HDR Matters at JCU
A Guide for Academic Staff
Introduction

This Handbook provides advice, guidelines and links to the University’s Research Education policy documents for the advisors of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates at JCU.

Supervising each HDR candidate is a unique experience. It is creative, challenging, emotionally and intellectually demanding, and should be immensely rewarding. I hope that this Handbook assists you to guide the HDR candidates you supervise to successful and timely completion.

This handbook which was developed by Helene Marsh during her time as Dean, Graduate Research is a living document and suggestions for improvement are very welcome.

Professor Christine Bruce
Dean, Graduate Research
**In this Handbook**

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What should you do to encourage prospective HDR candidates to apply for entry to a HDR degree under your supervision?

You need to work to attract good HDR candidates. Remember you are competing not only against other advisors from all over the world but also against a marketplace that is offering well-paid jobs.

You need to:
- Sell the projects that you are qualified to supervise and have the resources to support.
- Be clear about the theoretical rationale for each of these projects, their aims and methodologies and the likely modes of data collection and analysis.
- Be clear about the knowledge and skills that are required to successfully complete such projects. Which skills can be acquired during candidature and which skills must the applicant bring with them?
- Talk with promising undergraduate and coursework postgraduate students at JCU.
- Take the opportunity to sell yourself and your research by giving seminars at institutions external to JCU and at conferences etc.

You can place information on your prospective projects on your Research Portfolio page on the JCU website or on the GRS webpage. Consider using social media, e.g. Research Gate or Twitter, to sell your projects and invite prospective applicants to communicate with you and your other candidates.

See also:
- Kearns and Finn (2017)4, an e-copy of which is in the JCU library.
- The module on ‘Attracting and selecting doctoral applicants’ in the Epigeum Online course.

How do prospective HDR candidates apply for entry to a HDR degree?

Step 1

If the prospective candidate has not already checked their eligibility and/or found an advisor(s) who is willing to supervise their research degree, they should complete the Expression of Interest for a Higher Degree by Research process.

Step 2

The applicant completes the APP_FORM_01 Supplementary Form for Higher Degree by Research Application form in conjunction with the prospective advisor(s) and ensure it is signed and that they have the required documentation ready. Download a required documentation checklist here.

Step 3

To submit an application, the applicant will need to visit the JCU Courses and Study webpage. Once they have chosen their preferred course, they can click on ‘Apply Now’ on the course webpage and follow the prompts for the online application process. If the applicant is applying for a scholarship, the scholarship application can be submitted via the online system once the candidature application has been completed.

Step 4

The applicant should send the link for submission of Referee Reports to two nominated referees. Alternatively, the referees may prefer to use the PDF version of the report form, which can be completed electronically and emailed to GRS@jcu.edu.au.

https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/candidates/prospective-students

What are the entry requirements?
Entry requirements for HDR candidature are summarised below:

1.1.1 All applicants must normally demonstrate academic capacity at a satisfactory level (Grade Point Average of Credit or equivalent) in their final year of coursework study that was used as part of the basis for admission.

1.1.2 All applicants must meet the IELTS Band 2 English Language Requirements or equivalent as defined by the University. Exceptions to this requirement require written permission of the Dean, Graduate Research\(^1\).

1.1.3 If the proposed research involves working with children under 18 years of age, the applicant must be eligible to hold a ‘Positive Notice for Child Related Employment’ (Blue Card), as required by law and the University’s ethics approval process.

1.1.4 To be eligible to apply for entry to a Doctoral program, an applicant must demonstrate the capacity to undertake research at the Doctoral level by the attainment of at least one of the following:

1. A Bachelor’s degree with at least Second Class, Division A (Honours) in a degree program that included a total of at least a semester of supervised project work, the results of which contributed to the Honours grade;

2. A postgraduate qualification that included: (a) supervised research component(s) of at least one semester or equivalent and resulted in the production of output(s) graded at the equivalent of Distinction or better, and (b) at least one research methods subject;

3. A Research Masters degree, where at least two-thirds of the degree consisted of a supervised research component and resulted in the production of a thesis or equivalent;

4. Enrolment at this or another Australian university in a higher degree by research for the equivalent of at least 0.5 EFTSL with demonstrated satisfactory performance in the supervised research component(s);

5. A combination of qualifications, research training and experience, considered equivalent to the above by the Responsible Academic Officer in the Enrolling Organisational Unit, e.g., senior authorship of at least one peer-reviewed publication plus completion of an appropriate research methods subject.

1.1.5 Applicants for a doctoral degree who are being admitted under conditions 1.1.4 (2.) and (5.) and who have not completed an appropriate research methods subject may be exempted from that requirement on condition that they enrol in and successfully complete an appropriate research methods subject before their Confirmation of Candidature Milestone, in addition to the normal course requirements.

1.1.6 Professional Doctorate applicants must also have demonstrated professional experience as specified by the requirements for that degree.

1.1.7 To be eligible to apply for entry to a Research Masters degree an applicant must demonstrate the capacity to undertake research at the Research Masters level by the attainment of at least one of the following:

1. A Bachelor’s degree with at least Second Class, Division B (Honours) in a degree program that included a total of at least a 0.5 semester of supervised project work, the results of which contributed to the Honours grade;

\(^1\) Note that exceptions to the English Language Requirement are not normally granted, and will certainly not be considered without the applicants being asked to complete a Pre-Entry Language Assessment (PrELA).
2. A postgraduate qualification, which included: (a) supervised research component(s) of at least 0.5 semester (or equivalent) and resulted in the production of output(s) graded at the equivalent of Credit of better, and (b) at least one research methods subject;

3. A Graduate Certificate or Diploma in Research Methods with a Grade Point Average of Credit or above in addition to a Bachelor’s degree;

4. Enrolment at this or another university in a higher degree by research for the equivalent of at least 0.5 EFTSL with demonstrated satisfactory performance in the supervised research component;

5. A combination of qualifications and research experience considered equivalent to the above by the Responsible Academic Officer in the Enrolling Organisational Unit, e.g. junior authorship of a peer-reviewed research publication plus completion of an appropriate research methods subject.

1.1.8 Applicants for a Research Masters degree who have not completed an appropriate research methods subject as required in 1.1.7 (2.) and (5.) above may be exempted from that requirement on condition that they enrol in and successfully complete an appropriate research methods subject before their Confirmation of Candidature Milestone, in addition to the normal course requirements.

1.1.9 Applicants for a Research Masters degree that includes compulsory research methodology training in addition to the normal course requirements may be admitted on the basis of an appropriate Bachelor’s degree.

**What English language testing does JCU do before accepting a HDR candidate?**

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is one of the world’s most popular English tests for work, study and migration. It is not specifically designed for prospective HDR candidates. Rather it is an international standardised test of English language proficiency for non-native English language speakers. The test has four components: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. JCU uses IELTS as the benchmark English test for entry to a research degree and for determining scholarship applications. Note that scholarships require a higher IELTS score than degree entry. Certain specified non-IELTS English tests are also acceptable (see website).

An IELTS result is issued to all test takers with a score from "band 1" ("non-user") to "band 9" ("expert user"). JCU HDR applicants from an English as an Additional Language (EAL) background are required to have a band 2 IELTS score: an overall score of at least 6.5 with no component score less than 6.

JCU competitive HDR scholarship awardees are required to have a score of 7 with no band less than 6.5.

IELTS recommends that a student is likely to need 3 months’ full-time study to increase their score by 0.5.

Remember that even with an IELTS 6.5 studying a postgraduate course in English in Australia will be challenging and an HDR candidate needs to have opportunities improve their English throughout their course.

Institutions are advised not to consider an IELTS report older than two years to be valid, unless the user proves that they have worked to maintain their level. JCU abides by this recommendation.

JCU HDR applicants are asked to undertake a Pre-Entry Language Assessment (PrELA) as part of the JCU application process, if:

- There is a well-founded request to waive the English Language Requirements from a prospective advisor or Dean of College
- There is some doubt about their English Language competency i.e., competency claims are based on co-authored papers in English
• They have scored highly on their scholarship application and but do not have a current IELTS score and the University wishes to decide on whether to hold a stipend or fee-waiving scholarship while the candidate completes an IELTS test.

Please note that a PrELA is not used in the case of applicants who have clearly failed to meet the benchmark IELTS entry standard. PrELA is a short test designed to gauge the applicant’s ability to think and read critically and write in an academic style in English. The PrELA assists in decision-making about their application for admission to the JCU research degree and/or scholarship.

The journal article sent to those taking the PrELA test is standardised and accessible to any prospective research higher degree candidate regardless of discipline. The article is sent one week before the examination with advice on how they will be required to respond to questions emailed to them under examination conditions. The applicant is invited to make notes and to bring the article and the notes to the examination, which is conducted under invigilation, usually using Skype (in some cases it may be held face to face). The applicant has to show their ID to the scrutineer, then handwrite their response and email it to the Graduate Research School. The response is independently graded by qualified staff from the Graduate Research School and Learning, Teaching & Student Engagement who confer and send their collective evaluation and recommendation to the Dean, Graduate Research for final approval. If the applicant receives a marginal score and qualifies for admission they will be required to undertake a JCU Post-Entry Language Assessment (PELA) soon after the start of their candidature.

What is a cotutelle or conjoint HDR degree?

A cotutelle or conjoint HDR degree (https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/forms-and-policies/hdr-cotutelle-or-conjoint-enrolment-procedure) is an HDR degree granted by both JCU and another tertiary institution through a Cotutelle or Conjoint Enrolment agreement. This agreement is a contract between James Cook University and the partner institution. Hence detailed negotiations must occur between JCU and the partner institution prior to the finalization of the agreement to ensure that all details of the candidature arrangements have been specified to the satisfaction of all parties involved. In practice, the Graduate Research School’s experience is that is much easier to negotiate such an agreement with an international institution than an Australian institution. Agreements with international institutions with complex coursework requirements for a doctorate can also be challenging.

Candidates enrolled under such an agreement must meet the requirements for HDR candidature at both JCU and the partner institution. The agreement should be built on a prior collaboration between the advisors at JCU and the partner institution and will normally be initiated on a case-by-case basis for an appropriate HDR candidate who must meet all the JCU requirements for entry to the intended JCU higher degree by research, including the English Language Requirements.

Normally, a candidate wishing to be enrolled under an agreement would not yet be enrolled at either JCU or the partner institution. However if a candidate is already enrolled at either institution, an agreement may be finalised if the requirements of both institutions can be met. If you are the Primary Advisor of a candidate or potential applicant who wishes to be enrolled in a cotutelle or conjoint HDR degree, please contact the Manager Graduate Research School Operations to explore how an agreement that outlines the arrangements specific to each candidate can be developed. This requirement applies irrespective of any Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between JCU and the partner institution.

Candidates enrolled under an agreement will have any JCU tuition fees for their higher degree by research exempted for the normal duration of the degree.

The candidate and their Advisory Panel are responsible for ensuring that: (1) the conditions of the agreement are fulfilled throughout the candidature; and (2) the advisors from both institutions are involved in approving matters such as Leave of Absence, milestone completions, progress reporting, publications arising from the candidature, thesis preparation and data storage.
The Graduate Research School will ensure that when the higher degree by research of a candidate enrolled under such an agreement is completed, the conjoint status of the degree will be noted in the materials sent to Academic Board and University Council. The JCU testamur of the candidate will indicate that the degree is awarded under an Agreement and where appropriate will be badged from both institutions. Details of this arrangement will also be recorded on the candidate’s Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement.

**What do tuition fees cost?**

Candidates who are citizens of Australia and New Zealand, as well as Australian Permanent Residents, have their tuition fees supported by the Australian Government in the form of a Research Training Program Fee Offset and will be exempt from tuition fees for a defined maximum period (four years full-time equivalent for Doctorate and two years full-time equivalent for Masters by Research enrolments). Visit the Australian Government’s [Research Training Program website](#) for further information.

A proportion of International HDR Candidates (in practice, those who receive competitive stipend scholarships administered by JCU) may receive a Fee Offset or Fee Waiver and will be notified if this is the case. Some other international candidates have their tuition fees paid by sponsors such as their home country government or AUSAID.

**Note:** If you are supervising a candidate who is supported by their home country government, you should find out the penalty that they will incur if they do not graduate with the research higher degree in which they initially enrol. If such a candidate is struggling, it might be kinder for their candidature to be discontinued before they amass a crippling debt of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

All other international HDR Candidates are required by the Australian Government to pay tuition fees. For fee scales, visit the [JCU International Student Centre website](#).

HDR Fees for International students (2018) can be found [here](#), on page 64.

**What tuition fee exemptions are possible?**

**Domestic HDR Candidates**

As explained above, Domestic HDR candidates are allocated a place under the Research Training Program, which means they are exempt from tuition fees for a defined maximum period (four years full-time equivalent for PhD and two years full-time equivalent for research masters degree enrolments).

The only in-time domestic HDR candidates who are charged tuition fees at JCU are those enrolled in the PhD by Prior Publication.

**International HDR Candidates**

The Australian Government requires international HDR candidates to expect to pay tuition fees. The [JCU International Student Centre website](#) outlines the fee scales applicable for each calendar year.

Candidates who receive a JCU competitive stipend scholarship (IRTP or JCUPRS) will also be awarded a RTP tuition fee offset as explained above. Please refer to the [policy](#). If awarded, fee sponsorships or exemptions are generally for up to two years full-time equivalent study for masters degrees and up to four years full-time equivalent study for doctoral degrees subject to satisfactory process.
What is the prospective HDR Overtime HDR candidature charge?

It is planned to impose a modest overtime charge for HDR candidates from 2019. Details are still being finalised. Candidates who take leave of absence to avoid paying the fee will be changed on thesis submission. Such fees must be paid before a candidate can receive their testamur but nor before they are admitted to their degree.

For frequently asked questions please refer to the [GRS website](#):

What stipend support is available for HDR candidates?

