

# COHORT DOCTORAL STUDIES PROGRAM

*Information for Candidates & Advisors*



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*We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters where our university is located and actively seek to contribute and support the JCU Reconciliation Statement, which exemplifies respect for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultures, heritage, knowledge and the valuing of justice and equity for all Australians.*

*This Information Booklet was prepared by Dr Melissa Crowe and Dr Diana Mendez for the Cohort Doctoral Studies Program, James Cook University. Updated 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020.*

## Pathways to Higher Degree by Research at James Cook University

If you are considering to apply for higher degree by research (HDR) at James Cook University (JCU) please refer to the entry requirements:

Previous Qualification/Experience	Entry to Master of Philosophy	Entry to Doctorate
Bachelor's degree	GPA 5.5 or above in final year of study & research methods subject*	Not eligible
Bachelor's degree with Honours	Yes	Minimum one semester supervised research with at least Class IIA Honours
Postgraduate qualification (e.g. Grad Cert/Grad Dip Research Methods)	Yes	One semester supervised research with <u>distinction average</u> plus one research methods subject*
Research Masters	-	Research thesis produced from a supervised research component of 2/3 degree
Enrolment in a research degree at another Australian university	At least 6 months enrolment (or part-time equivalent)	At least 6 months enrolment (or part-time equivalent)
Other	-	Bachelor's degree plus senior author publication & research methods subject*

\* Research methods subject could be undertaken in first period of research degree in some circumstances.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/research-education/higher-degree-by-research-requirements>

If you are considering applying for a research degree within the JCU Division of Tropical Health and Medicine in any of the following disciplines: medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, health (including nursing, rehabilitation sciences, sport and exercise sciences, psychology and health promotion), public health and biomedical, molecular or veterinary sciences; you may also want to consider applying to the Cohort of Doctoral Studies Program.



## What is the Cohort Doctoral Studies Program?

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The Cohort Doctoral Studies Program is designed to provide additional support and networking opportunities to post-graduate research candidates enrolled at James Cook University (JCU) within the Division of Tropical Health and Medicine (DTHM). The program was initially established in September 2011 and has been nested under the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine (AITHM) since 2015. The Program commenced with one group of 13 candidates in 2011 and has since grown to 18 Cohort groups with 135 candidates. Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma of Research Methods candidates are also supported in the program along with HDR candidates (Master of Philosophy and doctoral candidates).

The Cohort Doctoral Studies Program is essentially aimed at practising health professionals working in the broad areas of medicine, dentistry, health (including nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, clinical exercise physiology, sport and exercise science, psychology, pharmacy, paramedics and health promotion), public health and biomedical, molecular or veterinary sciences. Medicine and health research candidates often return to study after varying lengths of time in the workforce, frequently combine research degrees with part or full-time work, often lack peers undertaking research degrees in their discipline and are sometimes studying at a distance because of the JCU focus on rural, remote and regional areas. The Cohort Doctoral Studies Program was implemented to address these issues.

Since its establishment, the Cohort Doctoral Studies Program has gained a positive reputation amongst HDR candidates, JCU and adjunct advisors and partners in the health industry. The response to the program has been very favourable including increased demand for the program and consistent positive feedback from candidates (see Cohort candidates' testimonials included in this document). Candidate outcomes reflect the success of the program with good completion times, high numbers of candidate publications, low attrition rates and successful grant applications. To date, Cohort candidates have produced over 340 publications and obtained in excess of \$4,654,904 in grant funding. Our retention rate has varied between 82-90% which is markedly higher than Australian averages of 60-65%. The average time to completion for a doctorate within the Cohort Program is 3.5 years.

Our program formalises and structures research education and candidates enter and progress through their programs as interacting cohorts. Candidates benefit from peer support and learning, networking opportunities, research education workshops, writing retreats, student conferences and academic mentoring.

