

GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

Toolkits for HDR Supervisors, HDR Coordinators & ADRs



1. Selection and admission



2. Scholarships



3. Candidature milestones



4. Navigating candidature



5. Supervision skills and requirements



6. Examination

Toolkits for HDR Supervisors, HDR coordinators and Associate Deans, Research
by W. Wright on behalf of Federation University's Graduate Research School © 2020.



Contents

Terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this document.....	iv
Toolkit 1. Selection and admission	1
Introduction and context.	1
Initial enquiries.....	1
Entry requirements	2
Selection of high quality candidates and planning for timely completion.....	2
Sanctions	2
Applying for HDR candidature.....	3
Matching needs, resources and supervision.....	3
Transfer and advanced standing	4
Toolkit 2. Scholarships	5
Introduction and context	5
RTP Training Program (RTP) Scholarships	6
RTP Stipend Scholarships	6
RTP Fee Offset Scholarships.....	6
Acknowledging support	6
Co-funded industry scholarships.....	6
Other scholarships to support HDR candidates	7
Internal (non RTP) scholarships	7
Externally funded scholarships	7
Extensions to scholarships	7
Toolkit 3. Candidature Milestones.....	9
Introduction and context	9
Confirmation of Candidature	9
Purpose of the Confirmation of Candidature	9
Components of the Confirmation of Candidature	10
Composition of the confirmation panel.....	10
Outcomes of the confirmation of candidature process.....	10
The role of the supervisory team in confirmation of candidature	11
The role of the Associate Dean Research (or nominee) in confirmation of candidature.....	11
The role of the Graduate Research School in confirmation of candidature.....	12
Annual and Interim Progress Reports	12
Purpose of the Progress Report.....	12

Administration of the Annual Progress Report.....	13
The role of the supervisory team in the Progress Report.....	13
The role of the Associate Dean Research (or nominee) in the Progress Report	13
Outcomes of the Progress Report.....	13
Other milestones	13
Toolkit 4. Navigating candidature	15
Introduction and context	15
Length of Candidature.....	15
Research Integrity and compliance	16
The thesis	16
Candidature requirements	16
Early candidature	16
Mid and late candidature.....	17
Variations to candidature.....	19
Leave	19
Extension of candidature	19
Change in research topic.....	19
Change of thesis title	20
Transfer between programs	20
Withdrawal from Studies	20
Readmission to candidature after withdrawal	20
Troubleshooting	20
Candidature not confirmed.....	21
Conflicting examiner recommendations.....	21
Academic and Research Misconduct	21
Research misconduct	21
At Risk	21
Show Cause	22
Toolkit 5. Supervision skills and requirements	23
Introduction and context	23
The Supervisor Register:.....	23
<i>Skills for Supervisors</i> program	23
Supervisory loads	23
The Responsibilities of the Supervisory panel	24
Avoiding problems	25

Selecting candidates	25
Setting expectations	25
Providing feedback.....	26
Regular meetings	26
Toolkit 6. Examination	27
Introduction and context	27
Thesis format and requirements.....	27
Is it ready?	28
Nomination of examiners.....	29
Thesis submission.....	29
Copyright.....	29
Academic integrity	29
Professional editing.....	29
Intellectual property	29
Selection and invitation of examiners.....	30
The examination process	30
What happens after the examiners' recommendations are returned?.....	31
Where the examiner reports are dissimilar	31
Where the examiner reports are dissimilar, the DGRS and/or the SEC may recommend	31
Where amendments/corrections are required	31
Where re-examination of a deferred thesis is required	31
Recommendation of award.....	32
Appendix 1. Suggested checklist of key competencies for selection of high quality HDR candidates .	33
Knowledge	33
Skills.....	33
Attitude	34
Appendix 2. Using evidence provided by HDR applicants to assess key competencies	35
Evidence included in the HDR application	35
Evidence which may be sought in addition to that contained in the HDR application.....	36
Appendix 3. Agenda Template for Candidate-Supervisory Team Meeting	37
Appendix 4. Suggested wording for informal approach to a potential examiner (by phone or by email).	39
Appendix 5. Future toolkits.....	41
Toolkit x. Resources and funding	41

Terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this document

Academic schools	The six academic schools at Federation University (Schools of: Arts, Education, Health and Life Sciences, Nursing and Healthcare Professions, Science, Engineering and IT and the Business School). This term is used to distinguish between the schools listed above and the Graduate Research School
Approved submission date	The approved date by which a candidate must submit their thesis.
EFTSL	Equivalent full time study load.
Fee Waiver	An agreement that the University will waive international tuition fees for one or more international candidates – usually for strategic reasons.
FTE	Full-time equivalent
Graduate Research School	A division of the University within the portfolio of the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation. The Graduate Research School administers HDR programs and supports HDR candidates and their supervisors.
GRS	Graduate Research School – see above
HDR	Higher Degree by Research. Includes PhD and Masters by Research.
RHDC	Research and Higher Degrees Committee
Scholarships: RTP fee offset scholarship	Scholarship provided to domestic students by the Australian Government via the Research Training Program (RTP). Eligible domestic candidates who are offered a place in an RTP supported HDR program will be provided with a RTP fee offset scholarship and are not required to pay fees.
Scholarships: RTP stipend scholarship	Scholarship provided by the Australian Government via the Research Training Program (RTP). The RTP stipend scholarship supports the general living costs of HDR candidates through an annual stipend, usually paid to the candidate in fortnightly payments.
Scholarships: Stipend scholarship	Scholarship (from any source) to support the general living costs of HDR candidates through an annual stipend, usually paid to the candidate in fortnightly payments.
Scholarships: Tuition fee scholarship	Scholarship to cover International Tuition Fees, usually paid to the University by an external organisation (e.g. student's home government)



Toolkit 1. Selection and admission

Introduction and context.

The following policies and procedures are relevant to this toolkit:

[HDR Candidate Selection Policy](#)

[Selection and Awarding of HDR Place Procedure](#)

Processes for selection and admission of HDR candidates must be applied consistently and equitably. While Federation University intends to increase the number of enrolled and completing HDR candidates, all candidates must meet the University's entry requirements (see below) which are designed to maximise the likelihood of successful HDR candidates admitted to the University.

Initial enquiries

Prospective HDR candidates may approach the University with an initial enquiry via one of several access points (e.g. via the Graduate Research School, or via an academic staff member).

A helpful response to an initial enquiry is to [check their eligibility to apply](#) for a Higher Degree by Research at Federation University Australia. Academic entry requirements are based around demonstrated research capacity (e.g. by completion of an honours degree, graded at first or second class (upper division), or completion of a Masters by Research which included a dissertation. Prospective applicants from outside of Australia may be unfamiliar with terminology relating to the Australian Honours degree and should be referred to information regarding [building a case for honours equivalence](#). Publication of peer reviewed papers in quality journals is often taken as evidence of honours equivalence. International candidates must also meet the University's [English Language Requirements](#).

The various academic schools at Federation University have different preferred processes relating to initial enquiries from prospective HDR candidates. Academics who receive enquiries from prospective HDR candidates are encouraged to notify the Associate Dean, Research and/or the HDR Coordinator within their School. Academics who wish to support a particular prospective applicant are encouraged to discuss this with the Associate Dean, Research and their manager. Such support may take the form of assisting a prospective candidate to self-assess their suitability for admission and/or assisting the prospective candidate to develop a research proposal (to be included in the application for admission). It is important that academics are selective about which prospective candidates are encouraged to apply. Entry requirements must be met and needs and resources must be matched (see below).

Prospective HDR candidates sometimes submit an application for admission to the Graduate Research School without any prior contact with the University. In such cases, where the applicant meets entry requirements, the Graduate Research School may liaise with the Associate Dean,

Research of the relevant academic school to determine whether there is supervisory capacity (and other resources) to support the proposed project.

Entry requirements

Academic and English language requirements for PhD and Masters degrees are available at the [Check Your Eligibility](#) webpage.

These entry requirements refer to 'honours equivalence', which allows consideration of applications from applicants from non-traditional academic backgrounds, or who have studied overseas and do not hold an Australian honours degree. Such applicants are required to build a case for honours equivalence to demonstrate that they research experience which is equivalent to (or greater than) that which would be expected from someone who has completed an honours year (including production of a thesis) in an Australian university. Information on building an [honours equivalence case](#) is available online.

Note that meeting the entry requirements does not guarantee that an applicant will be offered candidature. Applicants may only be offered a place where academic schools indicate that candidature can be supported (see section below on [matching needs, resources and supervision](#)).

Selection of high quality candidates and planning for timely completion

There is an increasing emphasis on timely completion of HDR candidates at all Australian universities, including Federation University. The amount of funding received by universities for HDR support is linked to the number of HDR completions. Timely completion means that candidates complete their studies within the [period of candidature](#). This is the period for with the university is funded.

The period of candidature for full time PhD candidates is three years (six years for part time PhD candidates); and is 18 months for full time Masters by Research candidates (three years for part time Masters by Research candidates). Supervisors should plan projects that meet these timelines. [Extensions](#) may be granted in exceptional circumstances, but extension periods should not be factored in to project planning.

Once eligibility for candidature has been established, the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the prospective candidate are all important to consider before an offer is made. Does the application demonstrate that the knowledge and skills of the applicant are a good fit for the project? Is the attitude of the candidate an appropriate fit for the working environment, the research team and the supervisors? This latter point is difficult to judge from a written application and interviews are sometimes used to assess attitudes. It is also important that the prospective candidate understands the time commitment involved in a HDR. There is some further guidance about [selecting candidates](#) in Toolkit 5. Supervision Skills and Requirements.

Sanctions

When dealing with prospective international HDR candidates, Federation University is required to comply with the United Nations Security Council Sanctions and with Australian Autonomous Sanctions (regulated by the Australian Government's Charter of the United Nations Act 1945 and the Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011, respectively). These sanctions may prevent an offer being made to an applicant from a sanctioned country. The list of countries/regimes to which sanctions apply, and the nature of the sanctions, can be found on the [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(DFAT\) website](#).

