

# HDR Candidature Management and Enrolment Variations Procedure

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## Purpose

This procedure describes how the University manages Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidature and variations to a candidate's enrolment. It does not apply to undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs or higher doctorate degrees.

## Applicable governance instruments

Instrument	Section	Principles
<a href="#">Research Training Ordinance</a>		
<a href="#">Research Training Policy</a>	3 Academic support, resources and intellectual climate	3.1 – 3.2
	4 Candidature progression, development, and completion	4.1 – 4.4
<a href="#">Research Policy</a>	2 Responsible conduct of research	2.1 – 2.2
<a href="#">Compliance Policy</a>	2 Conflict of interest	2.1
<a href="#">People Policy</a>	2 Inclusion, diversity, and equity	2.3
<a href="#">Data and Information Governance Policy</a>	1 Privacy	1.1
<i>Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act (2000)</i>		
<i>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standard)</i>		
<a href="#">The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)</a>		
<a href="#">ACGR Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships</a>		
<i>Higher Education Support Act (2003)</i>		
<a href="#">Australian Qualifications Framework</a>		
<i>Defence Trade Controls Act 2012</i>		
<i>Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011</i>		

## Procedure

### 1. Variations to enrolment and conditions of candidature

- 1.1. A candidate may apply to vary their enrolment or the conditions of their Higher Degree by Research candidature in accordance with the conditions outlined in *Research Training Ordinance*, and any scholarship terms or conditions, according to the processes stipulated by the Graduate Research Office (GRO).
- 1.2. International candidates are responsible for the management of, and adherence to, any visa or other government requirements and should seek advice from an International Student Advisor prior to applying to vary their enrolment or conditions of candidature.
- 1.3. All applications:
  - a) must be endorsed by the candidate's primary supervisor, Graduate Research Co-ordinator (GRC), and head of academic unit (HoAU); and
  - b) should be submitted at least four weeks prior to the requested date of the change to candidature.

- 1.4. All applications to vary enrolment or conditions of candidature will be considered by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Research (Pro Vice-Chancellor), or delegate. In making their decision, the Pro Vice-Chancellor or delegate will consider whether:
  - a) the University can continue to meet its duty of care in relation to the candidate's safety and wellbeing and student experience;
  - b) completion within the maximum degree period will be impacted; and
  - c) the academic unit will continue to have the necessary physical, financial, and supervisory resources necessary to enable completion of candidature.
- 1.5. Retrospective applications will normally not be approved unless satisfactory evidence is provided that demonstrates circumstances beyond the control of the candidate.

## 2. Study load

- 2.1. A candidate is enrolled for 52 weeks of each calendar year, with attendance requirements as defined in the Research Training Ordinance Section 17.
- 2.2. A candidate is required to spend the following hours per week progressing their candidature:
  - a) 38 hours when enrolled full-time; or
  - b) 19 hours when enrolled part-time.
- 2.3. A full-time candidate may undertake work experience or employment provided it:
  - a) does not interfere with the timely progression and completion of their research project; and
  - b) does not exceed on average over a 12-month period, 20% of a full-time load (i.e. 365 hours per annum).
- 2.4. Any work, undertaken by the candidate outside of their research project must not impact their ability to maintain their full-time or part-time attendance requirements and will not be considered as grounds for an extension of candidature request as set out in the *HDR Academic Progress Procedure*.
- 2.5. A candidate may request a change to their study load by submitting a [Change of Load, Mode or Campus](#) form. See Section 1.4 of this Procedure for the requirements.
- 2.6. Where a candidate seeks to enrol on a part-time basis on medical grounds, they will provide a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner that includes the start date (and end date, if relevant) of the period of the requested change. If an end date is not provided, a medical certificate may be required to support a request to vary enrolment to full-time.

## 3. Taking leave

- 3.1. Leave entitlements and conditions are set out in the *Research Training Ordinance*.
- 3.2. A candidate is entitled to take their yearly annual or sick leave provisions at any time, provided this is discussed and agreed to by the primary supervisor and recorded within the academic unit of enrolment. Academic units will manage the application for and granting of annual and sick leave at their discretion. No application form will be required by GRO for these types of leave and GRO will not track annual or sick leave balances.
- 3.3. An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidate is entitled to take cultural leave in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance*, provided this is discussed and agreed to by the primary supervisor and recorded within the academic unit of enrolment.
- 3.4. Annual leave will be accrued but will be dissolved upon submission of the thesis for examination,

withdrawal, cancellation of enrolment, termination or expiry of candidature.

