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1 Objective

The objective of this Policy is to ensure a robust, supportive, efficient and effective system for the management of Higher Degree by Research candidature.

2 Scope

This Policy applies to:

- all domestic, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and international candidates enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research at the University of Tasmania (the University); and
- all staff of the University (employees and adjunct appointments) involved in the supervision and/or management of Higher Degree by Research candidates at the University.

3 Policy Provisions

3.1 Candidate and Supervisory Team Meetings

The full supervisory team are expected to meet with the candidate at least once every two months to review the candidate’s progress, provide advice and support on matters related to the candidate’s research project and research training, and to plan future objectives.

Where the supervisory team determines that a candidate has failed to demonstrate satisfactory academic performance as reported during a candidate and supervisory team meeting, the primary supervisor may recommend the development of a candidature management plan as per section 3.6 of this Policy.

3.2 Formal Reviews of Candidature

The progress of Higher Degree by Research candidates will be formally reviewed by the Graduate Research Coordinator at regular intervals throughout candidature. The first review involves a confirmation of candidature, as detailed in clause 13 of Rule 4 and clause 3.3 of this Policy. After confirmation, candidate progress is reviewed annually as per clause 3.4 of this Policy.

3.3 Confirmation of candidature

3.3.1 Purpose of Confirmation

Confirmation of candidature occurs at 12 months’ equivalent full-time enrolment in the Higher Degree by Research and assesses:

- the academic preparedness of the candidate and whether they have developed a clearly defined, coherent and feasible research project and whether they have documented this adequately in the research plan;
- whether the candidate has met coursework requirements as specified in their letter of offer;
- whether other specific requirements (e.g. obtaining ethics approval), have been met;
• the suitability of the supervisory team to support the candidate to completion;
• whether the candidate’s oral and written skills are sufficient for undertaking a Higher Degree by Research; and
• the likelihood of the candidate completing their Higher Degree by Research within the maximum degree period.

3.3.2 The Confirmation Committee

The confirmation committee is convened and chaired by the Graduate Research Coordinator and must include:

• all members of the supervisory team, and
• one additional member external to the supervisory team. This person would normally be an experienced supervisor from a College/Faculty/Institute within the University.

The candidate has the right to invite an additional person of support who is not another Higher Degree by Research candidate or a legal representative.

The role of the Confirmation Committee is to assess the candidate’s capacity to undertake the proposed research project and determine if the candidature will be confirmed as per clause 13.3 and 13.4 of Rule 4.

3.3.3 Confirmation Requirements

In order to have their candidature confirmed, the candidate must fulfil the following requirements:

a) Research Plan

The research plan describes the research project’s aims, methods, directions and milestones and should provide sufficient information for the supervisory team to comment on its suitability for the nominated level of study. The research plan must contain at a minimum:

• the working title of the thesis, together with the conceptual framing of the research and an outline of the research and/or scholarly and creative activity to be conducted;
• the likely significance and impact of the research and original contribution that is expected to be made;
• where appropriate, issues surrounding ethics, budgetary requirements and access to infrastructure; and
• the entire timetable and forward plan for a candidate’s Higher Degree by Research including a set of milestones to be agreed with the supervisory team. The timetable should aim for submission at:
  • 24 months full time (48 months part time) for Master of Research degree, or
  • 36 months full time (72 months part time) for a Doctoral degree.

The first draft of the research plan must be completed at three months equivalent full-time enrolment and submitted to the Graduate Research Coordinator for review by the confirmation committee. At the point of confirmation of candidature, the research plan should have been refined and any issues affecting progress discussed, along with forward planning for the remainder of candidature.
The research plan is a dynamic document and should be continually updated throughout candidature and approved by the supervisory team and Graduate Research Coordinator at each annual review.

