HDR Admission and Enrolment Procedures

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1. Governing Policy

Higher Degrees by Research Policy

2. Purpose

These procedures specify the requirements for:

- prospective students to apply for admission to a higher degree by research (HDR) candidature
- admitted students to enrol, vary their enrolment, transfer between candidatures or withdraw from enrolment.

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3. Definitions

College HDR Committee	the College-level committee with responsibility for HDR matters within that College.
In person	requires in person attendance. Some topic resources, interaction, assessment and activities are available online and are of a supplementary nature. *[Note: this mode of delivery was previously termed 'internal' and may still be used in some instances.]*
Online plus placement/intensive	most topic resources, interaction, assessment and activities are available online. Some in person attendance will be required. *[Note: this mode of delivery was previously termed 'external' and may still be used in some instances.]*
Online	all topic resources, interaction, assessment and activities are available online. No in person attendance is required. *[Note: this mode of delivery was previously termed 'external' and may still be used in some instances.]*

4. Admission

4.1. Prospective student pre-application requirements

Before starting an application for HDR candidature, all prospective students must read the Apply for an HDR webpage and:

a. check their eligibility to start a higher degree by research in the relevant Course Rules

b. identify a potential research supervisor using the University's find a supervisor facility, and then prepare a research outline in the prescribed format, their academic qualifications transcript, and details of their research experience to that supervisor. If a supervisor cannot be identified, contact the Office of Graduate Research.

c. check for potential scholarships

d. check whether application closing dates apply.

4.2. How to apply

a. To apply for admission to all HDR candidatures except Higher Doctorates:

   i. for domestic students: apply through the domestic How to Apply website.

   ii. for international students: apply through the international How to Apply website.

b. Applications for a scholarship can be combined with the admission application for new domestic students, or separately for continuing domestic and international students.

c. To apply for admission to a Higher Doctorate, refer to the Higher Doctorate Procedures and Course Rule.

4.3. Application assessment

a. All applications for admission to candidature will be assessed to determine whether:

   i. the applicant meets all the eligibility requirements for admission

   ii. the applicant is reasonably likely to be able to successfully complete the requirement of the course in the proposed field of research within the maximum permitted duration, and

   iii. if the applicant is compliant with any University policy, legislative or Government requirements.

b. In assessing a.ii., the following matters will be taken into account:

i. whether a supervisory and study environment of research/creative activity, inquiry and scholarship can be provided for the applicant

ii. in the case of an application for Online plus placement/intensive OR Online delivery mode, whether the resources available to the student are in accordance with the Statement of Minimum Resources. The applicant and supervisor must complete the HDR Online Plus Study Agreement available from the Office of Graduate Research, and

iii. the likelihood that the student will be able to complete the candidature within the time available.

4.4. Offer of admission

a. Only authorised University officers may approve offers of admission.

a. All applicants will be notified whether their application has been accepted or not.

b. An applicant who receives an offer of admission to candidature must log into the Student Information System within the specified time, as stated in the letter of offer, and follow the prompts to:

i. accept or decline the offer, or

ii. apply for a deferral.

c. An offer which is not accepted within the time specified will lapse.

4.5. Withdrawal of offer of admission

4.5.1. Inaccurate or incomplete information provided by applicant

a. Where an applicant has been offered a place in a course as result of the provision of inaccurate or incomplete information, the offer may be withdrawn and any consequential enrolment cancelled.

b. Prior to withdrawing an offer, the delegated authority must:

i. give the applicant an opportunity to explain the inaccuracies or omissions in the information provided, and

ii. take into account the degree to which the applicant has contributed to the inaccuracies and omissions and the stage through the course at which the errors are detected.

4.5.2. Supervision team no longer available

Where the identified supervision team is no longer available in accordance with the HDR Supervisor Procedures 3.c.ii., the offer may be withdrawn, provided the applicant has not completed their enrolment.