## Key features of the Cohort Doctoral Studies Program

The key features of the Cohort Doctoral Studies Program include:

- Assistance with locating appropriate advisors and guidance through the enrolment process
- Peer group support and networking opportunities
- Opportunity for distance candidates to meet other research candidates and be part of an academic environment
- Academic mentoring from staff with diverse research skills
- Twice yearly on-campus block weeks (including research education workshops, writing retreats and opportunities for students to present their research) (see examples included below)
- Additional writing retreats outside biannual on-campus block weeks
- Clear, structured pathways and outlines of HDR milestones
- Regular contact within Cohort groups and opportunities to meet candidates from other Cohort groups
- Opportunity to consult with university staff with expertise in research and research education
- Advisor support
- Clear pathways to PhD for candidates without prior research experience
- LearnJCU Cohort Community for information sharing

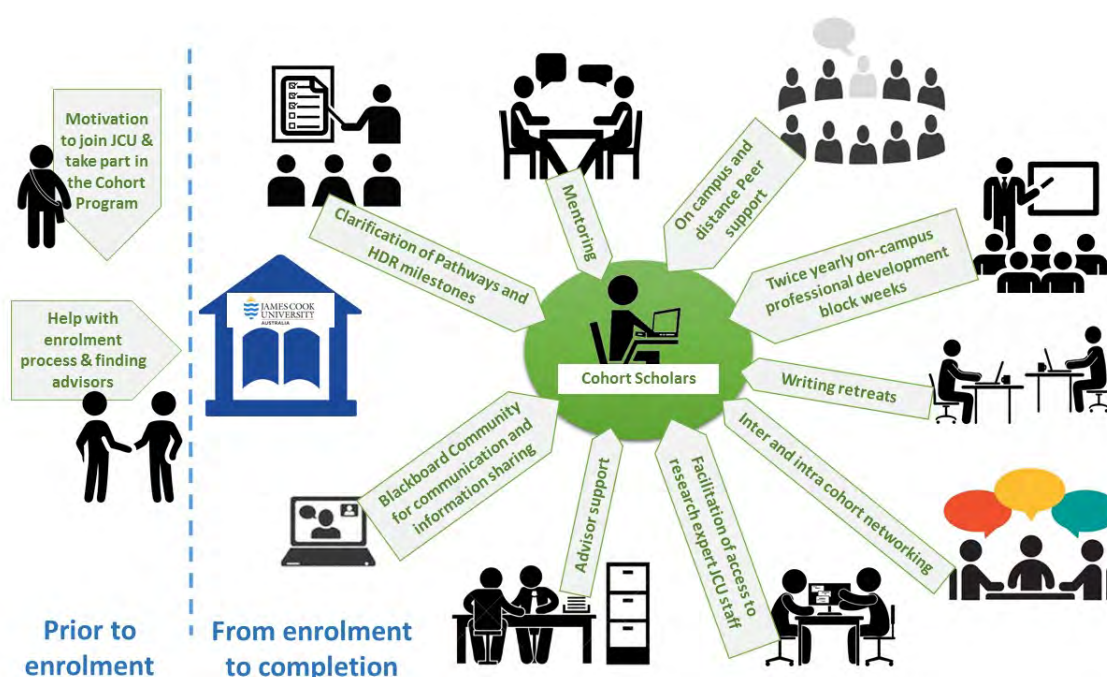


Figure 1 – Key features of the Cohort Doctoral Studies Program.

The Cohort Doctoral Studies Program operates alongside the JCU Graduate Research School (GRS), and students have the opportunity to seek support from both the Program and the GRS.