b) Ethics Requirements

Where a research project is dependent on research activities involving human participants, their data or tissue, genetic material or animals, a candidate must provide, at minimum, a careful presentation of all the foreseeable issues likely to be encountered in obtaining ethical clearance to undertake those research activities, as set out in the University’s Research Ethics Policy. Where a pilot study is required prior to full ethics approval being sought then a draft ethics application for that stage of the study should be provided. Where approvals from the Human Research Ethics Committee(s) or the Animal Ethics Committee has been received, full documentation of the received approval(s) should be provided to the Confirmation Committee prior to Confirmation of candidature. Candidates must not commence research activities involving human participants or animals until the required approvals have been obtained by their Primary Supervisor.

c) Data Management Plan

Candidates must provide a data management plan describing how they will collect, organise, manage, store, secure, back up, preserve, and share their research data in line with the Management of Research Data Policy and Procedure.

d) Written Work

A candidate must submit a satisfactory written component, of sufficient length to provide evidence that they have the ability to write in English at a Higher Degree by Research standard (within the relevant discipline). The written component must be work undertaken after enrolment in the Higher Degree by Research at the University, relevant to the thesis and should be:

- presented in a format and style as determined by the requirements of the discipline and following advice from the supervisory team and, be correctly referenced; and
- accepted by Peer Review (at least through the Confirmation Committee) as a piece of work appropriate to the discipline.

e) Oral Presentation

A satisfactory public oral presentation on the candidate’s research appropriate to the discipline and level of study, presented to an academic audience in the School of Enrolment (or other equivalent academic group) in a way that demonstrates the candidate’s oral competence, presentation skills and the ability to respond to questions about the research project.

The oral presentation provides the candidate with the opportunity to discuss aspects of their research to a group of the candidate’s peers and academic staff and receive expert and constructive advice on the proposed research project, its scope, feasibility and originality at the appropriate level. It is also an opportunity for comment on the theoretical approach, method and/or design of the research project.
The presentation should be followed by a time for questions and answers.

All members of the supervisory team are expected to attend this presentation.

Candidates are encouraged to use feedback from the oral presentation when finalising the written component for confirmation.

f) Peer Review

Peer review of the proposed research project as detailed in the research plan by senior academics within the discipline and external to the supervisory team is required in order to assess:

- the merit and integrity of the proposed research project;
- whether the research project is of a suitable scope and standard for the Higher Degree by Research; and
- whether the candidate has the capacity to complete the research project and undertake the Higher Degree by Research at the required level.

Peer review of the proposed research project can include the following:

- critical review of the research plan; and/or
- providing critical feedback on the proposed research project at the candidate’s confirmation seminar; and/or
- participating in the confirmation meeting with permission from the Chair of the confirmation committee.

g) Supervisor-Candidate meetings

A minimum of five mandatory meetings with all members of the supervisory team.

h) Coursework

- Doctoral degree candidates: Completion of at least 50% of the Graduate Certificate in Research, including XGR501 and either XGR502 or one elective unit.
- Master of Research candidates: Completion of XGR501 and enrolment in one other unit from the course schedule.
- Professional Doctorates: Completion of at least 50% of coursework as specified in the course and unit handbook, including XGR501.

i) Any Additional Criteria

Including additional meetings, presentations or training required by the school of enrolment or specified in the letter of offer.
3.3.5 Confirmation of Candidature Outcomes

At the final stage of the confirmation of candidature process, the Confirmation Committee will make one of the following recommendations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The candidate has met all confirmation of candidature requirements and demonstrated satisfactory academic performance.</td>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong>: The candidature is confirmed and if the candidate is a scholarship holder, the continuation of the scholarship is also confirmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The candidate has not met all confirmation of candidature requirements and/or has failed to demonstrate satisfactory academic performance.</td>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong>: The confirmation of candidature period is extended for a single period of no longer than three months equivalent full-time enrolment. The confirmation committee must make clear the work required to pass confirmation. At the conclusion of the extension period a new recommendation will be made. If the candidate is a scholarship holder, the scholarship continues to the end of the extension period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The candidate has failed to demonstrate satisfactory academic performance at the level required for a Doctoral degree.</td>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong>: The candidature for a Doctoral degree be converted to candidature at the level of a Master of Research degree and if the candidate is a scholarship holder, subject to the conditions of the award, the tenure of that scholarship be converted to the duration appropriate for a Master of Research degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The Master of Research candidate and has met all confirmation of candidature requirements and demonstrated satisfactory academic performance at the level required for a Doctoral degree.</td>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong>: The candidature for a Master of Research degree be converted to candidature at the level of a Doctoral degree and if the candidate is a scholarship holder, the end date of the scholarship be extended in line with the conditions of that scholarship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The candidate has failed to demonstrate satisfactory academic performance at the level required for the Higher Degree by Research and has been given a reasonable opportunity to rectify this failure.</td>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong>: The candidature be terminated and the candidate not be permitted to continue candidature.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In accordance with Clause 13 of Rule 4, the Dean of Graduate Research will determine if confirmation of candidature is granted.
All candidates will receive notification advising them of the outcome of the confirmation of candidature process.