- 3.5 Sick leave will be used to cover leave for candidates caring for an ill or incapacitated partner or immediate family members.
- 3.6 Sick leave that continues for more than ten (10) working days or where annual sick leave entitlements have been exhausted will be considered in accordance with *Research Training Ordinance*, with applications for additional leave made in accordance with this procedure.
- 3.7 A candidate can request a leave of absence by submitting the [Leave of Absence](#) form, and include all supporting documentation as required.
- 3.8 Where a candidate requests a leave of absence on medical grounds, the candidate will provide a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner that includes the start and end date of the period of the requested leave.
- 3.9 A candidate taking a leave of absence on medical grounds is encouraged to disclose sufficient information about their medical condition to enable the University to support their return to study. Information disclosed to the University about a candidate's disability/health condition will be managed in accordance with the relevant privacy legislation, and in accordance with the privacy principles in the University's *Data and Information Governance Policy*.
- 3.10 A candidate who is applying for a leave of absence will:
- where in receipt of a stipend and/or tuition fee scholarship/sponsorship, refer to their Conditions of Award and the *HDR Research Training Program & Other Scholarships Procedure* prior to submitting an application for a leave of absence and will make themselves aware of any potential impact on their scholarship/sponsorship; and
  - where enrolled in a coursework unit and the study period for that unit overlaps with the proposed leave of absence, contact the relevant unit coordinator to make themselves aware of the potential impact on their capacity to meet the requirements of the unit; and
- where applicable, will ensure that the Ethics team is notified when any leave of absence is granted, as this may impact their ethics approval. Refer to the *Research Ethics Procedure*.
- 3.11 Any future candidature action and milestone dates will be adjusted for any periods of approved leave of absence and the candidate will cease working on their research and associated coursework during this period. Any action and milestone dates that are overdue at the time of the leave of absence will not be adjusted. Where a leave of absence is requested and approved for mental health reasons and overdue actions remain, GRO may turn off iGrad notifications where it is in the best interests of the candidate.
- 3.12 Access to University facilities and resources will be restricted during a period of leave of absence.
- 3.13 A candidate who seeks to return from a medical leave of absence prior to the end date on the medical certificate will be required to submit a medical clearance from a registered medical practitioner.

#### 4. Revision to research thesis topic

- 4.1 It is expected that research projects evolve as candidature progresses. If textual updates to the wording of the title of thesis only are being requested, and the project is not changing, the candidate should email the request to GRO attaching written endorsement from the primary supervisor.
- 4.2 Revisions to a thesis topic that can be accommodated within a candidate's maximum expiry date should be requested by submitting a [Change of Research Thesis Topic](#) form. . In supporting such an application, the HoAU will ensure that:
- the academic unit can provide suitable supervision;

- b) the research project remains viable; and
  - c) completion will occur within the maximum degree period.
- 4.3 Where the revised project involves an item subject to controls under the Defence and Strategic Goods list, appropriate advice must be sought from GRO.
- 4.4 Where a candidate is a citizen of a sanctioned country a new [Autonomous Sanctions Compliance and Risk Assessment](#) form must be submitted. Any request to revise a research project for a candidate from a sanctioned country will not be progressed until this form has been approved.
- 4.5 Revisions to a thesis topic that cannot be accommodated within a candidate's maximum expiry date are not considered under normal circumstances, so please seek advice from the Graduate Research Office.

## 5. Campus and mode of study

- 5.1. A candidate will normally be enrolled at:
- a) the campus of their primary supervisor; and
  - b) for international students, the campus to which their course is included on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS).
- 5.2. A candidate may apply to the University to change their campus of enrolment to another University campus by submitting the [Change of Load, Mode or Campus](#) form with supporting documentation that outlines how the research and supervision resources of the HDR project will be provided at the proposed campus.
- 5.3. A candidate may apply to the University to change from on-campus to off-campus (as defined in the *Research Training Ordinance* and Section 7 of the *HDR Admissions, Selection and Enrolment Procedure*) by submitting a [Change of Load, Mode or Campus](#) form.
- 5.4 International on-shore candidates who hold a student visa will not spend more than one-third of the total course duration off-campus.

## 6. Selection and enrolment of coursework units

- 6.1. A candidate will complete core units for their coursework degree as set out in the course and unit handbook.
- 6.2. A candidate will select appropriate elective units that contribute towards skills required for completion of the HDR or for their future career in consultation with their supervisory team.

## 7. Exemption and credit of coursework requirements

- 7.1. A candidate may apply for full or partial exemption from, or credit towards, the Graduate Certificate in Research. The maximum credit granted will be in accordance with the limits set down in the [Student Participation and Attainment Ordinance](#) and [Credit Procedure](#).
- 7.2. A candidate seeking full exemption from the Graduate Certificate in Research or exemption from one or both core units, will complete the following MyLO units:
- a) HDR Candidate Induction,
  - b) Research Integrity,
  - c) Safety and Wellbeing Induction, and
  - d) Human and/or Animal Research Ethics Training where applicable.

