

HDR Progression Procedures

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1. Governing Policy

[Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#)

2. Purpose

- a. These procedures specify the progression Milestones which apply to all students enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidature with a time-based research component, namely Masters by Research, PhD and Professional Doctorate candidatures. [For clarity, Milestone requirements are not applicable to students enrolled in a PhD by Prior Published Work or to Higher Doctorate candidates.]
- b. They outline the general progression requirements and the consequences of progress being unsatisfactory for all HDR students, including those enrolled in a PhD by Prior Published Work candidature.

3. Definitions

College HDR Committee	the College-level committee with responsibility for HDR matters within that College.
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4. Progression Milestones: time-based research candidature

- a. Milestones are structured opportunities to:

- i. enable HDR students to plan their candidature
 - ii. ensure communication between student and supervisor/s is sound and focused on completion
 - iii. enable students to receive feedback from supervisors and College academic community
 - iv. identify any additional training requirements
 - v. encourage students to continue writing throughout candidature
 - vi. enable research integrity to be monitored, and
 - vii. enable students and the University to monitor progress towards timely completion.
- b. Every HDR student enrolled in an HDR candidature with a time-based research project must complete the Milestones set out in the timetable at 4.1.
- c. The structure and format of assessable Milestones are as prescribed by the University HDR Committee and outlined on the [Milestones](#) website. All major reviews must have an oral and a written component, with the written component submitted via [Inspire](#) to the HDR Coordinator no later than 10 business days before the Milestone date.
Note: Interim Milestones do not require an oral presentation, refer to Procedure 4.8.
- d. The written component must include:
- i. an electronic text-matching report on the submitted written work which is reviewed and signed off by the Principal Supervisor (except where this is explicitly precluded by the terms of a Government or third party agreement which applies to the research and an exemption application is approved by the Dean of Graduate Research)
 - ii. appraisals of progress by both the student and the supervisors, and
 - iii. a recommendation by the Principal Supervisor on the student's progress.
- e. At each Milestone, the progress of the student is assessed by the College HDR Coordinator (or nominee) or the College HDR Committee, taking account of recommendations from the supervisor, one of the following determinations is made:
- i. if progress is satisfactory, the student is allowed to continue in their candidature
 - ii. if progress is unsatisfactory, in accordance with Procedure 6.2, the student will be identified as experiencing ongoing or escalating difficulty meeting their progression milestones and their progress will initially be evaluated and may be subject to an Interim Milestone or a formal review.
- f. If a student's Milestone is overdue (5 weeks for full-time students and 8 weeks for part-time students) the student will be identified as experiencing ongoing or escalating difficulty progressing and Procedure 6.2 will be carried out.

4.1. Milestones Timetable

Milestone	Milestone date: measured from date of enrolment (excluding periods of intermission)					
	PhD and Professional Doctorate		Masters by Research		Master of Clinical Education and Master of Health and Clinical Research	
	<i>Full-time student</i>	<i>Part-time student</i>	<i>Full-time student</i>	<i>Part-time student</i>	<i>Full-time student</i>	<i>Part-time student</i>
Online Induction	2 months					
Face-to-face Induction (or via digital interface)	Held once each semester					

Milestone	Milestone date: measured from date of enrolment (excluding periods of intermission)					
	PhD and Professional Doctorate		Masters by Research		Master of Clinical Education and Master of Health and Clinical Research	
	<i>Full-time student</i>	<i>Part-time student</i>	<i>Full-time student</i>	<i>Part-time student</i>	<i>Full-time student</i>	<i>Part-time student</i>
Specialist activities (if applicable)	As specified in the student's Enrolment Verification					
<i>Interim Confirmation of Candidature Review</i>		12 months				
Confirmation of Candidature Review	12 months	24 months	6 months	12 months	3 months into time-based thesis component	6 months in time-based thesis component
<i>Interim Mid-Candidature Review</i>		36 months		18 months		
Mid-Candidature Review	24 months	48 months	12 months	24 months		
<i>Interim Final Thesis Review</i>		60 months		30 months		
Final Thesis Review	36 months	72 months	18 months	36 months	9 months into thesis component	18 months in thesis component
Expected Work Submission Date (Thesis due date)	36 months	72 months	24 months	48 months	12 months into thesis component	24 months in thesis component
<i>Interim Post-Final Thesis Review, if required</i>	42 months (if submission doesn't occur beforehand)	84 months (if submission doesn't occur beforehand)				
Intention to submit	12 weeks before Expected Work Submission Date (Thesis due date)					
Maximum time for submission of thesis	48 months (or before)	96 months (or before)	24 months (or before)	48 months (or before)	12 months into thesis component	24 months into thesis component

4.2. Online Induction

This is a compulsory activity conducted online by the student and managed by the Office of Graduate Research. Completion is recorded on the student's record in [Inspire](#).