4.5.3. Administrative error by University

a. Where an applicant has been offered a place in a course as a result of an error by a University staff member, the University may withdraw the offer and cancel any consequential enrolment.

b. At the time of withdrawing an offer, the delegated authority must attempt to facilitate an offer of admission to a suitable alternative course.

c. Where no suitable alternative offer can be made the University will refund any tuition fees paid.

4.5.4. International applicant withdrawal of offer: consequences

Changes to an international applicant's Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) resulting from confirmed withdrawal of an offer will be reported to the Australian Government. This may impact their student visa.

4.6. International student transfer

4.6.1. International students

a. Where an *international* student who is studying in Australia on a student visa seeks to transfer to Flinders University from another Australian registered CRICOS institution *before completing 26 weeks of their principal course*, the University will consider the application only if:

i. the original registered institution has ceased to be registered or the course in which the student was enrolled has ceased to be registered; or

ii. the original registered institution has provided a letter of release; or

iii. the original registered institution has had a sanction imposed on its registration by the Australian government or state or territory government that prevents the student from continuing their principal course; or

iv. any government sponsor of the student considers the change to be in the student's best interest and has provided written support for the transfer.

5. Enrolment in candidature

a. Successful applicants who accept an offer of admission will follow the instructions on HDR Welcome.

b. Applicants must enrol in their candidature by the date specified in the letter of offer of candidature. Failure to enrol by the date specified means that the authority to enrol lapses and the application process ends.

c. Enrolment in the time-based research project of an HDR candidature, or a PhD by Prior Published Work, is by appointment, in person or via technology, with the Office of Graduate Research.

d. Enrolment in any credit-based topics that are specified as program requirements in the HDR Course Rule is done directly by the student by following the enrolment instructions on the New Students website.

6. Candidature variation, transfer and withdrawal

a. Approval is required for all variations to candidature enrolment from those stated in the student's Enrolment Verification, as provided in the sub-sections below.

b. For all applications to vary their candidature enrolment, the student must review the information below and complete the appropriate online form in Inspire, together with:

i. a recommendation from the principal supervisor, and

ii. a justification to support the reasons for the request and evidence (if applicable).

c. If the student and supervisor disagree, the student may still apply, and the Office of Graduate Research will determine an appropriate course of action.

d. The application will be reviewed by the Office of Graduate Research.

i. If the application is clearly consistent with the relevant provisions of the Course Rules for the degree and the HDR Policy and these Procedures, including the maximum permitted duration of the candidature, the Office may approve the application.

ii. If the application does not fit within d.i., or the Office otherwise considers it should not make a decision to approve, the Office must refer the application to the relevant College HDR Coordinator, who may either:

- make a decision, after obtaining such advice as the HDR Coordinator considers appropriate, or
- refer it to the College HDR Committee for decision.

e. The Office of Graduate Research will notify the student of the outcome of the application, and any implications for the other conditions of candidature, including any impact on RTP support eligibility or tuition fees payable, and any consequential changes to Milestone dates.

f. Any consequential change to enrolment in any credit-based topics as a result of an enrolment variation must be done directly by the student on the New Students website.

6.1. Transfer from part-time to full-time status and vice-versa

a. The student must apply as per 6.b. above.

b. Additional approval is sought from the HDR Scholarships Committee via submission of the online form in Inspire for scholarship holders to transfer from full-time to part-time, as stated in the conditions of award for the scholarship. Approval will only be given if a student can provide sufficient evidence that there are extraordinary circumstances which preclude full-time study.

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c. For an *international* student who is studying in Australia on a student visa, part-time candidature will only be approved in compassionate or compelling circumstances beyond the control of the student (e.g., serious illness or injury, or bereavement of a close family member) and must be supported by documentary evidence.

6.2. Transfer of delivery mode between In Person, Online plus placement/intensive and Online

A student's Enrolment Verification will specify the delivery mode of the candidature, in accordance with the Section 3 Definitions above and Award Courses Policy Annex B Mode of Delivery Definitions.

6.2.1. Online plus placement/intensive to In Person

a. To change from Online plus placement/intensive to In Person, the student must apply as per 6.b. above.

b. Online plus placement/intensive *international* students:

   i. may be required to meet further admissions requirements determined by the University in accordance with legislative or government requirements before being accepted as an In Person delivery mode, and

   ii. will need to apply for a student visa from the Australian Government with a Confirmation of Enrolment from the University.