Applying for HDR candidature

Instructions for [applying for HDR candidature](#) are available online.

All applicants for HDR candidature are required to provide evidence that they meet the academic entry requirements of Federation University. International applicants are also required to show that they meet the English language proficiency requirements. Two academic referee reports are required to support the application, which should include a short research proposal. Applications are submitted to the Graduate Research School (applications from International candidates arrive at the Graduate Research School via the International Office). Once an application is received, entry requirements and supporting documents are assessed. It is sometimes necessary to seek more information. If all is in order, the application is passed on to the relevant academic school.

Application for HDR candidature may be thought of as application for a 'place' or a 'position' as an HDR candidate. This is separate from application for a stipend (living allowance) scholarship.

For domestic applicants (Australian and New Zealand citizens and permanent residents), successful applicants for HDR candidature will normally be offered a fee offset scholarship, provided by the Australian Government's Research Training Program (RTP). These are known as RTP Fee Offset Scholarships.

Between (around) 1 September – 31 October each year, eligible prospective candidates may apply for Research Training Program (RTP) Stipend Scholarships at the same time as applying for candidature. This is achieved simply by indicating an intention to apply for scholarship + candidature on the application for admission form. [Eligibility for a RTP Stipend Scholarship](#) is described online. The number of RTP Stipend Scholarships awarded by the University is restricted by the amount of funds received from the Australian Government and, because there are limits on how much of the funding may be allocated to support international candidates, the number of international candidates who may be awarded RTP stipend scholarships is constrained (and has been zero for several years). See [Toolkit 2. Scholarships](#) for more information.

Matching needs, resources and supervision

Once eligibility has been ascertained, it is the responsibility of the academic school to determine whether a particular applicant (and their proposed project) can be supported; and therefore whether a particular applicant will be accepted. Since this is a matter of resourcing (staffing and funding) the Dean and the Associate Dean, Research have this responsibility.

- Supervision: Schools must be able to assign at least two (one Principal and one Associate) supervisors to support the applicant and the proposed project. Supervisors must be on the Graduate Research School's list of registered supervisors and have relevant research expertise and capacity to supervise the project. A good match between students and supervisors is a recognised predictor of successful candidature. See [Toolkit 5. Supervision Skills and Requirements](#) for further information.
- Other resources: Schools must indicate that equipment and/or funds to facilitate completion of the proposed project is available from the time of enrolment. Resources required can vary enormously, depending on the proposed project. Minimum facilities for HDR candidate are noted in section 1 of Federation University's [HDR Candidature Management Policy](#). For on campus students, these include physical facilities and resources such as access to appropriate computer technology, stationery, photocopying, telephone, internet and postal services and an office space. Schools must advise candidates of the estimated amount of financial support they will receive and this should be recorded on the [HDR Candidate /](#)

[Principal Supervisor Agreement](#) early in candidature. Some research proposals describe highly specialised equipment and other resources. If these are not available, the School may reject the application. Where an application is associated with an externally funded research project, agreements may exist to indicate that some or all funding and equipment will be provided by an external organisation. Some applicants may already have secured funding to support project costs.

Where all entry requirements are met, and all needs and resources, including appropriate supervision, are available the Graduate Research School makes an offer of candidature on behalf of the Academic School.

Successful applicants from Australia and New Zealand who receive an offer of candidature are not required to pay fees. As domestic students, they receive an RTP Fees Offset Scholarship, which exempts them from fee payment (note that this is different from an RTP Stipend Scholarship, which provides a living allowance).

Successful international applicants may be expected to pay International Tuition Fees. These may be paid for by the candidate themselves or by a sponsor. See [Toolkit 2. Scholarships](#) for further information.

In summary, prior to an offer being made, the Academic School, the Graduate Research School (and where appropriate, the International Office) will work with all applicants to ensure that:

- The applicant meets the academic entry requirements
- Appropriate supervision is available for the duration of candidature (this includes considering back-up supervision to mitigate risks associated with loss of members of the initial supervision team)
- The proposed project can be supported (funding for project costs and required equipment and other resources are available)

In addition, [international applicants will be required to](#)

- Meet English language requirements
- Cover their international tuition fees (pay the fees, obtain a fee scholarship or a fee waiver)
- Meet the requirements of the Australian Research Student Visa, including:
 - Demonstrated capacity to meet their living expenses in Australia
 - Ability to pay the costs of Overseas Student Health Cover

Transfer and advanced standing

Occasionally, HDR candidates may wish to transfer to Federation University from another university. For example, candidates may wish to follow a supervisor who may be newly appointed to Federation University after moving from another university. Such candidates should apply using the standard application method, as per the [HDR Candidate Selection Policy](#). The period of enrolment at the previous institution will be deducted from the usual period of candidature at Federation University. Transfers are not normally allowed for candidates who have complete more than two years EFTSL of a doctoral program or six months EFTSL of a master's program.



Toolkit 2. Scholarships

Introduction and context

The following policies and procedures are relevant to this toolkit:

- [Research Training Program \(RTP\) Scholarship Policy](#)
- [Research Training Program \(RTP\) Scholarship Procedure \(currently under review\)](#)
- [HDR Scholarship Policy](#)
- [HDR Scholarship Procedure](#)

The term “Scholarship” is most often used to indicate a living allowance, awarded to a candidate to support them during their studies. However, there are various types of scholarships, with different purposes. Of particular interest are the new Research Training Program (RTP) Fee Offset scholarships¹, which have replaced (from mid 2017) the former RTS (fee-free) places for domestic candidates, and the Research Training Program (RTP) Stipend Scholarships which have replaced the former APA and IPRS Scholarships.

- **Stipend Scholarships** provide a living allowance for the HDR candidate. They may be from a variety of sources, including academic schools, the Graduate Research School, the Australian Government (RTP Stipend Scholarships, see next page), other national governments and industry sponsors. Stipend scholarships are normally paid to the HDR candidate in fortnightly payments via the Scholarships office. Some candidates complete their HDR without a stipend scholarship. Such students often need to work part-time to support themselves and may therefore choose to study part-time.
- **Research Training Program (RTP) Fee Offset Scholarships** are provided to all Australian Universities by the Australian Government to subsidise the costs of HDR programs for eligible domestic candidates. Thus, domestic candidates holding RTP Fee-offset Scholarships are not required to pay tuition fees. The fee offset scholarships form a component of the Research Training Program funding awarded to the University each year (see footnote).
- **Tuition Fee Scholarships** cover the cost of international tuition fees and are usually paid directly to the university, often by an external (e.g. industry or international government) sponsor. Sometimes international candidates (or their families) pay the international fees themselves. There are considerable financial implications associated with delayed completion for candidates who are liable for international fees.

Tuition Fee Scholarships may be provided by the University, where justified, to selected international candidates. In such circumstances, tuition fees are not charged and the University forgoes the income normally obtained from international tuition fees. Again, there are considerable financial implications associated with delayed completion for

¹ In July 2017, the [Research Training Program \(RTP\)](#) replaced the following former federally funded schemes for HDR support: the Research Training Scheme (RTS), the Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA) and International Postgraduate Research Scheme (IPRS). The RTP provides block grants, each calendar year, to Australian Universities to support both domestic and international students undertaking HDRs. The University must budget the expenditure of the RTP funding which may be used to support tuition fees offset, stipend scholarships and allowances related to the ancillary costs of research degrees (e.g. conference travel, research training etc). Universities may not expend more than 10% of RTP funding on the support of International Candidates. The amount of funds received by any University in any year is determined by a [formula](#) and is driven by the number of HDR completions, income from competitive grant funding and income from engagement activities.

candidates who may have had tuition fees waived for a nominated time period, since it cannot be assumed that extension of a tuition fee waiver will be awarded together with an extension to candidature.

RTP Training Program (RTP) Scholarships

Federation University offers and administers RTP Stipend Scholarships and RTP Fee Offset Scholarships on behalf of the Australian Government's Department of Education and Training.

RTP Stipend Scholarships

[RTP stipend scholarships](#) provide an annual living allowance (2019 rate: \$27,596 per year), paid on a fortnightly basis. These scholarships are for a period of two years for Masters by Research candidates and three years for PhD candidates. While candidature periods may be extended under extenuating circumstances, extensions to RTP stipend scholarships are not available.

The application process for RTP Stipend Scholarships is typically open from 1 September to 31 October each year. Eligible current and prospective candidates may apply. Agreed ranking guidelines are used to rank applications within each academic school and these school rankings are presented to the University's Research and Higher Degrees Committee, where they are used to allocate scholarships. School ranking committees are normally chaired by the Associate Dean, Research.

Details of [eligibility and selection for RTP Stipend Scholarships](#) is available online.

Due to the restriction on the amount of RTP funding that universities may allocate to supporting International HDR candidates, applications for RTP Stipend Scholarships are often limited to domestic applicants.

RTP Fee Offset Scholarships

Applicants are automatically assessed for eligibility for RTP Fee Offset Scholarships when they apply for candidature. There is no separate application process.

Acknowledging support

There is a legislative requirement that any candidate in receipt of a RTP Stipend Scholarship and/or a RTP Fee Offset Scholarship should acknowledge the support of the Australian Government in any published material related to the HDR (including in the thesis, and posters and publications or artworks arising from the research, during and subsequent to candidature).

Appropriate wording for acknowledgment of RTP support has been provided by the Government:

For HDR candidates in receipt of both an RTP Stipend and RTP Fee-Offset

<Student name> was/is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Stipend and RTP Fee-Offset Scholarship through Federation University Australia.