4.3. Face-to-face Induction

This is presented by the Office of Graduate Research and covers University-wide and College-specific aspects of HDR candidature, and information on developing a successful research proposal. Participation in person or via digital interface is compulsory and completion is recorded on the student's record in [Inspire](#).

4.4. Specialist activities

- a. Specialist activities are prescribed by the supervisor in the student's Enrolment Verification and are intended to provide additional preparation for research. They may include ethics, work health and safety, computer or writing skills training, statistical data analysis and techniques, language skills acquisition or particular discipline-specific components.
- b. Performance in the specialist activities may be assessed, and performance taken into account as part of Milestone Reviews.

4.5. Confirmation of Candidature Review

- a. The purpose of the confirmation of candidature is to:
 - i. assess whether the HDR student has a viable research project that is achievable for the degree in which the student is enrolled. In some cases, the assessment may include a recommendation to upgrade from Masters by Research to PhD candidature
 - ii. provide constructive feedback to the student on the oral presentation and written report
 - iii. assess whether additional specialist activities are required to ensure timely completion
 - iv. assess whether additional resources will be required by the student to undertake the research
 - v. ensure there has been agreement about the attribution of any papers which may be published and presented by the student as a result of their research, as specified in the [Research Publication, Authorship and Peer Review Policy](#)
 - vi. identify any problems or issues to address, and
 - vii. assess whether the candidature should continue.
- b. This Milestone requires the student to deliver:
 - i. a written component, including a comprehensive research proposal, together with any requirements specified in Procedure 4.c., and
 - ii. an oral presentation to supervisors and the College academic community.
- c. All components of the Milestone will be:
 - i. assessed by the HDR Coordinator (or nominee), after such advice as the HDR Coordinator considers appropriate is obtained, or
 - ii. assessed by the College HDR Committee, following referral by the HDR Coordinator.
- d. The HDR Coordinator will (or nominee):
 - i. assess the submitted material, after obtaining such advice as the HDR Coordinator considers appropriate, or
 - ii. refer it to the College HDR Committee for assessment.
- e. The assessor will provide a written assessment and determination, via [Inspire](#), on whether the candidature should continue or whether the student should be identified as experiencing ongoing or escalating difficulty meeting their progression milestones and the process under Procedure 6.2 initiated.

4.6. Mid-Candidature Review

- a. The purpose of the mid-candidature review is to:
 - i. assess whether the HDR student's progress since Confirmation of Candidature remains satisfactory and that progression goals have been met

- ii. provide constructive feedback to the student on the written submission and oral presentation
 - iii. assess whether the student is on track to submit their thesis by the due date
 - iv. assess whether the student's professional skills are developing appropriately
 - v. assess whether the resources available to the student, including supervision and facilities, are satisfactory
 - vi. identify any problems or issues to address, and
 - vii. assess whether the candidature should continue.
- b. This Milestone requires the student to deliver:
- i. a written report, including draft thesis chapters or equivalent written evidence of thesis progression, together with the requirements specified in Procedure 4.c., and
 - ii. an oral presentation to supervisors and the College academic community.
- c. The HDR Coordinator will (or nominee):
- i. assess, via [Inspire](#), the submitted material, after obtaining such advice as the HDR Coordinator considers appropriate, or
 - ii. refer it to the College HDR Committee for assessment.
- d. The assessor will provide a written assessment and determination on whether the candidature should continue or whether the student should be identified as experiencing ongoing or escalating difficulty meeting their progression milestones and the process under Procedure 6.2 initiated.

4.7. Final Thesis Review

- a. The purpose of the Final Thesis Review is to:
- i. assess whether the HDR student's progress since the Mid-Candidature Review remains satisfactory and that those milestone requirements have been met
 - ii. assess whether the student's thesis is at an advanced stage and is on track to submit by the due date or before
 - iii. provide feedback to the student about the readiness for submission of their thesis
 - iv. discuss which examiners the student does **not** wish to examine their thesis
 - v. determine whether the student should continue, and
 - vi. ensure that students for all higher degrees by research have demonstrated the criteria used by examiners (see the [Course Rules](#)).
- b. This activity requires the student to deliver:
- i. a draft of their thesis, together with the requirements specified in Procedure 4.c., and
 - ii. an oral presentation to supervisors and the College academic community.
- c. The HDR Coordinator will (or nominee):
- i. assess, via [Inspire](#), the submitted material, after obtaining such advice as the HDR Coordinator considers appropriate, or
 - ii. refer it to the College HDR Committee for assessment.
- d. The assessor will provide a determination, via [Inspire](#), on:
- i. whether the thesis is ready for submission for examination, and/or what further work is required for it to get to examination standard, and
 - ii. whether the candidature should continue or whether the student should be identified as experiencing ongoing or escalating difficulty meeting their progression milestones and the process under Procedure 6.2 initiated.