6.2.2. In Person to Online plus placement/intensive OR to Online

a. To change from In Person to Online plus placement/intensive the student must apply as per 6.b. above.

b. To change from In Person *to* Online ('Writing up the thesis') the principal supervisor must certify that:

   i. all experimental work has been completed

   ii. the student no longer requires physical access to the University's resources (other than consultation with the supervisors), and

   iii. the student has completed the research required to write the first draft of the thesis.

c. If the transfer from In Person is approved:

   i. scholarship holders must contact Student Finance Services, and

   ii. Milestone dates will remain unchanged (unless approval under another category above has been given).

d. An *international* student who is studying in Australia on a student visa and whose candidature transfers from In Person will be reported to the Australian Government. This may impact the student's visa.

6.3. Significant amendment to research topic

a. The student must apply as per 6.b. above.

b. Refer to the HDR Supervisor Policy and HDR Supervisor Procedures if the change requires a change in supervisor.

6.4. Intermission of candidature

a. In special circumstances, such as illness or another reason preventing the student from carrying out the work for the degree, the student may apply for intermission as per 6.b. above. Periods of intermission must not accumulate beyond 12 months for the whole of the candidature, except in extenuating circumstances.

b. Extenuating circumstances for which a period of intermission may accumulate beyond 12 months include, but are not limited to:

   i. prolonged illness

   ii. maternity / paternity leave

   iii. adoption leave

iv. miscarriage leave

v. stillborn infant

vi. family caring responsibility leave

vii. personal and carer's leave

viii. cultural/ceremonial and/or community obligations

ix. family violence

x. jury service

xi. voluntary emergency services

xii. defence force leave.

c. An *international* student who is studying in Australia on a student visa must discuss their reasons for intermission with Flinders International before making an application. Intermission will only be approved in compassionate or compelling circumstances beyond the control of the student (e.g., serious illness or injury, or bereavement of a close family member) and must be supported by documentary evidence. Approved intermission will result in cancellation of the Confirmation of Enrolment and will be reported to the Australian Government. This may impact the student's visa.

d. A student is not an enrolled student for the duration of the period of intermission.

e. Intermission approval for scholarship holders is sought from the HDR Scholarships Committee, via submission of the online form in Inspire.

6.5. Bridging extension for PhD students beyond 3 years FTE

Only applicable for PhD students enrolled from 2017 onwards.

Students must apply as per 6.b. above for a bridging extension of six months (FTE). Only two bridging extensions of six months (FTE) are available. Approval is subject to the authorised delegate being satisfied that there is an appropriate plan in place for completion within the period of the bridging extension.

6.6. Extension of candidature beyond the maximum permitted duration

6.6.1. Domestic and Online plus placement/intensive OR Online international students:

a. Students must apply as per 6.b. above for an extension of up to six months full-time or twelve months part-time. Approval is subject to the authorised delegate being satisfied that there is an appropriate plan in place for completion within the period of the extension.

b. Further extensions of up to six months may only be approved in extraordinary circumstances and under specific conditions determined by the authorised delegate, in consultation with the Office of Graduate Research.

c. *Note*: As such extensions are likely to result in Research Training Program-supported students exceeding their period of support, the student will be required to pay fees during the extension period as determined by the University. International students will be required to pay tuition fees during the extension period.

6.6.2. International students:

a. An international student who is studying in Australia on a student visa must complete their course within the duration specified in their Confirmation of Enrolment (COE) unless an extension is approved following application under 6.b. above.

b. Approval will only be given if there are compassionate or compelling circumstances beyond the control of the student, and supported by documentary evidence (e.g., serious illness or injury, or bereavement of a close family member).

c. *Note*: An international student who is studying in Australia on a student visa will be required to continue paying tuition fees throughout the period of extension. Any change to the Confirmation of Enrolment will be reported to the Australian Government. This may impact the student's visa.