For HDR candidates in receipt of an RTP Fee-Offset Scholarship only

<Student name> was/is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Fee-Offset Scholarship through Federation University Australia

Co-funded industry scholarships

From time to time, the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation (DVCRI) offers HDR scholarships for projects which arise from partnerships between Federation University and external industry partners. These co-funded industry scholarships are usually tied to a particular research project (with targeted, specific research outcomes relevant to the industry partner) and may include

project funding as well as a stipend scholarship. These partnerships are important in building Federation University's engagement profile. Prospective candidates with appropriate backgrounds may apply for co-funded industry scholarships in response to their advertisement. [Currently available co-funded industry scholarships](#) are listed online.

Academics who have connections with potential partners should discuss the possibility of co-funded industry scholarships with their Associate Dean, Research in the first instance. All co-funded industry scholarships must be approved by the DVCRI prior to being advertised.

Other scholarships to support HDR candidates

Various other scholarship opportunities are available to support HDR candidates. Known [current scholarship opportunities](#) at Federation University are advertised online and may include:

Internal (non RTP) scholarships

From time to time, various administrative units within Federation University offer stipend scholarships from budgets outside of the RTP. These may be via particular academic schools, or via the Graduate Research School, the DVCRI or another administrative unit.

Academics may have obtained research grants that include funds to support HDR scholarships. Such funds are considered internal (non RTP scholarships) and are managed jointly by the academic, the Research Funding Office and the Scholarships Office.

Externally funded scholarships

Various external organisations offer scholarships that are not administered by Federation University. The Graduate Research School maintains a (non-exhaustive) [list of external organisations that offer scholarships](#). At the time of application for candidature, some international HDR applicants indicate that their fees and/or a stipend will be provided via a scholarship from their home country (usually government or industry sponsored). Sponsorship of this nature is considered as an externally funded scholarship.

Extensions to scholarships

Extensions to scholarships are considered separately from extensions to candidature. Rules around extensions to scholarship vary with the type of scholarship held. Candidates should familiarise themselves with the conditions of their scholarship as described in their scholarship agreement. Supervisors should also be familiar with the scholarship conditions of each candidate.

Information regarding extensions to Research Training Program Scholarships (stipend and/or fee offset) can be found in the [Research Training Program \(RTP\) Scholarship Policy](#).

Extensions to some, but not all, other scholarships are described in the [HDR Scholarships Policy](#).

Extensions to Candidature are considered in [Toolkit 4. Navigating Candidature](#), under [Variations to Candidature](#).



Toolkit 3. Candidature Milestones

Introduction and context

The following policies and procedures are relevant to this toolkit:

- [HDR Candidature Management Policy](#)
- [HDR Candidature Management Procedure](#)

Candidature milestones provide opportunities for regular review of progress during candidature. They provide candidates and supervisors with opportunities to reflect on the research trajectory and to address challenges and problems before they seriously undermine the candidate's chances of success. They also provide appropriate procedures for terminating candidature where progress is insufficient and/or there is clear evidence that timely completion of the HDR is unlikely.

Completion of Candidature Milestones is one of several Conditions of Candidature that HDR candidates at Federation University must meet. Other conditions of candidature are listed in the Candidature Management Policy/Procedure and in [Toolkit 4. Navigating Candidature](#).

Confirmation of Candidature

Initial admission to HDR candidature at Federation University is on a provisional basis and candidates must apply for candidature to be confirmed. This must take place:

- PhD Candidates: within the first 9-12 months of full-time enrolment, or part time equivalent.
- Masters candidates: within the first 6 months of full-time enrolment, or part time equivalent.

While PhD candidates may confirm their candidature as late as 12 months after enrolment (for full time candidates), the Graduate Research School recommends that PhD candidates plan to confirm their candidature at 9 months after enrolment (or part time equivalent) in order that progress is not delayed. This is a recent (2019) change in the [HDR Candidature Management Procedure](#).

Masters by Research Candidates intending to upgrade to a PhD should aim to confirm candidature as early as possible so that if the upgrade to PhD is not permitted, but Masters candidature is confirmed, their progress is not impeded by late confirmation.

Candidates must demonstrate that they have met several candidature requirements before attempting confirmation of candidature. These are outlined in the [Guidelines for Confirmation of Candidature](#) and include:

- Completion of prescribed sessions of the [HDR Skills Development Program](#) (for candidates enrolled after January 1, 2019)

[Purpose of the Confirmation of Candidature](#)

The Confirmation of Candidature milestone is a checkpoint at which three separate aspects of the candidature are considered. The purpose is to identify and address any areas of concern in order to facilitate successful and timely completion. If there is clear evidence that timely completion is not likely, candidature may not be confirmed.

During Confirmation of Candidature, the candidate is asked to demonstrate that:

1. a viable research program has been developed,
2. satisfactory progress has been made, and

3. the degree requirements can be completed within the approved candidature period; three years full time or part-time equivalent for PhD candidates and 1.5 years full time or part-time equivalent for Masters by Research candidates.

Components of the Confirmation of Candidature

A step-by-step procedure for the Confirmation of Candidature is provided in the HDR [Candidature Management Procedure](#) and the Guidelines for Confirmation of Candidature. In summary, the probationary candidate is required to:

1. Submit a written report to the Graduate Research School. This report must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the date of the oral presentation and panel meeting and will be forwarded to members of a Confirmation Panel (see below). The report should be prepared in line with the Confirmation of Candidature Guidelines.
2. Deliver an oral presentation to an academic audience including the Confirmation Panel. The presentation should also be prepared in line with the Confirmation of Candidature Guidelines. It is expected that the audience will comprise the members of the Confirmation Panel and the candidate's peers and colleagues from the School. Other interested people are welcome to attend.

The Confirmation Panel is required to review the written report and participate in the oral presentation by asking questions. The Panel is required to make a recommendation and to provide feedback to the candidate and the supervisory team.

Composition of the confirmation panel

The confirmation panel should comprise:

- the Associate Dean (Research) (Chair) or nominee,
- the Principal Supervisor,
- an academic staff member from Federation University with relevant disciplinary experience and knowledge,
- a discipline expert, from another University, and
- an industry partner, where appropriate.

The Principal Supervisor and Panel Chair should ensure that no conflict of interest exists between panel members and the candidate. The Australian Council of Graduate Research has an excellent set of [Guidelines for Managing Conflicts of Interest](#) in selecting examiners which can also be applied to the selection of confirmation panel members.

In projects conducted on sacred aboriginal sites, involving aboriginal artefacts or ceremonies, and First Nations peoples, a senior member of the local Aboriginal community should be invited to join the panel, as appropriate.

Outcomes of the confirmation of candidature process

The Confirmation Panel will recommend to the RHDC one of the following outcomes:

- Confirmed,
- Confirmed subject to conditions – candidate must meet conditions within 8 weeks to be confirmed,
- Confirmation deferred – the candidate will be required to attempt confirmation again within 12 weeks, or
- Not confirmed – the candidate will be required to '[Show Cause](#)' as to why candidature should not be terminated.

Where the recommendation is 'Confirmed subject to conditions' or 'Confirmation deferred', the Panel will provide a written report outlining the reasons for its decision. The report will include details of what tasks will need to be completed with associated timelines.

Only in exceptional circumstances will more than two attempts to gain confirmation of candidature be permitted. The Confirmation Panel is responsible for providing feedback to the candidate on their research project and associated completion timeline.

Where a confirmation panel finds that a candidate should not be confirmed, the panel must advise the candidate and the Graduate Research School that the outcome is 'not confirmed'. The [HDR Candidature Management Procedure](#) then dictates that the Graduate Research School will initiate the [Show Cause](#) process.

The role of the supervisory team in confirmation of candidature

The role of the supervisory team in Confirmation of Candidature includes (but is not limited) to:

- Discuss the requirements of confirmation with the probationary candidate, ensuring that the probationary candidate is aware of the requirements of confirmation of candidature.
- Ensure that the probationary candidate has completed the requirements of the [Skills Development Program](#) prior to confirmation. More information about the Skills Development Program can be found in [Toolkit 4. Navigating Candidature](#).
- Assist the candidate to develop written and oral reports to an appropriate standard. This should involve members of the supervisory team working directly with the candidate to provide critical review of several drafts of the written and oral submissions. Attention should be paid to appropriate academic writing styles and conventions including referencing requirements. Evidence of plagiarism is taken very seriously in the confirmation process. Candidates are encouraged to use the Turnitin software to check their written report for plagiarism.
- Complete relevant sections of the *Notification of Intention to Confirm* form and submit to the Associate Dean Research (or nominee) within the Academic School.
- Nominate panel members (in consultation with the ADR or nominee)
- Attend the oral presentation. The Principal Supervisor is a member of the confirmation panel. Associate and co-supervisors may attend the presentation but do not form part of the panel.
- Support the candidate to address any recommendations made by the panel, for example with regard to conditional or deferred confirmations.

Supervisors who are unclear about what might be considered an appropriate standard for confirmation may seek advice from other experienced academics or from the Associate Dean Research in their academic school.

The role of the Associate Dean Research (or nominee) in confirmation of candidature

The role of the Associate Dean Research (or nominee) in Confirmation of Candidature includes (but is not limited) to the following. The Associate Dean Research may nominate the HDR Coordinator or another experienced HDR supervisor to fulfil some or all of these duties:

- Finalise membership of the Confirmation Panel
- Complete relevant sections of the *Notification of Intention to Confirm* form and submit to the Graduate Research School.
- Act as Chair of the Confirmation Panel

- Finalise and approve panel membership
- Liaise with Graduate Research School regarding date of the oral presentation and panel meeting
- Chair the deliberations of the Confirmation Panel
- Provide a written report to the Graduate Research School. The report should be provided within five days of the oral presentation and panel meeting and should include the Confirmation Panel's recommendation to RHDC plus detailed feedback to the candidate and the supervisory team.
- Informal feedback may be provided to the candidate at the conclusion of the panel meeting at the discretion of the panel. Formal notification will be provided to the candidate via the Graduate Research School.