Awards for Australian/NZ citizens and permanent residents include:

- Research Training Program Scholarships (RTPS)
- JCU Postgraduate Research Scholarships (JCUPRS)

International applicants are eligible to apply for:

- JCU Postgraduate Research Scholarships (JCUPRS)
- International Research Training Program Scholarships (IRTPS)

These awards are administered by the Graduate Research School. There is one scholarship round per year. For the 2019 round, international applications will close on July 31, 2018 and domestic applications on October 31. Applicants who score very highly on the scholarship ranking schema may be given advance offers.

In practice, a prospective candidate submits a generic stipend scholarship application and the specific scholarship is indentured by the Graduate Research School in the scoring and offer process.

Prestige scholarships with higher stipends are also offered to high performing candidates in nominated areas and to indigenous candidates.²

Other awards from external sources, such as the National Health and Medical Research Council, government agencies and private foundations, may also be available depending on field of study. Scholarships may also be available where the research topic is related to a current research project being undertaken by the Primary Advisor and funded by the Australian Research Council or other outside agency.

All HDR stipend scholarships are tax free as long as the scholarship is full-time.

Part-time scholarships are taxed, an Australian Government Regulation.

What research support is available? – For example, funding, administration, desk space, internet, operating costs, lab space...

Visit the [GRS Scholarships webpage](#) to find out about other research degree funding, scholarship opportunities, how scholarships are scored scholarship and the [JCU HDR scholarships procedure](#).

Generic policy applies to provision of support from the College. For further information, refer to the [HDR Minimum Standard of Resources, Facilities and Other Support Provided for Research Higher Degree Students Procedure](#).

² Indigenous candidates are a priority because of the importance of Indigenous HDR graduates to Australia, especially to the national ‘closing the gap’ agenda.
Financial support for HDR projects, conferences etc.

Each College receives funding from the Research Training Program for HDR candidature support on the basis of the number, cost category and degree of their in-time³ HDR candidates and must allocate $1000 to each candidate and retain the balance in a competitive pool. The method of awarding the funds in the competitive funding pool is at the discretion of the College but must be done according to a transparent plan approved by the Research Education Sub-Committee. Check with your College for details.

Arrangements for candidates enrolled in the ARC Centre of Excellence in Coral Reef Studies are slightly different as the Centre receives funding according to the contractual arrangements between the ARC and the University. Nevertheless, the Centre must ensure that funding is provided for HDR candidates at least at the levels indicated above.

Relevant research costs that a candidate’s College should meet

The following list includes but is not limited to:

- Photocopying costs;
- Thesis costs, including printing if required;
- Internet charges related to the project, including reasonable recompense for charges external to JCU in the case of off-campus HDR candidates. Such recompense must be negotiated in advance on a case-by-case basis and approved by the Dean of the relevant College;
- Essential inter-library loans and document delivery;
- Reasonable expenses for undertaking approved research at libraries and archives external to the host campus;
- ISD and STD telephone calls and fax costs related to the project;
- Costs of access to service facilities;
- Data analysis and specialised computer packages;
- Fieldwork expenses appropriate to the research project (sufficient to enable the research to be conducted in accordance with the University’s Workplace Health & Safety Policies);
- Training costs to meet the requirements of the University’s Workplace Health & Safety Policies;
- Laboratory consumables specific to the research project;
- Postage associated with essential research activities, e.g. postal surveys; and
- Substantial support towards attendance at one conference away from Townsville, Cairns or Singapore during the period of candidature (only for candidates presenting a paper or poster at the conference).

Facilities, equipment and lab/office space

The resources listed below should be available to all full-time HDR candidates while they are based on campus in Townsville, Cairns or Singapore. Part-time and off-campus candidates should negotiate their needs with the Dean of their College if their circumstances are not covered specifically by the HDR Minimum Standard of Resources, Facilities and Other Support Provided for Research Higher Degree Students Procedure*.

- Guaranteed access to desk or bench space in a secure, shared space that is dedicated to postgraduate and/or Honours students.
- Bench space and access to suitably maintained scientific and technical equipment appropriate to the discipline in which the research is being conducted.

³ “In time” means <2/4 EFTSL for Masters/Doctorate unless special circumstances have been approved by the Dean, Graduate Research as a result of illness, parenting or carer responsibilities
- Sole access to a desktop or laptop computer for the purposes of writing up research from the beginning of candidature. Under normal circumstances, JCU expects each candidate to own a computer that has web browsing, email, word processing and spreadsheet capabilities; this requirement is included in the letter of offer to the candidate.

- Access to additional computing facilities appropriate to the project requirements. Colleges or research groups may achieve this requirement by having a pool of University-owned computers with specialist software and/or hardware appropriate to the discipline.

- Note: The University’s software licensing agreements only allow some licensed software to be installed on JCU-owned computers. The list of Software Applications where the JCU Terms & Conditions of usage permit HDR students to install on a personally owned computer is available on the website.

- Reasonable after-hours access to facilities, subject to security, health and safety considerations.

Other Resources & Support

All JCU students have access to a dedicated JCU email account upon enrolment in their degree. They need to visit the GRS website to activate their JCU email account.

The following resources and support are most easily implemented for full-time on-campus HDR degree candidates and/or other candidates resident in Townsville, Cairns or Singapore. Other candidates should negotiate with the Dean of their College. Resources will depend on the level of research funding obtained.

- Internal and local telephone access;
- An @my.jcu.edu.au email account that must be used for official university correspondence.
- Reasonable access to basic office stationery; and
- Reasonable access to use of University vehicles, video and audio recording equipment of relevance to the program of research on certification by the Primary Advisor. Costs associated with access to such resources will incur fees that are payable by the candidate or their advisors through the relevant College.

What checks should you undertake before agreeing to be the Primary Advisory of a HDR candidate?

‘Recruit in haste, repent at leisure’ (Kearns and Finn 2017)

These checks are modified from Kearns and Finn (2017), an e-copy of which is in the JCU library. This book contains useful suggestions about the questions you might ask a potential HDR candidate.

See also the module on ‘Attracting and selecting doctoral applicants’ on the website.

- Suggested pre-acceptance checks
- Interview the applicant (preferably in person but Skype is okay). Prepare for the interview and be clear on the selection criteria and skills that you are assessing, in addition to the JCU requirements.
- Ask applicants to make a short presentation to you and consider testing their skills with relevant tasks.
- Talk with each applicant about your expectations and supervisory style and assess whether you want to work with them.

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4 Off-campus candidates can contact their advisors or other staff of the University via the JCU Student Association’s Freecall Number 1800 330 021 and ask for their calls to be forwarded.

5 Kearns, Hugh and Finn, John (2017) Supervising PhD students, Thinkwell. 212 pp.
- Prepare a Supervisor Statement (exemplar) outlining how you operate as an HDR advisor. Ask the applicant to complete the ‘Expectation of Candidates and their Advisory Team’ and talk with them about the matters in which their expectations differ from yours.
- Phone or Skype their referees. Referees are much more likely to be frank in conversation than in writing.
- Make sure that the project costs are not going to exceed guaranteed available funds. The candidate cannot sit around waiting for uncertain funding.
- In response to email queries from prospective candidates, do not promise funding beyond the HDR Minimum Resources Procedure unless there are specific funds available to support the project.
- Check with your College to see if there are any limits on using your IRA/DBA funds to support HDR candidates.
- Ask the prospective applicant if they have worked out how they will survive with the funds available to support themselves and their family (https://www.jcu.edu.au/international-students), even if they (or their partner) fail to find work (very important for international applicants). Remind them that doing a full-time research higher degree is at least a 40 hour a week job. You can’t pry into their personal affairs but you can ask if they have checked out the feasibility of the situation.
- Remember that when you take on a weaker HDR candidate you are also accepting the responsibility to ensure that they receive the additional support (including the likely need for additional stipend support beyond the normal 2 years for a Master degree, 3.5 year for a doctorate) that will be needed.
- Trust your gut instinct. When in doubt invest further effort before making any commitment or say NO.
After an applicant accepts a place at JCU, what next?

Who are the key people for a HDR candidate and what are their roles?

‘Candidateure Committee’ is the Committee approved by the Associate Dean Research Education (ADRE) of the College. The Candidateure Committee comprises the Chair, the Independent Academic and the Advisory Panel. The Chair (who may be the ADRE in some Colleges) and the Independent Academic are appointed by the ADRE from a pool of nominees who have been approved by the Head of College and trained in the responsibilities associated with the role.

Their role is to serve as internal reviewers of a candidate’s progress and to make recommendations to the Dean, Graduate Research who has been delegated the responsibility of signing off the various candidature milestones.

‘Advisory Panel’ means the panel appointed by the Dean, Graduate Research to undertake the day-to-day supervision of an HDR candidate. The Advisory Panel must comprise a Primary Advisor, between one and three Secondary Advisors, and an Advisor Mentor if no other Panel members are Advisor Mentor level on the JCU Register of Advisors. An Advisory Panel cannot consist only of adjunct staff.

The JCU Code of Conduct states that staff must “avoid placing [themselves] in direct positions of responsibility relating to the employment or studies of a person, where they have, or had, a close personal relationship with that person.”

Hence Advisory Panel members must not have a marital, de facto, intimate or close family relationship with the candidate, nor should there be any reason to believe that there is such a relationship between an advisor and a HDR Candidate. In addition, the Primary Advisor must not be the immediate line manager of a candidate who is a continuing employee of JCU.

If any of these circumstances arises during the candidature, both parties must inform one of the ADRE, Dean of College or Dean, Graduate Research within 10 working days to make consequential changes to the Advisory Panel and any other necessary arrangement. Failure to divulge such information will be considered a breach of the JCU Code of Conduct.

‘Primary Advisor’ means a person with a Primary Advisor status on the JCU Register of Advisors who is normally a member (or an adjunct member) of staff in the College and who chairs the Advisory Panel. The role of the Primary Advisor is take the lead in the day-to-day supervision of a HDR candidate.

Associate Dean Research Education is responsible for the regulatory leadership of research in the College and is the link between the College and the Graduate Research School (GRS). A strong working relationship between the Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidate and their advisors is essential to the successful and timely completion of their research degree and the role of the ADRE is to:

- Support and promote an Advisory Panel-candidate relationship that encourages HDR candidates to produce a thesis that is a substantial and original contribution to knowledge in their field of study.
- Provide advice and support when required to advisors on application for admission to the JCU Register of Advisors, upgrading of their level of Advisory Accreditation on the Register and on the HDR Advisor Training program offered by the Graduate Research School.

The Dean, Graduate Research is the person appointed by the university to chair the Research Education Sub-Committee, the Committee that develops HDR policies and procedures for subsequent approval by the designated JCU authorities. The Dean, Graduate Research is the JCU Council’s delegate for most HDR approvals. The Dean also has a pastoral care role when candidates approach her directly (even though they
should see their ADRE first) and is involved in the professional development of HDR candidates and advisors. The Dean is represented in Cairns by a Deputy Dean.

**Administration Assistance** – All Colleges have Academic Services Staff who are there to assist with candidates with operational matters relevant to their candidature such as forms and milestones.

**What are the Induction Processes?**

- Both the Graduate Research School and the Colleges are responsible for exposing HDR degree candidates to an integrated orientation process.
- The GRS runs Induction Days for HDR candidates twice per year, generally in March-April and September-October, in both Townsville and Cairns. These events are a compulsory component of the Professional Development Program unless the candidate is enrolled in a dedicated and approved cohort program e.g. DTHM Medical Cohort Program.
- Orientation or induction sessions should also be organised by each College and held at a time convenient to their HDR candidates.
- The GRS provides enrolling HDR candidates with information about the University’s policies pertaining to their candidature (including thesis examination and other relevant policies), e.g. research ethics, intellectual property, copyright, sexual harassment, grievance procedures, and sharing of responsibilities for the management of candidature between the Colleges, and administration offices. This information is increasingly supplied in electronic format on the GRS website and include a comprehensive **Handbook for HDR Candidates**.
- A similar handbook should be produced by each College, outlining procedures relevant to and entitlements of HDR degree candidates within that Unit. See your ADRE for details.
- Desirably, a College orientation or induction package will also include the following:
  - A tour of the facilities;
  - An introduction to relevant academic, technical and administrative staff, including the relevant faculty librarian;
  - Advice on how to contact the librarian;
  - Information on access to relevant training opportunities, e.g. AARUNET and computer training, Workplace Health & Safety;
  - Information on procedures to resolve problems;
  - Information on opportunities for participation in decision making processes, including arrangements for electing student representatives to relevant committees; and
  - Guidelines on ethical and safety procedures appropriate to the discipline. In addition, each College is required to provide relevant training to ensure that HDR candidates comply with these safety procedures and other relevant University safety policies.

There are important forms for Advisors and Candidates to complete jointly early in the candidature:

- **CAA-FORM-01 Candidate & Advisor 6 week Check-In**
- **HDR Candidate Intellectual Property Agreement**

**What services are available to help candidates settle in?**

**HDR Ambassador Program**

HDR candidates arrive at any time of the year, and meeting and inducting them can be challenging. HDR Ambassadors are HDR candidates employed by the Graduate Research School on a casual basis to meet commencing candidates new to JCU and show them around. Commencing HDR candidates are contacted by an Ambassador (a current HDR candidate) from their campus/College to arrange to meet them when they arrive at JCU for the first time, if they wish. The Ambassador will take the candidate on a tour of campus and to all of the important places such as the International Student Support Team (if an international HDR), the Graduate Research School, the College (in particular their Primary Advisor’s office) and the HDR Academic Support staff within the College. The Ambassador is also there to answer general questions about JCU and
the city where the campus is, and refer the student to JCU services as required. There is also an ambassador for external candidates. The HDR Ambassador program is funded by the Student Services and Amenities Fee, with the aim of improving the welcome experience for commencing HDR candidates.