6.7. Transfer between candidatures – enrolled Flinders University students

All students must review their current Course Rule to ensure that transfers are permissible.

a. For the transfer of enrolled Flinders University students:

- from Masters by Research candidature to PhD or Professional Doctorate candidature
- from PhD to Professional Doctorate candidature or Masters by Research candidature
- from Professional Doctorate to PhD candidature or Masters by Research candidature

—the student must complete the Transfer of Candidature or Project application form in Inspire, with a recommendation from the principal supervisor.

b. International students must also:

i. make a new application for admission to candidature as per Procedure 4.2, and

ii. submit an application to transfer to a new degree on the prescribed Transfer Degree Form available from Flinders International.

c. The supervisor will arrange for an independent academic expert external to the discipline (not necessarily external to the University) to provide a written assessment of, and letter of recommendation on, the written work submitted with the online application.

d. If the student and supervisor disagree, the student may still apply, and the Office of Graduate Research will determine an appropriate course of action.

e. The application will be forwarded to the HDR Coordinator for assessment and decision. The HDR Coordinator may refer it to the College HDR Committee for assessment and decision. Assessment must take into account the relevant provisions of the Course Rules for the degrees, and any other University policies, including admission criteria.

f. In the case of an application to ***transfer from a Masters by Research candidature to a doctorate***, assessment of the application will be against the following criteria:

i. the student has demonstrated a capacity to undertake work at the more advanced level, in the form of either:

- draft chapters, or
- evidence, in the form of written reports, of progress in fieldwork, research or data analysis, or
- written seminar or conference papers, dealing with the substance of the thesis, that have been presented formally

ii. the nature of the proposed research topic is substantial enough to warrant the expansion of the research framework, and

iii. the definition of the project is such that the student has a reasonable prospect of completing a doctoral thesis that will make a significant contribution to knowledge or, in the case of a Professional Doctorate, knowledge and/or professional practice.

[Note that a case for upgrading which simply asserts that the area is large enough to warrant an expanded scale of activity, without demonstration that the analytical framework has been expanded and is appropriate, will not be considered.]

g. In the case of an application to ***transfer from a doctorate to a Masters by Research candidature***, assessment will include:

i. whether the student has demonstrated they do not have capacity to reach the standard required of a doctoral program, and/or

ii. whether the scale, scope, level and originality of the work have been reviewed by the supervisor and student to ensure it is appropriate for a Masters by Research candidature.

For domestic students, dependent upon the duration of candidature and the amount of Research Training Program support already used by the student, tuition fees may apply. For international students, tuition fees will continue to apply.

h. The Office of Graduate Research will notify the outcome to:

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i. the student

ii. If the student is a scholarship holder, Student Finance Services, and

iii. if the student is an international student, Flinders International, which will issue a new offer which must be accepted by the student before a new Confirmation of Enrolment with the correct CRICOS code and duration of study for the course can be issued.

i. A ***transfer to a designated exit award candidature*** (if available) cannot be made on application by the student. It will only be made following a Formal Review of Progress process under the HDR Progression Procedures.

6.8. Withdrawal from candidature

6.8.1. By student

a. Students may withdraw from candidature at their discretion (except in circumstances covered by 4.5) by completing the online form in Inspire, but are encouraged to discuss an intention to do so with their supervisor/s and the relevant College HDR Coordinator, to see whether the reasons can be addressed by the University.

b. The supervisor/s and HDR Coordinator must consider the reasons provided by the student during any such discussion, and:

i. make an attempt to resolve any difficulties in the study environment which may have prompted the student to consider withdrawing, and

ii. draw the student's attention to the option of a designated exit award, if available.

c. Once the student withdraws, the Office of Graduate Research will arrange for the student's withdrawal to be acknowledged, for the student's supervisors to be notified, and for any follow-up action to be taken.

d. A student who has withdrawn and who subsequently wishes to re-enrol must apply to the University for re-admission. It is at the University's discretion whether the student will be re-admitted and whether the period of candidature will be adjusted to take account of the previous candidature.

e. An international student who is studying in Australia on a student visa and who seeks to withdraw from Flinders University and transfer to another registered CRICOS institution *before they have completed 26 weeks of their candidature* must apply for approval to transfer in accordance with the International Student Transfer Procedures.

