Higher Degree by Research Admissions and Enrolment Policy

**Responsibility Officer**
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

**Approved by**
Vice-Chancellor

**Approved and commenced**
July 2019

**Review by**
July 2022

**Relevant Legislation, Ordinance, Rule and/or Governance Level Principle**

- Australian Sanctions Legislation:
  - *Charter of the United Nations (UN Sanction Enforcement Law) Declaration 2008*
  - *Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011 (Cth)*
  - *Autonomous Sanctions Regulations 2011 (Cth)*
  - *Defence Trades Control Act 2012 (Cth)*
  - *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (Cth)*
  - *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)*
  - *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015*
  - *Australian Qualifications Framework*
  - *University of Tasmania Act 1992*.

**Governance Level Principle**

- *Governance Level Principle 12 - Academic Standards*
- *Governance Level Principle 13 - Quality Management Framework*
- *Rule 4 - Rules of Graduate Research*

**Responsible Organisational Unit**
Division of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

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1 Objective

The objective of this *Policy* is to set out admission and enrolment requirements for a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) at the University of Tasmania (the University).

2 Scope

This *Policy* applies to:

- all domestic, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and international students applying for admission to an HDR and
- all staff of the University involved in the assessment of applicants for admission to an HDR.

3 Policy Provisions

3.1 Principles of Selection

Selection for admission to an HDR will be based on each applicant demonstrating that they have:

- an appropriate academic background and adequate research preparation to meet the minimum entry requirements specified in Rule 4 Rules of Graduate Research (Rule 4), and any specific entry requirements set by the College of enrolment.
- a preliminary research proposal that is academically appropriate for their proposed HDR program.

Selection for admission to an HDR will also be based on the University's assessment of its capacity to provide:

- suitable, qualified supervision appropriate to the discipline and background of the applicant, and
the necessary facilities and resources required by the candidate to successfully complete the HDR within the degree period as specified in section 12 of Rule 4.

Selection decisions will be based on demonstrated academic achievement and may also take account of other factors if the candidate is applying for admission using an alternative pathway as listed in section 3.4.2 of this Policy.

3.2 Enrolment and Research Sanctions

Where an applicant is a citizen of a country affected by:

- United Nations Security Council Sanctions,
- Australian Autonomous Sanctions Regimes, or
- the Defence Trades Control legislation

the applicant and/or the applicant’s proposed research project will be assessed in accordance with the Defence Export Controls Policy and the Security Council and Autonomous Sanctions Compliance Policy prior to consideration for admission to an HDR.

The University Graduate Research Office (GRO) is nominated as the authorised assessor for “autonomous sanctions compliance and risk assessment forms”.

Final approval of whether to support an offer of admission to an HDR to an applicant who is a citizen of a sanctioned country is made by the Dean of Graduate Research.

3.3 Enrolment and Declaration of a Disability or Health Issue

In keeping with the University’s Disability and Health Conditions Policy, applicants should disclose any existing disability/health conditions at the start of candidature where:

- those conditions may affect their capacity to undertake their HDR program, and
- help or support from the University are warranted to identify levels of initial and ongoing additional support required by the candidate.

Information disclosed to the University about a candidate’s disability/health condition will be managed in accordance with the relevant privacy legislation and the University’s Privacy Policy.

3.4 Entry Pathways into a Higher Degree by Research

Entry into an HDR is based on demonstrated capacity to undertake significant research in the proposed field.

The final determination regarding the standard of an applicant's research capacity is made by the Dean of Graduate Research.

3.4.1 Standard Entry Pathways

Minimum entry requirements apply to all HDRs and specified in section 8 of Rule 4.

Qualifying degrees must have been awarded within a 10-year period prior to the date of application for admission to HDR candidature.
Where a coursework masters’ degree or graduate diploma is considered as the basis for admission to an HDR, the research project or thesis produced for these qualifications should be no less than 10,000 words in length and equate to a minimum 25% research component of the entire degree.

Where any of the standard admission requirements noted above are not met, an application will be considered via the alternative entry pathway process.