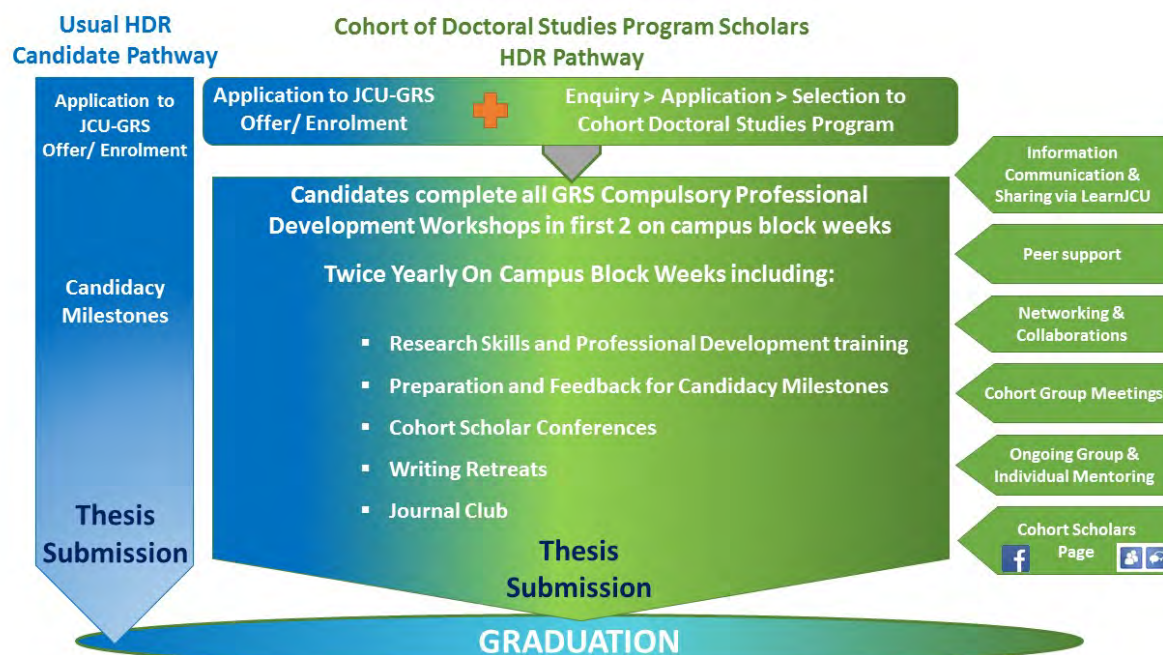


Figure 2 – Key features of academic activities offered by the Cohort Doctoral Studies Program.

**COHORT 15**  
Division of Tropical Health and Medicine Cohort Doctoral Studies Program  
Induction Block – **25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2018** (Room: AITHM Boardroom 48-202)

Time	Mon 25 <sup>th</sup> June	Tues 26 <sup>th</sup> June	Wed 27 <sup>th</sup> June	Thurs 28 <sup>th</sup> June	Fri 29 <sup>th</sup> June
8am	Introduction to program	EndNote (Sam Rannard)	Journal Club (Melissa Crowe and Cohort mentors; 2 <sup>nd</sup> room 48-204)	Goal setting & task engagement (Jo Lukins)	Intro to Mixed Methods (Karen Carlisle)
8.30am	Student introductions	Computer Room (Building 002- Room107)			
9am	Orientation to JCU (Melissa Crowe)				
9.30am					
10am	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Time to meet with your advisors	Morning Tea	Morning Tea
10.30am	Candidacy details & using LearnJCU (Melissa Crowe)	Using databases for literature searching (Sam Rannard)	Morning Tea	Time management (Jo Lukins)	Research conduct & ethics (Helen Griffiths & Sue Jenkins-Marsh)
11am			Data Management (Rhondra Jones)		
11.30am					
12pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12.30pm					
1pm	Writing a research proposal (Robyn Preston)	Writing a literature review (Melissa Crowe)	Copyrights & copy-wrongs (Tove Lemberget)	Research design Part 1 (Kerrienne Watt)	Working successfully with your advisory team (Jeff Warner)
1.30pm					
2pm	Afternoon Tea	Afternoon Tea	Afternoon Tea	Afternoon Tea	
2.30pm					
3pm	Introduction to academic writing (Liz Tynan)	Time to use computers for literature searching (Sharon Bryan <i>in attendance</i> )	Introduction to qualitative research (Robin Ray)	Research design Part 2 (Kerrienne Watt)	Afternoon tea & group discussion: Reflection on learning from block week
3.30pm		Computer Room (Building 002- Room107)			
4pm					
4.30pm					
5pm					
After 5pm	Meet & Greet: Drinks & nibbles	Cohort Dinner @ 6.30pm Venue TBA			

Figure 3 - Example of an on-campus Cohort Program induction block week.