6.8.2. By University

An authorised University delegate may administratively withdraw a student from HDR candidature for any of the following reasons:

a. the student was admitted on the basis of inaccurate or incomplete information (in accordance with Procedure 4.5.1)

b. the student was admitted due to an error by a University staff member (in accordance with Procedure 4.5.3)

c. the student failed to pay due fees or charges by the applicable date as specified under the Students with Outstanding Debt Policy and the International Student Tuition Fees Procedures

d. the student is deemed *Absent Without Leave* under s.4.d of the HDR Progression Procedures and fails to respond to the University's notification within 10 University business days, as required by section 4.e.ii of the same procedures

e. the student was precluded for unsatisfactory academic performance under the HDR Progression Procedures

f. in accordance with s.4.2.h of the HDR Supervisor Procedures, HDR supervision is no longer available and no alternative supervision can be found after all reasonable steps have been taken

g. the student was found to have committed an act of misconduct under Statute 6.4: Student Conduct and the Policy and Procedures for Handling a Matter Under Statute 6.4: Student Conduct

h. the student is not able to withdraw in a timely fashion (e.g., because of a serious medical condition or death) and the College HDR Coordinator or the Dean of Graduate Research deems it in the best interests of the student in order to mitigate financial or academic risk.

6.8.3. Consequence of full withdrawal for international students

If an international student who is studying in Australia on a student visa withdraws from, or the University administratively withdraws such a student from, their candidature, the University will cancel the student's Confirmation of Enrolment and notify the Australian Government. This may impact the student's visa.

6.9. Enrolment status following thesis submission

a. When an HDR student submits their thesis for examination, the student remains enrolled but their enrolment status is changed to 'Under Examination'.

b. This means that:

i. a Research Training Program (RTP) supported student will no longer be entitled to RTP fee offset or stipend, and/or will not be charged tuition fees, and

ii. an international student will not be charged tuition fees.

c. If the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) of an international student who is studying in Australia on a student visa has not already expired at the time the student submits their thesis, the University will cancel the Confirmation of Enrolment and notify the Australian Government. This may impact the student's visa.

7. Authorities

Delegate	Authority
a. Admission	
College HDR Coordinator or sub-delegate appointed in accordance with the Delegations Policy.	For *domestic* applicants, approve equivalency of Australian and international qualifications, and equivalency of other English language proficiency tests or qualifications, to specified admission requirements.
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training and Capabilities) and Dean of Graduate Research or sub-delegate appointed in accordance with the Delegations Policy.	For *international* applicants, approve equivalency of Australian and international qualifications, and equivalency of other English language proficiency tests or qualifications, to specified admission requirements.
College HDR Coordinator	Approve, reject or withdraw applications for admission into an HDR course. *[Actual offers will be issued, in light of the College HDR Coordinator decision, by the Office of Graduate Research (for domestic applicants) or the International Centre (for international applicants).]*
Dean of Graduate Research	Approve, in special circumstances, on advice of the relevant HDR Coordinator, an offer of admission to an individual applicant who does not meet the specified admission eligibility requirements.
College HDR Coordinator	Approve or reject an application for deferral of offer of admission.
b. Candidature variations, transfers and withdrawals	
Office of Graduate Research **College HDR Coordinator** **College HDR Committee**	Approve variations to enrolment on application by student, as per Procedure 6.

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Delegate	Authority
	For *international* students this approval is in conjunction with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training and Capabilities) and Dean of Graduate Research or sub-delegate.
College HDR Coordinator **College HDR Committee**	Approve or reject applications for transfers between candidatures.
Office of Graduate Research	Administratively withdraw a student, if satisfied the reason for withdrawal has been made out, after consultation as appropriate, as per Procedure 6.8.

8. Forms

Refer to the Office of Graduate Research or Inspire

Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Responsible Officer	Dean of Graduate Research
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