### 3.4.2 Alternative Entry Pathways

Where attainment of research skills and capacity has been achieved through sector-based research and/or equivalent professional experience and/or qualifications, applicants may apply for alternative entry to an HDR.

As stated in section 3.2.4 of the Higher Degree by Research Admissions and Enrolment Procedure, applicants must provide documented evidence to demonstrate their levels of competency against four criteria:

1. conceptual and theoretical understanding and knowledge of the field,
2. potential to undertake research—such as research design, data collection, and data management skills,
3. analytical and interpretive skills—such as data analysis, critical analysis, and problem solving, and
4. communication skills.

### 3.5 English Language Requirements

English is the language of instruction at the University. All applicants for whom English is not their first language must provide evidence that they are able to read, write, speak, and understand English to a sufficient standard before starting their HDR, as per the Higher Degree by Research Admissions and Enrolment Procedure.

Colleges may set higher individual minimum scores for English language requirements for specific HDR programs subject to approval by the Research Degrees Committee.

#### 3.5.1 Options for Applicants who do not meet English Language Requirements

The Head of Academic Unit (HoAU), through the Executive Dean, may present a case to the Dean of Graduate Research that an applicant who does not meet the minimum English language requirements has other qualifications or experiences that demonstrate their English language proficiency.

### 3.6 Referee Reports

Two referee reports are required in support of applications for admission to an HDR. At least one report must be from a referee external to the University. Applicants may only nominate their proposed supervisor as a referee if they have previously been supervised by them at the University.

Applicants who completed all previous tertiary qualifications at the University may nominate both referees from the University, provided that one referee is not a member of the proposed supervisory team.

Referees must be able to comment on an applicant’s research experience and potential against the criteria listed at Section 3.4.2 (1-4) by referring to their academic
background, including comparative standing in research qualifications, sector-based experience, prizes/achievements and other research related activities.

3.7 Transfer from another Institution

An applicant who is enrolled in an HDR at another Australian university may seek to transfer their candidature and research project to an HDR at the University at the same level of degree provided:

- the body of work the applicant is seeking to count towards their new candidature has not been submitted and/or accepted for an award at another institution,
- the research undertaken by the candidate continues, or is modified, to meet the requirements of the new HDR candidature, and
- the previous institution has provided appropriate release documentation related to candidature, project intellectual property (IP), and/or student visas.

Applicants wishing to transfer their candidature to the University must obtain the support of the relevant Executive Dean at the University and are subject to the HDR admission requirements and enrolment procedures at the time of transfer.

If the transfer is approved, the total duration of candidature will include the time enrolled at the original institution, and the University's minimum and maximum degree periods will apply.

Where a transfer of candidature and research project is approved, the interval between the two enrolments would normally be restricted to the time taken for both institutions to administer their withdrawal and application processes and for the applicant to relocate and commence in the HDR at the University.

3.8 External (Off-Campus) Candidature

A domestic or international applicant may apply to undertake their candidature off-campus. Approval for off-campus candidature is not automatic. The Academic Unit of enrolment and relevant College must be confident that the prospective applicant has the personal maturity and research experience to pursue independent, sustained, and structured research off-campus. Applicants may be able to demonstrate these capacities by reference to previous studies and/or research completed. A detailed plan must be provided to show how any program requirements will be met, and communication maintained. Final approval of any application for off-campus enrolment will be made by the Dean of Graduate Research.

Before external candidature is approved, the relevant College is expected to provide assurance to the Dean of Graduate Research that all additional costs related to external candidature can be met by the candidate, from funding attached to the research project, or by the Academic Unit of enrolment.

If an on-campus candidate seeks to spend more than 3 months of continuous time away from the University to complete all or part of their program, they are required to apply for a change of mode to external ‘off-campus’ candidature.

The following periods away from the University are not classified as completing all or part of a program outside the University:

- studying at a partner institution under a joint or dual degree, and
- revisions completed elsewhere after a thesis examination.
3.8.1 Domestic Applicants and External Candidature

A domestic applicant may apply to undertake all or part of their candidature off-campus. Where an application for external candidature is approved, domestic candidates must attend the University for periods of time sufficient to complete any on-campus requirements of the HDR in accordance with course specifications approved by Academic Senate and set out in the applicable University course and unit handbook.