COHORT 13

Division of Tropical Health and Medicine Cohort Doctoral Studies Program

Block Week – 12 -16<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2018 (AITHM building Room: 48-202)

Time	Mon 12 <sup>th</sup> February	Tues 13 <sup>th</sup> February	Wed 14 <sup>th</sup> February		Thurs 15 <sup>th</sup> February	Fri 16 <sup>th</sup> February		
8.30am	Program overview ( <a href="#">Diana Mendez</a> )	Student Conference	Peter <a href="#">Hartin</a> – example confirmation seminar		Writing retreat	Systematic review* ( <a href="#">Melissa Crowe</a> & <a href="#">Severine Navarro</a> )		
9am	Student progress report [5min each]		Editing your own work* ( <a href="#">Kellie Johns</a> )					
9.30am								
10am								
10am	<b>Morning Tea</b>							
10.30am	Grant Writing ( <a href="#">Andreas Lopata</a> ) With Cohort 12	<b>Morning Tea</b>	<b>Morning Tea</b>		<b>Morning Tea</b>	<b>Morning Tea</b>		
11am		Student Conference	Determining sample size ( <a href="#">Rhondda Jones</a> )	Introduction to NVivo ( <a href="#">K Johnston</a> , <a href="#">E Anderson</a> ) (Computer room Building 002- Room 107)	Writing retreat	Meta-analysis* ( <a href="#">Erik Biros</a> )		
11.30am								
12pm			<b>Lunch</b>				<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
12.30pm			<b>Lunch (1/2 hour)</b>	<b>Lunch</b>			<b>Lunch</b>	
12.30pm	Getting prepared for data collection ( <a href="#">Diana Mendez</a> )		<b>Lunch</b>	Workplace health & safety* ( <a href="#">Drew Kleier</a> )			Writing retreat	Avoiding death by PowerPoint ( <a href="#">Joe Moxon</a> & <a href="#">Sandip</a> via videoconference)
1pm	<b>Lunch</b>	Time with your advisors OR Free time			<b>Afternoon Tea or</b>	<b>Summing up and CLOSE</b>		
1.30pm								
2pm								
2.30pm								
2.30pm			<b>Afternoon Tea</b>	Plagiarism and SafeAssign* ( <a href="#">Colleen Kaesehagen</a> )			Writing retreat	
3pm	Time with your advisors OR Free time	<b>Afternoon Tea or</b>	<b>Summing up and CLOSE</b>					
3.30pm								
3.30pm								
3.30pm								
3.30pm								
3.30pm	Journal club ( <a href="#">Karen Carlisle</a> and <a href="#">Melissa Crowe</a> )	<b>Afternoon Tea</b>						
4pm	Making the most of Feedback ( <a href="#">Melissa Crowe</a> )	(Cohort Dinner 6.30 pm)	CLOSE	CLOSE				
4.30pm								
4.30pm								
5pm								
After 5pm							<b>Drinks and Nibbles</b>	

Figure 4 - Example of a second on-campus Cohort Program block week.

## Who can apply to the Cohort Doctoral Studies Program?

Any prospective or current HDR candidate (PhD, Professional Doctorate, MPhil) within the DTHM at JCU is eligible. Previous experience in research or research qualifications is not necessary, although applicants who cannot demonstrate research expertise will be required to successfully complete a bridging program (e.g. Graduate Certificate or Diploma of Research Methods). However, candidates must be eligible for any of the above mentioned degrees as per JCU policies and have applied to their course before they can commence with the Cohort Program.

Candidates may enroll full- or part-time, and can be located on or off campus. If candidates are employed full-time, they will be expected to show evidence of support from their employer to undertake the Program. We recommend that candidates in full-time employment seek a research project that closely aligns with their work.



## How to apply to the Cohort Doctoral Studies Program?

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Participation in the Cohort Doctoral Studies Program is by application. Each year there are two application rounds: one in April for commencement in June or July and one in November for commencement in February of the following year.

Prospective candidates who are interested in applying to the Program should contact the Head of the Program, A/Prof. Melissa Crowe, to discuss their intended study plan and research project prior to submitting their application. An application form and list of required supporting documentation can be obtained from A/Prof. Melissa Crowe or by sending an email to [dthmcohortapplications@jcu.edu.au](mailto:dthmcohortapplications@jcu.edu.au). Where necessary applicants will be referred to the Associate Dean of Research Education for their prospective College to clarify entry pathways.

