

Policy Title: Postgraduate Research Training

Policy Owner: Dean, Graduate Research School

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1. INTENT

The intent of this policy is establish fair, transparent and equitable standards to deliver postgraduate research training at Edith Cowan University, and to ensure the maintenance of high standards within higher degree by research programs.

2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This policy applies to all candidates undertaking higher degree by research (HDR) programs at Edith Cowan University, University staff engaged in the provision supervision, and University staff providing support to HDR programs. This policy does not apply to candidates of an undergraduate award with honours.

3. DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Candidature	The period of enrolment in a higher degree by research, including any periods of provisional candidature.
Confirmation of Candidature	A major milestone which assesses candidates' preparedness to move from provisional candidature to the research component of their program.
Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Candidate	A person who is enrolled in a Master by Research or Doctoral course.
Intermit	The course status applied to students who have

	applied for and received approval to defer their course for a specified time, and is a period of non-enrolment
Milestone	A mandatory event during candidature to assess a candidate's progress.
Progress Report	A milestone report required each semester by the university, which reports on progress to date of the HDR candidate, goals and future milestones, and re-enrolment requirements.
Provisional Candidature	The period during which a candidate is enrolled, but prior to the confirmation of their candidature.
Rule	A Rule referred to in this Policy is a Rule contained in the Admission, Enrolment and Academic Progress Rules.
Thesis	Material to be submitted by a Candidate for assessment in respect of the research part of a course

4. POLICY CONTENT

4.1 PROVISION OF RESOURCES AND SUPERVISION

- 4.1.1 The Dean of School (or nominee) must attest that adequate supervision and facilities are available before he/she approves admission. Provision of supervision, facilities and support must be approved by all Deans of School (or nominees) in the case of cross-school enrolments.
- 4.1.2 Schools must ensure appropriate supervision is available, in accordance with the Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Candidates policy.
- 4.1.3 Schools must provide sufficient support to enable a candidate to complete the proposed research program, which includes access to research facilities, study space and computing. See Procedure 1: Postgraduate Researcher Support and Development.
- 4.1.4 Schools will use part of the funding provided to them through the Research Training Scheme and Student Fees to provide HDR candidates with postgraduate support funds to assist in meeting the costs of candidature. See See Procedure 1: Postgraduate Researcher Support and Development.
- 4.1.5 Support funds should not be made available to candidates until after candidature has been confirmed.
- 4.1.6 Candidates who transfer into a Higher Degree by Research from another institution, or articulate from a Master by Research to PhD will have research support funds calculated pro-rata based on the duration of candidature remaining.
- 4.1.7 Schools must have a transparent and equitable process for candidates to apply for support funds, and maintain accurate records and a running total of the amount of funding made available to each of their eligible candidates.

4.2 MANAGEMENT OF CANDIDATURE

- 4.2.1 Candidates must maintain their enrolment for the duration of their research program. For doctoral degrees candidature duration is from two to four years (or equivalent part-time), for Master by Research degrees candidature duration is one to two years (or equivalent part-time).
- 4.2.2 Candidates must ensure their enrolment percentage reflects the time spent in pursuit of their research project. Candidates enrolled full-time (100%) should be able to commit at least 35 hours per week to their study, with a pro-rata commitment for part-time students.
- 4.2.3 Subject to visa and/or scholarship conditions, candidates may manage their candidature by applying to vary their enrolment percentage or to intermit their enrolment in the form and manner prescribed by the Student Services Centre. Duration of candidature will be adjusted to take into account any formal approved periods of leave or changes to enrolment percentage.
- 4.2.4 Candidates who are not enrolled (including those on 'intermit' status) are not permitted to conduct research, with the exception of writing or editing thesis chapters and/or papers
- 4.2.5 With the approval of their principal supervisor, candidates may take 20 working days of annual recreation leave per year, calculated on a pro-rata basis for part-time candidates. Annual recreation leave cannot be accrued and is forfeited if not used by the end of the calendar year. Candidature is not adjusted for annual recreation leave.
- 4.2.6 The candidate and the supervisor panel 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. It is important the candidate be made aware through these meetings of any supervisor panel assessment of inadequate progress or if the work is below the standard generally expected.

4.3 MILESTONES AND REPORTING

- 4.3.1 Provisional Candidature
 - 4.3.1.1 Candidates must successfully complete a period of provisional candidature before being allowed to continue in the research program.
 - 4.3.1.2 Provisional candidature is a maximum 12 months of full-time enrolment, or the part-time equivalent. Candidates enrolled in a research program without requisite coursework are encouraged to complete the requirements for confirmation of candidature within six months of full-time enrolment, or the part-time equivalent.
 - 4.3.1.3 Candidates who do not meet the confirmation of candidature milestone within the prescribed timeframes and who do not have an approved extension may have their academic progress status changed to 'excluded'.
- 4.3.2 Confirmation of Candidature
 - 4.3.2.1 The Associate Dean Research of the relevant School may require candidates to meet additional requirements in order to demonstrate satisfactory progress. It is strongly recommended that candidates discuss the requirements for

confirmation of candidature with their supervisor panel prior to commencing the written research proposal.

