

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Off-campus Higher Degree by Research</b>
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	<b>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</b>
<b>Keywords:</b>	<b>Higher degree by research, external, off-campus, postgraduate support, supervision</b>
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## 1. INTENT

This policy outlines the requirements for enrolling a Higher Degree by Research candidate in an off-campus or external mode. Off-campus HDR candidates are not required to be physically present at an ECU campus. They will undertake their HDR studies in their preferred location, in Australia or overseas, and maintain communication with their supervisors via electronic means.

## 2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

The policy applies to all external candidates undertaking a higher degree by research, and University staff engaged in the provision or support of HDR supervision.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
GRS	Graduate Research School
Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidate	A person who is enrolled in a Master by Research or Doctoral course.
Off-campus or external enrolment	A mode of study that does not require the candidate to be physically present at an ECU campus, and may be located within Australia or overseas.

## 4. POLICY CONTENT

### 4.1 Candidate selection, admission and enrolment

- 4.1.1 For all applications for off-campus enrolment, the principal supervisor and relevant Associate Dean (Research) must be convinced that the prospective applicant has the

personal maturity and research experience to pursue independent, sustained and structured research off-campus.

- 4.1.2 Any approval for off-campus enrolment must be supported by a Candidate Agreement that shows how any program requirements will be met. The Candidate Agreement template is available on the Graduate Research School website.
- 4.1.3 Final approval of any case for off-campus enrolment will be made by the relevant Executive Dean (or nominee) and the Dean, Graduate Research School.
- 4.1.4 Off-campus enrolment is permitted for higher degree by research candidates, except where an international candidate is in Australia and holds a student visa. International candidates who are in Australia with a student visa must reside within close proximity to an ECU campus.
- 4.1.5 International candidates based overseas are also permitted to enrol on a part-time basis, as the requirement for full-time study under Australian visa conditions does not apply.
- 4.1.6 Existing on-campus candidates may apply to transfer to an off-campus mode, if approved by their supervisory panel, relevant Associate Dean (Research), and the Dean, Graduate Research School. On approval candidates must forfeit their student visa, give up access to any desk or laboratory space they occupy at an ECU campus and return to their home country.

## **4.2 Fees and funding**

- 4.2.1 Domestic candidates who qualify for a Research Training Program (RTP) place will not be required to pay tuition fees.
- 4.2.2 International off-campus HDR candidates will be required to pay the appropriate tuition fee.

## **4.3 Supervision and Resources**

- 4.3.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Postgraduate Research Training PL266 [ac101]* policy and the *Supervision of Students Undertaking Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) PL218 [ac085]* policy.
- 4.3.2 Supervisors who wish to supervise off-campus HDR candidates will be required to undertake a professional development session on supervising off-campus candidates.
- 4.3.3 Off-campus candidates are entitled to an equivalent level of support provided by the School for on-campus candidates. Off-campus candidates are generally not entitled to a work space and any physical resources that are provided on-campus.
- 4.3.4 Off-campus candidates are eligible for research support that can be delivered remotely. This includes email access, access to library services, online research training offered by the GRS and support from peer mentors.
- 4.3.5 Off-campus candidates and their supervisors will maintain regular contact via electronic means such as phone, email, Skype and video conferencing. Candidate visits to an

ECU campus are welcomed but not compulsory. Ideally the principal supervisor should arrange to meet the candidate in person at least once during candidature, either at an ECU campus, elsewhere in Australia, in the candidate's home country or at a conference.

#### **4.4 Candidature Management**

- 4.4.1 The candidate and the supervisors will meet regularly (as determined by the Supervisor/Candidate Agreement), to carefully monitor the performance of the candidate relative to the candidature consumed, the work agreement and the standard required for the award. In addition, the progress of candidates in an off-campus mode will also be monitored on a regular basis by the Graduate Research School.
- 4.4.2 External HDR candidates based in Australia or overseas, must obtain ethics approval from the appropriate ethics committee.
- 4.4.3 All off-campus HDRs may use video-conferencing (or other communication technologies approved by the relevant Executive Dean (or nominee) and the Dean, Graduate Research School) when presenting at their research proposal seminar. Candidates who are able to attend an ECU campus may present their research proposal in-person.
- 4.4.4 International candidates may be required to spend some time in Australia in order to meet their home country's regulatory requirements governing degrees awarded by foreign universities.