**HDR morning teas**

**Townsville:** Usually the first Wednesday of every month, invitations are sent by email. The purpose of the morning teas is to provide an opportunity for HDRs to socialise, and particularly for new HDRs to meet their colleagues from across the university. The morning teas are also open to Graduate Research School and College based HDR-related staff, to give HDR Candidates an opportunity to meet staff in person and have them answer any questions that they might have.

**Cairns:** Morning teas are held weekly by the Cairns Postgraduate Centre and are open to HDR Candidates and relevant staff in Cairns. The morning teas are hosted by the Deputy Dean, Graduate Research, who is based in Cairns.

All HDR Morning teas are funded by the Student Services and Amenities Fee.
Commencing candidature

What should you do when the candidate commences?

Supervising PhD students: a practical guide and toolkit (Kearns and Finn 2017; available at JCU library) has a detailed guide to structuring the first few weeks of candidature including:

The actions you should take before and when the candidate arrives (see Settling in checklist below).

The very first meeting (see Settling in Checklist):

- Introductions to key people (some of this will have been done by the HDR Ambassador
- Expectation of Candidates and their Advisory Team
- Candidature timeline (see Appendix 1)
- Next meeting – when and what it will cover, relevant readings, candidature plan (see Appendix 1)
- What you suggest that the candidate does each week for the first few weeks

In addition, the Advisory Panel and the candidate are required to complete a CAA-FORM-01 Candidate and Advisor 6 Week Check-In URL and submit it to the Graduate Research School after 6-weeks. Candidates will be reminded to do this by the Graduate Research School.
### Settling in checklist for new HDR candidate (see Kearns and Finn 2017)

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### Local facilities

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### Other priorities

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Candidature Requirements and Progression

Along with most other Australian universities, JCU has three major candidature milestones for HDR candidates and requires annual progress reports:

- Confirmation of Candidature
- Mid Candidature Review
- Pre-Completion Evaluation and Progress Reporting on an annual basis

Please familiarise yourself with the procedures and requirements. A brief summary of each of these requirements is provided below.

Milestone 1: Confirmation of Candidature

Why?

The purpose of the Confirmation of Candidature milestone is for the candidate to demonstrate that:

1. Their project is of a suitable scope and standard for the degree;
2. The candidate has the capacity to:
   a. Complete the project in a timely manner with the resources available and the potential to obtain any required permits; and
   b. Undertake a degree at the required level by demonstrating:
      i. Mastery of a substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of their research field, including substantial knowledge of the principles and methods;
      ii. The cognitive skills to demonstrate expert understanding of the associated theoretical knowledge, and to reflect critically on the theory and practice of your field of research; and
      iii. The communication skills to explain and critique theoretical propositions, methodologies and conclusions and present cogently a complex investigation to peers and the wider academic community; and
   c. They have completed a Professional Development Audit and Plan that will enable them to acquire the skills required to complete the degree successfully and meet their career aspirations, as explained in the section on Professional Development in this Handbook.

When?

Full-time research doctoral candidates are eligible to have their candidature confirmed when they have completed between six months and one year of provisional candidature. Research master candidates are eligible to have their candidature confirmed between four and six months into their degree. The allowed times for part-time candidates are twice as long as those for full-time candidates. If the candidate exceeds these times without an approved extension of candidature they will be placed Under Review (see section What is ‘Under Review’?), a Candidature Management process that could lead to their candidature being discontinued.

What’s required?

1. Candidates are automatically enrolled in two (Pass/Fail) Confirmation of Candidature ‘subjects’. For candidature to be confirmed they must receive a grade of Pass for each subject and complete all requirements for this stage of the candidature process as outlined in the HDR Confirmation of Candidature Milestone Procedure.
2. As explained in the subject outline for the subject RD7001/RM7001 Planning the Research, they are required to:
   a. Complete a research proposal using the required pro-forma;
   b. Present a seminar of approximately 30 minutes’ duration, in person on their research proposal and answer questions from the audience. The seminar should normally be delivered to an open audience unless there are Commercial in Confidence issues, in which case it may be presented to a restricted audience. The audience must include the full Candidature Committee.
   c. Demonstrate compliance or potential compliance with the requirements of any permits, ethics approvals, University policies and any other regulations applicable to candidacy and/or research activities. For example, if the candidate is required to seek JCU Human or Animal Ethics Approval prior to undertaking the research, they must be able to convince their Candidature Committee that they have at least a complete draft of their ethics approval before they give the Confirmation of Candidature seminar. Feedback from the Confirmation of Candidature process often leads to modifications of the proposal so in some disciplines it may be best for the candidate not to submit the ethics prior to the Confirmation of Candidature meeting with the Candidature Committee.

3. As explained in the subject outline for RD7002/RM7002 Situating the Research, the single assessable piece of work for this subject is a substantive piece of writing of 4000-8000 words, in a form appropriate for the discipline within which they are enrolled. The written work must be a literature review, critical reflection and/or analysis of an appropriate body of literature or creative process, or a systematic review. This work must have been written since the candidate commenced their higher degree by research candidacy. Research papers or conference papers are not suitable for submission for this subject.

4. The candidate also needs to complete the “Compulsory Components” of the Professional Development Program, and provide evidence that they have been completed.

5. The Advisory Panel and the candidate should review and refresh the CAA-FORM-01 Candidate and Advisor 6 Week Check

If the Candidature Committee is convinced that the candidate does not have the capacity to successfully complete their degree after a second attempt at the Confirmation of Candidature Milestone, it is much kinder to the candidate to recommend that their candidacy be discontinued. That is ‘good’ attrition. ‘Bad’ attrition is when the candidature lapses after several years or the candidature is discontinued at the Pre-Completion Milestone. If you are concerned about how to deal with a candidate who is not progressing with the Confirmation of Candidature Process, see this handbook How to help a candidate who is not progressing?

**Milestone 2: Mid-Candidature Review**

**Why?**

The purpose of the Mid-Candidature Review is to:

1. Improve the quality of research by providing the candidate with formal feedback from their Candidature Committee.
2. Increase the likelihood that the thesis submission will be timely.
3. Facilitate the acquisition of professional skills.

**When?**

1. The due date for the Mid-Candidature Review milestone for a doctoral candidate is after 1.5-2 years’ enrolment for a full-time candidate; or 8-12 months for a research masters candidate. If a candidate is enrolled part-time, these timeframes are doubled.
2. If the candidate exceeds these times without an approved extension to candidature (they will be placed Under Review, a candidature management process that could lead to their candidature being discontinued. [https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/forms-and-policies/hdr-under-review-procedure](https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/forms-and-policies/hdr-under-review-procedure)

**What’s required?**

The Mid-Candidature Review requires the Candidature Committee to:

- Review current drafts of materials that the candidates has prepared for inclusion in the thesis, including a substantive piece of written work identified for detailed consideration (e.g. thesis chapter or journal article);
- Evaluate an oral presentation or poster on an aspect of the research findings. If the candidate has made a comparable presentation at a conference external to JCU since their Confirmation of Candidature, they are exempt from this requirement only;
- Complete their professional development requirements (for those who commenced before 1 January 2018. Those who commenced after 1 January 2018 will finalise professional development at the Pre-Completion Evaluation) (see section on Professional Development, this Handbook URL);
- Review and refresh their CAA-FORM-01 Candidate and Advisor 6 Week Check;
- Ensure that the checks required at this stage of the candidature process have been conducted and that you have met all associated requirements.

**What happens next?**

- The Candidature Committee will finalise the [Mid-Candidature Review Form](https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/forms-and-policies/hdr-under-review-procedure) (MCR-FORM-01) and any additional detailed written feedback to the candidate, obtain their signature and provide the report to the Graduate Research School.

_for frequently asked questions please refer to the [GRS website](https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/forms-and-policies/hdr-under-review-procedure):_

**Milestone 3: Pre-Completion Evaluation**

**Why?**

The purpose of the Pre-Completion Evaluation is to:

1. Improve the quality of research by providing the candidate with public feedback during the final stages of thesis writing.
2. Increase the likelihood that thesis submission will be timely.
3. Facilitate the acquisition of essential generic skills by providing the candidate with the opportunity to synthesise the results of their research, present their results orally and defend them.
4. Provide an opportunity for the candidate to present a plan for the publication of unpublished components of their research including the proposed authorship arrangements and the protocol for publication if the candidate does not initiate manuscript preparation within a mutually agreed time period.
5. Review the arrangements for storing the candidate’s data.
6. Ensure that creative work (where applicable) is of a standard that is ready for examination.

**When?**

- The Pre-Completion Evaluation must be completed at least one month (preferably two) and no more than six months prior to the expected date of thesis submission for examination. Most HDR candidates gain significant insights from the opportunity to present a synthesis of their research prior...
to thesis submission. Postponing the Pre-Completion Evaluation until the thesis is finalised means that the candidate will miss out on this benefit.

What’s required?

The Pre-Completion Evaluation requires the Candidature Committee to:

- Review current drafts of the materials prepared for inclusion in the thesis, especially the substantive piece of written work identified for detailed consideration (e.g. thesis chapter or journal article).
- Evaluate the candidate’s public seminar on their synthesised research findings; and
- Ensure that the checks required at this stage of the candidature have been conducted and that all associated requirements have been met.
- Review and refresh the CAA-FORM-01 Candidate and Advisor 6 Week Check-In.
- If required, finalise the Professional Development Requirements for the assessment and finalisation of the subject RD7003 ‘Professional Development’ (for those who commenced after 1 January 2018).
- Review the proposed 50 word abstract (summary) of the outcomes of the thesis that will need to be submitted with the thesis and which will appear on their Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement and check that the other materials to be included on the candidate’s Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (e.g., summary of Professional Development, details of Industry Placement or Cotutelle) have been assembled.
What happens next?

- The Candidature Committee will provide feedback in writing about the thesis draft, seminar performance and 50-word summary. These matters should also be discussed with the candidate (in person or by teleconference or videoconference).
- The Candidature Committee should also talk to the candidate about:
  - A pool of four to five potential thesis examiners;
  - The option of undergoing an oral examination (see section on Examination Process);
  - The requirements for a comprehensive statement on the contribution of others in the thesis and for appropriate referencing of all sources including other material published in any format by the candidate and the Advisory Panel;
  - The plan for publication of unpublished components of the research. It is a very good idea to work this out by finalising a written plan with the candidate to ensure you all have common expectations;
  - Any contractual obligations to industry partner(s) (if applicable) and what needs to be done to meet these obligations;
  - Whether your candidate advisor agreement CAA-FORM-01 needs to be refreshed;
  - The storage arrangements for the research data in accordance with the Data Management Plan.

The Candidature Committee will also ensure that all checks required at this stage of the candidature have been conducted and that all requirements have been met by completing the Pre-Completion Evaluation Form with the candidate’s input.

For frequently asked questions please refer to the GRS website:

Progress Reporting

What are progress reports?

Why?
1. To check whether the candidate’s progress is proceeding according to plan.
2. To identify and address, as far as possible, any impediments to their progress.
3. To comply with the external regulatory reporting requirements for international HDR candidates.

When?
1. A report on each candidate’s progress must be submitted every April and October to the Graduate Research School on the Progress Report Form each year, except if:
   a. The candidate has successfully completed one of the milestones (Confirmation of Candidature, Mid-Candidature Review or Pre-Completion Evaluation) in the previous six months; or
   b. The thesis has been submitted for examination.
   c. The candidate has been on leave of absence, for a substantial portion of that period.
2. The Graduate Research School will advise the candidate and the Advisory Panel of the due date for submitting the upcoming Progress Report at least 20 working days before it is due to be submitted to the Graduate Research School.
3. The Dean, Graduate Research or the JCU Research Education Sub-Committee may require the candidate to submit a progress report, provide material and undertake activities in order to evaluate the progress at any time.
What’s required?

The Progress Report Form contains questions about the candidate’s progress, expectations and performance and requests an update on the project work plan and thesis outline in tabular format.

If the candidate’s progress is considered to be ‘Conceded Satisfactory’, the candidate and their Advisory Panel must complete a statement outlining why this situation has occurred and what is in place to address these issues.

If ‘Review of Progress Required’ is indicated, a statement from both the candidate and their Advisory Panel is required explaining what has occurred and why this evaluation has been recommended.

The candidate should complete the Progress Report Form first, followed by the Primary Advisor and at least one Secondary Advisor. Each is asked to be honest in their reporting to facilitate the identification and timely resolution of any problems. The candidate must have read the evaluation, comments and any statements from their Advisors before signing the report.

The completed Progress Report Form must bear the comments and signatures of the candidate and their Primary Advisor, or their nominated delegate. If their progress has been considered to be ‘Conceded Satisfactory’ or ‘Review of Progress Required’, the full Candidature Committee must be signatories.

Any member of the Advisory Panel may also submit a confidential report to the Dean if considered appropriate or necessary to provide additional confidential information in relation to the candidate or their progress.

NOTE: A contemporary confidential report will carry more weight in a subsequent review than a retrospective report.

What happens next?

The Candidature Committee must recommend one of the following to the Dean, Graduate Research:

- **Satisfactory**: The candidate’s progress is within the expected parameters.
- **Conceded Satisfactory**: The candidate’s progress is less than expected, but for substantive reason(s) which have been addressed. Progress is expected to improve.
- **Review of Progress Required**: The candidate’s progress is less than expected without a substantive reason and the candidate should be placed Under Review.

The Graduate Research School will communicate the Dean’s approved course of action to the candidate, the Advisory Panel and relevant Dean of College (or nominee).

The Dean, Graduate Research will place the candidate Under Review if their progress is graded as ‘Review of Progress Required’ or if problems have been identified in the progress report or other issues of concern have arisen.

If the candidate fails to submit two successive reports, or receives two successive ‘Review of Progress Required’ outcomes, they will be subject to the HDR Discontinuation of Candidature Procedure.