The role of the Graduate Research School in confirmation of candidature

The role of the Graduate Research School in Confirmation of Candidature includes (but is not limited) to:

- Provide timely advice to the candidate, reminding them to begin the process of applying for Confirmation of Candidature
- Provide advice regarding process to the candidate, the supervisory team, Confirmation Panel members and/or the Panel Chair, where requested
- Confer with panel members to set an agreed time, date and location for the Confirmation of Candidature oral presentation and panel meeting.
- Receive the written report from the candidate
- Forward the written report to panel members.
- Receive the Confirmation Panel's report following the panel meeting
- Forward the panel report to the candidate, advising the confirmation outcome.
- Advise RHDC of the panel's recommendation and record the outcome of the confirmation process

Annual and Interim Progress Reports

Less formal than the Confirmation of Candidature, Progress Reports are also considered milestones. There are two kinds of Progress Reports for HDR candidates at Federation University Australia. Both involve a self assessment of progress by the candidate and a review of progress by the supervisory team. These reviews occur in a three- step process via an online survey.

1. Candidate completes online survey
2. Principal supervisor completes online survey on behalf of supervisory team
3. The Associate Dean Research and the Graduate Research School review survey responses.

Annual Progress reports take place annually (during July/August) and are for all HDR candidates.

Interim Progress reports take place during January/February and are for all international candidates plus any candidate nominated by their supervisor or ADR to participate in interim progress reporting. The Graduate Research School will notify candidates and their supervisors if they are required to participate.

Purpose of the Progress Report

Progress reports provide candidates, supervisory teams and the university with an opportunity to review progress and address concerns. It is important that both candidates and supervisors complete progress reports honestly. It is expected that supervisors and candidates will meet to discuss the progress report (and therefore any issues affecting progress) before completing their

relevant sections. Progress reports should be seen as an opportunity to raise and address concerns, as well as noting them in the report.

Administration of the Annual Progress Report

The Graduate Research School notifies candidates and supervisors when the online surveys are open. Candidates must complete their self-assessment report/survey within four weeks of receipt of the notification. Where candidates choose to provide confidential feedback, only the Dean of the relevant Academic School and the Dean of Graduate Studies see this information. Non-confidential components of the self-reports are forwarded to supervisors. Principal Supervisors then provide a progress report on behalf of the supervisory team via an online survey. This should be completed within a specified timeframe. As well as providing commentary, supervisors are asked to recommend one of three categories for the candidate:

- Satisfactorily Progressing
- [At Risk](#)
- Requested to [Show Cause](#)

The role of the supervisory team in the Progress Report

The supervisory team is expected to meet with the candidate to review progress prior to the candidate's completion of their online survey. The supervisory team is also expected to provide a candid assessment of the candidate's progress and recommend one of the above three categories for consideration by the Associate Dean Research.

The role of the Associate Dean Research (or nominee) in the Progress Report

The Associate Dean Research (or nominee, e.g. the HDR Coordinator) receives and considers both the students' and the supervisors' progress reports and considers whether and what interventions may be required in order to support the candidate and the supervisory team to the outcome of a timely completion. The Associate Dean Research (or nominee) is then responsible for implementing these interventions, and notifying the Graduate Research School of these. The Associate Dean Research (or nominee) provides additional commentary and a recommendation to RHDC on the candidate's progress.

Outcomes of the Progress Report

Following the completion of the Progress Report cycle, the candidate receives notification from RHDC via the Graduate Research School as to whether their candidature is considered to be:

- Satisfactorily progressing
- At Risk

Or the candidate is requested to

- Show Cause as to why candidature should not be terminated.

Procedure for candidates considered to be At Risk or who have been asked to Show Cause are considered in [Toolkit 4. Navigating Candidature](#).

Other milestones

Some Academic Schools have additional milestone requirements. These include:

- Pre-submission milestones.
Occurring toward the end of candidature and prior to submission of the thesis. Successful achievement of this milestone may be required before submission of the thesis is approved.



Toolkit 4. Navigating candidature

Introduction and context

The following policies and procedures are relevant to this toolkit:

- [HDR Candidature Management Policy](#)
- [HDR Candidature Management Procedure](#)
- [University Induction Policy](#)
- [University Induction Procedure](#)
- [University Research Integrity Policy](#)
- [HDR Theses and Examination Policy](#)
- [HDR Theses and Examination Procedure](#)
- [University Withdrawal from All Studies Procedure](#)

This toolkit begins with brief guidance on matters such as the **length of candidature**, **research integrity and compliance** and the **types of theses** that candidates may submit. The latter is also considered in [Toolkit 6. Examination](#).

HDR candidature is often described in three parts: early, mid and late candidature. Very simplistically, early candidature is typically considered as the period prior to confirmation and is often heavily focussed on research design and planning. Mid candidature usually refers to the period in which most of the research work is done (data collection and analysis, creation of artwork, etc). Late candidature typically refers to the period in which the candidate is preparing the thesis or exegesis for examination. The **candidature requirements** at Federation University are described below in terms of these three parts of the candidature.

At times, candidates need to make changes to their candidature, for example taking leave or switching from full to part time, changing the title of their thesis or changing their research topic. Such changes are known as **variations to candidature** and need to be approved and recorded. A series of [forms](#) is used to achieve this purpose. Usually such forms require the signature of the Associate Dean, Research or nominee and should be submitted to the Graduate Research School using the generic email address: research.degrees@federation.edu.au

HDR candidates may experience various difficulties during their candidature, which may be brought to the attention of the supervisor, HDR Coordinator, Associate Dean, Research. Often, it is appropriate to refer candidates to [support services](#) available from colleagues in other parts of the university, such as counsellors, the Equity and Diversity Office, Disability Support and the Student Advisory Service. It is impossible to predict or summarise the nature of the difficulties that might arise, but we have tried to provide some guidance regarding the types of assistance available, in a section below headed “**Troubleshooting**”.

Length of Candidature

PhD candidature is for a period of three years full-time study, or the equivalent in part-time study (6 years). Candidature for Masters by Research is for a period of 18 months full-time study, or the equivalent in part-time study (3 years). Extensions to these time periods are possible where there are exceptional circumstances. However, all candidates are expected to complete within the durations stated above and, therefore, supervisors and candidates should plan for this outcome.

See the section in this toolkit on [Variations to Candidature](#) for further information regarding extensions to candidature.

Research Integrity and compliance

Candidates and their supervisors should work together to ensure that issues relating to research integrity are addressed during the project planning stage. Such issues include applying for approval from the Human and/or Animal Research Ethics Committees, and awareness of University recommendations and procedures relating to biosafety, authorship, data management collaborative research across institutions, recognition of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, intellectual property (IP) and commercialisation. The University's [Research Integrity Policy](#) provides useful advice in these areas.

The thesis

Federation University Australia accepts for examination, three thesis formats. These are:

- 'Traditional' format thesis
- Thesis including publications
- Thesis comprising creative work and exegesis

The candidate and the supervisory team should consider which of these formats is likely to be most suitable for the planned research as soon as is reasonable, given the nature of the project. More information about thesis formats can be found in the HDR Theses and Examination [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#) and is discussed in [Toolkit 6. Examination](#).

Candidature requirements

Early candidature

Graduate Research School Orientation

Candidates must complete the prescribed HDR Orientation Seminar outlined in the [HDR Skills Development Program](#) as soon as possible after their enrolment. The seminar is offered in each academic semester, and candidates who begin their studies at other times during the year can access the seminar online.

School Induction

Schools are responsible for ensuring that new candidates address the [University Occupational Health and Safety Induction Checklist](#) and undertake an appropriate local induction as outlined in the [Induction Policy](#) and [Procedure](#).

Candidate/Supervisor agreement

Candidates and supervisors are required to complete a [Candidate/Supervisor Agreement](#) within the first four weeks of candidature. Once completed, this is submitted to the Graduate Research School. The Candidate/Supervisor agreement is intended to encourage discussion regarding approaches to research, and expectations among the research team. Completion of this document can help the candidate-supervisor relationship to start 'on the right foot'.

Research integrity training

Under the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#), researchers at all Australian universities are required to undertake research integrity training. For HDR candidates at Federation University, this has been integrated into the requirements of the [HDR Skills Development Program](#) since January 2020. This training comprises a suite of online modules developed by "Epigeum" (an external provider of online courses for colleges and universities).

Prescribed sessions of the HDR Skills Development Program

The Federation University HDR Skills Development Program (SDP) was introduced in 2019 and comprises a series of seminars, workshops and other activities. The objectives of the program are to:

- Support the successful and timely completion of our candidates' higher degrees by research
- Provide a mechanism by which HDR candidates can identify gaps in their own skill sets and work towards filling these gaps during their candidature.
- Provide opportunities for HDR candidates to develop skills that they have identified as useful either for their candidature or for their future employment prospects.
- Provide a mechanism by which HDR candidates can recognise and articulate the transferable skills which they develop throughout their candidature.
- Facilitate networking and the development of communities of practice among the HDR cohort.
- Address the University's responsibility for providing HDR candidates with the best possible preparation for their future roles whether within academia or other sectors.
- Support Schools in developing HDR candidates' transferrable skills.

All candidates enrolled after 1 January, 2019 are required to participate in a set number of compulsory and a set number of optional sessions during each year of candidature. Candidates who do not complete prescribed sessions in their first year (full time equivalent) are not permitted to attempt [Confirmation of Candidature](#). Candidates who do not complete prescribed sessions in their second and third years (full time equivalent) may be asked to [Show Cause](#). Candidates enrolled in their Federation University degree prior to 1 January, 2019 are not required to participate, but are very welcome to do so.

A full description of the SDP is available [online](#).

Candidates have access to the schedule and other resources related to the SDP via [Moodle](#). Most sessions are available either face-face or by live (real-time) webinar. Several of the webinars are recorded and made available after the live session.