Any candidate, who has not completed a confirmation of candidature process by the nominated date or by the end date of an approved extension period, will be notified by the University that their candidature is to be terminated under clause 18 of Rule 4.

3.4 Annual Review Process

Annual reviews involve consideration of reports prepared by the candidate and primary supervisor and a meeting between the candidate, the full supervisory team, chaired by the Graduate Research Coordinator. The purpose of the annual review is to make an assessment of:

- the candidate’s academic performance consistent with the candidate’s research plan; and
- the adequacy of research infrastructure and resources (including the supervisory team relationship) needed by the candidate to complete the research project within the maximum degree period.

Continuation of candidature is subject to a satisfactory report as per section 3.4 of this Policy.

3.5 Annual Review Outcomes

At the conclusion of the review meeting the Graduate Research Coordinator makes one of the following recommendations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The candidate has demonstrated satisfactory academic performance and no significant problems have arisen. The candidate is expected to complete within the maximum degree period. <strong>Outcome</strong>: candidature to continue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The candidate has demonstrated satisfactory academic performance, however, issues have been identified that may delay submission of the thesis. The candidate and supervisory team have discussed these issues and strategies are in place to enable completion within the maximum degree period and documented in the annual review report. <strong>Outcome</strong>: candidature to continue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The candidate’s has failed to demonstrate satisfactory academic performance. <strong>Outcome</strong>: candidature to continue subject to conditions and implementation of a candidature management plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The candidate’s expected thesis submission date exceeds the maximum permitted candidature expiry date (an application for extension of candidature is required four weeks in advance of the maximum expiry date).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Candidature to continue subject to conditions and implementation of a candidature management plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>The candidate has failed to demonstrate satisfactory academic performance and has been given a Reasonable Opportunity to rectify this failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong>: candidature to be transferred from the Doctoral degree to Master of Research degree and a candidature management plan to be implemented.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong></td>
<td>The candidate has failed to demonstrate satisfactory academic performance and/or progress and has been given a reasonable opportunity to rectify this failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong>: Termination of candidature recommended</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A report on the annual review including the recommendation and a detailed progress statement from the candidate, must be provided by the Graduate Research Coordinator to the Graduate Research Office as per Section 3.3.2 of the Higher Degree by Research Reviews of Progress Procedure.

Where a review determines that research infrastructure and/or resources (including the supervisory team relationship) are inadequate, any proposed changes to research infrastructure and/or resources must be approved by the Head of School and, where appropriate, the Associate Dean or Director Research.

All annual review recommendations will be approved by the Dean of Graduate Research.

### 3.6 Candidature Management Plan

Candidature management plans are designed to assist candidates and supervisors to identify and work towards overcoming problems that may be encountered at any time throughout candidature or as a result of an annual review of progress.

The implementation of a candidature management plan is designed to ensure closer supervision of a candidate’s research project and is initiated by the Graduate Research Coordinator on advice from candidate’s primary supervisor.

Candidature management plans will be put in place for up to two three-month periods (equivalent full-time enrolment).

Where a candidature management plan is in place, the candidate must meet with the primary supervisor fortnightly and with the whole supervisory team on a monthly basis. Candidate progress will be assessed at the end of a candidature management plan period by the Graduate Research Coordinator.

