SUBJECT OUTLINE		
JCU Graduate Research School (GRS)	**RM7001 'Planning the Research'** **Research Masters Candidates**	JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA
www.jcu.edu.au/grs	GRS@jcu.edu.au	07 4781 5861 or 4735

Study Periods: Research Training Periods 1-4
Mode: Standard
Subject Coordinator: Dean, Graduate Research Studies
Prepared By: Dr Melissa Crowe and Professor Helene Marsh

Enquiries: grs@jcu.edu.au

Subject Contacts

	Contact	Phone	Email	Room	Consultation Times*
Subject Coordinator	Dean, Graduate Research Studies	+61 7 4781 5575	grs@jcu.edu.au	Room 028, Building 17	By appointment
Other Key Staff					
Primary Advisor	This is the Primary Advisor of the Candidate undertaking this subject				
Chair, Candidature Committee	This is normally the relevant Head of the Enrolling Organisational Unit[1] or nominee				
Relevant Director of Research Training	Please contact relevant Enrolling Organisational Unit for details				By appointment
Academic Support Coordinator	Dr Liz Tynan	+61 7 4781 6278	Elizabeth.Tynan@jcu.edu.au	Room 028B, Building 17	By appointment
Director, HDR Cohort Doctoral Studies Program (if applicable)	Please contact relevant Enrolling Organisational Unit for details				By appointment

Key Dates

The following summary provides a quick reference to the most important aspects of this subject. Please make sure that you read all the details of the entire subject outline.

---

[1] College or School or ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies

As per Section 5.2 of the [Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Requirements Policy](#), Research Masters candidates will be eligible to seek to have their candidature confirmed after the equivalent of 0.33 EFTSL of provisional candidature and must have had their candidature confirmed within 1 EFTSL of provisional enrolment. Candidates who fail to meet this timeline may be placed Under Review.

Because the completion of subjects RM7001 'Planning the Research' and RM7002 'Situating the Research' requires a meeting of the Candidature Committee to reach a final decision regarding the candidate's confirmation, it is efficient though not essential for the requirements for the two subjects to be completed simultaneously.

Important dates in this subject that will require planning by the candidate and their Advisory Panel include:

Timing	Task/Action
Start of Subject enrolment	Setting the seminar date and appointment of Expert Reviewer
6 weeks prior to seminar	Research proposal submitted to Expert Reviewer
4 weeks prior to seminar	Candidate makes amendments to research proposal in accordance with Expert Reviewer's report
2 weeks prior to seminar	Advisors complete RD7001/RM7001 Advisory Panel Report on Proposal Proforma
1 week prior to seminar	All required documentation to be submitted to Candidature Committee

Subject Description

RM7001 'Planning the Research' is intended to allow candidates to develop and demonstrate expert skills in the design and communication of a research proposal at the Research Masters level in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework.

RM7001 is one of two subjects that must be completed by Research Masters candidates to meet the requirements for the Confirmation of Candidature degree milestone and to have their candidature confirmed. Candidates should read this Subject Outline in conjunction with the [Confirmation of Candidature Procedure](#).

The overall intention of the Confirmation of Candidature degree milestone is to allow the candidate to demonstrate that:

1. The candidate's 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:

   - mastery of a substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of the field of research including substantial knowledge of the principles and methods;

   - the cognitive skills to demonstrate expert understanding of the associated theoretical knowledge, and to reflect critically on the theory and practice of the field of research; and

   - 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.

3. The candidate's HDR Professional Development Audit and Plan in [COC-FORM-02](#) is appropriate for the candidate's degree requirements and career aspirations.

RM7001 addresses Items 1 and 2a above. The Advisory Panel will assist the candidate to complete two Assessment Items, (1) a research proposal; and (2) a seminar to the satisfaction of the Candidature Committee, and will ensure that any permits, clearances or training required for the research project have been obtained, or are in the process of being obtained.

Subject Learning Outcomes

Research Masters candidates who successfully complete RM7001 will be able to:

1. Interpret, critique and explain theoretical propositions, methodologies and conclusions; design, theorise and communicate research that has the potential to make a significant and original contribution to knowledge and/or professional practice; and independently plan and develop an original research proposal;

2. Apply knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning;

3. Apply research knowledge and skills with intellectual independence, initiative and creativity in new situations; and

4. Communicate complex research and/or discipline concepts and plans to a broadly discipline-literate audience, using a variety of modes.