If the candidate fails to submit a required Progress Report, the outcome for that report will normally be recorded as ‘Review of Progress Required’, unless an alternative outcome is approved in writing by the Dean, Graduate Research.

Progress reports are not required in the semesters in which the candidate completes a major milestone (Confirmation of Candidature, Mid-Candidature Review, Pre-Completion Evaluation).

For frequently asked questions please refer to the [GRS website](#):
What is ‘Under Review’?

A candidate whose current performance is of concern may be placed Under Review with the aim of rectifying the problem in a constructive manner and getting their candidature back on track.

Candidates who are Under Review must develop and submit a Candidature Management Plan that must be endorsed by their full Candidature Committee and Associate Dean Graduate Research and submitted to the Graduate Research School.

For guidance on how to prepare a Candidature Management Plan see https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/forms-and-policies/hdr-under-review-procedure

NOTE: While preparation for a milestone may be included in a Candidature Management Plan it is advisable NOT to include the milestone per se because the status of the milestone may confound the result of the Candidature Management Plan.

At the end of the specified Under Review period (normally six months), the progress of the candidate must be assessed against their agreed Candidature Management Plan by their Candidature Committee, which must make recommendations to the Dean, Graduate Research.

Failure to meet the conditions in the Candidature Management Plan normally leads to discontinuation of candidature.

A candidate can only appeal the outcome of the Under Review process on procedural grounds.

Being placed Under Review is a very serious caution- like receiving a yellow card in soccer game or being on probation. .

A timetable of the candidature milestones and activities can be found at Appendix 1 of this Handbook. It is strongly suggested that you work with each of your candidates to personalise this timetable.

Discontinuation

How are candidates discontinued?

About 70% of those who commence a Higher Degree by Research actually complete their course and are awarded their Doctorate or Masters by Research. Most of those who discontinue their candidature voluntarily withdraw because they no longer have the time, commitment or money to complete their thesis. Other reasons for candidature discontinuation include a failed HDR thesis or discontinuation by the University for reasons outlined in the HDR Discontinuation of Candidature Procedure (both very rare). https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/forms-and-policies/hdr discontinuation-of-candidature-procedure

The Graduate Research School goes through the list of candidates with apparently moribund candidature at regular intervals, and initiates the discontinuation process for them. Some HDR candidates try to postpone the reality of their lapsed candidature by seeking extended Leave of Absence, which the Graduate Research School is reluctant to grant because few candidates successfully complete their thesis after extended leave. If a candidate wishes to initiate discontinuation of their candidature, they should advise the Graduate Research School by email.
Campus Attendance

How often are candidates expected to attend campus?

Unless on approved field work or travel, candidates enrolled as internal candidates are expected to attend a recognised campus of the University on a regular basis as negotiated with their Advisory Panel to fulfil the degree requirements.

A candidate enrolled as an external candidate is expected to be on campus for at least five working days per year as negotiated with their Advisory Panel to fulfil their degree requirements. Exceptions to this practice must be approved by the Dean, Graduate Research as a Condition of Enrolment or via the HDR Variation of Candidature Procedure.

Candidates are only accepted as external candidates if the Dean, Graduate Research can be convinced that the required support is available and that the arrangement has a high chance of success.

Professional Development

What Professional Development Activities are available?

Skills required to complete the degree and fulfil career aspirations

Professional development is a compulsory part of HDR candidature at JCU. Opportunities for professional development are now seen as essential components of best practice higher degree by research programs because such opportunities assist candidates:

- To develop and/or acquire the skills needed to successfully complete their thesis; and
- To fulfil their individual career aspirations as internationally competitive research professionals given that fewer than half of current candidates can be expected to have a career as academics.

The minimum professional development requirements apply to all candidates for the HDR degrees offered by JCU, even though such requirements differ in some respects depending on whether the candidate is a masters or doctoral candidate and when they commenced their candidature.

RD7003 Subject outline for Doctoral Candidates

The candidate has the option of applying to the GRS for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) of the Compulsory Components of the development activities specified below. However, they will not be able to obtain RPL for the Elective Component because of the importance of the candidate using the period of HDR candidature to upskill.

- Compulsory components should be completed for all candidates by Confirmation of Candidature,
- Conditional and Elective components (to a total of 80 hours including the compulsory components) should completed by Mid-Candidature Milestone (in the case of Doctoral Candidates, contained in Mid-Candidature Review Forms).
- Doctoral candidates enrolling from 1 January 2018 are required to complete an additional 40 hours of elective components i.e. a total of 120 hours of professional development by their Pre-completion Evaluation
- Masters Candidates are not required to complete Elective Components, although they are encouraged to do so if they wish.

A guide to the compulsory and elective components can be found here.

HDR candidates must ensure an accurate record of participation is maintained and must able to provide evidence of Elective and Conditional modules completed, including the number of hours undertaken, to
successfully complete the Professional Development requirements. The modules completed should also be recorded in the Professional Development Plan (all components) and the ePortfolio (all components).

To complete RD7003 the candidate must also prepare a 1-2 page Professional Development Career Statement, which is a synthesis of the professional development undertaken during the subject in the genre of a job application. This statement must be provided at the time of Pre-Completion Evaluation. Click here for exemplar statements.

From 2018, a summary of each doctoral candidate’s professional development will appear on their Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS), which provides information on a graduate’s higher education qualification, the institution at which the qualification was obtained and the Australian higher education system in one easy to read document that they receive on graduation. The material for the statement must be reviewed as part of the Pre-completion Evaluation.

**SKIP (Skills for International Postgraduates)**

SKIP, as it is commonly known, is offered to assist international HDR candidates (who are typically more time-limited by their visas than domestic candidates) to complete their degree in a timely manner by providing training in professional academic writing and critical thinking. SKIP is not an English language program, and is compulsory for all international HDR candidates, unless they have successfully sought exemption (see exemption details below). Indigenous HDR candidates are invited to join SKIP if they wish.

SKIP is run twice a year in both Townsville and Cairns. In Townsville the program is structured as a six-week course, involving a three-hour seminar each week. In Cairns, the course is run as day workshops in two consecutive months, plus the ‘Critical Thinking’ and ‘Writing for Journals’ workshops. In addition, in both Townsville and Cairns a five-hour SKIP Consolidation workshop is run at the end of the series. This workshop is compulsory for candidates who have English as an Additional Language, and optional for native English speakers. In Singapore during 2018, SKIP will be run as an intensive week at a date to be announced. Contact the Convenor (elizabeth.tynan@jcu.edu.au) for details.

Further information about these workshops is available in the Workshops and Training section of the GRS website.

Topics covered by the SKIP Program include:

- An introduction to great academic writing: outlining and drafting, introductions and conclusions.
- Literature reviews
- Confirmation of candidature: proposal and seminar
- Critical thinking
- Technical and stylistic correctness: grammar, punctuation, concision and concreteness
- Strategies for writing journal papers
- SKIP Student Conference to practise oral research presentation
- SKIP Consolidation Workshop, covering revision, redrafting, style and self-editing.

Doctoral candidates may count SKIP hours towards the Conditional Component of RD7003 Professional Development by providing a SKIP Certificate of Completion during the Mid-Candidature Review milestone. To successfully complete the SKIP program and receive a Certificate of Completion, candidates are expected to:

a. Attend all SKIP sessions;
b. Provide a sample of their work (such as a research proposal or literature review) for editorial appraisal and face to face feedback from the SKIP convenor; and
c. Participate in a presentation to the class (usually a Confirmation of Candidature seminar rehearsal) during the SKIP Student Conference.
Editing Assistance for SKIP Candidates

HDR candidates who have successfully completed the SKIP course are entitled to expert editing help: up to three hours of free individual thesis editing assistance from the SKIP Program Convenor for each full-time-equivalent year of candidature. If they require additional editing assistance, further help may be arranged with an external editor at an hourly rate. The Graduate Research School does not meet the costs of an external editor. Such costs are to be paid by the candidate or the College.

Requests for Exemption from SKIP

International HDR candidates who wish to be exempted from the SKIP Program should ask the Chair of their Candidature Committee to outline their reasons in writing to the Dean, Graduate Research, providing justification and evidence to support their request. Exemptions must be endorsed by the HDR candidate’s Primary Advisor and approved by the Dean, Graduate Research. Exempted candidates will not be eligible for editing assistance from the SKIP Program Convenor but can ask the Convenor for assistance in arranging editorial input from an external editor at an hourly rate, to be paid by the candidate their Advisors or the College.

Think carefully before you encourage a candidate to request exemption from SKIP. Most HDR candidates find it very helpful and enjoy being part of a cohort of HDR candidates from all Colleges in the university. Such peer support is very important to successful candidature.

What English language support is provided by JCU?

The Post-Entry Language Assessment (PELA) is a short academic writing test that is designed to gauge the academic writing abilities of research degree candidates who have English as an Additional Language (EAL). The test helps understand how best to support candidates in developing their writing skills. Those who do require assistance receive targeted and flexible support tailored to their requirements. Candidates undertaking a PELA are asked to write an academic paragraph in response to a statement. The outcome of this assessment determine each candidate’s writing support plan. The most intensive level of support involves regular contact with writing support staff and attendance at compulsory seminar sessions, as well as further writing assessment and a re-test. The PELA has been operating since the beginning of 2013.

The PELA must be undertaken by any English as an Additional Language (EAL) HDR candidate entering JCU who:

- Received an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) score below 7.0 overall or for any sub-skill (writing, reading, speaking or listening)
- Has undertaken (or is undertaking) an English for Academic Purposes pathway course
- Received a writing score of below 23 for the Internet-based TOEFL (or 5.5 for paper-based)
- Received a score below 72 for a Pearson test
- Received a marginal score on the PrELA

Depending on the candidate’s results in PELA, they may be required to develop and complete a writing support plan as a condition of their HDR candidature. This plan will be tailored to their research interests as much as possible and ideally will be developed in association with their Primary Advisor.

Relevant links:

https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/candidates/commencing-students/post-entry-language-assessment-pela
What statistics support is provided for HDRs by JCU?

StatsHelp

The StatsHelp program is coordinated by Emeritus Professor Rhondda Jones assisted by several limited hours contract staff (usually post-docs or advanced HDRs) who provide consultancy services and workshops (e.g. on R). AIMS@JCU also offer stats workshops which are usually open to non-AIMS@JCU candidates. The AIMS@JCU workshops are conducted by AIMS’ statisticians. Rhondda Jones refers candidates to the appropriate contract staff if she has not the time or expertise to deal with their queries herself.

Stats Help is designed to help HDRs with at least a basic level of statistical literacy with research design and statistical analysis of their results. Candidates who are not confident that their statistical knowledge will be adequate for their HDR degree (or whose advisors think that they need extra stats training), are encouraged to talk to their advisors about enrolling in one of the statistics subjects offered by JCU. If a candidate is unsure of their level of competency or needs a refresher course in basic statistics, they should log into the Higher Degree by Research community in LearnJCU and complete the Epigeum: Statistical Methods for Research. The StatsHelp staff expect a level of competence at least equivalent to that provided by the Epigeum module and, if in doubt, will require a candidate to show that they have successfully completed the quizzes in this module before they can obtain their help.

Relevant links:
https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/candidates/enrolled-students/grs-statshelp-program

Internship Opportunities

What internship opportunities are there/for HDRs?

The Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI) is operating the APR Intern scheme across Australia from 2018 http://aprintern.org.au/for-industry-partners/how-it-works/. APR Intern is charged with placing 1400 new research internships between 2017 and 2020. The Australian Government will provide a 50% rebate on the cost of a typical $26,000 (5 month) postgraduate internship to small-to-medium and large enterprises, as well as government agencies. The industry partner must achieve milestones as specified in a formal contract.

JCU is a participant in the APR scheme. Each internship will be kept on track by a project plan that is agreed to by all parties and regular checks from APR Intern staff. A mid-term presentation provides an opportunity to review the approach and progress and the internship concludes with the intern giving a face-to-face presentation on their results plus a written report.

The JCU program is run by a part-time staff member based in the GRS, Dr Susan Sobtzick (susan.sobtzick@jcu.edu.au), who is funded three days per week as a result of a contract between AMSI and JCU. The contract aims for 15 interns per year.

There is an optional internship subject RD7004:15 in which the intern is enrolled during the internship period to manage the regulatory requirements of the Commonwealth Fair Work Act (2009) and its regulations and parallel state regulations. A second internship subject RD7005:03 has been established for 4-5 week internships with a view to positioning the university to take advantage of alternative internship models.

Relevant links:
https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/candidates/enrolled-students/internships-for-hdr-candidates
Varying Conditions of Candidature:

How can a candidate make changes or updates?

Undertaking a research degree takes several years, during which circumstances can change. It may be possible to make consequential changes to the candidature arrangements by completing the required Variation of Candidature form.

Candidates are also encouraged to take some holidays during candidature, although a holiday of greater than four weeks must be registered as ‘Leave of Absence’.

Please remember that:

- Changes to candidature arrangements should not be made lightly.
- There are limitations as to how many changes can be made to a candidature without special permission from the Dean, Graduate Research.
- Candidates must obtain the necessary permissions before making a change to their candidature. Most changes cannot be made retrospectively because of the University’s reporting requirements to the Australian Government.
- All changes to candidature require approval, usually from at least the Primary Advisor and in some circumstances the Secondary Advisor, the delegate of the Dean of the College and the Dean, Graduate Research. Refer to the Variation of Candidature form for details.
- International candidates should check with JCU International as some changes are restricted by visa conditions’. e.g. Government regulations preclude International HDR candidates from enrolling part-time.
- Some changes may be precluded by the conditions of a scholarship. It is a good idea for the candidate to read the fine print!
- Repeated changes are often a sign of a candidate at risk of non-completion. Refer the first dot-point above!

A breakdown of possible changes that can be made to a HDR candidature as well as limitations to those changes are outlined in the table at Appendix 2.