In the case of Master of Research candidates, in all but exceptional circumstances, if at the end of the three-month candidature management plan period the performance and/or conduct of the candidate has been unsatisfactory as per section 18 of Rule 4, the Graduate Research Coordinator will make a recommendation to the Head of School that candidature should be terminated and clause 3.5.9 of the Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management Policy applies.
In the case of Doctoral candidates, the Graduate Research Coordinator will make one of the following determinations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determination</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The candidate is making good progress against agreed milestones and no significant problems have arisen. The candidate is expected to complete within the maximum degree period.</td>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong>: candidature to continue. candidature management plan to be discontinued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The candidate has completed one three-month period on a candidature management plan. The candidate’s progress has improved; however closer supervision is still required.</td>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong>: candidature to continue subject to conditions and implementation of the candidature management plan for a second three-month period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The candidate has completed two three-month periods on a candidature management plan. The candidate has failed to demonstrate satisfactory academic performance and/or progress against agreed milestones at the level required for a Doctoral degree and has been given a reasonable opportunity to rectify this failure.</td>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong>: candidature to be transferred from the Doctoral degree to a Master of Research degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The candidate has completed two three-month periods on a candidature management plan. The candidate has failed to demonstrate satisfactory academic performance and/or progress against agreed milestones at the level required for the Higher Degree by Research they are enrolled in and has been given a reasonable opportunity to rectify this failure.</td>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong>: Termination of candidature recommended as per clause 18 Rule 4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 **Responsibilities**

4.1 **The Dean of Graduate Research** is responsible for:

- ensuring high quality administrative processes and appropriate candidate support are provided and monitored;
- ensuring candidates receive a high standard of supervision;
- developing strategy and associated policies for the retention and successful completion of Higher Degree by Research candidates; and
- ensuring that the University maintains appropriate standards in relation to candidature matters (including admission, minimum infrastructure, supervision and examination).

4.2 **College Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty Deans and Institute Directors** are responsible for:

- the strategic management of College/Faculty/Institute financial, supervision, and infrastructure resources as per the Academic Structures Policy, Delegations Policy and Schedules.
4.3 Heads of School are responsible to College Pro Vice-Chancellor/Faculty Deans/Institute Directors for:

- the administration of the School including planning, budget, strategy, human resources and performance as per the Academic Structures Policy, Delegations Policy and Schedules.

4.4 Graduate Research Coordinators are responsible to the Heads of School for:

- monitoring candidate progress as per section 3.2.3 of the Higher Degree by Research Graduate Research Coordination Policy.

5 Definitions and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term/Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Director, Associate Dean or Director of Research</td>
<td>A senior academic staff member appointed to assist the College/Faculty Dean/Institute Director with the planning, development and management of research and research training in the College/Faculty/Institute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>a person enrolled at the University as a candidate for a Higher Degree by Research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidature</td>
<td>the status conferred on a person who is enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research as a candidate at the University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>Unless otherwise stated, in this Procedure ‘College’ refers to the College in which the applicant will be enrolled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Pro Vice-Chancellor</td>
<td>The Pro Vice-Chancellor of the relevant college (or their authorised delegate).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation Committee</td>
<td>A committee as defined at clause 3.3.2 of this Policy, responsible for assessing a candidate’s capacity to undertake the proposed research and determining whether candidature will be confirmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of Candidature</td>
<td>confirmation by the Dean of Graduate Research that candidacy may progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Management Plan</td>
<td>A document describing how data will be collected, organised, managed, stored, secured, backed up, preserved, and shared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Graduate Research</td>
<td>The Dean of Graduate Research establishes the academic framework for research training at the University, and works with Faculties and Institutes to ensure the University maintains appropriate standards for research training at the University (including admission, appropriate infrastructure, supervision and examination).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Period</td>
<td>The period within which the thesis must be submitted (1-2 years equivalent full-time enrolment for Master of Research degrees and 2-4 years equivalent full-time enrolment for Doctoral degrees) as per clause 12 of Rule 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Unless otherwise stated, in this Procedure ‘Faculty’ refers to the Faculty in which the applicant will be enrolled.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faculty Dean: The Dean of the relevant Faculty (or their authorised delegate).

