



**Federation**  
University



Electronic version 1.5

## Graduate Research School Higher Degree Research Handbook

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Federation University acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where our campuses, centres and field stations are located, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and First Nations Peoples.

The Aboriginal Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where our campuses, centres and field stations are located include:

- ★ Wimmera Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jupagulk
- ★ Ballarat Wadawurrung
- ★ Berwick Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri
- ★ Gippsland Gunai Kurnai
- ★ Nanya Station Muthi Muthi and Barkindji
- ★ Brisbane Turrbal and Jagera





**Welcome to Federation University Australia (the University). We are very pleased that you have chosen to study your Higher Degree by Research (HDR) with us. We endeavor to provide HDR candidates with the highest possible standard of support.**

This handbook has been prepared to assist HDR candidates at the University. The handbook covers a wide range of topics that are relevant to our HDR programs. The handbook has been arranged into three sections (Getting Started at Federation University; Early Candidature; and Late Candidature), but it is a good idea to become familiar with the contents of all sections when starting out on your HDR journey.

Throughout the handbook there are links to more detailed documentation with which you are encouraged to become familiar. In particular, candidates should read the [HDR Candidature Management Policy](#) and other important [policies and procedures](#) located on our [Research website](#).

Any questions can be directed to the generic email account: [research.degrees@federation.edu.au](mailto:research.degrees@federation.edu.au). Your message will be answered by the most appropriate person in the Graduate Research School team.

## Degrees to which this handbook applies

Higher Degrees by Research are supervised research training programs. The HDR programs offered at the University are:

- **Masters Degree (Research)** 18 months full time
- **Doctoral Degree** (also known as a PhD) three years full time





# Getting Started at Federation University

A checklist to help you get started at the University is provided in Appendix A

## Applying for admittance to a Higher Degree by Research

Candidates are admitted to their degrees following a formal application process. All prospective candidates must demonstrate that they have met academic entry requirements and international students must also meet English language entry requirements.

The Graduate Research School has provided a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page regarding the application process. Further information about [applying for a HDR](#) is also available online, along with specific information for [international research applicants](#).

Admission to all HDR programs is on a probationary basis. Candidates progress from probationary status to confirmed candidature after successful completion of the Confirmation of Candidature (CoC), details of which are provided in the [Early Candidature](#) section of this handbook.

## Amend your personal details

Update your personal details (for example, name, phone number, address, etc.) using [My Student Centre](#).

## Communication

A Federation University email account is provided to all HDR candidates on enrolment. It is vital that you monitor this account as this is where many important university communications will be sent. Failure to monitor and maintain this email account is not considered an excuse for failing to respond to communications. It is possible to redirect emails from your university account to other email accounts. If assistance is required in this regard, please contact the [ITS Service Desk](#).

## HDR News

All candidates will receive regular HDR News, circulated by email. HDR News is created by the Research Training Team at the Graduate Research School. It outlines upcoming training opportunities and provides information specifically relevant to HDR candidates. The University also provides a general bulletin called *FedNews*, which HDR candidates should also monitor for opportunities and important information that may be relevant to them. Previous *FedNews* bulletins are available online. If a candidate finds that they do not receive these bulletins automatically via their university email account, they can be viewed on the [website](#) or a request for a [RSS feed](#) can be made.

## The Graduate Research School

The Graduate Research School is led by the Dean of Graduate Studies and comprises of [academic and professional staff](#), whose roles are to support HDR candidates and ensure compliance with government requirements for HDR programs.

HDR candidates are supported centrally by the Federation University Graduate Research School (GRS). In particular, the staff of the Graduate Research School provide:

- academic (supervision) and financial assistance
- a central administrative role for HDR candidature
- research training and development opportunities for HDR candidates and their supervisors

The central administrative role of the GRS also includes processing applications for candidature and scholarships, enrolment, facilitating and documenting confirmation of candidature, documenting leave, accepting theses for examination and processing examination results, which is just to name a few of its many responsibilities.

The research training role of the Graduate Research School team includes the development and delivery of the HDR [Skills Development Program](#) (SDP).

Candidates may contact the Graduate Research School via [research.degrees@federation.edu.au](mailto:research.degrees@federation.edu.au). More information on [research at Federation University](#) can be found online.

## Research Centres

A candidate's main source of support is their principal supervisor, who will generally be attached to a Research Centre (further details about HDR supervision can be found in the [Early Candidature](#) section of this handbook). Each Research Centre has a HDR coordinator linked to it and they are the candidates' next source of support.

