# Subject Outline

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|---|---|
| **Subject Title** | Planning the Research |
| **Subject Code** | RD7001 |
| **Study Period** | Research Training Periods 1-4 |
| **Attendance Mode** | Standard |
| **Campus** | Townsville, Cairns and Online |
| **Subject Coordinator/Division/College** | Dean, Graduate Research<br>Research Division<br>Graduate Research School |

*At James Cook University, we acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which our campuses and study centres are located and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present and future. JCU is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to JCU and society.*

Cairns
Singapore
Townsville

# Contents

This subject outline has been prepared by A/Prof Liz Tynan for the Graduate Research School, Research Division, James Cook University. Updated December 2021.

The information provided in this subject outline is correct as at the time of completion and may change in response to changing University resources. Any changes will be approved by the College Dean or representative and will be communicated to students via the LearnJCU subject site.

# 1    Subject Details

## 1.1    Subject Outline Preparation

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q1. This subject is offered across more than one campus and/or mode and/or study period within the one calendar year. | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| Q2. If yes (Q1), the design of all offerings of this subject ensure the same learning outcomes and assessment types and weightings. | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| Q3. If no (Q2), [Type here] has authorised any variations, in terms of equivalence. | | | |

## 1.2    Subject Outline Peer Reviewer

| Name | Dr Lauretta Grasso |
|---|---|
| Position | Manager, Graduate Research Operations |
| Date reviewed | 20 February 2020 |

## 1.3    Staff contact details

| Key Staff | Staff member | Room | Phone | Email | Consultation times* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Subject Coordinator | Dean, Graduate Research | 017-028 | +61 7 4781 5575 | deangrs@jcu.edu.au | By appointment |
| Primary Advisor | This is the Primary Advisor of the Candidate undertaking this subject | | | | |
| Chair, Candidature Committee | The Chair of Candidature Committee is appointed by the College Associate Dean of Research Education and approved by the Dean of the Enrolling Organisational Unit | | | | |
| Coordinator Professional Development | A/Professor Liz Tynan | 017-148 | +61 7 4781 6278 | elizabeth.tynan@jcu.edu.au | By appointment |
| Director, HDR Cohort Doctoral Studies Program (if applicable) | Please contact relevant Enrolling Organisational Unit for details | | | | |

*Other consultation times by appointment only.

## 1.4    Subject description

RD7001 Planning the Research is intended to allow doctoral candidates to develop and demonstrate expert skills in the design and communication of a research proposal at the doctoral level in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework.

RD7001 is one of two subjects that must be completed by doctoral 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[2].

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-Assessment Form and COC-Proposal Template](#) is appropriate for the candidate's degree requirements and career aspirations.

RD7001 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.

## 1.5   Subject learning outcomes and course learning outcomes

Doctoral candidates who successfully complete RD7001 will be able to:

• 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;

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

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

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

## 1.6   Student feedback on subject and teaching

For general information about processes for student feedback and grievances at JCU, students should consult the JCU website:  https://www.jcu.edu.au/division-of-student-life/student-complaints

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.

## 1.7    Subject resources and special requirements

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/policy/procedures/research-education-procedures/hdr-progress-reporting-procedure

An online module on plagiarism is a Compulsory Component of the GRS Professional Development Program for HDR candidates.

All HDR candidates have access and are encouraged to use iThenticate to check their papers and thesis chapters as they write them.
Candidates are strongly advised to check their RD7001 project proposal through iThenticate 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 iThenticate matching report requires knowledge that should be obtained through the completion of the Plagiarism module offered by the GRS Professional Development Program.

# 2    Assessment details

## 2.1    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.

As per Section 5.2 of the Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Requirements policy, doctoral candidates will be eligible to seek to have their candidature confirmed after the equivalent of 0.5 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 RD7001 Planning the Research and RD7002 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.

A suggested timetable for a full-time PhD candidate to complete the requirements for both subjects is provided in the HDR Confirmation of Candidature Procedure. This timetable should be modified for part-time candidates through discussions between the candidate and their Advisory Panel. A suggested timeframe for the Confirmation of Candidature process is also available in the HDR Confirmation of Candidature Procedure.

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 RD/RM7001 Advisory Panel Report |
| 1 week prior to seminar | All required documentation to be submitted to Candidature Committee |

## 2.2   Requirements for successful completion of this subject

In order to pass RD7001, 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.

### 2.2.1 Research Proposal and Seminar Assessment Process

| Timing | Task/Action |
|---|---|
| Start of Subject enrolment | 1.   Candidate and Advisory Panel set date for confirmation seminar<br>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-Assessment Form and COC-Proposal Template to their Primary Advisor for submission to the Expert Reviewer. |
| 4 weeks prior to seminar | 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-Assessment Form and COC-Proposal Template 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. |

## 2.3   Assessment items

### 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?

- 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-Assessment Form and COC-Proposal Template 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?

# 3    Grade for RD7001 Planning the Research

## 3.1    Grading System

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 RD7001 must be recommended to the Dean, Graduate Research by the members of the Candidature Committee who are external to the candidate's Advisory Panel through COC-Assessment Form and COC-Proposal Template.  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.

The grading system for RD7001 Planning the Research is as follows:

**Pass:** The candidate's work is of a suitable scope and standard for a doctorate 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 doctorate 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. Research Masters or Graduate Diploma).

**Fail**: The candidate's work is not of a suitable scope and standard for a doctorate 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.