### **5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

In relation to this policy, the following positions are responsible for the following

#### *Policy Owner*

The Policy Owner, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), has overall responsibility for the content of this policy and its operation in ECU.

#### *Staff/Candidates*

Higher degree by research candidates and ECU staff engaged in the provision or support of HDR supervision are required to comply with the content of this policy and to seek guidance in the event of uncertainty as to its application.

All members of the University community are expected to comply with University Policy.

### **6. RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

- 6.1 The policy is supported by the following Guidelines:
- *Appendix 1 - Guidelines for the supervision of off-campus HDR candidates*
  - *Appendix 2 – Off-Campus Agreement (Prior to Admission)*
  - *Procedure 9 – Off-campus Enrolment*
- 6.2 Other documents which are relevant to the operation of this policy are as follows:
- *ECU policy ac101 Postgraduate Research Training*
  - *ECU policy ac085 Supervision of Students Undertaking Higher Degrees by Research (HDR)*

## 7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

Policy Owner	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
All Enquiries Contact:	Dean, Graduate Research School
Telephone:	08 6304 3906
Email address:	j.luca@ecu.edu.au

## 8. APPROVAL HISTORY

Policy Approved by:	Vice-Chancellor
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Date last modified:	September 2018
Revision History:	
Next Revision Due:	September 2021
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## **Appendix 1 – Guidelines for the supervision of off-campus HDR Candidates**

### **ROLE OF SUPERVISORS**

- Attend a professional development session on supervising off-campus candidates.
- Prior to enrolment, supervisors should discuss what their respective roles will be and communicate that in writing to the candidate.
- There should be clear expectations about written work including which supervisor(s) will respond and the timelines for response.
- There should be a clear timetable for meetings as outlined in the the Supervisor/Candidate Agreement, or as requested by the candidate if needed. Skype or videoconferencing should be used for meetings with external candidates.
- Email is a useful means of communicating with candidates; however, this needs to be very carefully managed when providing candidates with criticisms or dealing with difficult situations. In these circumstances, Skype or videoconferencing should be used.
- When giving feedback on a candidate's work, it is good practice to flag comments on the written work and then follow up with discussion via Skype, videoconferencing or telephone.
- Response times to emails from candidates are very important. If a query is not able to be responded to immediately, then a reply indicating the timeline for a response is good practice.
- All supervisors should copy each other when emailing the candidate, and the candidate should include all supervisors in their communications.
- Supervisors may need to provide a tailored induction for external candidates and include mention of the support provided by the candidate's School and the Graduate Research School.
- Supervisors should ensure that their candidates are able to present their work at appropriate forums.
- Ideally the principal supervisor should arrange to meet the candidate in person at least once a year, either at an ECU campus, elsewhere in Australia, in the candidate's home country or at a conference.

### **ROLE OF THE CANDIDATE**

- The candidate needs to establish clear timelines with their supervisor(s) as to when they will visit ECU, when they plan to attend conferences and when they plan to have holidays.
- There will be circumstances where the candidate will need to be proactive in arranging a Skype, videoconference or telephone meeting to discuss concerns they have.
- It is good practice to send an email to all supervisors summarising the outcomes of each supervisory meeting.

## Appendix 2 – Off-Campus Agreement (Prior to Admission)

### OFF-CAMPUS DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY AGREEMENT

If approved by the enrolling School and the Graduate Research School, some candidates may enrol in a Doctor of Philosophy program at Edith Cowan University in an off-campus (e.g. online, external, remote) mode. Approval for off-campus enrolment is not automatic. Prospective candidates and the enrolling School must show that due consideration has been given to meeting the program requirements and supporting the candidate.

This Agreement must be completed prior to a candidate's enrolment in off-campus mode with ECU.

Off-campus enrolment is not permitted for international students residing in Australia and holding a student visa.

Off-campus enrolment is not open to applicants in the Schools of Engineering or Science.