Links to the six Research Centres are provided below:

- ★ **Health Innovation and Transformation Centre** (HITC)
- ★ **Collaborative Evaluation and Research Group** (CERG)
- ★ **Future Regions Research Centre** (FRRC)
- ★ **Centre for New Energy Transition Research** (CfNETR)
- ★ **Centre for Smart Analytics** (CSA)
- ★ **Centre for eResearch & Digital Innovation** (CeRDI)

## Regulations, policies and procedures

The University's HDR programs are governed by legislation. There is a range of HDR-related [Policies and Procedures](#) that all HDR candidates should become familiar with.

## Full-time and part-time candidature

Domestic HDR candidates may enroll on a full-time or part-time basis, subject to approval by the [Dean of Graduate Studies](#).

International students who have an Australian student visa are required to enroll on a full-time basis. A form to request a change of enrolment can be found on the [HDR Forms](#) page.

## Duration of candidature

Doctoral (PhD) candidature is for a period of three years full-time study or six years part-time equivalent.

Candidature for Masters by Research is for a period of 18 months full-time study or three years part-time equivalent. Extensions to these durations are possible only where there are exceptional circumstances.

However, all candidates are expected to complete within the durations stated and, therefore, should plan for this outcome.

## Hours of study

Full-time candidates should plan to spend, on average, 38 hours a week on their studies. In other words, full-time HDR candidature should be considered at least as time consuming as a full-time job. Part-time candidates are expected to spend at least 50% of this time (18 hours per week) on their studies. A prospective candidate should not accept a place unless they are prepared to devote such time to their candidature, as they cannot otherwise expect to achieve satisfactory progress.

## Employment during candidature

Full-time students are usually permitted to undertake part-time, paid employment except where scholarship conditions apply. Such employment must not interfere with the recommended hours of study as stated above. Paid employment commitments during the period of candidature will not be accepted as grounds for an extension of either candidature or a scholarship.

## Leave

There are [various types of leave](#) available to HDR candidates. It is important that you distinguish between the different types of leave, and that you apply for the appropriate leave type for your circumstances. Examples 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 applicable 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](#).

Candidates studying full time are permitted 20 working days of recreation leave and up to 20 working days of sick leave each year. For those studying part time, this allocation is halved. An [Absentee Leave Form](#) must be completed before leave is taken. This form must be signed by the candidate, principal supervisor and HDRC before submitting it to the Graduate Research School for processing. It is appropriate to use the generic email address: [research.degrees@federation.edu.au](mailto:research.degrees@federation.edu.au)



Periods of recreation or sick leave are not subtracted from the duration of candidature.

Leave from studies is a different kind of leave. It is usually taken for longer periods of time than other types of leave. Candidature is suspended during leave from studies and, therefore, this period of leave is not included in the calculation of candidature time expended. Please login to [My Student Centre](#) and complete the online Leave form studies form. Leave from studies can be taken for periods from six months up to one year. Where the candidate has appropriate medical certificates, they may request leave from studies for periods between four weeks and six months.

Further information on types of leave and leave entitlements can be found in the [HDR Candidature Management Policy](#).

## HDR induction/orientation

All accepted HDR candidates must complete the compulsory HDR induction/orientation module that forms part of the Federation University [HDR Skills Development Program](#) (SDP). Completion of this induction/orientation module can be face to face, online via a live webinar or via a recording. All HDR candidates should have access to the SDP Moodle Shell. Failure to complete such prescribed modules may prohibit the candidate from attempting confirmation of candidature.

Candidates must also participate in an induction/orientation program arranged by their supervisor and / or HDRC, which will include information regarding occupational health and safety. It is highly recommended that international HDR candidates make contact with our [International Student Support](#) team and participate in their orientation program.

## HDR Skills Development Program on Moodle

All HDR candidates should become familiar with the [HDR Skills Development Program on Moodle](#). This online platform holds a host of HDR resources and information. Candidates are automatically enrolled in this shell when starting their degree and its access and use will be covered during the HDR induction/orientation program.

## Minimum resources/support

The following (minimum level) of resources/services will be provided by the GRS for all HDR candidates undertaking their program on campus. These minimum resources should be made available to candidates when they commence study. In instances

where the candidate believes the provision of resources is not reasonable, they should address their concerns to the relevant HDR coordinator (HDRC).