7.3. Applications for exemption or credit are to be made using the [X5A Exemption & Credit Form](#).

## 8. Program transfer

A candidate may request to transfer between HDR programs in accordance with the requirements specified in the HDR Academic Progress Procedure.

## 9. Transfer to another Australian institution

- 9.1. A candidate wishing to transfer to another university may request documentation about their candidature and an Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFSTL) statement from GRO at the point of withdrawal. A candidate in receipt of a living allowance scholarship should refer to the *HDR Research Training Program and Other Scholarships Procedure* and the Conditions of Award for any implications for their scholarship.
- 9.2. An international candidate within their first six months of candidature must obtain a release from International Compliance before they can transfer to another institution. This release will not automatically be approved, and strong compassionate or compelling reasons must be provided by the candidate, as specified in the International Student Transfer Request Procedure.

## 10. Resetting candidature

- 10.1. If a project is unable to continue, prior to Confirmation of Candidature, the University will investigate reasonable options for resetting HDR candidature in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance* Section 25.
- 10.2. If a new project that matches the candidate's skills and qualifications can be identified, the ADRP will submit a proposal to the Pro Vice-Chancellor detailing the circumstances and the proposed reset arrangements, for consideration.
- 10.3. If the proposal is accepted, the School and College will complete a Candidature Reset form and submit it to the Pro Vice-Chancellor to formally consider the reset.
- 10.4. If the Candidate Reset arrangements are approved, the candidate will receive a letter of offer made an offer of candidature for the new course. Upon acceptance of that offer the candidate will be withdrawn from their original course and enrolled in a new course. Where a candidate is in receipt of a scholarship, the scholarship may also be reset.
- 10.5. Where resetting candidature is approved for an onshore international candidate, International Compliance will issue a new confirmation of enrolment (eCoE) to enable the candidate to update their visa.

## 11. Withdrawal from candidature

- 11.1. Candidates considering withdrawing from their candidature are strongly encouraged to discuss their options with the supervisory team and the GRC.
- 11.2. For a candidate in receipt of a scholarship, refer to the *HDR Research Training Program & Other Scholarships Procedure* for implications of withdrawing from candidature and any Conditions of Award.
- 11.3. A candidate may withdraw from their HDR candidature by submitting the Withdraw from Candidature form.

- 11.4 If an international candidate does not notify GRO of their request to withdraw from candidature within four weeks of the requested date of withdrawal:
- a) fees may continue to be charged and the candidate may be required to pay those fees; and
  - b) the candidate may be in breach of visa conditions.

## **12. Medical withdrawal from candidature**

- 12.1. The Pro Vice-Chancellor may offer or approve a request for a medical withdrawal for HDR candidates who have taken more than 12 calendar months of medical leave.
- 12.2. A candidate that has been granted medical withdrawal from candidature will be withdrawn from their course and may request re-enrolment within 12 calendar months from the withdrawal date. Re-enrolment will only be approved if the Pro Vice-Chancellor is satisfied that:
- a) the candidate is medically fit to resume their candidature, on the basis of supporting evidence from their registered medical practitioner;
  - b) the academic unit can provide suitable supervision;
  - c) the research project remains viable; and
  - d) any other conditions imposed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor on offering of the medical withdrawal have been met.

## **13. Miscellaneous obligations**

- 13.1. A candidate will notify the University of any change to personal details and will provide information on other circumstances that may affect the candidate's progress as soon as possible after such circumstances change:
- a) changes to a candidate's address will be updated in eStudent; and
  - b) changes to a candidate's name and citizenship will be made via Uconnect, noting that an International candidate changing to Permanent Resident status will incur Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF) from the effective date of the change.
- 13.2. International candidates will be responsible for being aware of and adhering to any visa conditions.

### **Related procedures**

*Credit Procedure*

*HDR Research Training & Other Scholarships Procedure*

*HDR Academic Progress Procedure*

*HDR Supervision & Academic Support Procedure*

*Research Ethics Procedure*

## Versions

<u>Version</u>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Business Owner/s</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>
1	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Dean of Graduate Research	3 Dec 2020
2	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Dean of Graduate Research	11 Apr 2022
3	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Dean of Graduate Research	12 Apr 2023
4	Minor amendments approved (position title changes)	Director Governance and Compliance	Pro Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Research	19 January 2024
5	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Pro Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Research	12 April 2024

## Definitions

[Academic unit](#) | [credit](#) | [candidate](#) | [exemption](#) | [Graduate ResearchCoordinator](#) | [higher degree by research \(HDR\)](#) | [primary supervisor](#) | [study load](#) | [student mode](#)