

Coronavirus response - Federation University Australia

Friday 20 March 2020

Dear *|FName|*,

I am writing to let you know about arrangements for Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students and supervisors during the COVID-19 pandemic. As you will be aware, a State of Emergency has been declared in Victoria to stop the spread of COVID-19. The University is monitoring the situation carefully and is continuing to provide updates for staff and students via email, social media and the newsroom page on our website. Please check the link below regularly for updates on university operations

<https://federation.edu.au/news/articles/federation-university-australias-response-to-the-coronavirus>

For HDR, there may be impacts on scholarships, projects, laboratory facilities and supervisors. Information about this is outlined below.

Scholarships

In the event that research projects are impacted by COVID-19, scholarship payments (made through payroll) will occur normally.

Project suspensions

If data collection or another aspect of a project is suspended due to COVID-19, candidates are advised to work on other aspects of their candidature. This could include preparing for confirmation of candidature or writing the literature review and methodology/methods sections of the thesis. Please discuss this with your supervisory team. If research activities are suspended over a protracted period of time, arrangements will be made for project extensions.

Project changes

If your project involves face-to-face contact with vulnerable people, you should make arrangements to carry out these activities via Skype. If this is not possible, you may need to suspend your project. Please talk to your supervisor about this.

Laboratory facilities

New occupational health and safety regulations (OH&S) regulations are currently being put in place. However, if you need access to laboratory facilities before the regulations have been finalised, you are advised to observe [social distancing guidelines](#) and comply with normal OH&S practices. If access to laboratories is suspended, you may need to suspend your project.

For supervisors only

New candidate applications are being considered at the moment. However, admission will be delayed until

semester two.

For now, I urge you to maintain very good hygiene (wash your hands often!) and to follow the [Victorian Department of Health and Human Services \(DHS\) advice](#) on the COVID-19 virus. If you are unwell, please stay home and seek appropriate medical advice, if needed.

I sincerely hope that you and your family stay well throughout this pandemic. We do not know how long the current situation will last, so I urge you to stay calm, don't panic and take every step as it comes.

Please stay in contact with the university via your supervisor and I encourage you to take part in the Skills Development Program. As we've advised students previously, this program will continue online. Contact Associate Professor Wendy Wright with any questions about the program: wendy.wright@federation.edu.au.

Kind regards,

Chris

Professor Chris Hutchison
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Research and Innovation



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