On-campus candidates should be provided with:

- a desk and chair located in a secure space dedicated to HDR candidates (this might be shared space), where possible, in reasonable proximity to the Research Centre or Institute that is providing principal supervision
- secure storage
- access to computer (hardware/software) facilities appropriate to the research needs of the candidate
- reasonable amounts of stationery and access to photocopying, telephone and postal services
- reasonable after-hours access to facilities (taking into account relevant occupational health and safety requirements)
- any other resources identified as essential to a particular candidate's research program (for example, scientific and technical equipment, laboratory, or studio facilities)

An adequate level of financial support to undertake the approved project, as approved by the GRS Dean, shall be provided to meet relevant research costs. The GRS and relevant Research Centre & Institutes should ensure that candidates are included in their activities: such as research seminars/conferences; networking and interaction with their staff and any scholarly visitors; and be provided with opportunities for social interaction with staff and other research candidates.

## Services and support for HDR candidates

**A troubleshooting list is provided in Appendix B.**

We offer a range of student [advocacy](#) and [support services](#), that include disability support, counselling and a [Student Advisory Centre](#). Such services are available to all enrolled candidates. It is important that candidates be proactive regarding seeking support so that problems and issues can be addressed as they arise.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidates can find support and assistance at the [Aboriginal Education Centre](#).

All international candidates should engage with [International Student Support](#)

The Library provides a range of services for HDR candidates, such as advice on your literature review, use of [Endnote bibliographic software](#), citing and referencing help, workshops, [databases access](#), [delivery of resources available in other libraries](#), guidance on publishing, managing your research data,

advice on [copyright](#) and deposit of your e-thesis. All HDR candidates are encouraged to make early contact with their liaison librarian to discuss individual research requirements.

The [career development and employment team](#) can assist with such things as planning for a career, part-time work and applying for positions (for example, creating curriculum vitae and resumes, addressing selection criteria and preparing a cover letter).

The GRS also supports a [Federation HDR Facebook group](#), which is a great source of information and a means to network with other HDR candidates at the University. [Learning Skills Advisors](#) are also a great source of academic support.

## Information Technology Support

The [ITS Service Desk](#) can assist candidates with IT support needs, questions, and issues.

## HDR Skills Development Program (SDP)

The Research Training team within the Graduate Research School recognises the importance of education and training to support HDR candidature. We are pleased to offer a range of personal and professional development initiatives aimed to enhance the higher degree experience. The [Skills Development Program](#) provides a variety of opportunities to build skills and knowledge that can assist with timely and successful completion of your degree and increase employment opportunities. It is a requirement that HDR candidates must complete certain elements of the SDP, in each year of candidature, in order to satisfy the requirements of their candidature. More information on the SDP program and its compulsory elements is available [online](#).

## Scholarships and external funding

The University offers a limited number of scholarships to support HDR candidates each year. An annual HDR [scholarship](#) round takes place each year (closing date usually around the end of October) to award scholarships provided by the Australian Government's Research Training Program (RTP) funds. External grants and other types of [funding](#) become available from time to time. Such opportunities are normally advertised via FedNews, HDR News and online.

Any research support provided to HDR candidates should be acknowledged in research outputs such as publications, conference presentations and artworks.

Acknowledgement of support from the Australian Government's [Research Training Program](#), including RTP stipend scholarships and fee-offset scholarships is a requirement for all recipients and is outlined in the [Research Training Program \(RTP\) Scholarship Policy](#).