3.8.2 International Applicants and External Candidature

For international HDR applicants there are two categories of external candidature: onshore or offshore.

**Onshore external candidature**: This form of candidature applies to international candidates in Australia who hold a student visa; they can only spend up to 12 months in total studying off-campus within Australia.

**Offshore external candidature**: This form of candidature applies to candidates who undertake their entire degree at a location outside of Australia. Candidates may visit a University campus but must seek advice from the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Control before entering Australia.

3.9 Joint Research Training Programs

Applicants who wish to apply to undertake a Doctoral degree under a Joint Research Training Program should contact the Graduate Research Office to discuss specific requirements related to these programs.

3.10 Assessments of Applications for Admission to a Higher Degree by Research

In consultation with the proposed Primary Supervisor, the Graduate Research Coordinator (GRC) is responsible for assessing applications for admission to HDR candidature, and for making recommendations about admission applications to the relevant HoAU and College Associate Deans Research (ADR). These recommendations will take into consideration:

- the program of research and other studies required of the candidate,
- the supervisory arrangements to be made in accordance with the *Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy*,
- the date of enrolment in the HDR, and
- any other conditions recommended by the academic unit of enrolment.

After endorsement by the HoAU and ADR, recommendations for admission are provided to the Dean of Graduate Research for approval.

3.11 Offers of Admission to a Higher Degree by Research

Letters of offer for admission to an HDR shall be made in writing by the Dean of Graduate Research.

Unless otherwise advised, letters of offer are valid for two weeks for domestic applicants or eight weeks for international applicants. Offers will lapse if they have not been accepted by the date indicated in the letter of offer, as per section 3.11 and
section 3.12 of the Higher Degree by Research Admissions and Enrolment Procedure.

Once an offer of admission to an HDR has been accepted, domestic candidates have up to two months and international candidates have up to six months to enrol in the HDR and start their candidature, the time being marked from the date of the letter of offer, unless otherwise stated.

A letter of offer may contain pre-enrolment conditions that must be met either before accepting the offer or on being admitted to candidature.

3.12 Enrolment in a Relevant Program of Coursework

Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Research applicants will automatically be enrolled in the Graduate Certificate in Research (X5A) when enrolled in the relevant HDR, unless otherwise specified in the letter of offer.

Professional Doctorate applicants must enrol in coursework units in accordance with course specifications approved by Academic Senate and set out in the applicable University course and unit handbook.

Applicants should refer to the Higher Degree by Research Reviews of Progress Policy for more information about coursework requirements.

3.13 Credit provisions

The Dean of Graduate Research may determine that an applicant/candidate is wholly or partially exempt from coursework requirements of the HDR as a result of their previous qualifications and/or experiences. The applicant/candidate will be advised in writing of any exemptions/credit approved by the Dean of Graduate Research.

3.13.1 Graduate Certificate in Research

Applicants/candidates may apply for full or partial exemption from, or credit for, units already completed towards the Graduate Certificate in Research (X5A). Applicants should refer to section 3.2 of the Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management Procedures.

Applicants seeking full exemption from the Graduate Certificate in Research (X5A) or exemption from one or more core units, must complete relevant research integrity and work health and safety training as specified by the Dean of Graduate Research.

3.13.2 Professional Doctorates

Applicants to a Professional Doctorate may apply for credit for up to 50% of coursework where:

- they gained at least a distinction grade for the unit of study

and the unit of study

- was a genuine Australian Qualifications Framework level nine unit in the same or a cognate discipline,
- did not constitute a component of an already completed degree, and
- was completed in the past ten years.
No credit will be given for previously completed research.

Applications for credit towards the coursework component of a Professional Doctorate must be discussed with, and approved by, the relevant course coordinator.

3.14 Commencement Date of Enrolment

An applicant must enrol in and start their candidature on or before the date of enrolment stipulated in the letter of offer.