All Cohort Doctoral Studies applications are reviewed by a committee comprising the Head of the Program, A/Prof. Melissa Crowe, the DTHM Director of Research Development, the Associated Deans of Research Education (ADRE) of the College of Healthcare Sciences (CHS), College of Medicine and Dentistry (CMD) and the College of Public Health, Medical and Veterinary Sciences (CPHMVS), and the Cohort mentors.

To be accepted and commence in the Cohort Program candidates have to be enrolled at JCU with DTHM. Successful applicants will be notified in person and will receive an official letter of acceptance to the Program.

## Participation in the Cohort Doctoral Studies Program

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The main yearly activities of the Program are offered in **Block Mode**. Candidates accepted to the Cohort Doctoral Studies Program are expected to attend the twice yearly on-campus block weeks. Travel grants are available to support distance candidates to attend on-campus activities.

Attendance at the first two block weeks are compulsory as the workshops offered during these weeks include the equivalent professional development workshops mandated by the GRS (See examples of block week timetables included in this document). Attendance at subsequent block weeks is at the discretion of the candidates but are highly recommended. Completion of the first two Cohort block weeks will qualify students for all RD7003 compulsory components.



In addition to the compulsory workshops, candidates will be offered a range of other workshops tailored to the stage of their research journey, the opportunity to practise their communication skills at student conferences and focused time on writing during writing retreats (held at each block week following the induction block), access to data analysis experts and Cohort mentors, and a number of educational and social events to encourage peer networking. An additional week long writing retreat is also available annually towards the end of the year (November).

In addition, each Cohort group is invited to participate in twice yearly mid-semester catch up meetings which they will be able to join either in person if on campus, or via videoconferencing (e.g. Zoom) if based off campus.

Cohort scholars can also receive support from Cohort mentors at any time during their studies. After the induction bloc week, candidates will be assigned to a mentor who will be in regular contact with them to monitor, facilitate and encourage their progress.

## Role of the Cohort Mentors

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### Cohort Mentors: A mission statement

*"The role of Cohort mentors is to foster, support and facilitate the progress of HDR scholars towards their study milestones and degree completion."*

Cohort mentors will endeavour to meet their mission statement by providing students with any or all of the following support:

- Providing information and assistance with HDR enrolment process and subsequent candidacy requirements (milestones) and management
- 
- Providing information, guidance and feedback about a range of research and academic activities:
  - Critical thinking
  - Academic writing
  - Oral presentations
  - Ethics and biosafety application processes
  - Research Methods
  - Data collection, management, analysis
  - Peer-review publishing process

- Encouraging with the development organisational skills
- Facilitating networking with peers
- Referring candidates to appropriate university experts when required, such as librarians, teaching and learning staff, workplace health and safety, ethics committee, counselling, etc.
- Sharing research education resources and tools, and student work exemplars
- Providing general pastoral care: motivation and emotional support as well as encouraging self-confidence

Where appropriate, cohort mentors will apply discretion and transparency when providing students with support and will keep advisory panels abreast of their interactions with students.

The role of the Cohort mentor is not to impede the progress of students and therefore:

- At no time will a Cohort mentor undermine or supplant the role of the advisory panel. However, please note that some of the Cohort mentors are also advisors as part of their normal academic activities.
- At no time will a Cohort mentor interfere with the candidate-advisory panel relationship. In this regard, Cohort mentors are expected to keep the mentoring process transparent by informing advisory teams and the head of the Cohort Program of interactions with students.
- Cohort mentors will not give content expert advice unless their expertise warrants it and is sought by the candidates/advisory team.
- Cohort mentors do not expect co-authorship unless they have significantly contributed to a particular research project.

*For example:* a Cohort mentor could expect to be included as a co-author if he/she substantially contributed to the design of a study or the design of a research tool.

*For example:* a Cohort mentor would not expect to be included as a co-author after giving feedback about the academic quality of a draft manuscript without any other substantial contribution to the study reported in the manuscript.