#### SECTION 1: APPLICANT

Applicants intending to study off-campus are expected to have a clear idea of their intended project, to be self-motivated and independent, and be pro-active in seeking support and developing connections with the School and with wider research community.

Off-campus students are generally not entitled to a work space and any physical resources that are provided on-campus, but otherwise may expect an equivalent level of support and services. Please refer to the policy on [Postgraduate Research Training](#)

Applicants intending to undertake research at another facility must ensure they meet the requirements of that facility. Written endorsement from a position of authority must be provided with this application to demonstrate that the research is supported and endorsed.

1. Applicant details	
Candidate name:	
Email address:	
Country of Citizenship:	
ECU student number (If known):	
Applying for: a) Doctor of Philosophy (L61) b) Doctor of Philosophy Integrated (J42)	
If you are not studying in Australia, will government regulatory body recognise a doctoral degree awarded by foreign universities in online/off-campus mode?	
Summary of your skills and research experience that supports independent, sustained and structured research off-campus:	
2. Proposed project details	
Summary of proposed research project:	
Do you need any specialist equipment or infrastructure to undertake the proposed	

research? If yes: a) what equipment/infrastructure? b) how/where will this be accessed? (e.g. commercial or government research station, laboratory, hospital, another university) c) what is your relationship to the facility? d) What support and facilities can you expect to be provided? e) Will you have a supervisor at the external research location? If yes, please provide name and job title.	
If you are accessing a facility to conduct your research, please attached written confirmation that this will be supported by the facility	<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Written confirmation attached
<b>3. Other</b>	
Do you plan to attend an ECU campus during the program and if yes, how often and for how long?	
Please describe the computing, software and internet access you have to support online study/research?	
How do you propose to maintain contact with your ECU supervisors? (e.g. Skype, ZOOM, email)	
Any further comments to support application for off-campus enrolment?	

## SECTION 2: ENROLLING SCHOOL

When enrolling an applicant off-campus, Schools must be certain that they can provide equivalent support services and research experiences to the applicant, and that the proposed project is suitable to be conducted off-campus. Meeting or exceeding TEQSA requirements for research training and transnational education is imperative.

The principal supervisor and relevant Associate Dean (Research) must be convinced that the prospective applicant has the personal maturity and research experience to pursue independent, sustained and structured research off-campus.

<b>4. School Support</b>	
Proposed Supervisors:	
Have all supervisors completed the PD "Off-campus Supervision"?	
Has a member of the supervisor panel interviewed the applicant	

by video or phone conference?	
How does the supervisor panel intend to maintain contact with the applicant? How regular will contact with the applicant be?	
Is the School satisfied the applicant has the equipment, IT and infrastructure to maintain contact and to complete the proposed project?	
Are there any planned visits by members of the supervisor panel to the applicant?	
Does the School intend to provide additional resources to those described in the Postgraduate Research Training Policy (e.g. SPSS, laptop, additional conference and/or travel funds)	
How will the School support the applicant to complete the confirmation of candidature and oral examination milestones?	
How will the School support the development of research networks and provide a research rich environment?	
Are there any perceived risks to running the proposed project off-campus? If so, what mitigation strategies will be put in place?	
Any further comments to support application for off-campus enrolment?	
<b>4. Funding arrangements</b>	
Is the candidate currently receiving or applying for any PhD scholarship?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the applicant be a fee-paying student?	



**PART 3: AGREEMENT (DECLARATIONS AND ENDORSEMENT)**

I certify that the details provided are to the best of my knowledge true and correct. Falsification of records or details may be construed as academic or non-academic misconduct and is subject to the right of the University to terminate my enrolment or impose other sanctions in accordance with the [University Rules](#).

**SIGNED by APPLICANT:**

.....  
Name  
(BLOCK LETTERS)

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

**PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR:**

.....  
Name  
(BLOCK LETTERS)

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

**ASSOCIATE DEAN (RESEARCH):**

School will support off-campus enrolment

.....  
Name  
(BLOCK LETTERS)

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

**GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL:**

Approved/Declined  
Comments:

.....  
Name  
(BLOCK LETTERS)

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date