Confirmation of candidature

Confirmation of candidature is also candidature requirement and has been discussed in [Toolkit 3: Candidature Milestones](#).

Mid and late candidature

Candidates have ongoing responsibilities in mid- and late- candidature, including:

Progress reports

All candidates and their supervisors are required to participate in the [Annual Progress Report \(APR\)](#) during each year of enrolment. These reports involve candidates and their supervisors completing an online survey about the candidate's progress during the last twelve months. While there is a separate survey for the candidate and for the supervisory team, it is intended that candidates and supervisors meet to discuss progress before the two surveys are completed. Annual Progress reporting is generally instigated by the Graduate Research School in July/August of each year.

Following notification by the Graduate Research School about the availability of the APR survey, candidates are expected to complete their section of the survey within four weeks. Supervisors will have two weeks (usually during October) to confirm and respond to candidates' APRs. The reports are then reviewed by Associate Deans, Research (or their nominee) in the candidate's academic school, usually also during October.

In addition, where the candidate falls into one or more of the following categories, they and their supervisors will be required to participate in an Interim Progress Report (IPR). The procedure for the IPR is similar to that for the APR, except that it is offset by about 6 months.

Students required to complete IPR:

- hold an international student visa holders,
- were identified as 'At Risk' in previous progress reports,
- may have been on leave during the previous APR cycle
- may have joined the university as a HDR candidate after the previous APR cycle
- have consumed the maximum period of candidature, or
- were nominated by their supervisor or Dean of School.

During the APR and (where required) the IPR, the Principal Supervisor and the Associate Dean, Research each recommend one of the following outcomes:

- **Satisfactory progress:** the candidate is making sufficient progress to complete their research program by the approved submission date.
- **School action required:** the candidate is making progress, however action is required on behalf of the School and candidate to ensure timely completion.
- **At Risk:** The candidate is at risk of not completing their program by the approved submission date or to the required standard, and intervention is required.
- **Show Cause:** the candidate has not made sufficient progress and is required to show cause as to why their candidature should not be terminated.

Candidates who have been placed At Risk by their School of enrolment will be required to meet with their Principal Supervisor or supervision team to complete an intervention strategy. The strategy must set out the next six months of activity to ensure that the research project will be completed by the approved submission date. A copy of the intervention strategies must be provided to the Graduate Research School.

If a candidate is placed At Risk on two or more consecutive occasions, they may be asked to Show Cause.

Participation in Student Evaluation of the Postgraduate Program (SEPP)

The Student Evaluation of the Postgraduate Program (SEPP) is an annual evaluation of candidates' experiences of the HDR program. Each year, HDR candidates are invited to complete an evaluation and provide feedback about their experience. The purpose of the SEPP is to provide feedback to the university about candidates' satisfaction (or otherwise). Responses are anonymous.

Continued participation in the Federation University HDR Skills Development Program (SDP)

The HDR Skills Development Program (SDP) is a series of workshops and seminars designed to support HDR candidates to timely completion; and to assist them to develop and document a suite of transferrable skills, useful across many fields of endeavour. Prescribed and optional sessions of the SDP continue into mid and late candidature.

School milestones and requirements

Academic schools may request additional candidature requirements. These will normally have been approved by the Research and Higher Degrees Subcommittee. Candidates and supervisors should check with the Associate Dean, Research within their school whether any such requirements are in place.

Variations to candidature

Where circumstances change and candidates would like to revise their enrolment details, a 'variation to candidature' may be required. This includes circumstances such as a change to the research project, a change to the proposed thesis title, a requirement to take leave, a request for an extension, a change to the supervisory team, conversion from Masters by Research to PhD and withdrawal from studies. In most cases, permission of the supervisor and the Associate Dean, Research is required for a variation to candidature to be processed.

The Graduate Research School manages applications for variations to candidature via a suite of HDR-related [forms](#). Where necessary guidance can be sought from the Graduate Research School via research.degrees@federation.edu.au

Leave

There are various types of leave available to HDR candidates. These are outlined in the [HDR Candidature Management Policy](#) and include recreation leave (vacations or holidays), sick leave (time off for illness) and parental leave (following the birth of a child). Candidates may also access other leave entitlements as assigned to Academic and General staff of the University, such as: compassionate/bereavement leave; leave for Jury Service; and Domestic Violence Leave. More information on these types of leave can be found on the [Human Resources webpage](#).

Leave from studies is a special kind of leave which normally extends for at least six months and up to one year (where a candidate has appropriate medical certificates, they may request Leave from Study for periods between four weeks and six months). Leave from Studies periods pause candidature for the duration of the leave. The period of candidature is thus extended by the same amount as the duration of this form of leave. Stipend scholarship payments are also paused during Leave from Studies.

Extension of candidature

Under exceptional circumstances, candidates can request an extension of up to six months, or part time equivalent, subject to the approval of the Dean, Graduate Studies.

PhD Candidates may request a second extension of up to a further six months where their HDR studies have been severely impacted by circumstances beyond their control. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Documented medical issues with substantial periods of leave,
- Unforeseen circumstances which impact the progress of a candidate's research topic, e.g. natural disaster in a data collection area.

Requests for extension to candidature must be submitted at least four weeks prior to the approved submission date.

Extensions to scholarships (including fee scholarship) are considered separately from extensions to candidature. Extensions to scholarship are considered in [Toolkit 2. Scholarships](#).

Change in research topic

A proposed change in research topic must show that suitable supervision and other required resources are available and appropriate for the new research topic, and the proposal must be endorsed by the Dean of the School of enrolment and approved by the Research by Higher Degree Committee. There will be no extension to the total duration of candidature arising from change in either research topic or a change in supervisory team, or both.

Significant changes to a candidate's research topic may require the candidate to undertake the Confirmation of Candidature process again as determined by RHDC.

Change of thesis title

The title of the research project, and therefore the thesis, is very often refined during candidature. It is therefore fairly common for candidates and supervisors to request a change to the thesis title even though the research topic remains essentially the same. A change to the thesis title can be requested via email at any time. The most important times to consider a change to the thesis title is at the time of submission of the Intention to Submit and Release of Thesis forms (i.e. around the time of thesis submission). Candidates who are impacted by [UN or Australian Sanctions](#) may be required to seek Government permission to change thesis title. A change in thesis title may occur with or without significant change to the research topic.

Transfer between programs

Applications for transfer between programs must be endorsed by the Dean of the School of enrolment and approved by the Chair, RHDC.

Conversion from Masters by Research to PhD

Where they have the support of their supervisory team and the Academic School, Masters by Research candidates may seek to convert to a PhD at confirmation. Masters by Research candidates requesting to convert to PhD candidature must follow the requirements of PhD confirmation of candidature as outlined in the [Candidature Management Procedure](#) for PhD probationary candidates.

If a candidate transfers from a Masters by Research degree to a PhD, the total enrolment period will be up to three years from the date that the candidate commenced the Masters by Research degree. There will be no extension to the total duration of candidature arising from transfer from Masters to PhD.

Conversion from PhD to a Masters by Research program

Transfers from a PhD program to a Masters by Research program will normally be considered where an extension for candidature has not already been approved. Where a candidate has already exceeded the maximum allowable time for a Masters by Research candidate, their thesis must be submitted within six months of their transfer request, or part-time equivalent and any stipends will be terminated on approval of the conversion request.

Withdrawal from Studies

Where a candidate chooses not to continue their study, they may withdraw. Information on ceasing candidature is located in the [Withdrawal from All Studies Procedure](#).

Readmission to candidature after withdrawal

Readmission to candidature after withdrawal may be considered where support from the Principal Supervisor and Dean of School exists. Candidates must readmit to the same program and must submit their thesis within the semester of readmitted enrolment.

Troubleshooting

It is impossible to predict what challenges may occur during HDR candidature. Supervisors, HDR coordinators and Associate Deans, Research are often involved in assisting candidates to address difficulties that arise during candidature. The Graduate Research School can also provide advice to

supervisors who may be helping their candidates navigate these kinds of challenges. Relevant Federation University HDR procedures can be a helpful starting point.

Candidature not confirmed

Where a confirmation panel finds that a candidate should not be confirmed the panel must advise the candidate and the Graduate Research School that the outcome is 'not confirmed'. The [HDR Candidature Management Procedure](#) then dictates that the Graduate Research School will initiate the Show Cause process (see below).

Candidates may appeal an unsuccessful confirmation outcome. The appeal must be made on the basis of incorrect procedure rather than arguing against the outcome itself.

Conflicting examiner recommendations

Examination of the thesis is discussed in [Toolkit 6. Examination](#) and in the HDR Theses and Examination [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#). The latter document shows steps to be taken where the examiner reports conflict. In summary, the Dean of the Graduate Research School, having read the two reports may make an 'on balance' recommendation or may request a School Examination Committee to form to consider the reports and formulate a recommendation. Outcomes may include sending the thesis to a third examiner. The Principal Supervisor will be informed of the situation. The Graduate Research School recommends that the Principal Supervisor then (sensitively) informs the candidate that the examination process will be delayed, and why.

Academic and Research Misconduct

Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to conduct that involves academic fraud, plagiarism and any other dishonest conduct to gain academic or general advantage; or conduct that otherwise contravenes the provisions of the University's academic rules, policies and procedures.

The [Academic Integrity Policy](#) applies to all Federation University staff and students. Breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy will be dealt with under the [Academic Misconduct Procedure](#).

Research misconduct

The University adheres to the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#) and requires all researchers, including HDR candidates and research managers to be familiar with, and abide by its provisions and to conduct their research and related tasks in accordance with these provisions and all other relevant legal, regulatory and policy requirements.

The [Research Integrity Policy](#) applies to all Federation University staff and students. Breaches of the Research Integrity Policy will be dealt with under the [Research Integrity and Misconduct Procedure](#).