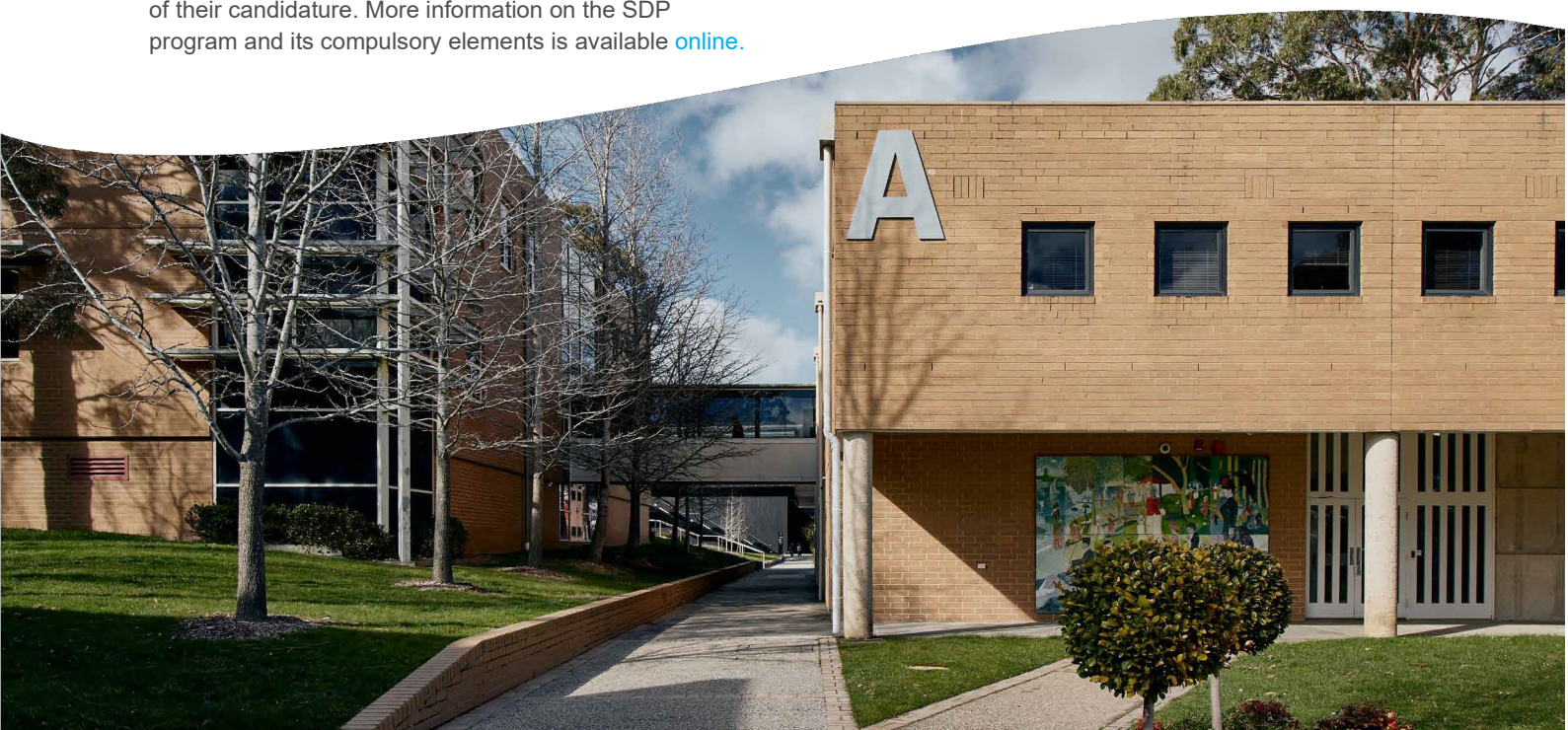
Most domestic HDR candidates are supported by an RTP fee-offset scholarship. The wording for such an acknowledgments is as follows:

### **For HDR candidates in receipt of both a 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 only:**

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







# Early Candidature

## Your supervisory panel/team

A supervisory panel, or team, must be in place at all times to support each HDR candidate. The panel will consist of a principal supervisor and at least one associate supervisor, who are Federation academic staff.

A supervisory panel may also include one or more co-supervisors (with relevant expertise but not employed by Federation University). All supervisors must be approved and listed on the University's Register of Supervisors. Further information regarding supervisor registration and responsibilities can be found in the [HDR Supervision policy](#), and its related procedures, which include the [Supervision of HDR Candidates Procedure](#) and the [Responsibilities for Supervision of HDR Candidates Procedure](#).

The principal supervisor is normally the candidate's first point of contact for support. The supervisory panel is responsible for ensuring that candidates have the support they require for the timely and successful submission of their thesis/exegesis.

It is important that the expectations of a candidate and their supervisor are compatible. All candidates are required to complete the [HDR Candidate – Principal Supervisor Agreement](#) by the end of the first four weeks of candidature. This agreement should be revisited from time to time and can be amended and resubmitted.

Further information regarding the responsibilities of supervisors, candidates, Research Centres and the University can be found in the [HDR Candidature Management Policy](#).

If a candidate has concerns about their supervisory panel, they should talk to their HDR coordinator (HDCR). Where the supervisory team includes the HDCR, the issue should be discussed with Graduate Research School Coordinator.

## HDR Skills Development Program (SDP)

The [HDR Skills Development Program \(SDP\)](#) has dual goals of supporting HDR candidates to achieve timely completion and to develop and document a suite of transferrable skills that is useful across many fields of endeavor. There are **prescribed elements** in the SDP, which all HDR candidates must complete except where a recognition of prior learning has been granted.

## Confirmation of Candidature

Admission to all Higher Degree by Research programs is on a probationary basis. Candidates progress from probationary status to confirmed candidature after successful completion of the [Confirmation of Candidature](#) (CoC) process.

- Doctoral candidates should aim to complete their CoC within nine months (and no more than 12 months) of commencing their full-time probationary candidature. Part-time candidates should plan to complete their CoC within 18 months and no later than 24 months after beginning their candidature.
- Masters by research candidates must complete their CoC within six months of commencing their full-time probationary candidature. The equivalent for part-time candidates is within 12 months.