How can a candidate upgrade their candidature from a research masters to a research doctorate?

There are four (4) opportunities during candidature for the Upgrade of HDR Candidature from a Research Masters to a Research Doctorate. They are:

1. At Confirmation of Candidature and having met the entry requirements for a Doctorate at the time of Masters enrolment.

   **Timeframe:** at 0.5-1 EFTSL as per the normal PhD Confirmation of Candidature.

2. At Confirmation of Candidature and having NOT met the entry requirements for a Doctorate at the time of Masters enrolment.

   **Timeframe:** at 0.5-1 EFTSL and after having successfully completed a Masters Confirmation of Candidature at 0.33-0.66 EFTSL.

3. At the Mid-Candidature Review milestone.

   **Timeframe:** no later than 1.5 EFTSL.

4. At the Pre-Completion Evaluation milestone.
**Timeframe:** at 1.5 to 2 EFTSL but must repeat Pre-Completion Evaluation for Doctorate candidature at 2.5-3.75 EFTSL and within 6 months before thesis submission, as per the Doctorate Pre-Completion Evaluation time frame.

5. If attempting upgrade at Confirmation of Candidature, a candidate must first confirm whether they met the entry qualification for a Research Doctorate at the time of enrolment in their Research Masters. This qualification will indicate the course of action. This should be done by emailing grs@jcu.edu.au and a Graduate Research School staff member will provide advice on this by return email.

6. A candidate who did meet the entry qualifications for a Research Doctorate at the time of enrolment in their Research Masters may attempt to upgrade by conducting their Confirmation of Candidature at a Doctorate level.

7. A candidate who did not meet the entry qualifications for a Research Doctorate at the time of enrolment in their Research Masters, must complete their Research Masters Confirmation of Candidature at the required time point for a Masters. Subsequently they may attempt to upgrade to a Doctorate during an additional Confirmation of Candidature conducted at a doctoral level.

8. Both candidates who did and those who did not meet the entry qualifications for a Research Doctorate at the time of enrolment in their Research Masters may attempt to upgrade to a Doctorate at the Mid-Candidature Review and Pre-Completion Evaluation by conducting the milestone at a Doctorate level. Candidates wishing to upgrade at the Mid-Candidature Review Milestone must present a seminar on their research and a revised proposal so that the Candidature Committee can be sure that the scope of the project conforms to the Learning Outcomes of a doctorate.

9. All candidates wishing to attempt to upgrade must apply using the HDR Course Upgrade Application Form. The HDR Course Upgrade Application Form should be completed and submitted to the Primary Advisor with the documents relating to the upgrade milestone, for assessment of the upgrade attempt.

10. If the milestone is successfully conducted at doctoral level, the Graduate Research School will input an application into the Student Management System and the Candidate will receive an offer from University Admissions for their doctorate. The offer must be formally accepted, at which point the Graduate Research School will withdraw the Candidate from their Masters and enrol them in the doctorate, deducting time consumed in the Master degree from the total time allowance of a doctorate.

11. Candidates upgrading at the Confirmation of Candidature and Mid-Candidature Review are required to successfully complete RD7003 at the appropriate time during the course of the doctorate, while those upgrading at Pre-Completion Evaluation are not required to complete RD7003.

**Conduct of the Research**

**Under which code must the research be conducted?**

The University’s Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research has been adapted from the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. As an HDR advisor you are encouraged to peruse both documents to ensure that you understand the importance of research integrity and appropriate management of data. View the JCU Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research here:


**Does the project require ethics clearance?**

Projects and teaching activities that involve human participants, tissue or data, or work involving sentient animals (live vertebrates and live cephalopods), or projects using genetic manipulation, are required to have the ethical aspects of the project considered by the Advisory Panel and the Dean of the College, and these projects must be approved by the appropriate University Ethics Committee. This requirement applies even if the research occurs in a country that does not require such approvals. Research that employs known pathogens/carcinogens or ionising radiation must also be cleared with the Radiation Safety Officer. Research
must not commence before the required clearances are obtained. **Ethics approvals cannot be issued retrospectively.** Specific requirements and application forms are available from the JCU Research Services website: [https://www.jcu.edu.au/research-services/ethics-and-integrity](https://www.jcu.edu.au/research-services/ethics-and-integrity)

Manipulative research on protected fauna or flora, in national parks or in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park will require permits from the relevant regulatory agency. If the research is to be conducted on land or sea that is or is likely to be under claim by Indigenous peoples, these agencies will also be required by law to notify the Traditional Owners of those land and/or sea areas before a research permit can be issued. Such permits are likely to take several months to issue and you should factor potential delays into the research timetable.

**What responsibility does a Primary Advisor have for a candidate’s data?**

**Confidentiality of data**

In some disciplines, particularly in the social sciences and health fields, the candidate must obtain the consent of individuals to gather and record data concerning them. Those people who have made the research possible must be protected from the inconvenience or embarrassment caused by release of personal information. The confidentiality of individual records must be protected during and after the study, and anonymity must be preserved in the publication of results. As researchers, neither the Advisors nor the candidate must use such information for personal advantage or to advantage a third party.

To the best of your ability both you and the candidate must conform to the principles laid down in relation to confidentiality by such bodies as the NHMRC, The Helsinki Declaration, and The American Psychological Association.

**Retention of data**

JCU researchers, including HDR candidates and early career researchers, should be familiar with the [University’s JCU Research Repository Policy](https://www.jcu.edu.au/research/services/ethics-and-integrity).

The Graduate Research School provides a compulsory data management workshop for all HDR candidates as part of the Professional Development Program to ensure that all candidates deposit their research data in JCU’s Research Data Repository upon submission of their thesis.

Training, support and advice as well as guidelines and templates for research data management, including data management plan templates are available from the JCU eResearch Centre website: [http://eresearch.jcu.edu.au/data-management](http://eresearch.jcu.edu.au/data-management)

**Remember: the JCU Code for Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research states:**

‘A student’s principal supervisor and Academic Head have overall responsibility for the retention and storage of the student’s research data and materials. They must also ensure that the student is aware of his/her obligations as a researcher in respect of research data and materials, in particular those set out in section 2.7.’

The College retains responsibility for the management of a student’s data and primary materials after the student’s departure.

Unless a student has executed a relevant intellectual property assignment to the University, s/he will own copyright in their data’.

**Confidentiality Agreements & Contractual Arrangements**
HDR Matters at JCU:

However, implications to examination. Internship research to Ownership must candidate’s work. The same (Commonwealth) terms, can undertake legal appointment. The Policy what any confidentiality arrangement can also be used. Any appointment with the Dean, Graduate Research to discuss potential contractual obligations before signing any such agreement.

What do advisors need to know about Intellectual Property with respect to HDR candidates?

Intellectual property has many facets, including the following areas of particular relevance to research: copyright, patents, authorship, and managing confidentiality within a research project. The Graduate Research School encourages all JCU researchers to familiarise themselves with the Intellectual Property Policy and Procedures.

The thesis submission process requires the HDR candidate to sign a statement of originality. It is implicit in that statement that the thesis text has been written by the candidate and in their own words, so you need to be very cautious about over-editing. (It can be hard to determine the appropriate boundary for editorial intervention when the thesis is based on co-authored work).

In legal terms, the HDR candidate has copyright of the thesis. Section 31(1)(a) of the Copyright Act 1968 (Commonwealth) confers on the owner of copyright in a work the exclusive right to reproduce it in any material form, and to publish the work. Generally, the author of a work is the owner of copyright in it. In the same way, an inventor is the owner of a patentable invention. However, there are a number of cases in which these rights are modified or overridden by law or agreement. For example, an agreement to assign copyright can be effected in writing, either before or after work is produced.

The University Library can supply a copy of the thesis to a person who requires it for study/research purposes. The Australian Copyright Council believes that if a university wishes to supply a thesis copy to a person who intends to use it for business purposes, then the permission of the author must be obtained. There is a compulsory Intellectual Property and Copyright workshop for all HDR candidates as part of the Professional Development Program.

If the candidate is also employed by the University and they make an invention in the course of their paid work as a staff member, the University will have rights over that invention.

Ownership of copyright or a patent will also depend on contributions made by others to the work. In cases where the ideas or other work of an advisor contribute significantly to a project, the candidate may have only a joint interest or, in some cases, no interest in the underlying intellectual property referred to in the candidate’s written work. However, a candidate will own copyright of his or her thesis on the basis that it must be the candidate’s own work in order to qualify as a thesis.

Ownership of copyright and inventions may be transferred by agreement. HDR candidates are encouraged to undertake their research in collaboration with industry partners (industry is defined as research and non-research careers in business, academia, government, community and not-for-profit’ sectors). In addition, internship with industry partners are becoming increasingly available, especially during the period of thesis examination.

All such arrangements are beneficial to HDR candidates as they provide resources, research topics and experience relevant to future employment outside academia. However, industry parties may require rights to intellectual property in return for their input. In such cases, candidates need to be aware of the implications of undertaking research supported by third parties in that there may be restrictions on or transfer of their rights. For example, publication from a thesis may be subject to a period of restriction. However, the University will use its best efforts to ensure that candidates retain copyright. In rare cases,
difficult decisions may have to be made by the candidate and the University about the impact of such conditions and whether to accept the support.

**What are UN and Autonomous Sanctions?**

JCU has a responsibility to assess the applications and projects of HDR applicants and candidates from countries that are subject to United Nations and Australian Autonomous Sanctions, including Iran, Syria and North Korea. This requirement is to ensure that neither the applicant nor the proposed research will be in breach of the conditions of the sanctions. If the HDR Applicant or candidate is from a sanctioned country they may be subject to restrictions regarding the project. If in doubt, contact the GRS (GRS@jcu.edu.au).

**Obtaining Help**

**How can a candidate obtain the help they need when they have a problem?**

It is very important for candidates to seek help as soon as emerging problems and issues relating their HDR candidature are identified, whether they relate to their University or personal life. Open and honest discussions can usually resolve most issues. Appendix 3 lists some of the problems that commonly arise for HDR candidates and provides some suggestions for assistance.

A key time of difficulty in a candidature is the phase of ‘making sense of the data’ in order to actually complete the thesis. Attention to this issue may require the candidate to attend relevant workshops. See the Professional Development Program on our website.

Information for enrolled candidates can be found at: [https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/candidates/enrolled-students](https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/candidates/enrolled-students)
The Thesis and its submission

What is an HDR Thesis?

A thesis is a substantive description of the research undertaken for the purpose of obtaining a higher degree by research; or

A critical interpretation of creative work, together with any associated material that is also subject to examination (practice-based disciplines such as the Creative Arts).

JCU thesis word limits:

- Masters by Research – 60,000 words
- Professional Doctorate – 50,000 words
- Doctor of Philosophy – 100,000 words

The length of many excellent theses is much less than the above-mentioned word limits. If the thesis is approaching the relevant word limit you should check the text to see if it is not too verbose or contains irrelevant material.

It is very easy for an examiner to check the word length of an electronic thesis. The Graduate Research School’s experience demonstrates that examiners occasionally use the technical breach represented by an over-length thesis as an excuse to refuse to continue examining it.

What is the editorial standard required?

The editorial standard of a thesis is seen as an indicator of the care taken by the candidate with the research. Be scrupulous about ensuring:

- All typographical and other errors have been corrected;
- There is no plagiarism, including self-plagiarism. Ask the candidate to put their thesis through plagiarism software and check the report. Examiners increasingly check theses for plagiarism.
- Spelling, grammar, punctuation and choice of language are of an appropriate standard; and
- The referencing is complete and exact.

Candidates who have successfully completed the SKIP course are entitled to expert editing help: up to three hours of free individual thesis editing assistance from the SKIP Program Convenor for each full-time-equivalent year of candidature.

The Graduate Research School may arrange further help with an external editor at an hourly rate. The Graduate Research School does not meet the costs of an external editor. Such costs are to be paid by the candidate or their College.

The candidate may use a professional proof-reader/editor to help with copy-editing the thesis but the candidate must declare that they have read and complied with the Guidelines for the Editing of Research Theses by Professional Editors. The candidate should not be using a professional proof-reader to help with structural editing. The Advisory Panel should be prepared to assist the candidate with structural editing problems.

What is the required thesis structure?

- The body of a thesis is normally presented as series of chapters: the natural divisions of the research. It may be appropriate, indeed highly desirable, to prepare thesis chapters in a format that will facilitate publication as a series of journal articles or as a book. However, this practice is much more common in some disciplines than others. You should provide advice in the first instance.
The papers on which the data chapters in a thesis are based may be co-authored, however the candidate should be listed as the senior author on at least 75% of them. A statement in the thesis that clearly outlines the contributions of any co-authors to each paper must be included.

The intellectual thread of the thesis should be outlined in the introduction and synthesised in the general discussion. These chapters cannot be co-authored.

The introduction should introduce the reader to the rationale for the research, the objectives of the research and outline the structure of the thesis.

The introduction should be followed by a series of chapters (or papers) in logical and cogent sequence leading to an argument that supports the main findings of the thesis.

The final chapter should be a general discussion which demonstrates how the objectives were achieved and what the findings mean in theory and practice. It should also make recommendations for future research.

It is a good idea to encourage the candidate to write the introduction and final discussion of their thesis together and for these to be the last chapters written. Many examiners will first read the introduction and then the discussion before reading the body of the thesis, so it is important that these chapters are consistent.

The ‘Examiner Friendly’ Thesis

If data chapters are presented as series of papers (published or unpublished), the chapters should preferably be presented in coherent format (reprints bound together are generally not reader friendly). Talk to other advisors about the conventions in your discipline and look in the Library and online for examples of reader-friendly theses in your discipline.

Statement of the Contributions of Others

Contemporary research, including the work of HDR candidates, is increasingly collaborative or team-based. Thus contributions to the research project by others are inevitable in almost every case. Research may be jointly published, carried out in collaborative teams, and done and/or written with the technical, theoretical, statistical, editorial, or physical assistance of others.

