Evaluation Criteria and Evidence for a Self Review of Higher Degree Research

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Demonstrating Quality
Introduction

• International benchmarking (e.g. ARWU) requires a quantum of HDR candidates to identify a university as research intensive.

• Robust processes for implementing, assessing and evaluating HDR programs are critical to ensuring quality HDR training.

Demonstrating Quality in HDR

• International Context
• National Context
• 10 Principles for Best Practice in HDR (Global Leaders Summit, 2010)
• National Self Reviews
• UTAS Self Review
• Evaluation Criteria and Evidence
• Some Findings
• Lessons Learnt
Demonstrating Quality in HDR

**International Context**
- **UK**
  - Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)
  - 10 key reference points within its Academic Structure
  - Postgraduate research programs

- **US**
  - 2.5 Million will require a masters, doctoral or advanced degree between 2008 and 2018 (Wendler et al., 2010).
  - **Challenges**
    - demographic shifts
    - international migration
    - ‘non-traditional’ candidates and return from workforce

**National Context**
- **Key Drivers – Quality**
  - Emergence of TEQSA to replace AUQA
  - Higher Education Standards Framework
  - Australian Qualification Framework (AQF)
  - Measuring and improving academic standards in universities

- **Key Drivers – Research**
  - Impact on HDR training as result of Government policy initiatives
  - Excellence in Research in Australia (ERA)
  - Super Science Initiative
  - Postgraduate Research Student Support
  - Measuring and improving research quality
  - Global Leaders Summit-2010
Demonstrating Quality in HDR

National Context-Global Leaders Summit

jointly sponsored by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and the Go8 addressed the topic of measuring and assessing quality in HDR Programs (September 13-15, 2010)

10 Principles for best practice for HDR training-

1. Ensure and improve the quality of (post)graduate training, student learning and professional development.
2. Assure external stakeholders of the quality of (post)-graduate education.
3. Evaluation should be based on clearly-defined objectives, criteria and processes.
4. Development of specific quality metrics for research degrees is a key priority.
5. Quality assessment is most effective when academic staff play a role in designing or refining evaluation procedures.
6. Regular processes of internal and external review to sustain and advance quality.
7. Graduate education leaders have particular responsibilities for defining, measuring, benchmarking and improving the professional and transferable skills of students.
8. Assessment of quality in international collaborations is integral to (post)-graduate research training in the 21st century.
10. National and regional groups of university leaders responsible for (post)-graduate education and research training provide an important mechanism for sharing best practices.
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Self Reviews

• Major self reviews of Research/Research Training in Cycle 2 AUQA audits (Bond, Charles Darwin, La Trobe, Macquarie, Melbourne, New South Wales and Newcastle)

• Building staff capabilities and capacity for improving and enhancing standards in HDR

UTAS

• Self review of HDR (Sept-Oct, 2010) in preparation of Cycle 2 AUQA audit

• How do you know? (Carmichael, 2010) framed the self review process and shaped the inquiry for the collection of evidence to demonstrate quality and standards in HDR


• Identified key evaluation criteria and evidence in HDR
### Demonstrating Quality in HDR

Evaluation Criteria & Evidence

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Planning, Governance and Policy Arrangements (strategic and operational planning, organisational structures and corporate governance, academic governance)</td>
<td>University Strategic Plan, Research and Research Training Plan, University governance structures and reporting lines, Policies, TOR Research committees</td>
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<td>2. Financial Management Processes</td>
<td>Financial allocations</td>
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<td>3. Supervision - guidelines and registration, quality assurance processes, professional development for supervisors</td>
<td>Supervisor register, guidelines, feedback from supervisors, training modules and workshops for supervisors</td>
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<td>4. Candidate Progression and Retention</td>
<td>Completion &amp; satisfaction rates, research learning plans, annual reviews of progress, at risk register</td>
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<td>5. Articulation Pathways</td>
<td>Evidence of adherence to AQF and individual statements of graduate abilities</td>
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# Demonstrating Quality in HDR

## Evaluation Criteria & Evidence

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<tr>
<td><strong>6. Feedback from Stakeholders and Candidates</strong></td>
<td>Tracking career destinations of PhD candidates, providing timely advice as result of annual surveys, development of annual improvement priorities AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR UNIVERSITIES</td>
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<td><strong>7. International Candidates</strong></td>
<td>Feedback from international candidates not only courses but services, pay attention to entrance credentials and language requirements AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR UNIVERSITIES</td>
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<td><strong>8. Indigenous Candidates</strong></td>
<td>Mentoring programs AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR UNIVERSITIES</td>
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<td><strong>9. International Research Agreements and Research Training Partnerships</strong></td>
<td>Cotutelle arrangements, candidate agreements that articulate requirements AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR UNIVERSITIES</td>
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<td><strong>10. Candidate Support — administrative, financial and academic support</strong></td>
<td>Enrolment and administrative arrangements, access to space, resources computers, skilling and training programs AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR UNIVERSITIES-CANDIDATE CAREER DEVELOPMENT</td>
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<td><strong>11. Benchmarking</strong></td>
<td>Candidate assessment/grading, benchmarking processes, resources AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR UNIVERSITIES</td>
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## Improvements - HDR Candidature Management

### Candidature Timeline

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### Variation to Candidature

- Start
- Suspend
- Stop
- Extension
- Review
- Re-start
- Submit
- Graduate

![Candidature timeline diagram](image-url)
**Improvements** - HDR Candidature Management

**Skilling and Training**
Improvements - Measuring the success of our Self Review in HDR training

The number of HDR candidates commencing increased 37% from 2008-2010.

The number of HDR candidates completing increased 46% from 2008 – 2010.
UTAS was ranked 5 in HDR completions for 2009, up from 23 in 2008.
HDR Benchmarking Project-Deakin, UTAS, UOW 2011

INDICATIVE DRAFT- PRESENTLY SCOPING THE PROJECT

PI#1 Policy and governance framework

PI#2 Selection and admission processes

PI# 3 Learning outcomes for HDR programs

PI#4 HDR supervision

PI#5 Academic support services

PI#6 Administrative support and adequate resources

PI#7 Student performance and feedback data
Lessons Learnt in Self Review Process

- Develop transparent and rigorous processes for maintaining and assuring quality of HDR training and management on a regular basis;

- Initiate a Graduate Research Coordinators network to ensure consistency and develop and share good practice;

- Develop process for monitoring quality of theses based on HDR candidate completion rates rather than completion times;

- Determine how data will be analysed;

- Use survey data to candidates and supervisors to formatively improve quality of supervision and communicate improvements back to them.

- And lastly…
There is a HOLY TRINITY IN MONITORING AND MAINTAINING QUALITY IN HDR

- Standards
  • What are our standards?

- Evaluative Criteria
  • How do we measure standards?

- Evidence-Data
  • How do we know?
  • How do we use this data to improve standards?
References