The [Confirmation of Candidature Guidelines](#) detail the requirements of candidates for this important milestone. All candidates must attend the SDP session titled "Preparing for Confirmation of Candidature" along with several other prescribed sessions before attempting confirmation. The Graduate Research School also recommends that you attend the CoC presentations of other candidates.



## Project budget

The CoC document must provide budget details, which outline the project costs and the source(s) of funds to cover these costs. Costs may include fieldwork, laboratory equipment and reagents, consumables, outsourced transcription of interviews or professional editing. Such costs can be considerable and should be considered when developing the project. The details of financial support available to HDR candidates should be discussed during the creation of the [HDR Candidate – Principal Supervisor Agreement](#). Candidates may also have access to, and may apply for, additional funds from external funding sources. HDRCs can also assist with queries about funding support.

## Preparing the thesis/exegesis

Although there will be some aspects of your thesis that are tightly prescribed, there is a certain amount of flexibility relating to how an HDR thesis/exegesis is presented for examination.

Plan the structure and approach of your thesis early in your candidature.

Helpful information regarding the prescribed and flexible aspects of your thesis can be found in the “Format of Thesis” section of the [HDR Examination Procedure](#).

Further information is detailed in the document: “[How to present your thesis](#)”.

The planned approach to your thesis/exegesis should be discussed with and supported by your supervisory team, who are aware of disciplinary ‘norms’.

The Graduate Research School recommends that candidates carefully examine several recent examples of successful Federation University HDR theses in their research discipline. These can be found in the library catalogue and may be available in both electronic and hard copy forms.

## Staying Enrolled

All HDR candidates are required to re-enrol each year. Failure to re-enrol may lead to the termination of your candidature.

International candidates are required to contact the Graduate Research School to re-enrol in their program.

Domestic candidates are responsible for their own re-enrolment via HDR online enrolment in [My Student Centre](#) – you will receive an email to your university email address once enrolment for the semester/year is open, but if you do not receive it, please email [research.degrees@federation.edu.au](mailto:research.degrees@federation.edu.au)

The Graduate Research School will attempt to contact students via phone and email prior to enacting processes leading to the termination of their candidature; however, re-enrolment is firmly the responsibility of the candidate.

## Building a publication record during candidature

The University and the GRS encourage candidates to build a publication record during their candidature where this is possible and appropriate. While this can have many benefits, including improving your research track record, which is important for some career pathways, it is important to recognise that there are also some costs, including the significant time involved in preparing manuscripts for publication. During your candidature discuss the potential for publication of your research with your supervisory team.

HDR candidates who publish during their candidature, generally work in collaboration with their supervisory team and target high-quality, peer-reviewed journals or contribute to peer-reviewed books and/or chapters and conference proceedings. Candidates wishing to publish their research must ensure that they understand the copyright implications of publishing and avoid ‘predatory’ publishers. Training opportunities and support for these and other important issues can be accessed during your candidature through the library. If publishing during your candidature sounds appealing, discuss this with your supervisory team and look for the opportunities that will help you attain this goal.

## Student Evaluation of the Postgraduate program (SEPP)

The University and the GRS care about their candidates’ experiences and seek feedback on this via the annual Student Evaluation of the Postgraduate Program (SEPP) questionnaire. A link to this questionnaire will be forwarded directly to all enrolled candidates annually. All candidates are encouraged to complete this online questionnaire. Your honest responses will help the GRS and other sections of the University further improve the programs and the support that is provided to HDR candidates. The SEPP questionnaire is anonymous and cannot be traced back to an individual.

## Annual and Interim Progress Reports

The candidature requirements for all HDR candidates include compulsory participation in the annual progress report (APR) during each year of enrolment. The APR is an important opportunity for the University to check a candidate’s progress and provide support where necessary. Candidates will receive notification by email when it is time to complete the APR, which is in the form of a two-part online survey.

One part is completed by the HDR candidate, and the other is completed by their principal supervisor on behalf of the supervisory team. Candidates should meet with their principal supervisor (or supervisory team) to discuss

their progress, and any concerns, prior to the completion of the relevant section of the report. Candidates and supervisors should be honest about the challenges of the research program. Documentation of such challenges and issues can be useful if an extension to candidature is being considered. Some candidates must also complete interim progress reports (IPR) in addition to APR in the following circumstances:

- Candidates who hold an international student visa.
- Candidates who have been identified as being 'at risk' in previous progress reports.
- Candidates who have expended the maximum period of candidature.
- Candidates nominated by their principal supervisor or HDRC of their designated discipline.