In all cases, it is imperative that the candidate acknowledges the work of others appropriately. A statement precisely outlining the contributions of others to the intellectual, physical, and written work must be set out at the beginning of the thesis. When the thesis contains work that is also part of jointly-published papers, the contribution of the candidate and of others must be clearly stated at the beginning of the chapter and the publication details clearly cited.

The statement of the contribution of others at the beginning of the thesis should include (as appropriate):

- Fees
- Stipend support
- Supervision
- Other collaborations
- Statistical support
- Editorial assistance
- Research assistance
- Any other assistance
- Project costs
- Use of infrastructure external to JCU
- Use of infrastructure external to organisational unit within JCU

An exemplar of a Statement of Contributions of Others is available on the GRS website. Candidates are strongly advised to document the contribution of others in qualitative, rather than quantitative, terms as the latter may be misinterpreted.
Note: Candidates must remain enrolled until submission of the thesis for examination, unless Leave of Absence has been obtained.

For frequently asked questions please refer to the GRS website:

What do thesis examiners look for?

In reviewing a thesis, the examiners will look for evidence that the candidate has met the requirements for the degree:

Research Doctorate
- Capacity to apply a substantial body of knowledge to research, investigate and develop new knowledge, in one or more fields of investigation, scholarship or professional practice.

Research Masters
- Capacity to apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research and scholarship and as a pathway for further learning.

All Theses
- Originality of the research data and/or analysis of the data;
- Coherence of argument and presentation;
- Technical and conceptual competence in analysis and presentation; and
- Critical knowledge of the relevant literature.
- It is a good idea to ask the candidate to specify how they have met these requirements in the abstract of their thesis. e.g. for a doctoral thesis: ‘My significant original contribution to knowledge is......................’

The generic information provided here does not cover all the specific requirements of every discipline. New staff should consult with experienced advisors in their discipline regarding matters, such as the style, and requirements that are particular to the field of research before advising on the preparation of the final draft of the thesis. Various style manuals are used within the University and most are held by the Library. It is also good practice to examine other theses in the discipline from JCU and other universities. Many examples are available online. As well as using a recognised Style Manual it is good to encourage a candidate to create their own rubric to ensure consistency in textual detail. Inconsistencies can really interfere with the flow of the text for a reader.

More information can be found at: https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/forms-and-policies/procedure-thesis-submission-and-exam
The Examination Process

What is the thesis examination process at JCU?

In accordance with Australian Government requirements, JCU requires both doctoral and masters theses to be examined by at least two independent examiners. Doctoral theses can be examined by up to three examiners, at least two of whom must be external to JCU; Masters theses by up to two examiners at least one of whom must be external to JCU. Most JCU theses are examined by two external examiners.

Each examiner is normally provided with an electronic copy of the thesis.

Examiners are requested to make a summative recommendation to the University and provide a formative narrative evaluation of the thesis. Thus, the examination of a thesis is rather like the review of a paper submitted to a scholarly journal: the thesis must stand alone as a document. However, unlike the reviewer of a paper, the examiner of a thesis needs to know exactly what the candidate actually did so they can judge whether the candidate has met the requirements for the degree. This is why the Statement on the Contribution of Others is so important.

Including an Oral Examination

An oral examination may be requested by the candidate as part of the normal examination process. If a candidate wishes to submit their thesis before the relevant minimum period of candidature, the Dean, Graduate Research will normally insist that they undertake an oral examination.

The advantages of an oral examination include:

- An educationally rewarding and personally satisfying finale to the candidacy;
- The benefit of advice from an external expert in the field of the thesis who has read the thesis in detail;
- Clarification of points of principle or of detail in the thesis;
- Assessment of the contribution to the content and presentation of the thesis (important if you include multi-authored papers);
- Establishment of a firm deadline for the preparation of examiners' reports, to decrease the time taken for the examining process.

If oral examination option is chosen at least one examiner must agree to participate in the oral examination on a designated date prior to agreeing to examine the thesis.

A copy of the thesis will be sent to the examiners as per standard procedure.

The examiners are requested to include a series of questions that they will ask during the oral examination at the time they return their reports to the University. These questions will be provided to candidates and advisors prior to the oral examination.

The oral examination will be attended by a trained facilitator, at least one of the external examiners and the candidate, and normally lasts one to two hours.

Australian universities are increasingly introducing an oral component as a compulsory component of the doctoral thesis examination process and JCU is in active discussion about if and how to do this.

The University requests that examiners submit their response within six weeks of receipt of the thesis and makes every effort to ensure that this happens. However, at times examiners can be recalcitrant and it is necessary to appoint a replacement examiner; this prolongs the process.
How should you go about choosing examiners?

Getting the right examiners is crucially important. Selecting the right examiners is probably the second most important decision you will make as a Primary Advisory of a candidate (selecting the candidate is the most important). You need to do some homework before you recommend examiners. Matters you should consider include:

- What is their expertise in the topic of the thesis?
- What are their recent research interests?
- Are they likely to be fundamentally opposed to the approach taken in the thesis?
- When and where did they do their PhD?
- How experienced are they both as a supervisor and HDR examiner?
- Are they reasonable people? If you don’t know them, do you know a mutual colleague who may be able to advise? (be careful)
- Are they sufficiently independent to be eligible? Do they have a conflict of interest with the candidate, any members of the Advisory Panel or the university?

Remember:

- Research shows that the risks associated with inexperienced examiners are much greater than with experienced examiners.
- It can take time to recruit examiners. Expect refusals. People are busy and thesis examining is a time-consuming task.

Around the time of the Pre-Completion Evaluation, the candidate and the Advisory Panel should jointly identify a pool of four to five possible examiners from which the final examiners can be selected by the Dean of the College (or their delegated authority).

If you or the candidate have concerns about any person as a potential examiner, you should advise the Graduate Research School of your concerns in writing. Examiners about whom there are legitimate concerns will not be used.

The Advisory Panel is required to confirm in writing that the nominated examiners have no conflicts of interest with the candidate, the Advisory Panel or the University on the HDR Nomination of Examiners Form

In addition, thesis examiners are asked if they have any conflict of interest in the formal letter from the University inviting them to be a thesis examiner. Graduate Research School experience shows that examiners often disclose Conflicts of Interest when approached formally by the Graduate Research School prior to the thesis being sent to them. Graduate Research School staff also make on-line checks for conflict of interest.

The final examiners are approved by the Dean, Graduate Research.

What is the process of thesis submission?

An electronic copy (PDF) of the thesis should be submitted to the Academic Services Officer responsible for HDR candidates in the College. There are several forms that must also be completed and submitted with the thesis and members of the Advisory Panel are required to certify that the thesis is ready for examination.

If you don’t think that the thesis is ready for examination but the candidate insists on submitting it, they have the right to do this. Please state your concerns in writing and ask the candidate to respond in writing and lodge these documents with the Graduate Research School. You might consider asking the candidate for you to organise for someone else to read the thesis.

The Academic Services Officer responsible for HDR candidates in the College will forward the thesis and completed forms to the Graduate Research School, which will then formally approach the nominated examiners.
The candidates and their advisors will be advised by the Graduate Research School when the thesis has been sent to the examiners.

From the time the thesis is submitted to the Graduate Research School for examination (or re-examination), all communication regarding the examination(s) of the thesis must be conducted through the Graduate Research School. Candidates and/or advisors must not contact any of the thesis examiners during the thesis examination period and if an examiner approaches you should refer them to the GRS.

When all examiners’ reports are received, they will usually be released immediately to the candidate and the Primary Advisor unless one or both of the examiners recommends ‘passages to be revised to the satisfaction of the examiner’ or ‘revise and resubmit’ whereupon the reports will usually be released to the candidate via their Primary Advisor, and the findings will need to be discussed between the candidate and the Advisory Panel. If an examiner recommends ‘fail’ (very rare), the reports will go to the Research Education Sub-Committee first.

If the candidate submits the thesis without the signature of the Primary Advisor and the examiners recommend that it not be passed (usual but not inevitable response is such circumstances), the examiners will be advised of what happened when the examination process has been completed.

How should you help the candidate respond to the examiners’ comments?

If all examiners recommend that the thesis is of appropriate standard and can be passed, any recommended amendments will need to be made prior to submitting a final thesis copy to the Dean of College (or designated authority) for checking and signoff. A summary of the amendments made should be developed. It is recommended that the summary be organised in a table with the following columns: examiner’s recommendation, referenced page number in original thesis copy, candidate’s response, and referenced page number in revised thesis copy. A framework for responding to examiners’ comments is available from the GRS website.

If the candidate and the Advisory Panel disagree with a recommendation of an examiner, that recommendation can be refuted. Advisors play an important role in this process. Responses should be expressed in a neutral tone.

Examiners may request that some thesis passages be revised and resubmitted to them for checking. Take particular care to check that the candidate’s summary response is neutral in tone and suitable for return to the examiner.

In approximately 5% of examination cases, one or more examiners may request that the thesis be revised and resubmitted for further examination. Under these circumstances, the Candidature Committee will be invited to work with the candidate to develop a response to the examiners’ reports for the University’s Research Education Sub-Committee, who will consider the examiners’ reports and responses before deciding on the next steps. See appendix 2.

In most such cases, the candidate is required to revise and resubmit their thesis for further examination. In these circumstances, the response should be carefully crafted as it will be sent to the examiner(s) with the revised thesis and table of revisions. It is usual in these circumstances for the thesis to be sent back to the examiner(s) requesting ‘revise and resubmit’, unless they advise that they will be unavailable.

If the examiners make different recommendations and these discrepancies cannot be resolved, the University’s Research Education Sub-Committee may invite an adjudicator to evaluate the examiners’ reports. The role of the adjudicator is that of an arbiter rather than an additional examiner.

The University will normally seek an additional examiner only if one or more examiners submit an inadequate report. Under these circumstances the Research Education Sub-Committee may decide that the inadequate report(s) be set aside. These circumstances are extremely rare.
For frequently asked questions please refer to the GRS website:

Should you be provided with a 'hard' copy or an electronic copy of the final thesis?

The candidate is required to lodge an electronic copy of the final thesis in the library. If you want a final bound copy you should ask the relevant Academic Service’s Officer in your College to arrange for you to get one. Most candidates also want a bound copy of their thesis.
Steps to Graduation

- When and how a HDR candidate should apply for graduation?
- When and where are the relevant graduation ceremonies?
- Does the candidate need to attend?

Answers to all these questions can be found at: Conferral of the Degree

Staff members will be invited to take part in the academic procession through an email to all staff prior to the graduation ceremony. Advisors usually make an effort to attend the graduation ceremonies’ of their PhD graduates as a member of the procession because they will be formally acknowledged during the ceremony.
Workload Matters

What workload credit do you get for your advisory activities?

The current Enterprise Agreement says:

‘HDR supervision will normally be considered 75% learning and teaching and 25% research.

An Academic Staff Member whose HDR supervision contributes significantly to their research load may agree with their Supervisor to count up to 100% as part of their research load.

An Academic Staff Member whose HDR supervision does not contribute to their research output may agree with their Supervisor to count their HDR supervision as up to 100% learning and teaching.

Higher Degree research Supervision is allocated at the rate of 42 contact hours per annum per advisory team. An advisory team cannot claim more than 42 contact hours between them in their respective workload allocations.

A Staff Member may only count a maximum of 274 contact hours per annum for Higher Degree Research Supervision irrespective of their work profile.’

How to count HDR supervision has been an ongoing area of concern due to problem with the currency conversion between actual hours and contact hours. Actual hours is clearly a more appropriate currency for HDR supervision but teaching workloads tend to be counted in contact hours.

The HDR Supervision Procedure says that: 1 contact hour = 3 actual hours.

So if a staff member is responsible for 50% of the advisory load of a FT HDR candidate, Their overall workload is usually counted as 21 contact hours - 75% (15.75 contact hours) of which is allocated to their teaching workload; the remaining 25% to their research workload.

The number of candidates for whom one staff member can be the Primary Advisor in specified in the HDR Supervision Procedure URL. This number, which depends on the advisor’s level on the Register of Advisors, is not only a workload issue but an issue of the risk to the university if the advisor leaves: https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/forms-and-policies/hdr-supervision-procedure.

Exceptions to these limits requires the approval of the Dean of College. If you are concerned about your supervisory load in the context of your overall workload talk to your Dean of College.

What is the Register of Advisors and how do you get on the Register?

All JCU academic and research staff (including adjunct staff) who wish to supervise or are actively supervising JCU HDR candidates must apply for admission to the JCU Register of Advisors. Aspiring HDR advisors must apply to the Research Education Sub-Committee (RESC) to be included on the Register through submission of an Application for Admission to the Register of Advisors. Application for Admission to JCU Register of Advisors

An annual review of all members of the Register will be conducted by the Graduate Research School. Experienced HDR advisors who wish to upgrade their level of Advisory Accreditation on the Register must apply by way of submitting a revised Application for Admission and undertaking the Elevate Training (see below). In all cases, the Research Education Sub-Committee reserves the right to solicit confidential reports from students who have been supervised by the applicant.
What training is available for HDR Advisors?

The Graduate Research School offers a comprehensive training program for HDR Advisors as summarised in the table below. There is also a considerable online material on the [GRS website](#).