Graduate Attributes

The graduates of James Cook University are prepared and equipped to create a brighter future for life in the tropics world-wide.

JCU graduates are committed to lifelong learning, intellectual development, and to the display of exemplary personal, professional and ethical standards. They have a sense of their place in the tropics and are charged with professional, community, and environmental responsibility.

JCU graduates appreciate the need to embrace and be acquainted with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia. They are committed to reconciliation, diversity and sustainability. They exhibit a willingness to lead and to contribute to the intellectual, environmental, cultural, economic and social challenges of regional, national, and international communities of the tropics.

Assessment

Requirements for Completion of RM7001

In order to pass RM7001, students must successfully complete the following two assessment items:

1. A written research proposal; and

2. A seminar, which is usually public unless Commercial In Confidence restrictions apply.

Research Proposal and Seminar Assessment Process

Timing	Task/Action
Start of Subject enrolment	1. Candidate and Advisory Panel set date for confirmation seminar 2. Primary Advisor will contact an expert reviewer who is external to the University. Confirmation of the Expert Reviewer's availability and willingness to provide a report should be ascertained several months before the anticipated confirmation seminar in order to ensure that they will be available and can complete the report in the required timeframe.
6 weeks prior to seminar	The candidate submits the completed COC-FORM-01 Research Proposal to their Primary Advisor for submission to the Expert Reviewer.
4 weeks prior to seminar[2]	The Expert Reviewer returns their report and the candidate amends their research proposal in accordance with the Expert Reviewer's report and completes the Candidate's Response to Expert Reviewer section of the Proforma.
2 weeks prior to seminar	The candidate submits the amended research proposal to their Advisory Panel who undertake the assessment using RD7001/RM7001 Advisory Panel Report on Proposal Proforma.
1 week prior to seminar	COC-FORM-01 and COC-FORM-02 are distributed to Candidature Committee by the Primary Advisor.
Seminar date	The candidate undertakes the seminar with the Candidature Committee and audience present.
As soon as possible following seminar	The Candidature Committee meets to discuss the Research Proposal and Seminar. The Advisory Panel members leave the meeting so the remaining members can finalise their grade recommendation for the subject.

Assessment Item 1: Written Research Proposal

Candidates, in consultation with their Advisory Panel, should develop a research proposal using the RD7001/RM7001 Research Proposal Proforma. The proforma indicates each of the sections that should be included in the proposal. In the proforma candidates must demonstrate compliance or potential compliance with the requirements of any permits, ethics committee approvals, University policies and any other regulations applicable to their candidature and/or research activities and specify the plan for management of data that will be collected or obtained.

Research Proposal Assessment Guidelines

The Expert Reviewer will assess the research proposal using the RD7001/RM 7001 Expert Reviewer's Report on Proposal Proforma, which includes the following criteria:

- Are the aims of the study and associated research questions and/or hypotheses clear?

- Is the methodology appropriate to address the research questions?

---

[2] If the Expert Reviewer's report is not submitted to enable sufficient time for the candidate to revise their proposal in response to comments (at least one week), or if the Expert Reviewer indicates that they have substantial concerns regarding the proposal which are not able to be addressed by the candidate revising the proposal, the candidate and/or Advisory Panel may request that the seminar be rescheduled. The rescheduled date must be within one month of the original seminar date unless under exceptional circumstances.

- Is the proposed analysis appropriate to address the research questions?

- Is the background to the study comprehensively discussed?

- Is the significance of the proposal clearly justified?

- Is the risk analysis sufficiently thorough? Are there any risks inherent to the project not considered by the candidate?

- Is the proposed budget adequate for the planned research?

- Is the proposed timeline for implementation feasible?

- Is the scope of the study suitable for the degree?

The Advisory Panel will assess the research proposal using RD7001/RM7001 Advisory Panel Report on Proposal Proforma, which includes the following criteria:

- Has the candidate responded appropriately to the comments of the Expert Reviewer?

- Is the risk analysis sufficiently thorough? Are there any risks inherent to the project not considered by the candidate?

- Does the candidate have access to the funds and facilities required to complete their thesis in the planned timeframe of the degree?