Following submission of the APR or the IPR by the HDR candidate and their principal supervisor, the principal supervisor and the HDR Coordinator must review the report and 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 Research Centre/Institute 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 therefore 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 receive an "At Risk" recommendation can expect to receive a detailed action plan intended to assist them to recover their candidature. Candidates who receive "At Risk" outcomes in two consecutive reports, or who fail to meet the requirements of the action plans may be asked to show cause as to why their candidature should not be terminated.

## Confidential section of the APR

The student's part of the APR includes an optional confidential section which may be used when a candidate wishes to share something that they do not want their supervisory panel to see. This confidential section of the report will be provided only to a HDRC and /or Dean of Graduate Studies (DGS) and not to members of the supervisory panel. Where a conflict of interest exists (such as the HDRC or DGS being on the supervisory panel/team), the confidential information will be provided only to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research and Innovation.

## Show Cause

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

- Two or more consecutive Annual Progress Reports indicate that they are at risk.
- Candidature has not been confirmed at the end of the probationary period of enrolment.
- On recommendation of the DGS or nominee.
- Failure to have maintained adequate and regular contact with the University.
- Failure to have submitted written reports on academic progress when requested.
- Reached the maximum period of candidature.
- Failure to have met the requirements of the Skills Development Program.

Candidates who are required to show cause will be notified in writing via email to their nominated university email address. Details regarding the Show Cause process can be found in the [Candidature Management Procedure](#).

Candidates are required to provide a written submission detailing why their candidature should not be terminated. Where a report is not provided by the candidate, candidature will be terminated. Applications for leave from studies will not be considered once notification for a Show Cause hearing has been given.



## Research Integrity and Ethics Approvals

It is important that research carried out at the University is conducted ethically and with integrity. Issues regarding authorship of publications, conflicts of interests, use of samples and methods or approaches developed or obtained by other researchers all fall within the purview of research integrity. Completion of the online research integrity course is compulsory for all Federation researchers, including HDR candidates. [The course is available via the Epigeum online platform.](#)

Research ethics may be considered as a subset of research integrity. Projects and practices carried out by staff and HDR candidates at the University must conform to accepted community standards regarding ethics. The [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) outlines these standards and all candidates should familiarise themselves with this document.

Any research project involving human subjects must be approved by the University's Human Research Ethics

Committee. Any research involving animals must be approved by the University's Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee.

Discuss the ethics requirements of your project with your supervisory team, who will assist you to develop and submit an ethics application where appropriate. If there is any doubt about the need for ethics approval, the matter can be discussed with the Coordinator, Research Ethics (email: [research.ethics@federation.edu.au](mailto:research.ethics@federation.edu.au); or phone +61 3 5327 9765). Failure to seek appropriate ethics approval prior to the collection of data could result in an inability to use the data in your thesis and may lead to disciplinary action.

The [Research Ethics and Integrity webpages](#) are a useful source of relevant information, resources and application forms. Plagiarism, contract cheating, and other breaches of research integrity are not tolerated at Federation and can lead to a termination of candidature.





# Late Candidature

Many of the points raised in the earlier sections will also be relevant during late candidature, including requirements for progress reporting and matters of research integrity. In the following sections we have detailed some information that is important for candidates nearing completion of their degrees and submission of their theses.

## Thesis editing

Candidates may seek professional editorial assistance for their thesis; however, the input from the editor should be restricted to copy editing and proofreading only. In relation to matters of substance and structure, the professional editor may draw attention to problems, but should not provide solutions. Funds to support professional editing of your thesis should be requested during the proposal stage of the project (for example, in the budget for CoC). There is no guarantee that such funds will be made available.

## Preparing and presenting a thesis for submission

While there are general and specific thesis formatting requirements that must be adhered to (please see the [HDR Examination Procedure](#) for more details), there is also scope for diversity in thesis presentation. Therefore, it is recommended that issues of style and presentation of the thesis be determined early in your candidature. This can save time and frustration prior to submission of your thesis for examination.

The principal supervisor will recommend examiners and will know the accepted practice in the discipline. Therefore, candidates should seek advice from their principal supervisor on matters of style and presentation. Perusal of several examples of successful theses from their discipline is also recommended (check the library catalogue). A booklet “[How to present your thesis](#)” may also be useful.

## Plagiarism and Turnitin

[Plagiarism](#) is a serious matter and should be avoided at all costs. To help candidates consider this important issue, the University provides free access to the [Turnitin system](#), via Moodle. Turnitin works by comparing the text in a submitted document to internet content, journal databases and a global database of student assignments. Turnitin uses advanced pattern-making technology to identify similar passages of text in the submitted document. The tool can help a candidate identify passages of text that may not have been cited correctly, or that need quotation marks, or page numbers appended.