## Who are the current Cohort Mentors?

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### **Head of the DTHM Cohort Doctoral Studies Program** Cohort Mentor

**A/Prof. Melissa Crowe, BSc(Hons) Biology/Physiology, PhD**

[Melissa.Crowe@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Melissa.Crowe@jcu.edu.au)

Ph: (+61) 747 81 5610

Townsville Campus

Building 039 – Room 239

Dr Melissa Crowe has over 20 years experience teaching and researching the issues of exercise in hot and humid environments and drugs and supplements in sport. Melissa is currently the main national provider for heat tolerance testing for the Australian Defence Force. While working as Associate Dean of Research Education developed an interest in the recruitment, retention and support of higher degree research students. An interest which subsequently led her to design and implement the Division of Tropical Health and Medicine Cohort Doctoral Studies Program.



### **Cohort Mentor**

**Dr Diana Mendez, BVSc, MPH, PhD**

[Diana.Mendez@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Diana.Mendez@jcu.edu.au)

Ph: (+61) 747 81 4359

Townsville Campus

Building 039 – Room 237

Dr Diana Mendez is veterinarian who has been working in the fields of animal and human health at JCU for the past 19 years within the Public Health discipline. She has a particular interest the management of existing and emerging infectious diseases, zoonoses and One Health. She has experience conducting quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research in a variety of environments (field, laboratory, in vivo, in vitro, interviews, surveys). She is also involved in the teaching of postgraduate subjects in Research Methodologies. Diana has been working as a mentor for the Cohort Program since August 2015.



### **Cohort Mentor**

**Dr Sandip Kamath, BPharSc, MBiotech, PhD**

[Sandip.Kamath@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Sandip.Kamath@jcu.edu.au)

Ph: (+61) 747 81 4846

Townsville Campus

Building 047 – Room 109i

Dr. Sandip Kamath has been a Research Fellow at the Molecular Allergy Research Laboratory at JCU since 2015. He is part of the AITHM and the Centre for Food and Allergy Research (Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Melbourne). His current research focuses on the characterisation of allergens from food and inhalant sources and their interaction with the human immune system. His research interests include paediatric food allergy diagnostics, occupational allergy and immunotherapeutics for food allergy. Sandip has been a Cohort Mentor since August 2015.



**Cohort Mentor**

**Dr Meryl Churchill, BSc(Hons), MSc, MPHTM, PhD**

[Meryl.Churchill@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Meryl.Churchill@jcu.edu.au)

Ph: (+61) 747 81 4589

Townsville Campus

Building 039 – Room 246

Dr Meryl (Pearce) Churchill has over twenty years of experience working as an academic. Having a background in health, environmental sciences, and social sciences has resulted in multi-faceted research covering perceptions around climate change, behavioural responses to limited water resources, and social determinants of health. Meryl is passionate about enhancing the student experience and improving educational outcomes, and to this end her current research focusses on improving postgraduate research student outcomes. Meryl has been working as a mentor in the Cohort Program since March 2019.



**Cohort Mentor**

**Dr Karen Cheer, BA(Lib&InfoSci), GCertResMeth, PhD**

[Karen.Cheer@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Karen.Cheer@jcu.edu.au)

Ph: (+61) 747 81 4589

Townsville Campus

Building 039 – Room 246

Dr Karen Cheer has a diverse professional background with qualifications and experience in qualitative and cross-cultural research, library and information science, education and research administration. Her research focuses on social and cultural aspects of health and wellbeing, with a particular interest in maternal health in the Pacific region. These interests are reflected in Karen's doctoral research, where she identified the process midwifery students use to manage the provision of care to women following stillbirth in Papua New Guinea. Karen commenced as a mentor for the Cohort Program in February 2020.