- Is the proposed timeline feasible?

- In preparing this proposal has the candidate demonstrated the independent research capacity necessary to continue in the proposed degree?

- Has the candidate obtained the permits, approvals and training required for research to commence?

- Have the permits, approvals and training required for the entire research project been identified?

The RD7001/RM 7001 Expert Reviewer's Report on Proposal Proforma and RD7001/RM7001 Advisory Panel Report, both in COC-FORM-01 can be downloaded from the GRS website: https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/formstemplates

Assessment Item 2: Seminar

Each candidate must present a seminar on the research proposal, in person or by video of approximately 30 minutes (at least 20 minutes) duration, and then answer questions from the audience. The candidate should prepare for the seminar in conjunction with their Advisory Panel and it is recommended that several 'practice seminars' are given before presenting the seminar proper.

The following components from the written research proposal should be covered in the seminar:

- Title

- Advisory Panel members

- Background, theoretical context and significance

- Aims/objectives and research questions/hypotheses as relevant

- Project methodology including project design, data collection and data analysis

- Results to date

- Project work plan

- Thesis outline

- Publication plan
- Risk management plan

Seminar Assessment Guidelines

The following will be considered by the Candidature Committee in assessing the seminar:

- Was the background and significance of the study explained comprehensively and defended strongly?
- Were the methodology and methods identified clearly and explained appropriately?
- Does the candidate exhibit the presentation skills appropriate to this stage of their candidature?
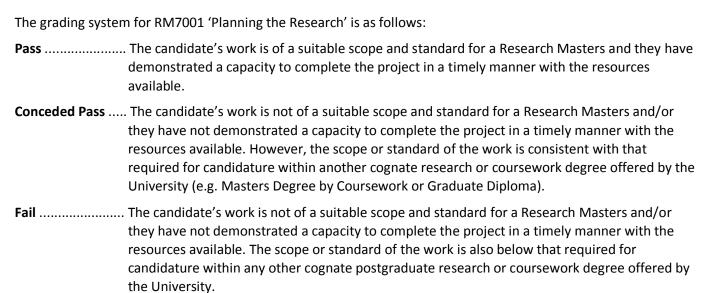
Grade for RM7001 'Planning the Research'

The grade in this subject will be based on both Assessment Items: the research proposal and seminar. The Expert Reviewer's and Advisory Panel's reports will be also considered in determining a grade for the research proposal.

The members of the Candidature Committee who are not on the Advisory Panel will discuss the Research Proposal, the Expert Reviewer's and Advisory Panel's reports and the seminar following the seminar presentation.

The candidate's grade for RM7001 must be recommended to the Dean, Graduate Research Studies by the members of the Candidature Committee who are external to the candidate's Advisory Panel through the COC-FORM-03. Members of the Advisory Panel as well as the candidate must not be involved when the other members of the Candidature Committee finalise the grade recommendation.

In exceptional circumstances, non-Advisory Panel members of the Candidature Committee may seek one additional expert review of a revised research proposal and/or allow the candidate to repeat the seminar on one occasion only before finalising a grade recommendation for the subject. In this instance the Chair of the Candidature Committee must notify the Graduate Research School in writing and the candidate will be placed Under Review. The gaining of an additional expert reviewer and/or the presentation of a repeat seminar must occur within three months of the original seminar date unless there are exceptional circumstances which would make this unfeasible.

Grading System

The grading system for RM7001 'Planning the Research' is as follows:

Pass .... The candidate's work is of a suitable scope and standard for a Research Masters and they have demonstrated a capacity to complete the project in a timely manner with the resources available.

Conceded Pass ..... The candidate's work is not of a suitable scope and standard for a Research Masters and/or they have not demonstrated a capacity to complete the project in a timely manner with the resources available. However, the scope or standard of the work is consistent with that required for candidature within another cognate research or coursework degree offered by the University (e.g. Masters Degree by Coursework or Graduate Diploma).

Fail .... The candidate's work is not of a suitable scope and standard for a Research Masters and/or they have not demonstrated a capacity to complete the project in a timely manner with the resources available. The scope or standard of the work is also below that required for candidature within any other cognate postgraduate research or coursework degree offered by the University.

Plagiarism, Referencing and Cheating

A workshop on plagiarism is a Compulsory Component of the GRS Research Skills Program[3] for HDR candidates.

