ethics and integrity in conducting research and this expectation extends to our higher degree research candidates.

Research at Western Sydney University is carried out in accordance with our Research Code of Practice and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

The Office of Research Services provides resources, advice and assistance to researchers navigating the complex issues of governance and compliance in relation to conducting ethical research.

For more information about research ethics and integrity, visit:

westernsydney.edu.au/research/research_ethics_and_integrity



MANAGING YOUR CANDIDATURE

SUPERVISION

PANELS

Western Sydney University uses a panel system of supervision. Each research candidate has a panel of at least two supervisors, one of whom is designated as principal supervisor, the other(s) as co-supervisor.

Panels introduce additional expertise and some candidatures may have several co-supervisors, to access a range of knowledge and skills. Panels also provide a backup should the principal supervisor be absent for any reason. The operation of your panel will be determined by the principal supervisor in consultation with you and the other panel members.

QUALITY OF SUPERVISION

Principal supervisors are registered on the Graduate Supervisor Register. Registration ensures that University supervisors are up to date with the latest research on doctoral education and University policies relevant to supervising HDR candidates. Normally a principal supervisor will hold qualifications at least at the level they are supervising.

THE PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR

The principal supervisor has a specific role in leading the panel and taking responsibility for a range of matters. Broadly these are:

- Management of time
- Monitoring of progress
- Encouragement of candidate participation in University research culture
- Ensuring that commitments made by the panel and candidate are met
- Providing timely feedback
- Ensuring that reporting milestones are met: Early Candidature Plan, Confirmation of Candidature and Annual Progress Reports
- Arranging nomination of examiners, thesis lodgement and responding to examiners reports
- Taking steps to address any problems that may arise
- Advising candidates about Leave of Absence, if required
- Ensuring that candidates are provided with resources
- Advising candidates about the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, the Research Code of Practice and ensuring that they are aware of University policies on intellectual property (IP) and plagiarism.

An Acting Principal Supervisor of the supervisory panel must be appointed during any significant absence of the principal supervisor i.e., more than a month at a time, and always during periods of absence due to Academic Development Program (ADP), (sometimes referred to as 'study leave' or 'sabbatical' leave). It is never acceptable for a candidate to have their candidature disrupted by staff absences. Please see the information under "Variation of Candidature" for advice on changing panel membership either on a temporary basis or for other reasons.

SETTING UP THE RELATIONSHIP

This section poses ideas to consider as you and your supervisory panel get to know each other in the early days of enrolment. The dot points suggest items you may wish to consider as you establish a working relationship with your supervisors. Establishing protocols sets clear boundaries, roles and expectations.

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RESEARCH CANDIDATE

“I have discussed my research proposal in details with my principal supervisor and obtained his feedback. We found it is easier for all of us to make set appointments and stick with that. We currently meet every 2 weeks formally but if I need anything informally, I can do it anytime. We are making some deadlines and usually try to finish the task by the time frame. This is the plan for next three months; things may change in the future.”

IDEAS FOR SETTING-UP INITIAL MEETINGS

- What will be the frequency and duration of meetings?
- Will I have access to supervisor(s) outside scheduled meeting times?
- Who has responsibility to initiate meetings, if they are not regular?
- What is the protocol when one cannot make the meeting?
- Who takes meeting notes and circulates them?
- What will be the protocol for submission and return of work?

THE PANEL

- What role will be taken by each supervisor?
- What will be the workload percentages?
- Will the whole panel meet, how often?

TIME FRAME

- Have we mapped projected progress against time?
- How long will each stage take?
- How will we monitor time/progress?

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND AUTHORSHIP

- Essential topics to discuss early are authorship and intellectual property
- You must discuss Intellectual Property if you will be working on funded project that was granted to an academic staff member.

WHAT IS A THESIS?

- What does “thesis” mean?
- Will there be a non-text component?
- Are there specific course guidelines, such as with some Professional Doctorates?
- What is an appropriate structure?
- What is the difference between a thesis that passes and one that is exceptional?
- Titles of good examples in a particular field.
- What is meant by originality?
- When should writing occur?
- What is expected in a literature review?
- Have we sorted out Intellectual Property (IP) issues?
- Can we start thinking about potential examiners?

ADVICE AND SUPPORT

- Confirmation of Candidature: how much input from the supervisor, how will this proceed?
- Expectations of feedback (style, how much, how often in what form, how soon?)
- Strategies to use when comments/ corrections are not understood
- Should the candidate seek feedback from anyone else?
- Support with content, e.g., resources, contacts, how much can be expected given the supervisor’s knowledge of the area?
- What other kinds of knowledge are needed? (e.g., research process, writing skills)
- Any personal circumstances that ought to be considered? (e.g., new baby, ill health)
- Attitudes to supervisor/candidate relationship (mentor/mentee, teacher/candidate, colleagues).

RESOURCES

- Do you have access to resources?
- Do you know about support schemes within the University: candidature support and conference scholarships etc.?
- Are there any suitable conferences this year?

UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

- Do you know what milestone reporting is required in the first year and do you have a plan of approach?
- Do you know of research activities in the School/ Research Centre/Institute?
- Will you be presenting at a seminar (apart from the Confirmation of Candidature)?





The information is correct at the time of printing. You will be notified of any change in policy or practice by email to your student account. Links are provided as hyperlinks for online readers and as URLs for paper readers.

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