## Submission of the thesis

Candidates are required to notify the University that they are getting ready to submit their thesis for examination using the [Intention to Submit form](#). This form must be submitted to the GRS via the HDR Team: [research.degrees@federation.edu.au](mailto:research.degrees@federation.edu.au) at least 30 working days prior to the submission of the thesis/exegesis + portfolio. It must include the title of the thesis. This form must be signed by the candidate, their principal supervisor and their HDR coordinator.



## Examination

Examiners are nominated by your principal supervisor. Under no circumstances may the candidate contact the nominated thesis examiners at any stage of the examination process.

Examiners must indicate their willingness to return the marked thesis in a timely manner. The University requests that examiners return their recommendations within 4 to 6 weeks for a masters degree (research), and 6 to 8 weeks for a doctoral degree. However, there can be delays beyond these indicated timeframes, which may occur for various reasons that are outside the control of the Graduate Research School.

The examiners make recommendations to the University as to whether a higher degree by research should be awarded. However, the University is the final arbiter

of this process. In addition to providing the Academic Board with written comments relating to the [examination criteria](#), the examiners, acting independently, will provide the Academic Board with one of the following recommendations:

- The thesis should be classified as PASSED without further examination.
- The thesis should be classified as PASSED, subject to minor corrections made to the satisfaction of the Academic Board. That is, 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).
- The thesis should be PASSED subject to major corrections made to the satisfaction of the Academic Board. That is, 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).
- The thesis should be classified as DEFERRED because 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.
- The thesis should be classified as FAILED.

## Oral defence

An oral defense of the thesis is not mandatory at the University. However, at the request of the Examination Committee, candidate and/or the Dean of Graduate Studies, the candidate may be required to:

- provide an oral presentation that explains the thesis findings, context, and contribution to the research discipline area
- participate in an interview to confirm that all necessary revisions have been completed to the satisfaction of the Examination Committee and the Dean

of Graduate Studies. The requirement for an oral presentation or interview is relatively rare; it may take place physically, or by video-conference. If required, the oral defense shall serve the purpose of confirming or moderating the outcome of the thesis revision process. The presentation itself does not attract a separate assessment report.

## Status of a candidate whilst under examination

Once the thesis has been submitted for examination, the candidate is assigned a "TD" grade, which indicates that the candidate is under examination. Scholarships cease at this point. This grade does not attract course fees, unless the TD grade is activated after the HECS census dates (31 March and 31 August for each year), in which case, course fees may be charged for that semester. The official date for the recording and commencement of the TD grade is the date that the thesis is submitted for examination.

## Graduation

Candidates are eligible to apply to graduate after the University Council has approved the award of the degree. Candidates will be advised by the GRS of the appropriate [forms](#) that are required to be completed prior to attending a graduation ceremony.

## Complaints or candidate grievance

If a candidate has a complaint, concern, or enquiry about some aspect of their candidature or their research program, most issues can be dealt with by making an appointment to talk to the person who can solve your problem (for example, your supervisor, HDR Co-Ordinator or Dean of Graduate Studies). It is good practice for candidates to keep a record of these discussions; such records can become extremely important in the unfortunate event that the situation escalates. The [Student Advisory Service](#) can help you to prepare for a meeting or (given appropriate notice, and in appropriate circumstances) may accompany a candidate to a meeting to provide support.

If this approach doesn't work, then formal steps can be taken via the [Student Grievance procedure](#).

## Respect. Now. Always

Federation University Australia is committed to providing a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment.

## Finding a job and the Career Development and Employment Service

While this section has been placed at the end of the handbook, graduate employment should be considered even before undertaking HDR candidature. Simply having a postgraduate research degree will not guarantee employment. Good planning and identification of opportunities for relevant experience (for example, training, teaching, and networking) are required. [The Skills Development Program](#) provides sessions relevant to career development. All students have free access to the [Career development and employment](#) team, both during candidature and after graduation.

## Any questions?

Any questions or inquiries can be directed to the email [research.degrees@federation.edu.au](mailto:research.degrees@federation.edu.au). Your message will be answered by the most appropriate person in the Graduate Research School team.