3.14.1 Delaying the Date of Enrolment

In exceptional circumstances, and where delaying the date of enrolment in the HDR can be accommodated by the research project, the Academic Unit of enrolment and the relevant College the Dean of Graduate Research may approve an application from the applicant to delay the date of enrolment. That application must be made in accordance with section 3.10 of the Higher Degree by Research Admissions and Enrolment Procedure and submitted prior to the original date of enrolment contained in the letter of offer.

An application to delay the date of enrolment will not normally be approved for longer than three months. In exceptional cases, an application to delay the date of enrolment may be approved for longer periods up to a maximum of 12 months. Where commencement has been delayed for more than 12 months, applicants will be required to reapply for admission to the HDR.

Scholarship conditions may have an impact on whether an applicant can delay the date of enrolment and retain that scholarship. Applicants should check the conditions of the scholarship they have been offered before making an application to delay the date of enrolment.

3.15 Withdrawing an Offer or Cancelling Enrolment

The Dean of Graduate Research may withdraw an offer of admission to HDR candidature or cancel the enrolment of an applicant where:

- an offer is made based on incomplete, inaccurate, fraudulent, or misleading information supplied by the applicant or certifying authority, or
- an applicant has been excluded from any tertiary institution or tertiary program, and has not so advised the University, at any time up to the start of, or during, the HDR program, or
- the applicant does not meet the pre-enrolment conditions in the letter of offer within the maximum expiry date specified.

Fees paid may be forfeited as per the International Student Fee Refund Policy.

3.16 Review of Decisions made by the Dean of Graduate Research

An applicant who wishes to appeal an admission decision may submit a request for review in writing to the Deputy-Vice Chancellor (Research) (DVCRC) within 20 working days of receiving a notification about admission from the University.

The decision of the DVCRC is final and no further appeal can be made within the University.
### 3.17 Record Keeping Requirements

Records and information that support activities related to the assessment of applications and admission to HDRs will be created, managed, and retained in accordance with University Records Management Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.

### 4 Responsibilities

#### 4.1.1 The Dean of Graduate Research is responsible for:

- establishing the academic framework for research training at the University; and for working with Colleges, Faculties, and Institutes to ensure the University maintains appropriate standards for research training at the University, including in relation to admission, appropriate infrastructure, supervision, and examination.

#### 4.1.2 The Executive Deans are responsible for:

- strategically managing College financial, supervision, and infrastructure resources, as per the Academic Structures Policy and Delegations Policy and Schedules.

#### 4.1.3 The Associate Deans Research are responsible for:

- assisting the Executive Dean to plan, develop, and manage research and research training in the College, and
- making recommendations on the strategic use of College resources to support HDR candidature in line with College research priorities.

#### 4.1.4 The Head of Academic Unit is responsible to the College Executive Dean for:

- administering the Academic Unit including in relation to planning, budget, strategy, human resources, and performance, as per the Academic Structure Policy and Delegations Policy and Schedules, and
- approving the commitment of resources to support HDR candidature.

#### 4.1.5 Graduate Research Coordinators are responsible for:

- assessing applications for candidature and making recommendations to Heads of Academic Units and Executive Deans on Higher Degree by Research admissions to candidature, as per the Higher Degree by Research Graduate Research Coordination Policy.

#### 4.1.6 Supervisors are responsible for:

- assessing an applicant’s suitability for an HDR,
- conducting one or more face-to-face interviews, either in person or using video conferencing technology, with all applicants seeking entry to an HDR program in order to test applicant claims made about research preparedness, as per section 3.1 of the Higher Degree by Research Admissions and Enrolment Procedure, and
- registering and/or staying registered as a Supervisor, as per the Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy.
4.1.7 Applicants are responsible for ensuring that:

- information provided in their application is complete and accurate, and contains no fraudulent or misleading information, and
- they adhere to any pre-enrolment and ongoing conditions stipulated by the University.

4.1.8 Graduate Research Office is responsible for ensuring that:

- information about programs, entry requirements, and application procedures are accurate and communicated to applicants in a timely fashion,
- admission processes are explicit, fair, transparent, inclusive, and consistent across the University,
- the quality of admission services is maintained at a high level and the University continually improves the delivery of those services, and

  records are created, managed, and retained in accordance with University Records Management Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.