All HDR candidates have access and are encouraged to use 'Safe Assign' to check their papers and thesis chapters as they write them (refer the GRS Research Skills Program Handbook for further information).

Candidates are strongly advised to check their RM7001 project proposal through SafeAssign and to discuss the details of the report with their Advisory Panel or an appropriate member of the JCU Teaching and Learning Development Unit.

Referencing and attribution practices can differ between and even within disciplines and understanding and interpreting these differences in the context of the SafeAssign matching report requires knowledge that should be obtained through the completion of the Plagiarism & 'SelfAssign' workshop offered by the GRS Research Skills Program.

Additional Student Support

Support Needed	Who to Contact
Accommodation	www.jcu.edu.au/accommodation/
Advanced Analytical Centre	http://www.jcu.edu.au/aac/
Childcare	https://www.jcu.edu.au/students/support/childcare-and-schooling
Employment	www.jcu.edu.au/careers/
e-Research Centre	http://eresearch.jcu.edu.au/
Equity and Diversity	https://www.jcu.edu.au/learning-and-teaching/students/student-equity-and-wellbeing
Ethics and Integrity	https://www.jcu.edu.au/research-services/ethics-and-integrity
Financial	Student Loans www.jcu.edu.au/student/Loans/studentloans/
Graduate Research School	http://www.jcu.edu.au/grs/
Indigenous students	https://www.jcu.edu.au/australian-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-centre/student-support
International Students	http://www.jcu.edu.au/international/
IT Help Desk	https://www.jcu.edu.au/information-and-communications-technology/units/it-services-and-support/it-help-desk
Learning Skills / Language Help	GRS Academic Support Coordinator – email grs@jcu.edu.au to request an appointment
Library	https://www.jcu.edu.au/library
Library Liaison Contacts by Discipline	https://www.jcu.edu.au/library/about/library-contact-details/liaison-librarian-discipline-responsibilities
Personal / Emotional Support	Counselling Service https://www.jcu.edu.au/counselling

---

[3] See GRS Workshops webpage: http://www.jcu.edu.au/grs/workshops/index.htm

Research Services	https://www.jcu.edu.au/research-services/ethics-and-integrity
Statistics Support	GRS Statshelp http://www.jcu.edu.au/grs/JCU_097309.html
Student Association	https://www.jcu.edu.au/international-students/life-at-jcu/student-services-and-support/jcu-student-association
Students with disabilities	http://www.jcu.edu.au/disability/
Workplace Health and Safety	https://www.jcu.edu.au/work-health-and-safety

Equity Statement

James Cook University is committed to encouraging equity and diversity. In particular, JCU aims to provide an optimal learning environment to students from a variety of backgrounds:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

- People from rural and isolated areas

- People from low socio-economic backgrounds

- People with disabilities

- People from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Information relating to scholarships, bursaries and services for HDR candidates is available on the Graduate Research School website: http://www.jcu.edu.au/grs/

Other JCU and School Policies and Guidelines Relevant to RM7001

- Important policy information is available for all JCU HDR candidates on the Graduate Research School website: http://www.jcu.edu.au/grs/

- See also the Higher Degree by Research Requirements policy: https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/research-education/higher-degree-by-research-requirements

- See also the Confirmation of Candidature webpage: https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/forms-and-policies/hdr-confirmation-of-candidature-proceudre

Subject Feedback

For general information about processes for student feedback and grievances at JCU, students should consult the JCU website: http://www.jcu.edu.au/student/complaints/index.htm

JCU staff value and appreciate student feedback as a source of evidence about the quality of our courses so you are strongly encouraged to provide considered feedback on all aspects of your HDR candidature. JCU has several methods of systematically capturing the experiences of HDR candidates.

Every year, recent JCU graduates are invited to complete the Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ), part of the nation-wide Australian Graduate Survey owned by Graduate Careers Australia.

In even numbered years, all JCU HDR candidates are invited to undertake an online survey based on the PREQ. Individual HDR candidates, their Enrolling Organisational Unit or advisors, are not identified through this process.

In odd numbered years, JCU HDR candidates are invited to participate in focus groups conducted by an expert consultant independent of the Graduate Research School. Individual HDR candidates or their advisors will not be identified through this process.