## APPENDIX A - Introduction Checklist

TICK WHEN  
COMPLETED

1. Complete enrolment process and receive confirmation of place	
2. Arrange student card from <a href="#">Student HQ</a>	
3. Meet with principal supervisor as soon as possible	
4. Identify key people responsible for you (HDR Coordinator, RC or Institute admin support person, etc.)	
5. Ensure that you have access to minimum resources (e.g. desk, computer, etc.) when you start	
6. Ensure you can access and monitor your Federation University email. Use the <a href="#">IT Services helpdesk</a> if required phone 1800 333 864	
7. Familiarise yourself with the "HDR Skills Development Program" (SDP) on <a href="#">Moodle</a>	
8. Complete location-based Induction. The HDR Coordinator or your principal supervisor should arrange this.	
9. Complete Graduate Research School (GRS) HDR induction (face to face, webinar or Moodle recording as part of the SDP)	
10. Within the first four weeks of full-time study, complete <a href="#">HDR Candidate – Principal Supervisor Agreement</a> with your principal supervisor or team	
11. Familiarise yourself with the HDR candidate management policy and other <a href="#">policy and procedure documents relevant</a> to HDR candidature	
12. Familiarise yourself with the University's <a href="#">support services</a>	
13. Establish what research funds are available to you to support your research project and how to access these funds (talk to your supervisor about this)	
14. Develop a rough project plan and timeline that outlines key milestones (e.g. Confirmation of Candidature, ethics approval, etc.)	



## APPENDIX B -Troubleshooting

### TROUBLESHOOTING Forms

- Many HDR forms can be found [here](#)

#### Who to see about resources to get started

- **Student card:**
  1. Contact/visit [Student HQ](#)
- **The bare essentials (e.g. desk, computer, etc.):**
  1. Principal Supervisor
  2. HDR Team
  3. HDR Coordinator
  4. GRS Coordinator

#### Navigating the Skills Development Program (SDP)

- To find out about the SDP, go to the [SDP webpage](#)
- To identify which sessions are compulsory/optional, and to register your intention to attend face to face or webinar sessions, explore the [SDP Moodle shell](#)

#### • Difficulty accessing the SDP Moodle shell?

1. Contact [Lauren James](#) (ph. 03 5327 9302)

#### • Identifying required modules:

1. SDP Information can be found [here](#);
2. [Program](#)

#### Health concerns and taking time off

- **Taking leave** (recreational, personal, etc.):
  1. Complete the [leave form](#) and submit
- **Taking leave from studies:** (usually six to 12 months during which time candidature is suspended and then candidature will be extended for the period of leave).
  1. talk to your principal supervisor about the situation and complete the leave form in [MySC](#)

#### Accessing Federation University Health Services:

there are a variety of health services provided at various campuses.

#### • Mental Health:

1. [Counselling](#)
2. [Beyond Blue](#);
3. Lifeline 24/7 telephone counselling (131114)

#### Concerns about progress

##### • Dealing with concerns

- (Suggested order of people to talk to when appropriate):
1. Principal supervisor or member of supervisory team
  2. HDR Coordinator
  3. Graduate Research School representative

##### • At Risk:

1. [Candidate Management Policy](#)

##### • Show Cause:

1. [Candidature Management Policy](#)

##### • Student Advocacy:

1. [Student Advisory Service](#)

##### • Withdrawal from studies:

1. Talk it over with supervisors or HDR coordinator
2. Complete form in [MySC](#) to withdraw

#### IT matters

- The IT Service Desk can assist with various IT-related concerns to do with hardware, software and how to use our systems, including setting up your account, email, internet, printing software and hardware issues.
- You can call the IT Service Desk on 1800 333 864 or go to the [online Service Desk](#)

#### Running out of time

##### • Importance of planning for timely completion:

All candidates should plan to finish a PhD within 3 years full-time study (or equivalent part-time) and Masters by Research within 18 months full-time study (or equivalent part-time).

##### • Extensions to candidature

(only available in unforeseen or exceptional circumstances):

1. [Extension form](#)

#### Raising concerns

It is always best to raise concerns as they arise, because hoping that they will resolve themselves or go away may hold up candidature. Any concerns or unexpected delays should be noted in the annual progress report. The confidential section of the Annual Progress Report can be used where a candidate doesn't want the supervisor/s to see the concern.

##### • Concerns:

1. If possible, talk about the concern with your supervisor/s;
2. talk to the HDR Coordinator
3. Talk to the GRS Coordinator
4. Submit a confidential report at any time to [research.degrees@federation.edu.au](mailto:research.degrees@federation.edu.au)

### Federation University Australia

Call + 61 3 5327 9508

Email [research.degrees@federation.edu.au](mailto:research.degrees@federation.edu.au)

Address **PO Box 663, Ballarat VIC 3353, Australia**

[Federation.edu.au](http://Federation.edu.au)

Coursefinder [study.federation.edu.au](http://study.federation.edu.au)

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