Advice regarding academic and research misconduct can be sought from the [University Integrity Officer](#).

At Risk

An 'At Risk' outcome following an Annual, or Interim, Progress report indicates that a candidate is at risk of not completing their program by the approved submission date, or to the required standard, and intervention is required to support them to do so. Candidates who have been placed 'At Risk' by their Academic School will be required to meet with their Principal Supervisor or supervision team to complete an intervention strategy. The strategy must set out the next six months of activity to ensure that the research project will be completed by the approved submission date. The strategy should be approved by the Associate Dean Research and provided to the Graduate Research School.

If a candidate is placed 'At Risk' on two or more consecutive occasions, they may be asked to 'Show Cause'.

Show Cause

A candidate may be required to show cause as to why their candidature should not be terminated in any of the following instances:

- two or more consecutive Annual Progress Reports indicate that they are At Risk,
- candidature is not confirmed at the end of the probationary period of enrolment,
- on recommendation of the Dean or nominee,
- failure to maintain adequate and regular contact with the University,
- failure to submit written reports on academic progress when requested ,
- reached the maximum period of candidature, or
- failure to meet the requirements of the Skills Development Program.

Candidates must provide a written submission in response to a 'show cause' request. A Show Cause Committee will be convened by the Chair, RHDC to consider the candidate's submission and one of the following recommendations will be made:

- a) Candidate's progress is satisfactory,
- b) Candidate's enrolment for the degree is terminated, or
- c) Candidate's enrolment for the degree continues, with conditions.

Further detail regarding the Show Cause process can be found in the recently revised (soon to be released) HDR Candidature Management Policy and HDR Candidature Management Procedure



Toolkit 5. Supervision skills and requirements

Introduction and context

The following policies and procedures are relevant to this toolkit:

- [Federation University HDR Supervision Policy](#),
- [Supervision of HDR Candidates Procedure](#)
- [Responsibilities for Supervision of HDR Candidates Procedure](#)

At Federation University Australia, all Higher Degree by Research candidates are allocated a supervisory panel consisting of a Principal Supervisor and at least one Associate Supervisors. Supervisory panels may also include one or more external Co-Supervisors. The roles and responsibilities of each of these categories of supervision are described in the [Federation University HDR Supervision Policy](#). A fourth category of supervision ‘Provisional Principal Supervisor’ is also described. Use of this fourth category is considered exceptional, is intended for small disciplines lacking supervisory capacity, and is to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

All Supervisors must be approved and listed on the University Register of Supervisors.

The Supervisor Register:

According to the [Federation University HDR Supervision Policy](#), all staff members involved in the supervision of Higher Degree by Research Candidates must be listed on the Register. Requirements for registration are detailed in the [Federation University HDR Supervision Policy](#) and vary for Principal, Provisional Principal, Associate and Co-supervisors. Federation University staff wishing to be included on the register must undertake a minimum of 16 hours of training from the *Skills for Supervisors* program managed by the Graduate Research School. The Dean of the School in which the supervisor is based must also approve registration. Registration is for a period of four years, following which supervisors may apply to re-register. Re-registration requires supervisors to demonstrate that they have participated in at least four hours of training from the *Skills for Supervisors* program (or equivalent) during the preceding four year registration period. An evaluation/recommendation from the Dean is also required.

Skills for Supervisors program

The Graduate Research School provides a program of seminars to support supervisors of Higher Degree by Research candidates at Federation University. The *Skills for Supervisors* program provides supervisors with regular updates about the research training context as well as opportunities to develop and/or build on supervisory skills. Sessions may be face-face, via live webinar or available as recordings, and are relevant for new and aspiring supervisors, current supervisors wishing to build skills and knowledge regarding supervision and highly experienced supervisors. Participation in *Skills for Supervisors* sessions will enable supervisors to meet their obligations regarding registration and re-registration. Details of the *Skills for Supervisors* program are available via Moodle. All registered supervisors have access to the [Skills for Supervisors Moodle Shell](#). Access can also be arranged by contacting [Paula Di Maria](#).

Supervisory loads

The [Federation University HDR Supervision Policy](#) states the normal maximum supervision load that may be carried by supervisors in different categories. In exceptional circumstances these loads may be subject to adjustment; such adjustment requires the approval of the Dean or nominee.

Principal Supervisor: Where other duties are not reduced, normally not more than 6 equivalent full-time candidates; where the principal supervisor is a full time researcher, normally not more than 12 equivalent full-time candidates.

Provisional Principal Supervisor: Where other duties are not reduced, normally not more than 4 equivalent full-time candidates.

Associate Supervisor: Where other duties are not reduced, normally not a member of more than 4 supervisory panels.

Co Supervisor: Normally not a member of more than 4 supervisory panels.

The Responsibilities of the Supervisory panel

The responsibilities of the HDR supervision panel are described in the [Responsibilities for Supervision of HDR Candidates Procedure](#) and include:

- Ensuring that the candidate and the research project complies with university policies
- Ensuring that the candidate has access to the minimum resources (as stated in Section 1 of the [Candidature Management Policy](#)) from the first day of enrolment.
- Providing guidance to candidates (including with respect to the requirements and timelines for progress reporting, availability and expectations around skills training opportunities, expected standards of research, refining the research topic, planning the research program, presenting a research proposal, productive use of time, constructive feedback on writing, assistance in understanding and responding to examiners).
- Establishing timelines for the research, including a schedule of regular contact, which may be face-face or by tele- or video-conferencing. (at least every two weeks for full time candidates and at least monthly for part time candidates is recommended). Timelines regarding feedback on written work, progress reports, research results and drafts of the thesis should also be established. (A two week turn around is recommended for chapter-length drafts)
- Ensuring that changes to supervisory arrangements are approved by the Dean of the Academic School and formalised via the Graduate Research School.
- Ensuring that occupational health and safety matters are be addressed
- Ensuring that the candidate and the supervisory panel are aware of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Practice of Research](#) and adhere to the code, including following ethical practices appropriate to the discipline and the University's ethics committees. This includes obtaining all necessary clearances with respect to ethics in research involving humans, animals, hazardous materials and biosafety issues.
- Encouraging and supporting candidates to make research presentations
- Involving the candidate in activities of the Academic School
- Ensuring the candidates is familiar with the University's support services
- Encouraging, where appropriate, candidates to publish and disseminate the results of their research responsibly. Mentor the candidate in publishing research.
- Ensuring the candidate is familiar with the University policy and guidelines on intellectual property and its implications for their research
- Providing regular reports on progress
- Mentoring the candidate in preparing the thesis for examination
- [Nominating examiners](#)

- Ensuring that the candidate's original data or research records and information are stored safely and reliably during and after the research project. Storage of data or research records and information must be in accordance with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Practice of Research](#) and with requirements of relevant ethics approvals. The duration, security, reliability, confidentiality and mechanism of storage should be considered.
- Notifying the candidate regarding periods of leave and make alternative arrangements where leave periods are greater than three months
- Notifying the candidate of any intention to cease employment at the university as soon as is practicable.

Responsibilities of the University, the School and the candidate are also outlined in the [Responsibilities for Supervision of HDR Candidates Procedure](#).

Avoiding problems

There are several key areas where actions of supervisors can reduce the likelihood of problems occurring during candidature. These are most often most relevant at the early stages of the candidate-supervisor relationship.

Selecting candidates

Federation University's [HDR Candidate Selection Policy](#) highlights the need to select high quality candidates who are capable of completing their program within the required time and to a high academic standard. While it is clearly also important that applicants are selected into supportive research environments with appropriate supervision and sufficient resources available to carry out the research, this section of the toolkit provides advice regarding selecting candidates with appropriate competencies.

[Toolkit 1. Selection and admission](#) describes the processes by which prospective students approach the University and apply for HDR candidature. From the prospective supervisor's point of view, each enquiry from a prospective candidate and each request from the School to lead or join a supervisory team, represents a decision point.

Prospective supervisors are encouraged to consider whether each prospective candidate has the desired key competencies likely to lead to a timely completion; and to raise concerns where there are some doubts. This consideration could take place at the point of first enquiry (if the prospective applicant's first approach to the university is via a prospective supervisor); or when the prospective supervisor is approached by the Associate Dean Research or HDR Coordinator with a request to lead or join a supervisory team. Alternatively, the Associate Dean Research or the HDR Coordinator may wish to undertake these quality checks.

[Appendix 1](#). provides a checklist of key competencies for supervisors who are considering working with applicants on HDR projects. [Appendix 2](#). provides information about the types of evidence that are commonly requested from applicants and how these can be used to assess key competencies.

Setting expectations

Supervisory problems can be avoided, or at least minimized if candidates and supervisors discuss and agree their needs, expectations, responsibilities and ways of working, early in the HDR candidature. Ground rules may need to be renegotiated periodically.

The Graduate Research School has developed [a Candidate / Supervisor agreement](#) which is intended to help candidates and supervisors explore their expectations and to identify and resolve mismatches. It is a requirement of candidature that the agreement be completed and submitted to

the Graduate Research School within the first four weeks of candidature. Where appropriate, and at any point in candidature, this agreement may be updated and re-submitted to the Graduate Research School.

Providing feedback

It is the role of the supervisory team to provide critical feedback to the HDR candidate. This should be done effectively and supportively. Problems can emerge around the giving and receiving of feedback for various reasons including:

- There is a mismatch between the candidate's and the supervisors' perspectives regarding progress or quality of the work done, so perhaps negative feedback is unexpected
- The candidate is not familiar (or comfortable) with robust academic debate
- The supervisor(s) is/are not comfortable providing what may be perceived as negative criticism and so avoid discussing problems
- The supervisor(s) is/are not providing feedback on written work or responding to emails within a timeframe that the candidate considers reasonable
- The supervisor(s) is/are not providing feedback that the candidate considers useful
- The supervisor(s) have found fault but not helped the candidate to address the problem (the candidate understands that they are not 'hitting the mark' but does not understand how to achieve the desired goal)

It is helpful to check how feedback has 'landed' with the candidate and it may be useful initially to schedule time to provide feedback and then additional time to discuss the experience of receiving feedback once it has been provided. Supervisors should be aware that there is a power differential between themselves and the candidate and encourage candidates to question or seek clarification around feedback.