### The 6 'ate' program of comprehensive advisor training at JCU

| Name   | Target Audience                                                                 | What’s required                                                                                                                                                                                                 | When offered                                                                                           |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------PUBLIC                                                                        |                                                                                                          |
| Initiate | For JCU staff including adjunct staff or aspiring adjunct staff who wish to be on the JCU Register of Advisors and who have not supervised a HDR candidate to completion | 1. Attend full day face-to-face workshop conducted by the Dean, Graduate Research and the Graduate Research School’s Professional Development Co-ordinator in Townsville and Cairns and organised through Dean of Research in Singapore.  
2. Complete all units and pass the associated online quizzes from the Epigeum on-line course “Advising Higher Degree by Research Candidates”, available in the Higher Degree by Research Advisors Organisation on [LearnJCU](#).  
3. Prepare 500 word reflective consideration of the Epigeum module ‘Attracting and selecting doctoral applicants’ on [LearnJCU](#) and submit to the Graduate Research School’s Professional Development Co-ordinator | Twice per year in each of Townsville and Cairns. As required in Singapore.                                                                 |
| Integrate | For new JCU staff including adjuncts who wish to be on the JCU Register of Advisors and who have supervised a HDR candidate to completion as Primary Advisor | 1. Attend the ‘Initiate’ Workshop without requirement for follow up work                                                                                                                                  | Twice per year in Townsville and Cairns. As required in Singapore.                                                                 |
| Update  | For all advisors on the register every four years, plus anyone with an interest in updating their skills | 1. Read the JCU HDR Advisors’ Handbook and watch “The Good Supervision Video from Angel Productions” and pass the online quiz available in the Higher Degree by Research Advisors Organisation on [LearnJCU](#).  
2. Attend occasional lectures and workshops on supervisory matters | Anytime, but compulsory every four years with recording by GRS Anytime |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elevate</th>
<th>For advisors qualified to increase their level on the register</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Prepare a 500 word reflective consideration of each of the following (1) “Managing Progress” and (2) “Continuing your supervisory development” from on-line course “Advising Higher Degree by Research Candidates available in the Higher Degree by Research Advisors Organisation on <a href="#">LearnJCU</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Prepare a Statement of Advisory Expectations (<a href="#">exemplar</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Provide written work to ADRE for checking before they sign support of upgrade and send to Dean, GR. All three components must be completed satisfactorily before applying to upgrade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anytime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accelerate</th>
<th>For Primary Advisors in a College with a shortage of Advisor Mentors, who have been nominated by their College ADRE for fast track to Advisor Mentor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Prepare 500 word reflective consideration of: (1) “Managing Progress” and (2) “Continuing your supervisory development” from Advising Higher Degree by Research Candidates”, which is available in the Higher Degree by Research Advisors Organisation on <a href="#">LearnJCU</a>. Prepare /update Statement of Advisory Expectations (<a href="#">exemplar</a>) and submit to ADRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Prepare statement on how you plan to approach role of ‘Advisor Mentor’ on Advisory Panels on which you are not the primary Advisor and submit to your College ADRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Both components must be completed to satisfaction of ADRE satisfactorily before applying to upgrade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anytime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulate</th>
<th>For JCU academic staff on the Register of Advisors who are at least Primary Advisor but preferably at Advisor Mentor Level, who have been nominated by their ADRE as potential Chairs of Candidature Committees or Independent Academics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Attend a half-day face to face workshop conducted by the Dean, Graduate Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As required. Typically at least one per semester in both Townsville and Cairns conducted by Dean, Graduate Research and in Singapore by video-conference as required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Features of Excellent Supervision

What are the attributes of high performing HDR Advisors?

- The advisor has a record of their HDR candidates submitting their theses in < 4 years FTE (PhD) and <2 years (MPhil) in the context of number of enrolments, advisory roles and rescue supervisions.
- The advisor has a record of their HDR candidates having their candidature confirmed in < 1 year FTE (PHD) and < 8 months (MPhil) in the context of number of enrolments, advisory roles and rescue supervisions.
- The HDR candidates of the advisor have a consistent record of a majority of excellent external examiner’s reports, either the NA (no amendments), MA (minor amendments) or SA (substantial amendments to the satisfaction of the Head of Academic Group).
- The advisor has successfully assisted underperforming HDR candidates to discontinue their candidature without rancour or to exit early with an alternative qualification.
- The advisor has a consistent record of their HDR candidates having at least one publication from their thesis research accepted for publication prior to thesis submission as the primary author.
- The PhD candidates of the advisor pass RD7003: Professional Development within the time period stipulated for that subject.
- The advisor has an award for supervisory excellence from JCU or externally or has received formal advice that they have been short-listed for such an award.
- The advisor has HDR candidates who are working on an industry-defined problem, funded by industry (research or stipend) or co-supervised by an industry-based advisor.
- The advisor has developed and distributed a supervisory statement to their HDR candidates setting out their considered expectations of research supervision.
- The advisor has effectively mentored less experienced advisory team colleagues in order to develop their advisory capacities.
- The advisor and their HDR candidates are part of an effective research network.
- The advisor has actively supported their HDR candidates in developing and achieving their professional, personal, and career goals (as relevant).

How to help a candidate who is not progressing

Talking to candidate enables you to find out what the candidate considers as their problems - - what’s the matter with their candidature but also what matters to the candidate.

A seven step script is:

2. I’d like to talk with you about.....................
3. For example..............................
4. I feel............................
5. There is a great deal at stake here. What’s at stake is............... 
6. Perhaps I have contributed to the situation by..........  
7. This is what I want to resolve with you today. I want to resolve...........  
8. What’s your take on this...............? How do you see it?

Once you have worked out what the problem is you and the candidates have to design a solution. See example below regarding failure to progress in Confirmation of Candidature. You can modify this approach to other stages of candidature.

Remember:

- to make times for regular meeting and return their work in a timely manner
- that if candidature fails a milestone on their first attempt they are eligible for a second attempt.
Importance of regular meetings

The 2016 JCU internal survey of HDR enabled the satisfaction levels for the various PREQ scales of 2016 HDR candidates who considered that they met with their supervisor at least once a fortnight (black) with those who did not (blue). All results are presented as means + standard errors. At least fortnightly meetings with the principal advisor were positively associated with the levels of satisfaction in all the dimensions of the PREQ survey. For example, 85% of candidates who had frequent meetings with their principal supervisors were satisfied overall compared with 54% who did not.

Importance of timely feedback

The 2016 JCU internal survey of HDR enabled the satisfaction levels for the various PREQ scales of 2016 HDR candidates who considered that their supervisor provided timely feedback (black) to be compared with those who did not (blue). All results are presented as means + standard errors. The satisfaction levels of candidates who received timely feedback from their advisors was higher across all dimensions than for candidates who did not receive timely advice.
The table below outlines some strategies that you might like to try with a struggling candidate. The table is framed in the context of Confirmation of Candidature but could be adapted for a later stage of candidature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Suggested solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrealistic expectations</td>
<td>• Undertake expectation survey on GRS website with candidate; explain verbally and in writing about expected work hours, how much time each task will take, how many drafts are likely to be required; encourage candidates to speak with other candidates about this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>• Ask candidate to outline their argument using dot points, a PowerPoint presentation or a story board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Help candidate order their listed argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Help candidate identify gaps in logic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to synthesise information</td>
<td>• Provide exemplars of published and HDR literature reviews in your area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitor candidate’s progress with Epigeum literature module</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>• Ask candidate to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Outline argument (see Critical Thinking).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Make temporary labels for every paragraph (to see if order is logical and inform topic sentence).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Write reason why every paragraph is important (informs topic sentence).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Check that concluding sentence in each paragraph explicitly links to opening sentence of next paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfectionist</td>
<td>• Ask to see specified small sections of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage candidate to join a writing circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project planning and management</td>
<td>• Encourage candidate to read Kearns, H. and Gardner, M. (2013) Planning your PhD. All the tools and advice you need to finish your PhD in three years. ThinkWell, Adelaide, South Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <a href="http://www.ithinkwell.com.au/planning-your-phd">http://www.ithinkwell.com.au/planning-your-phd</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <a href="http://studentconflict.org.au/">http://studentconflict.org.au/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Show candidate how to develop a plan. *Encourage them to do project management course on e-grad school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Insist candidate prepare agenda and minutes for every meeting (provide exemplars)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge essential to project</td>
<td>• Insist that candidate enrol in coursework or undertake short course to address knowledge gap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with data collection/analysis</td>
<td>• Explicitly teach candidate what to do. If necessary employ another more senior graduate student to tutor the candidate in the problem area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What if there is no substantive progress?

**3 months**: Detail the problem in writing and ask the candidate to respond in writing. Ask them to work on the literature only and then progress to the proposal only after the literature review is completed to a satisfactory standard.

**6 months**: Call a meeting of the full Candidature Committee to review progress. Detail the problem in writing and ask the candidate to respond in writing.

**8 months**: Ask that the candidate be placed ‘Under Review’ with a Candidature Management plan ending at 11 months.

**11 months**: Complete the Under Review process requesting termination if necessary.
Appendix 1: Generic timeline for milestone and reporting requirements for a full time doctoral candidate. The timeline can be modified for part-time and/or Research Masters Candidates.

This is a timeline of the general requirements for a Higher Degree by Research Candidate at JCU. A research plan specific to your project and your particular goals should be made and used in conjunction with this timeline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time since enrolment</th>
<th>Candidate to do</th>
<th>Form required</th>
<th>Advisors to do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>Consider requirements for subject including project proposal, ethics application and any required permits and discuss with Advisors (RD7001)</td>
<td>COC-FORM-01</td>
<td>Meet with candidate to discuss plan for candidature, especially expectations of one another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>Scope relevant literature with advisors, commence literature searches (consult relevant librarian) and reading (RD7002)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue to meet with candidate re scoping and development of significant piece of work, research proposal, ethics application (if required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>Brainstorm/mindmap ideas for research questions and methods with Advisors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct Professional Development Audit of candidate and think about Professional Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>Start developing outline of substantive written work with advisors; read relevant literature</td>
<td></td>
<td>Contact nominated Expert Reviewer to check availability and willingness to review research proposal in week 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>Work on research proposal (using the Confirmation of Candidature Research Proposal pro-forma COC-FORM-01), ethics permit application (if required) and other permit applications (if required) with input from Advisors and multiple drafts.</td>
<td>COC-FORM-01 and 02</td>
<td>Contact relevant administrator to make arrangements for seminar date and meeting/s of candidature committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>Continue reading and development of substantive written work with Advisors. You are likely to require multiple drafts.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Help candidate conduct and develop Professional Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue to meet with candidate re development and revision of substantive written work, research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 weeks</td>
<td>Work with advisors to develop Professional Development Audit and Plan using the required pro-forma (COC-FORM-02)</td>
<td>proposal and ethics application (if required); provide timely feedback on revisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 weeks</td>
<td>Plan to have all compulsory Professional Development Components completed by Confirmation of Candidature Milestone (COC-FORM-02)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 weeks</td>
<td>Continue work on research proposal and ethics application (if required) with input from Advisors and multiple drafts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 weeks</td>
<td>Do final revision and amendments to substantive written work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>Finalise substantive written work and submit to Advisory Panel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 weeks</td>
<td>Finalise Confirmation of Candidature Research Proposal with input from advisors including checklist of compliances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 weeks</td>
<td>Finalise substantive written work and submit to Advisory Panel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 weeks</td>
<td>Finalise Confirmation of Candidature Research Proposal with input from advisors including checklist of compliances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 weeks</td>
<td>Complete evaluation of substantive written work using COC-FORM-02 for Substantive Piece of Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 weeks</td>
<td>Submit Confirmation of Candidature Research Proposal to Primary Advisor for Expert Review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 weeks</td>
<td>Submit Candidate’s Confirmation of Candidature Research Proposal to Expert Reviewer along with RD/RM Expert Reviewer’s Report on Proposal Form COC-FORM-01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 21 weeks
- While Confirmation of Candidature Research Proposal is with Expert Reviewer, develop seminar
- Help candidate plan seminar

### 22 weeks
- Assist candidate with amendment of proposal as required, or if necessary, suspend seminar

### 23 weeks
- Provide revised Confirmation of Candidature Research Proposal to Advisors

### 24 weeks
- Practice seminar with Advisors
- Submit revised Confirmation of Candidature Research Proposal, Expert Reviewer’s Report, Advisory Panel Reports on Proposal and Substantive Piece of Writing to all members of Candidature Committee
- Provide feedback to candidate on seminar by attending several rehearsals