Equivalent Full-Time Enrolment: Elapsed time where a candidate is enrolled full-time, excluding approved leave of absence and including annual and sick leave. For those enrolled part-time, equivalent full-time enrolment is twice as long as for full-time candidates.

Full-Time: As per clause 3.3.1 of the Higher Degree by Research candidature Management Policy.

Graduate Research Coordinator: an academic staff member who oversees candidature management within a school of enrolment in consultation with the Head of School.

Higher Degree by Research: A Doctor of Philosophy, Professional Doctorate or Master of Research Degree as listed in Rule 4: Rules of Graduate Research.

Head of School: The Head of the school of enrolment or the Director of the Centre or Head of the Institute of enrolment (or nominee).

Institute: Unless otherwise stated, in this Procedure ‘Institute’ refers to the Institute in which the applicant will be enrolled.

Institute Director: For the purposes of this policy, the Institute Director refers to in the case of:
- the Australian Maritime College, the Principal of that College (or their authorised delegate).
- the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, the Executive Director of that Institute (or their authorised delegate).
- the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, the Director of that Institute (or their authorised delegate).

Maximum Degree Period: As per Clause 12 of Rule 4:
- Doctor of Philosophy: 4 years Full Time or equivalent Part Time.
- Professional Doctorate: the maximum Degree Period as approved by Academic Senate and set out in the applicable the University course and unit handbook.
- Master Degree (Research): 2 years Full Time or equivalent Part Time.
- Joint/Cotutelle Doctoral degree: the maximum degree period as specified in the candidate Agreement.

Part-Time: As per clause 3.3.1 of the Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management Policy.

Peer Review: is the process of subjecting an author's scholarly work, research, or ideas to the scrutiny of others who are experts in the same field.

Primary Supervisor: The supervisor who is primarily responsible for ensuring that all administrative and regulatory requirements prescribed for candidates are met.
Reasonable opportunity: Although specific to each case, a reasonable opportunity is generally considered to be as per the candidature management plan process described in clause 3.6 of this Policy.

Research Plan: A plan, developed by the candidate, that:
- develops a rationale for the research project, including the context of the research and a structural outline of the project;
- states the hypothesis/questions to be tested by the research project;
- defines aims and realistic milestones to be undertaken during candidature and provides a timeline for the achievement of these activities; and
- is continually updated and used to report a candidate’s progress against agreed milestones on an annual basis at minimum or more frequently where required.

Research project: The research undertaken towards the Higher Degree by Research as articulated in the research plan.

Rule 4: Rules of Graduate Research

Satisfactory Academic Performance: Performance which is regarded as satisfactory for the relevant Degree, taking into account a candidate’s development of and compliance with their research plan.

School of Enrolment: The School, Centre or Institute within which a Higher Degree by Research candidate is enrolled.

Supervisory team: The Primary and Co-Supervisors appointed by the Head of School to supervise the candidate and their research project (also see clause 3.2 of the Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy).

University: Unless otherwise stated all references to the University mean the University of Tasmania.

6 Supporting Documentation
- Higher Degree by Research Reviews of Progress Procedures
- Higher Degree by Research Admissions Policy
- Higher Degree by Research Admissions Procedure
- Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management Policy
- Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management Procedure
- Higher Degree by Research Minimum Infrastructure and Resources Policy
- Higher Degree by Research Minimum Infrastructure and Resources Procedure
- Research Ethics Policy
- Management of Research Data Policy
- Management of Research Data Procedure
- Rule 4 – Rules of Graduate Research
- Records Management Policy
- Academic Structure Policy
- Delegations Policy and Schedules
Acknowledgements

This Policy has been developed with reference to the Australian Council of Graduate Research Good Practice Principles.

Versioning

| Former Version(s) | Version 1 – Higher Degree by Research Reviews of Progress Policy, approved April, 2017 |