Regular meetings

Regular supervisory meetings help build a productive relationship between all members of the research team and are strongly encouraged. Regular meetings facilitate active engagement (of both the candidate and the supervisors) in the project and allow supervisors to monitor progress and guide the candidate. Supervisors may request that the candidates sends an agenda in advance of the meeting and a summary of tasks or actions following the meeting. An example agenda template is provided in [Appendix 3](#).



Toolkit 6. Examination

Introduction and context

The following policies and procedures are relevant to this toolkit:

- [Research Training Scholarship Program \(RTP\) Policy](#)
- [HDR Theses and Examinations Policy](#)
- [HDR Theses and Examinations Procedure](#)

The supervisory team, and in particular the Principal Supervisor, has a major role in ensuring that the candidate's thesis is ready for examination. The Principal Supervisor's role also extends to nominating suitable examiners and, where required, supporting the candidate when the examination outcome is returned, for example providing guidance while the candidate makes any amendments to the thesis, should this be required.

The Graduate Research School will not accept a thesis for examination from a candidate if the Principal Supervisor has not yet submitted the [Recommendation of Examiners form](#).

It should be noted that the School of Health has introduced pre-submission requirements for candidates enrolled via that School. Supervisors in the SoH should familiarise themselves with these requirements and ensure that they are understood by HDR candidates in the School.

Thesis format and requirements

Supervisors and candidates should be familiar with the thesis format and requirements as described in the (new) HDR Theses and Examinations Policy. The Policy dictates the various approved formats for the thesis and provides guidance on the length of the document.

Approved thesis formats:

- Conventional thesis
- Thesis incorporating published papers
- Practical works and an exegesis

Doctoral theses should normally comprise text of not more than 100,000 words, or a major work or collection of works (for example, visual art, performance art, literary production or computer software development) accompanied by an exegeses or scholarly commentary of between 20,000-40,000 words

Masters by Research theses should normally comprise text of not more than 50,000 words, or a major work or collection of works (for example, visual art, performance art, literary production or computer software development) accompanied by an exegeses or scholarly commentary of between 10,000-20,000 words.

Supervisors are expected to provide guidance and support to students in selecting a chosen thesis format, and meeting conventions appropriate to the research discipline (for example regarding specific styles of writing, formatting and referencing). Such guidance is best provided before writing begins.

The [Skills for Supervisors](#) training program and the [Skills Development Program](#) provide guidance for supervisors and candidates, respectively, on the structure of the thesis incorporating published papers and on the examination process.

Federation University's [Research Training Scholarship Program \(RTP\) Policy](#) requires that candidates whose research has been supported by a RTP Fee Offset Scholarship and/or a RTP Stipend Scholarship must recognise this support² in the acknowledgements section of the thesis. Recommended wording for such acknowledgement is:

For HDR candidates in receipt of both an RTP Stipend and RTP Fee-Offset:

"<candidate name> was/is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Stipend and RTP Fee-Offset Scholarship through Federation University Australia."

For HDR candidates in receipt of an RTP Fee-Offset Scholarship only:

"<candidate name> was/is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Fee-Offset Scholarship through Federation University Australia."

Is it ready?

The supervisory team should assist the candidate to develop the thesis to a standard that is considered likely to receive a passing grade. While this is clearly a subjective evaluation, it is likely that the supervisory team has a clearer understanding of the required standard than the candidate.

There are sometimes differences of opinion between candidates and supervisors about whether the thesis is ready for submission. Candidates may feel that the thesis is ready while the supervisors have some concerns; or the supervisors may feel that the candidate is spending too much time 'polishing' the final draft of the thesis. Open and honest discussions are the best way forward. Where disagreements persist, it may be advisable to involve the Associate Dean, Research or the HDR Coordinator as a mediator. It is not in the best interests of the candidate for the supervisor to withhold their opinion about a thesis that they think is not ready for examination. Matters of particular concern include appropriate ethics approval for the collection of data presented in the thesis (where relevant), adequate statistical analyses (where relevant) and the scope and depth of the thesis.

Where differences of opinion about the readiness of the thesis for submission cannot be resolved, it is possible for the candidate to submit the thesis and for the supervisory team (via the Principal Supervisor) to note their concerns. This occurs at the time of [thesis submission](#).

Candidates are required to complete and submit an '[Intention to Submit](#)' form at least four weeks prior to the intended submission date. The endorsement of the supervisory panel is demonstrated by the signature of the Principal Supervisor on this form. A candidate may submit a thesis for examination without the endorsement of the supervisory panel, however this requires the candidate to acknowledge the supervisors' concerns and to be prepared to accept responsibility for any tuition fees applicable during any period of thesis revisions.

Supervisors should use the submission of the Intention to Submit form as a trigger to complete the Recommendation of Examiners form.

² In fact, RTP support should be acknowledged at any time during or after the completion of the HDR degree when the recipient of a RTP scholarship, their supervisor or any other party publishes or produces material such as books, articles, newsletters or other literary or artistic works which relate to the research project.

Nomination of examiners

The Principal Supervisor recommends three thesis examiners to the Graduate Research School. These nominated examiners must be approved by the Associate Dean, Research and the Dean of the Academic School in which the candidate is enrolled and by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Timely nomination of examiners is important to avoid delays in examination. Principal Supervisors should use the [Recommendation of Examiners form](#) to nominate examiners, including information about each nominated examiners' credentials regarding their suitability to examine the thesis. In order to obtain such information, and to establish that nominated examiners are available and willing to assess the thesis, it is expected that the Principal Supervisor will make informal contact with prospective examiners prior to nominating them. Suggested wording for an informal approach to prospective examiners is provided in [Appendix 4](#). The Graduate Research School will not accept a thesis for examination from a candidate if the Principal Supervisor has not yet submitted the Recommendation of Examiners form.

In nominating examiners, supervisors should avoid conflicts of interests. The Australian Council of Graduate Research has developed [Conflict of Interest in Examination Guidelines](#) which are useful to consider when considering potential examiners for nomination.

Thesis submission

A completed [Release of Thesis form](#) must accompany the submitted thesis. It asks important questions regarding copyright, academic integrity, professional editing and intellectual property which candidates must answer. Each of these points be considered by the candidate and the supervisory team well before the point of submission of the thesis.

Copyright

It is imperative that, for a thesis/exegesis including any copyrighted material (including the candidates' own published work, where copyright may be held by another party), permission has been sought from the copyright holder. This may require candidates to seek permission from journal editors to replicate published papers in the thesis. The Graduate Research School advises supervisors and candidates to seek this permission at the time of submission of articles for publication, however such permission may be sought retrospectively.

Academic integrity

It is imperative that the submitted thesis/exegesis does not contain material which has been accepted for an award of a degree or diploma at any university, unless this is clearly referenced and described as outside of the scope of the research conducted for the thesis. Likewise, the work of others must be clearly acknowledged, cited or referenced throughout the thesis. Where appropriate, approval of the Human or Animal Research Ethics Committees for research described in the thesis should also be indicated.

Professional editing

Where a professional proof reader/editor has been used in preparing the thesis/exegesis, this must have occurred within the [Guidelines for the editing of research theses by professional editors](#).

Intellectual property

Candidates are asked to indicate that they have read and understood Federation Universities' [Statute 8.2 on Intellectual Property](#). In short, this document states that intellectual property created by a HDR candidate as part of their HDR will be owned by the University, but that the HDR candidate will own copyright of material in his or her thesis.

The Principal Supervisor is also asked to sign the [Release of Thesis form](#) to certify that the thesis/exegesis is ready to be released by Federation University Australia for examination and the matters mentioned above have been addressed. The Release of Thesis form is also signed by the Associate Dean, Research and the Dean of the academic school in which the candidate is enrolled.

Where the supervisor does not feel that the thesis is ready for examination, this may be recorded on the [Release of Thesis form](#); and details are requested. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation) will meet with the candidate if the Principal Supervisor, Associate Dean (Research) and the Dean have all indicated that the thesis/portfolio is not worthy of examination.

Selection and invitation of examiners

Following receipt of the 'Intention to Submit' and 'Recommendation of Examiners' forms, the Dean of the Graduate Research School will assess the suitability of the examiners. If approved, the thesis will be sent to two of the three examiners. The third is 'held in reserve' in case of conflicting recommendations from the original two examiners. If the Dean, Graduate Research School rejects one or more of the nominated supervisors, a request for further nominations will be made of the Principal Supervisor.

The examination process

Examiners are sent pdf copies of the thesis and advised that they have 6-8 weeks to complete an examiner's report. Information provided to examiners along with the thesis includes a statement on conflict of interest, a link to Federation University Australia's [HDR Theses and Examinations Procedure](#), details on how to assess specific thesis formats (e.g. traditional thesis layouts for PhD and Masters, theses including publication for PhD and Masters and exeges), payment information and forms and an examiners' report template including the possible recommendation outcomes for thesis examination.

Each examiner returns their report, clearly stating their recommended examination outcome, which may be one of the following:

- **PASSED without further examination**
- ³ **PASSED, subject to minor corrections** made to the satisfaction of the Academic Board; (i.e. the thesis is suitable for conferral once the author has addressed nominated passages, textual errors, and referencing corrections. These actions should largely be able to be undertaken independently by the candidate); or
- ³ **PASSED subject to major corrections** made to the satisfaction of the Academic Board; (i.e. the thesis requires new data collection, new or revised data analysis, substantive rewriting of one or more chapters, or a large volume of stylistic/presentation errors. These actions should be undertaken with ongoing input from the supervisory team); or
- **DEFERRED**; the thesis requires substantial revision and re-examination by external experts and the Candidate should be permitted to submit the thesis for examination in a revised form.
- **FAILED**

³ These two recommendation options replace a single recommendation option in earlier versions of the HDR Theses and Examination Procedure, which was "PASSED subject to corrections being made to the satisfaction of the Board"; i.e. there was previously no opportunity for examiners to distinguish between minor and major amendments. It was felt that this was leading to a larger number of 'DEFERRED' recommendations than was necessary and these two options will now be available to examiners.