4.8. Interim Milestones

- a. The purpose of an Interim Milestone is to:
 - i. assess whether the HDR student's progress since the last Milestone assessment remains satisfactory and that those Milestone requirements have been met, or will be achieved before the next Milestone
 - ii. assess whether the student is on track to submit their thesis by the due date
 - iii. identify any problems or issues to address
 - iv. assess whether the student's professional skills are developing appropriately
 - v. assess whether the resources available to the student, including supervision and facilities, are satisfactory
 - vi. provide feedback to the student, and
 - vii. assess whether the student should continue.
- b. Interim Milestones apply to part-time students, and to students who have not submitted their thesis within six months of their Final Thesis Review Milestone, to enable regular monitoring between the Milestones described above.
- c. Interim Milestones require a written report from the student, together with the requirements specified in Procedure 4.c., but not an oral presentation.
- d. The HDR Coordinator will (or nominee):
 - i. assess, via [Inspire](#), the submitted material, after obtaining such advice as the HDR Coordinator considers appropriate, or
 - ii. refer it to the College HDR Committee for assessment.
- e. The assessor will provide a written assessment and determination on whether the candidature should continue or whether the student should be identified as experiencing ongoing or escalating difficulty meeting their progression milestones and the process under Procedure 6.2 initiated.

5. Progression – PhD by Prior Published Work candidature

- a. The monitoring of progression of a student enrolled in a PhD by Prior Published Work candidature will be as determined by the student's Principal Supervisor.
- b. The supervisor may require evidence of progress in a variety of forms, including written reports and oral presentations.
- c. All written work presented by the student for review by the student's supervisor must include an electronic text-matching report on the submitted written work.

6. Unsatisfactory progress

6.1. Difficulty Progressing

If, at any time **outside the Milestones** for students with time-based candidature or at **any time** for students with PhD by Prior Published Work or Higher Doctorate candidature, a Principal Supervisor, Associate Supervisor, College HDR Coordinator or Dean of Graduate Research identifies that a student may experience difficulty meeting their progression milestones, **the supervisor must:**

- a. request, in writing, the Office of Graduate Research (OGR) to notify the student that they have been identified as experiencing difficulty progressing, stating the reasons why the student's progress is considered to be unsatisfactory. The OGR will also provide the student with a range of support and resources to help them address the factors that may be impacting their progress
- b. inform the student's other supervisor(s) that the student has been identified as experiencing difficulty progressing, and

- c. request the OGR to arrange a meeting with the student, supervisor(s) and a representative of the OGR HDR Progression team to discuss any actions that must be completed by the student within a specified timeframe to rectify the unsatisfactory progress, which may take the form of an Interim Milestone. The OGR will notify the student and supervisor(s) of the required actions and timeframe for completion in writing.

6.2. Ongoing or Escalating Difficulty Progressing

If the student:

- a. fails to complete the required actions by the specified timeframe determined at 6.1.c, or
- b. is deemed to be making unsatisfactory progress against an assessable Milestone (see Milestones Timetable at 4.1), or
- c. is overdue with an assessable Milestone by 5 weeks for full-time students and 8 weeks for part-time students, or
- d. fails to respond to communications from and/or attend any meetings requested by the OGR concerning their unsatisfactory progress within the specified timeframes

—they will be identified as experiencing ongoing or escalating difficulty meeting their progression milestones and their progress will initially be evaluated and may be subject to an Interim Milestone or a formal review. For students identified as experiencing ongoing or escalating difficulty progressing as per 6.2.b or 6.2.c, the OGR will arrange a meeting with the student, supervisor(s) and a representative of the OGR HDR Progression team to discuss progression in the candidature.