### Second Year

#### 25 weeks
- Present seminar
- Attend seminar and meet with independent members of Candidature Committee to provide input to their decision; provide feedback to candidate.
- Candidature Committee provide final recommendation for milestone on COC-FORM-03 and Chair of Candidature Committee submits the 3 completed Confirmation of Candidature forms to their College Academic Services officer who sends them to the GRS for sign off by the Dean, Graduate Research.
<p>| 6 to 9 months | - Check your Professional Development Plan that was established at your Confirmation of Candidature and book any planned workshops/courses to ensure that you have a total of 80 hours of Professional Development completed by Mid-Candidature Review (18 months post-enrolment) | - Continue to meet regularly with the Candidate to provide guidance and feedback. |
| 10 to 12 months | - Submit Progress report in April/October when a milestone has not been completed in the previous 6 months. | PRO-FORM-01 | - Meet with Candidate regarding Progress Report. |
| 13 to 15 months |  |  |  |
| 16 to 18 months | - Mid-Candidature Review Milestone due 18 months (1.5 years) after enrolment. | MCR-FORM-01 | - Meet with Candidate to support successful completion of the Mid-Candidature Review |
| 19 to 21 months | - Check your Professional Development Plan which was established at your Confirmation of Candidature and book any planned workshops/courses to ensure that you have a total of 120 hours of Professional Development completed by Pre-Completion Evaluation (36 months post-enrolment) |  | - Continue to meet regularly with the Candidate to provide guidance and feedback. |
| 22 to 24 months | - Submit Progress report in April/October when a milestone has not been completed in the previous 6 months. | PRO-FORM-01 | - Meet with Candidate regarding Progress Report. |
| Third Year |  |  |  |
| 25 to 27 months |  |  | - Continue to meet regularly with the Candidate to provide guidance and feedback. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>28 to 30 months</th>
<th>Submit Progress report in April/October when a milestone has not been completed in the previous 6 months.</th>
<th>PRO-FORM-01</th>
<th>▪ Meet with Candidate regarding Progress Report.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 31 to 33 months | ▪ Finalisation of data analysis required for thesis.  
▪ Preparation to present findings at Pre-Completion Evaluation and in thesis |             | ▪ Continue to meet regularly with the Candidate to provide guidance and feedback. |
| 34 to 36 months | ▪ Pre-Completion Evaluation Milestone 6 months prior to thesis submission. | PCE-FORM-01 | ▪ Meet with candidate to support successful completion of the Pre-Completion Evaluation Milestone |
| Forth Year      |                                                                                                     |             |                                               |
| 37 to 39 months | ▪ Thesis writing                                                                                     | NEX-FORM-01 | ▪ Discuss potential examiners with candidate and submit Nomination of Examiners to GRS.  
▪ Review thesis drafts |
| 40 to 42 months | ▪ Finalisation of thesis writing, submit to advisors for feedback.  
▪ Submit thesis  
▪ Scholarship expiry | SUB-FORM-01 | ▪ Review thesis drafts and final version of thesis |
| 43 to 45 months | ▪ Thesis Examination                                                                                  |             |                                               |
| 46 to 48 months | ▪ Completion, and Graduation depending on timing of Graduation Ceremonies                             | Online graduation application form |                                               |
**Appendix 2:** Summary of potential changes to HDR candidature arrangements and their limitations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed change</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Limitations (check with the Graduate Research School and JCU International (if applicable) if you are unsure what a limitation means for you)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| From full-time to part-time or vice versa | Candidates may vary their enrolment from semester to semester to be enrolled at a full-time rate which is 0.5 EFTSL (Equivalent Full Time Study Load) per semester or a part-time rate (0.25 EFTSL per semester) | ▪ International candidates have to be enrolled full-time under Australian law as a condition of their visa.  
▪ Candidates receiving scholarships often need to be enrolled full-time as a condition of their scholarship or visa and are unable to enrol as part-time candidates.  
▪ The amount of EFTSL remaining for your candidature.  
▪ Enrolment in coursework subjects. |
| Internal to external (off-campus) based candidature | Candidates may seek approval to be enrolled externally in instances where geographical distance will prevent them from being in regular attendance on campus. This restriction does not include periods of approved field work as part of the research. | ▪ Requires special approval from the Dean, Graduate Research.  
▪ Candidate must be able to demonstrate why it is necessary for them to be based off campus, how sufficient support will be provided by their Advisors, and how they will have access to the resources necessary for successful candidature.  
▪ Some candidates receiving scholarships and/or international candidates may not be permitted to be enrolled as an external candidate as a condition of their scholarships or visa. |
| International to domestic | Candidates who commenced as an international candidate may be able to change their enrolment to a domestic candidate where Australian permanent residency or citizenship has been granted. | ▪ Must be able to prove residency or citizenship status change.  
▪ Can only take effect from the date of change of residency or citizenship (cannot be backdated). |
| Tuition Fees exemption or sponsorship | Under specific conditions international candidates may be eligible to have part or all of their tuition fees exempted or sponsored by their College. | ▪ Only applies in limited situations.  
▪ Deans of Colleges are typically very reluctant to approve fee exemptions of sponsorships for candidates who are not performing well. |
| Transfer/Change of Course | Dependent on what course the candidate wishes to transfer to (e.g. upgrade to PhD, change to a different PhD course), or if the candidate wishes to transfer their enrolment to a different university | ▪ There can be difficulties in claiming credit for research work if transferring to a coursework degree form a research degree.  
▪ Candidate must meet the conditions necessary for an upgrade of candidature.  
▪ Transfer to another university is not normally approved if candidate is in the last year of their candidature.  
▪ Some candidates receiving scholarships may not be permitted to transfer their enrolment as a condition of their scholarships.  
▪ International candidates will likely require a new Certificate of Enrolment which may... |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed change</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Limitations (check with the Graduate Research School and JCU International (if applicable) if you are unsure what a limitation means for you)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Withdrawal from Course | If a candidate wishes to discontinue their enrolment in the course, they need to formally notify the University through the required process, which includes notification of their Advisors and College. | - No restrictions on withdrawal, other than following process for formal notification.  
- Candidates who do not formally withdraw may continue to be liable for fees including the Student Services and Amenities Fee.  

| Add or remove coursework subjects | Candidates may choose to undertake additional coursework subjects if they are considered appropriate and/or necessary for their candidature e.g. biostatistics. | - Maximum of 15 credit points for Masters and 21 credit points for doctorates. RD/RM7001 and RD/RM7002 do not count in these subjects as they are considered research; RD7003 does count as coursework.  
- Must normally be undertaken during the first half of candidature.  
- Must be appropriate to degree and research project.  
- Must be completed as per the subject requirements.  
- University policy and procedures apply (e.g. withdrawing with academic penalty).  
- Must advise GRS via appropriate form at least five working days prior to wishing to enrol in or withdraw from a subject.  
- It is up to the candidate to ensure they know the start date, requirements and attendance times for the subject in which they wish to enrol.  
- You must not be enrolled in a certificate, diploma of degree course at JCU or another university in addition to your JCU Higher Degree Research Higher Degree without written permission from the Dean, Graduate Research. |

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6 The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSA Fee) was introduced by the Australian government to improve university services and facilities for students both on and off campus. JCU students must pay this fee (except for a small number of exempt students). The income from the fee is used to provide a range of student support services and facilities that students can access including specific initiatives for HDR candidates [https://www.jcu.edu.au/students/fees-and-financial-support/student-services-and-amenities-fee-ssa-fee](https://www.jcu.edu.au/students/fees-and-financial-support/student-services-and-amenities-fee-ssa-fee).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Proposed change</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description</strong></th>
<th><strong>Limitations (check with the Graduate Research School and JCU International (if applicable) if you are unsure what a limitation means for you)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Leave of Absence    | It is assumed that full-time candidates will work on their research and thesis for approximately 48 weeks/year. Candidates are entitled to take a period or periods of Leave of Absence from their candidature if required. During Leave of Absence, candidature is in effect ‘suspended’, no EFTSL are consumed and no fees accrued. Only periods of leave greater than four weeks need to be applied for formally. | - Applies to periods of absence greater than four weeks.  
- Must apply prior to taking the leave  
- Normally not granted prior to successful completion of Confirmation of Candidature Milestone.  
- Normally not granted for more than a total of six months throughout candidature.  
- Retrospective applications for Leave of Absence are normally not approved.  
- Taking Leave of Absence without prior approval may lead to a candidate being placed Under Review. |
Appendix 3: Where can a candidate get help?

It is very important for a candidate to seek help as soon as emerging problems and issues relating to their HDR candidature are identified, whether they relate to University or personal life. Open and honest discussions can usually resolve most issues. This section lists some of the problems that commonly arise for HDR candidates and provides some suggestions for assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Problem</th>
<th>Types of Problem or Symptom</th>
<th>Written, or Telephone Advice</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Face-to-Face Advice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Candidature and Enrolment Matters   | ▪ Due dates for candidacy milestones  
▪ Variation of candidature  
▪ Names of members of your Candidature Committee  
▪ Scholarship matters  
▪ Examination matters | Contact GRS@jcu.edu.au  
+61 7 4781 5861  
+61 7 4781 4735 | Contact GRS@jcu.edu.au for an appointment |                 |
<p>| Unsure how the candidature is progressing | ▪ Take this <a href="#">questionnaire</a> to find out how you are doing. |                                   |                 |                     |
| Research Project                    | ▪ Unsure about what’s required at JCU                                                      | Contact the Associate Dean, Research Education in your College |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | College of Arts, Society and Education        |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | Prof Ryan Daniel                               |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | College of Business, Law and Governance        |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | Dr Ray McNamara                                |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | College of Healthcare Sciences                 |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | Dr Karen Yates                                 |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | College of Medicine and Dentistry              |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | Dr Robin Ray                                   |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | College of Public Health, Medical &amp; Veterinary Sciences |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | A/Prof Kerrianne Watt                          |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | College of Science, and Engineering            |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | Prof Mohan Jacob                               |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | ARC Centre Coral Reef Studies                  |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | Dr Alana Grech                                 |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | JCU Singapore                                  |                 |                     |
|                                     |                                                                                           | Professor Dean Jerry                           |                 |                     |</p>
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<th>Type of Problem</th>
<th>Types of Problem or Symptom</th>
<th>Written, Online or Telephone Advice</th>
<th>Face-to-Face Advice</th>
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<td>If you are based at the Cairns Campus, contact the Deputy Dean, Graduate Research at your JCU Campus: Deputy Dean, Cairns Campus Associate Professor Hilary Whitehouse <a href="mailto:hilary.whitehouse@jcu.edu.au">hilary.whitehouse@jcu.edu.au</a> +61 7 4232 1421 Dean, Graduate Research: Professor Helene Marsh to end of March 2018; Professor Christine Bruce from April 2018 <a href="mailto:deangrs@jcu.edu.au">deangrs@jcu.edu.au</a> +61 7 4781 5575</td>
<td>Contact Associate Dean, Deputy Dean or Dean GRS as outlined above</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Question unclear</td>
<td>Require additional funds for project JCU’s Research Services Directorate can provide advice regarding external opportunities for competitive and other grants: <a href="https://www.jcu.edu.au/research-services/grants">https://www.jcu.edu.au/research-services/grants</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lack necessary skills</td>
<td>Require help with statistics JCU’s ‘StatsHelp’ Program provides HDR candidates with access to a qualified statistician. Appointments are required and HDR candidates should allow up to five working days before meeting with statistician. <a href="http://www.jcu.edu.au/grs/JCU_097309.html">http://www.jcu.edu.au/grs/JCU_097309.html</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Progress impeded by politics</td>
<td>Need help with written English and/or editing Consider attending one of several writing workshops or series offered by the GRS Professional Development Program.</td>
<td>Contact GRS Professional Development Coordinator Associate Professor Liz Tynan <a href="mailto:Elizabeth.Tynan@jcu.edu.au">Elizabeth.Tynan@jcu.edu.au</a> +61 7 4781 6278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Required resources not available</td>
<td>Literature searching and referencing Research Librarians at the JCU Library: <a href="https://www.jcu.edu.au/library/about/library-contact-details">https://www.jcu.edu.au/library/about/library-contact-details</a></td>
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<td>Computer and equipment matters JCU IT Help Desk Townsville Campus +61 7 4781 5500 Cairns Campus +61 7 4232 1777 <a href="mailto:ithelpdesk@jcu.edu.au">ithelpdesk@jcu.edu.au</a></td>
<td>Staff on the desk in each campus library on the ground floor <a href="https://www.jcu.edu.au/library">https://www.jcu.edu.au/library</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of Problem</td>
<td>Types of Problem or Symptom</td>
<td>Written, Online or Telephone Advice</td>
<td>Face-to-Face Advice</td>
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<td>Advisory Panel</td>
<td>Meetings tough to organise – unavailable</td>
<td>Kearns, H. and Gardner, M. (2013) Planning your PhD. All the tools and advice you need to finish your PhD in three years. ThinkWell, Adelaide, South Australia <a href="http://www.ithinkwell.com.au/planning-your-phd">http://www.ithinkwell.com.au/planning-your-phd</a></td>
<td>Contact Associate Dean, Deputy Dean or Dean, Graduate Research as outlined above</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Advisors disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>JCU Student Association Freecall 1800 330 021 Townsville Campus <a href="mailto:studentassociation@jcu.edu.au">studentassociation@jcu.edu.au</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Slow feedback</td>
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<td>Cairns Campus <a href="mailto:admin.ccsa@jcu.edu.au">admin.ccsa@jcu.edu.au</a></td>
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<td>Relationship deteriorating</td>
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<td>Lack required expertise</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Too busy</td>
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<td>Administrative matters within College</td>
<td>Need access to physical resources: office, desk, equipment, etc.</td>
<td>Administrative Services Officer contacts for HDR candidates in your College.</td>
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<td>Need someone to organise milestone meetings of Candidature Committee and milestone seminars</td>
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<td>Where to submit progress reports; thesis; forms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Anxious, depressed, fearful</td>
<td>JCU Mental Health Program for HDR Candidates and their Advisors Lifeline Free over-the-phone counselling 13 11 14</td>
<td>JCU Counselling Service Townsville Campus +61 7 4781 4711 Room 103, Level 1, Building 18 (Library)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cairns Campus +61 7 4232 1150 Level 1, Building B1 (Library)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Easily distracted</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Getting ever further behind</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Going round in circles – easily distracted</td>
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<td>Don’t want to meet with Advisors and fellow candidates</td>
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<td>Type of Problem</td>
<td>Types of Problem or Symptom</td>
<td>Written, or Telephone Advice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Overwhelmed by personal problems</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Financial advice</td>
<td>Centacare</td>
<td>Townsville: <a href="mailto:centacareng@centacareng.org.au">centacareng@centacareng.org.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advice on international student matters</td>
<td>JCU International</td>
<td>Townsville <a href="mailto:international@jcu.edu.au">international@jcu.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advice on accommodation</td>
<td>JCU Off-Campus Accommodation Register</td>
<td><a href="https://secure.jcu.edu.au/app/offcampus/index.cfm?event=home.index">https://secure.jcu.edu.au/app/offcampus/index.cfm?event=home.index</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Need advice on career options</td>
<td>JCU Career Development Program</td>
<td><a href="mailto:careers@jcu.edu.au">careers@jcu.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Need assistance with job applications</td>
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Appendix 4: Suggested resource materials


Kearns H and Gardner M. (2013) Planning your PhD. All the tools and advice you need to finish your PhD in three years. ThinkWell, Adelaide, South Australia


See also:

FIRST: for Improving Research Supervision & Training

Epigeum on-line course “Advising Higher Degree by Research Candidates”, available in the Higher Degree by Research Advisors Organisation on LearnJCU.