What happens after the examiners' recommendations are returned?

After both examiners' reports have been received, the Dean, Graduate Research School (DGRS) makes an on balance recommendation to the School Examination Committee (SEC) regarding the examination outcome. This is contained within the DGRS Report which is sent to the SEC. The SEC is a committee formed with the candidate's Academic School for the purposes of considering and making recommendations regarding HDR examination outcomes.

On the basis of the recommendations of the examiners and the DGRS, and acting in accordance with the HDR Thesis and Examination Policy, the SEC may recommend one of the following examination results:

- PASSED without further examination
- PASSED subject to minor corrections
- PASSED subject to major corrections
- DEFERRED
- FAILED

Where the examiner reports are dissimilar

Where the examiner reports are dissimilar, the DGRS and/or the SEC may recommend

- Examination by a third examiner.
- Deliberations at the Research Higher Degrees Committee (RHDC)
 - RHDC may recommend either a result (from those listed above) or examination by a third examiner

Where a third examiner is recommended, the Graduate Research School provides the remaining approved nominated examiner a pdf copy of the thesis and information regarding the examination process. The third examiner is also asked to return an examination report within 6-8 weeks.

Once the third examiner report is received, the DGRS again makes an on balance recommendation to the SEC, who are required to recommend a result or to refer the matter to the RHDC.

Where amendments/corrections are required

Where the candidate is required to make either minor or major amendments or corrections to the satisfaction of the Academic Board prior to the award of a passing grade, it is expected that the amendments will be summarised in a template provided to the candidate by the Graduate Research School. The amended thesis and template are returned to the SEC, within a specific time frame. The Candidate and the Principal Supervisor must sign a statement indicating that the recommendations of the examiners have been considered and implemented where appropriate. The amended thesis and the examination report template will be considered by the SEC, which will recommend

- PASS
- Further amendments (usually minor and within a specific timeframe)
- FAIL
- Resubmission for a lower award (e.g. Masters rather than PhD)

Where re-examination of a deferred thesis is required

Where the candidate is required to undertake substantial revisions to the thesis prior to re-examination, the revised thesis should be submitted to the SEC together with a completed template which summarises the changes made to the revised thesis. The SEC may recommend

- Further changes (usually minor within a specific timeframe)

- Re-examination
- Failed and not submitted for re-examination

When a thesis undergoes re-examination, examiners may select one of only three possible recommendations:

- PASS
- Pass subject to minor corrections
- FAIL

The DGRS makes an on-balance recommendation to the SEC following the re-examination process.

Recommendation of award

Where the SEC has recommended a passing grade, the Graduate Research School arranges for approval by RHDC and the Chair of Academic Board for award of the degree and notifies the candidate and the Academic School of the outcome.

The Chair of RHDC and the Chair of Academic Board recommends that the degree be awarded.

The Graduate Research School advises the candidate of the remaining procedures to qualify for admission to the degree. Academic Board via RHDC recommends to Council that the candidate be admitted to the degree.

Appendix 1. Suggested checklist of key competencies for selection of high quality HDR candidates

Knowledge

Check or score	Key competency	Suggested means of assessment of key competency
	The educational career/background of the candidate is with the field of the HDR project, including technical skills and research-related knowledge	Discipline area of undergraduate/honours/masters degree Previous work Publications Selection interview

Skills

Check or score	Key competency	Suggested means of assessment of key competency
	<u>Analytical thinking</u> The ability to separate a complex whole into its constituent parts in order to study these parts and their relations and come up with plans or solutions	Previous work Selection interview Set and assess a task Contact with referees
	<u>Conceptual thinking</u> The ability to identify patterns or connections between situations that are not obviously related, and to identify key or underlying issues in complex situations	Previous work Selection interview Set and assess a task Contact with referees
	<u>Creativity</u> The ability to come up with new/innovative ideas and concepts	Previous work Selection interview Set and assess a task
	<u>Project management</u> The ability to plan and organise the project as well as delegating and negotiating tasks among project members	Previous work Selection interview Contact with referees
	<u>Presentation and communication</u> The ability to transfer an idea to others in an understandable and effective way	Selection interview Contact with referees
	<u>Language</u> The level at which the candidate can read, write and speak English (and other required languages)	Meets University English language requirements Selection interview
	<u>Academic integrity</u> The adherence to moral and ethical principles	Selection interview Set and assess a (scenario-based) task

Attitude

Check or score	Key competency	Suggested means of assessment of key competency
	<u>Perseverance</u> The drive and determination to continue and finish a project	Previous work Selection interview
	<u>Autonomy/Independence</u> The ability and confidence to self-manage and execute tasks individually as deemed right by the candidate	Selection interview Contact with referees
	<u>Working with others</u> The openness to feedback and input from others as well as the ability to collaborate, negotiate and influence others.	Selection interview Contact with referees
	<u>Supervising and coaching</u> The ability to transfer knowledge and inspire others	Selection interview Contact with referees

Appendix 2. Using evidence provided by HDR applicants to assess key competencies

Evidence included in the HDR application

Type of evidence	Key competency demonstrated by this type of evidence
Academic testamurs and grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the applicant meets the University’s academic entry requirements • Whether the applicant’s educational career/background is a good fit for the HDR project, including technical skills and research-related knowledge
IELTS/TOEFL certificate IELTS – International English Language Test Score TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the applicant meets the University’s English language entry requirements for HDR
Resume or Curriculum Vitae	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the applicant’s educational career/background is a good fit for the HDR project, including technical skills and research-related knowledge
Master’s thesis or publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the applicant’s educational career/background is a good fit for the HDR project, including technical skills and research-related knowledge • Whether the applicant has demonstrated research capacity • Academic writing skills • Whether the applicant has the capacity to publish

Evidence which may be sought in addition to that contained in the HDR application

Type of evidence	Key competency demonstrated by this type of evidence
Direct contact with referee(s)	Contacting referees directly can provide additional insights regarding the kind of work that the applicant has done, how the applicant typically organises their work and the quality of the work that the applicant has previously delivered. Be aware that in some cultures it is considered inappropriate to give negative feedback. It can be helpful to ask for experiences with the candidate rather than a judgement.
Selection interview	An interview can be particularly useful where there are several applicants for one HDR project, or where it is deemed important to ensure the selection of the highest quality applicant possible. A selection interview is a very helpful way to ensure a good match between the potential PhD candidate and the desired competencies for the position. Start by deciding the attributes of the person that you want to see in the position. Create a selection committee (at least two people and preferably more) and agree on the competencies that you want to assess. Interviews may be face-face, by telephone or videoconferencing.
Set and assess tasks	If warranted, various kinds of tasks can be set to assess the specific skills and attitudes of an applicant. Tasks set may include: writing an abstract, giving a trial presentation, or completion of set exercises. The tasks should clearly test for the presence or the degree of development of a particular desired competency. a

Appendix 3. Agenda Template for Candidate-Supervisory Team Meeting

Date:

Candidate Name:

Supervisors Present:

Discussed:

Agreed:

To do
for next
meeting:

Date of Next Meeting:

Appendix 4. Suggested wording for informal approach to a potential examiner (by phone or by email).

The following is intended only as a guide. Please edit to suit your personal style.

Dear <Prospective Examiner>,

<Candidate's name> is a <PhD/Masters by Research> candidate in <School name> at Federation University Australia, supervised by <Principal Supervisor's name> (or <myself>) and <Name(s) of other supervisor(s)>. <Candidate's name> plans to submit his/her thesis in <month> <year>. The title of his/her thesis is <Thesis title>. Please find a draft abstract attached.

Given your expertise in this topic </we> hope that you might be agree to be nominated as an examiner for <Candidate's name>'s thesis.

Federation University's Graduate Research School requires the nomination of three external examiners. Once the thesis has been accepted for examination, the Dean of the Graduate Research School will select two nominated examiners to be formally invited to undertake the examination.

The examination process requires each of the two selected examiners to read the thesis and send a written report, based on clear criteria to the Graduate Research School. It is expected that examiners' reports will be returned within six weeks of receipt of the thesis and the third nominated examiner is not normally contacted unless there is a discrepancy between the examination reports received. There is no requirement at Federation University for an oral interview.

Could you please let me know if you are willing to be nominated as a potential examiner for <Candidate's name>'s thesis and, if selected, whether you feel you are able to return a report within approximately six weeks?

If yes, could you please confirm your preferred email address for correspondence (the thesis will be sent to you in pdf format) and a telephone number. In order to make a case regarding your suitability as an examiner for this candidate, I hope you can provide me with the following information:

- A copy of your curriculum vitae, including a summary of your appointments, publications and research grants,
- The number of HDR candidates you have supervised to completion,
- The number of current HDR candidates you are supervising and
- The number of theses that you have previously examined.

If you are selected as an examiner, Federation University's Graduate Research School will send further instructions, including advice regarding a small honorarium to acknowledge your time. All further correspondence regarding the examination of this thesis will come from the Graduate Research School at Federation University Australia since neither the supervisors nor the candidate are permitted to contact the examiners after this initial approach.

Yours sincerely,

<Principal Supervisor name> or <All Supervisor names>

<Affiliation and contact details>

Appendix 5. Future toolkits

The Graduate Research School hopes to build on this resource and provide further guidance in the form of additional toolkits. Possibilities include:

Toolkit x. Resources and funding