6.2.1. Initial evaluation

- a. The OGR will notify the student in writing that they have been identified as experiencing ongoing or escalating difficulty progressing, stating the reasons why the student's progress is considered to be unsatisfactory, and that their progress will initially be evaluated and may be subject to a formal review.
- b. The student's progress will initially be evaluated by the relevant College HDR Coordinator to determine one of the following:
 - i. actions that can be completed by the student within a specified timeframe to rectify the unsatisfactory progress, which may take the form of an Interim Milestone, or
 - ii. the student's progress is to be subject to a formal review by the College HDR Committee.
- c. In making the determination the College HDR Coordinator will take into consideration the following:
 - i. a diagnostic statement from the supervisor(s) regarding the candidature, including communication, engagement and production of work
 - ii. willingness of the supervisor(s) to continue in the role and sustain an ongoing professional and respectful relationship, and
 - iii. the outcomes of a meeting between the OGR, the student and supervisor(s).

6.2.2. Formal review of progress

The following process applies for a formal review of progress:

Office of Graduate Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Write to the student, at their University email address, with a copy to the student's Principal Supervisor, notifying the student that their progress will be formally reviewed to determine if their candidature should continue, continue with conditions, be terminated or, if appropriate, transferred to another degree. b. Include in the letter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. a copy of these procedures ii. the reasons for initiating a formal review
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. the date of the meeting of the College HDR Committee which will consider the student's response. The meeting may be held in person or using any digital interface which enables all the persons participating to communicate concurrently with each other and to participate effectively. iv. an invitation for the student to respond in writing, or by attendance at the meeting (either in person or via digital interface) or both v. an invitation for the student to be accompanied at the meeting (either in person or via digital interface) by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Flinders University student or staff member, or • an HDR Contact Officer, or • a representative of the Flinders University Student Association's Student Assist team. <p>[Legal representation is not permitted, but this does not prevent a legally qualified student or representative from attending the meeting provided they are not acting in a professional legal capacity.]</p> vi. a statement that the supervisor will be invited to attend the meeting vii. a statement that, if the student does not reply within the specified period, the candidature may be terminated. <p>c. Write to the supervisor, inviting them to be present at the College HDR Committee meeting which will consider the student's response.</p>
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. If desired, request an interview (in person or via digital interface) with the Office of Graduate Research to discuss the letter and the student's proposed response. e. If providing a written response, ensure it is submitted in time for the meeting's consideration.
College HDR Committee Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Chair the meeting at the scheduled time, whether the student has responded to the letter or not. g. If the student and anyone accompanying them under b.v. above are present at the meeting, ensure they are given an opportunity to present the student's response, to answer questions on it, and to respond to any new information that is elicited during the meeting. h. When satisfied that the student has been given adequate opportunity to respond, request that the student, any accompanying person and the supervisor (if present) leave the meeting.
College HDR Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Consider the original recommendation to formally review the student's progress and supporting material, and the student's response. j. On the basis of all the evidence before the committee, make a decision to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. take no further action thus allowing the student to continue in their candidature ii. permit the student to continue in their candidature subject to completing Milestones or such other conditions as the Committee may impose. If the student fails to meet the conditions within the specified timeframe, the College HDR Committee may determine that the student's candidature is to be terminated iii. transfer the candidature from PhD or Professional Doctorate to an appropriate Masters degree candidature or designated exit award, or iv. terminate the student's candidature.

Office of Graduate Research	<p>k. Notify the student of the decision immediately, via their University email address.</p> <p>l. If the decision is for termination or transfer, provide the reasons for the decision and the process for appealing it.</p> <p>m. Notify the student's supervisors and take the necessary administrative steps to effect the decision.</p>
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7. Reviews and appeals

- a. A student whose candidature is terminated or transferred under Procedure 6. should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with the student's supervisor and/or one of the following: the Chair of the College HDR Committee, College HDR Coordinator, an HDR Contact Officer, the Dean of Graduate Research or the Office of Graduate Research.
- b. A student who is dissatisfied with the decision to terminate or transfer candidature may request a review of this decision in accordance with [Student Review and Appeal Policy](#) and procedures.
- c. A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the review may appeal to the Student Appeals Committee, if specified grounds are met, in accordance with the [Student Review and Appeal Policy](#) and procedures.
- d. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, the student may lodge a complaint or appeal with a relevant external agency.

8. Authorities

Delegate	Authority
College HDR Committees	Approve the termination or transfer of a student's candidature for unsatisfactory progression

Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Responsible Officer	Dean of Graduate Research
Approval Date	28 June 2021
Effective Date	28 June 2021
Review Date*	June 2024
Last amended	Dean of Graduate Research, 15 December 2021
CM file number	CF18/303

* Unless otherwise indicated, this procedure will still apply beyond the review date.

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