## How to contact the Program facilitators?

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Program facilitators can be contacted using the information provided above. For general enquiries about the Cohort Program please email us at:

[dthmcohortprogram@jcu.edu.au](mailto:dthmcohortprogram@jcu.edu.au)



Or contact our Administrative Support Officer:



Administrative Support Officer  
Mrs Christine Teitzel  
[Christine.Teitzel1@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Christine.Teitzel1@jcu.edu.au)  
Ph: (+61) 747 81 5176  
Townsville Campus  
Building 039 – Room 237

For enquiries about or submission of applications to the Cohort Program please email us at:  
[dthmcohortapplications@jcu.edu.au](mailto:dthmcohortapplications@jcu.edu.au)

## Cohort Candidate Testimonials

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*"Top three [of induction block week]: 1. The chance to be on campus (I live 8 hours south) and interact face-to-face with staff. 2. The opportunity to meet fellow HDR; to share our stories, to challenge each other and to laugh together! 3. To participate in the foundational PhD courses; knowing that the workshops are required and necessary."* (Starting candidate, Cohort 13, July 2017)

*"Comprehensive coverage of key topics. Great to get us going!"* (Starting candidate, Cohort 12, February 2017)

*"The cohort week has been highly valuable and it's been fantastic meeting other individuals along a similar journey. I would highly recommend the program and would advocate for its future continuance. Can't wait for block two!"* (Starting candidate, Cohort 12, February 2017)

*"I liked the topics which they selected for the cohort program. It was according to the needs of the specific batch of students."* (Cohort 11 candidate, 2<sup>nd</sup> block week, February 2017)

*"Many thanks to all the facilitators for organizing such an informative and power-packed program. Your support has been very helpful."* (Cohort 11 candidate, 2<sup>nd</sup> block week, February 2017)



Cohort 12 – Induction Block week, AITHM, Townsville Campus, February 2017

*"I really value catching up with everyone, it is great to touch base with other cohort members. Doing a PhD is quite isolating, I'm only realising the extent of it one year in. The cohort blocks are timely opportunities to reconnect with people who are living the same experience. I also appreciate the enthusiasm of the team that organise the Doctoral Cohort Program. [...] They are so committed to the program and to us students."* (Cohort 10 candidate, 3<sup>rd</sup> block week, February 2017)

*"Great opportunity to network with colleagues. Found there was a lot of bonding and sharing of stories. It was great to talk to some of the cohort 11 too and found an opportunity to help another student make some connections that hopefully will help with their study."* (Cohort 10 candidate, 3<sup>rd</sup> block week, February 2017)

*"The blocks have been fantastic, and the support from program mentors, lecturers, and students has made this journey easier."* (Cohort 9 candidate, 3<sup>rd</sup> block week, February 2017)

*"I find there is variability in the content, which allows me to choose which session I attend giving a level of flexibility. This block provided great content - mixed methods, data storage and leadership, supervision and mentoring - paying it forward! All great sessions - thanks!"*  
(A candidate from Cohorts 1 to 7, February 2017 block week)

*"This cohort block has been particularly good in terms of content, because everything has been relevant to where I am in relation to my project."* (A candidate from Cohorts 1 to 7, February 2017 block week)



Candidates from Cohorts 7 to 9 – Block Week, Cairns Institute, Cairns Campus, February 2016

*"As an external student I relish in the fact I can catch up with a group of people who are experiencing the same emotions as I am. Knowing this reinforces these experiences are normal in the journey. It provides opportunity to spend quality time with other students in the cohort and to touch base with the mentors who are responsible for conducting the cohort blocks and share our progress. It provides the required booster shot to carry on until the next time I come into this space to be nurtured, recharged and invigorated – Thank you."* (A candidate from Cohorts 1 to 7, February 2017 block week)

*"I travel from Cairns and I always um and ah about the value of coming to the Cohort. That is dispelled within the first 5 minutes of the first session. The support within and from the group has been amazing. I am approaching the end of my project and I can honestly say that the stories of other people's journeys and the hardships (either personal or their project) has been an inspiration to get through my own hard times. Being able to hear about other people's projects gives a perspective and texture to my own project. I have learnt so much from the Cohort that I would not hesitate to recommend the program to both people considering a PhD and those that may provide funding to support this unique program."* (A candidate from Cohorts 1 to 7, February 2017 block week)



Cohort 2 during a block week on the Townsville Campus

*" Thanks for facilitating my attendance at the cohort block. I found it a great opportunity to meet several times with my supervisors and get lots of tasks requiring 'campus time' done ie meet with library staff etc. As a part-time external student, this is extremely valuable in being able to keep me on track with my studies. I also really enjoy the student and peer support and interaction that the cohort brings. "* (A candidate from Cohorts 1 to 7, February 2017 block week)