5 Definitions and Acronyms

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term/Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td>A person applying for enrolment at the University as a candidate for an HDR.</td>
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<td>Academic Unit</td>
<td>The secondary organisational unit in the academic structure of the University, reporting directly to the College Executive Deans, as per Ordinance 14 – Academic Structure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate Dean</td>
<td>A senior academic staff member appointed to assist the Executive Dean with planning, developing, and managing research and research training in the College.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>Australian laws developed to implement United Nations Security Council sanctions regimes and Australian autonomous sanctions regimes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autonomous</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanctions Laws</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authorised</td>
<td>A University employee responsible for reviewing autonomous sanctions, compliance and risk assessments, and for making recommendations to the Dean of Graduate Research on the level of risk that the University may have of being in breach of Australian autonomous sanctions laws.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>A person enrolled at the University as a candidate for a Degree.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidature</td>
<td>The status conferred on a person who is enrolled as a candidate under Rule 4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>means a) the primary organisational unit in the academic structure of the University, as per Ordinance 14 – Academic Structure, or b) the University College,</td>
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</table>
Dean of Graduate Research  The Dean of Graduate Research is the person who has responsibility for establishing the academic framework for research training at the University; and for working with Colleges, Faculties, and Institutes to ensure the University maintains appropriate standards for research training at the University, including in relation to admission, appropriate infrastructure, supervision, and examination.

Degree Period  The period within which an HDR Thesis must be submitted as defined in clause 12 of Rule 4.

Executive Dean  means:
  a) the Executive Dean of the relevant College, or
  b) in relation to the University College, the Principal of the University College.

External candidature  An arrangement whereby a candidate undertakes part of their candidature off-campus.

Graduate Research Coordinator  An academic staff member who oversees candidature supervision within an Academic Unit of enrolment in consultation with the Head of Academic Unit.

Graduate Research Office  The University organisational unit responsible for supporting the central administration of HDRs.

Head of Academic Unit  means the head of the relevant Academic Unit.

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

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

Institute Director  For the purposes of this Policy, 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), and
  • the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, the Director of that institute (or their authorised delegate).

Joint Research Training Program  A Joint Research Training Program is an arrangement whereby a Doctoral candidate is jointly supervised by the University of Tasmania and a partner institution, is enrolled at both institutions, and receives one award made jointly by the University of Tasmania and the partner institution.

Primary Supervisor  The supervisor who is primarily responsible for ensuring to the best of their ability that all administrative and regulatory requirements prescribed for candidates are met.

Reasonable Adjustments  Alterations or modifications to alleviate the implications of a disability/health condition after due consideration is given to inherent requirements and academic integrity.
Research Project  The research undertaken towards an HDR as articulated in a research plan.
Research Proposal  Draft aims and objectives for, and significance of, a research project submitted as part of an application for admission to an HDR.
Rule 4  Rules of Graduate Research.
Academic Unit of Enrolment  The Academic Unit in which a successful HDR applicant will be enrolled.
Supervisory Team  The Primary and Co-Supervisors appointed by the Head of Academic Unit to supervise the candidate’s research project (also see section 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

- Rule 4 – Rules of Graduate Research
- Higher Degrees by Research Admissions and Enrolment Procedure
- Higher Degrees by Research Candidature Management Policy
- Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy
- University English Language Proficiency Policy
- Conjoint Doctoral Degrees Policy
- Conjoint Doctoral Degrees Procedures
- Defence Export Controls Policy
- Security Council and Autonomous Sanctions Compliance Policy
- Disability and Health Conditions Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Document and Records Management Procedures
- Records Management Guidelines
- Responsible Conduct of Research Policy
- Managing Research Integrity and Potential Breaches of Responsible Research Conduct Procedure
- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)
- Gene Technology Policy
- Privacy Policy
- English Proficiency Policy
- International Student Fee Refund Policy
7 Acknowledgements

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

8 Versioning

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<th>Former Version(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Version 2 – <em>Higher Degrees by Research Admissions and Enrolment Policy</em>; approved April 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Version 3 – <em>Higher Degrees by Research Admissions and Enrolment Policy</em>; approved April 2017, amended in December 2017 to reflect College structure and nomenclature.</td>
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