4.3.2.2 A candidate will apply to the Associate Dean Research of the relevant School for approval of their candidature. The Associate Dean Research may only confirm candidature if he or she is satisfied that the candidate has met the minimum required expectations for achieving confirmation of candidature set by the Academic Board and any School based requirements. Minimum requirements are listed in Procedure 2: Confirmation of Candidature.

4.3.2.3 If confirmation of candidature is not approved by the Associate Dean Research, he/she will recommend to the Board of Examiners that the candidate be excluded from the course.

4.3.3 Progress Reports.

4.3.3.1 The candidate and the supervisor panel must submit a progress report each semester. Progress reports require allocation of a grade for work in that semester, set milestones and goals for the coming semester, and enable a request for re-enrolment.

4.3.3.2 Candidates who do not commence or submit their progress report to their principal supervisor during the reporting period will be moved to a course attempt status of 'discontinued'. Candidates on discontinued status will be required to submit an application to resume their course, and will be liable for any re-enrolment fees this may attract, in accordance with Rule 3.2.

4.4 EXTENSIONS

4.4.1 Applications for extension to provisional candidature will be considered by the Associate Dean Research of the relevant School. Where the Associate Dean Research believes an extension is warranted, provisional candidature may be extended by a maximum of three months.

4.4.2 Applications to exceed the maximum duration of candidature will be considered by the Associate Dean Research of the relevant School. The Associate Dean Research may extend the candidature only where he or she is satisfied that the research has been delayed by circumstances beyond the candidate's control. Factors such as employment commitments are not usually considered a valid reason for extending candidature.

4.4.3 Candidates should not apply to intermit or defer their course during the extension period, unless the Associate Dean Research determines otherwise.

4.4.3 If International fee paying candidates are granted an extension of their candidature, they are liable for additional tuition costs covering the period of the approved extension to candidature and must ensure that they comply with visa requirements.

4.4.4 Scholarship end-dates are different from candidature end-dates. Scholarship recipients should consult their [Scholarship Conditions](#) for information on scholarship extensions.

4.4.5 Where a candidate does not meet milestone deadlines or does not apply for an extension to provisional candidature or to candidature, the Associate Dean Research of the School will recommend to the Board of Examiners that the

candidate be excluded from the course on the grounds that the candidate has failed to pursue the course satisfactorily.

- 4.4.6 If the candidate does not complete their studies within the extension period, the Associate Dean Research of the relevant school will recommend to the Board of Examiners that the candidate be excluded from the course, unless the Associate Dean Research deems a further extension is warranted.

4.5 THESIS PREPARATION, FORMAT AND SUBMISSION FOR EXAMINATION

- 4.5.1 A thesis should conform to length and formatting requirements as set out in Procedure 4: Requirements of a Thesis for Examination.
- 4.5.2 A thesis may be submitted in the form of a series of published papers, as set out 4.6 Thesis with Publication and Procedure 5: Requirements of a Thesis With Publication.
- 4.5.3 Candidates shall submit an electronic copy of the thesis to Research Assessments in Student Services Centre (SSC). In the event examiners request hard copies of the thesis, candidates will be advised to provide these to Research Assessments.
- 4.5.4 As part of the thesis submission process, doctoral candidates are required to provide a citation.

4.6 THESIS WITH PUBLICATION

- 4.6.1 Higher degree by research candidates may present their thesis as a series of papers, however research presented in the thesis must have been completed during the period of enrolment. The thesis can consist of publications that have already been published, are in the process of being published, or a combination of these.
- 4.6.2 Publications where the Candidate is a joint author can only be included in the thesis provided the work done by the Candidate is clearly identified. The candidate should be first author with a contribution of at least 50% to each publication. For large collaborative projects (e.g. productions, design plans, or exhibitions with multiple artists), the Candidate must have contributed at least 50% to the component of the publication for which their thesis is based on.
- 4.6.3 The Candidate must avoid copyright infringements, and confirm with each publisher whether or not there are any restrictions regarding copyright, format and style before inclusion of the publication in the thesis.

4.7 THESIS EXAMINATION

- 4.7.1 A thesis will be examined by two examiners for Master by Research and by three examiners for doctoral programs. Examiners are required to be external to ECU and be free from real or perceived conflict of interest with the candidature, supervisor and the University, in accordance with the [Conflict of Interest \(thesis examination\) Guidelines](#) provided by the Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies Australia.
- 4.7.2 Although candidates may be involved in discussions with their supervisor panel on the selection of appropriate examiners, examiners should only be approached by a member of the supervisor panel on behalf of the University.

- 4.7.3 Candidates and supervisors may not contact any examiner during the examination period. All contact with examiners will be conducted via the Research Assessments area of Student Services Centre.
- 4.7.4 Candidates will have their thesis classified by the Executive of the Graduate Research Committee, based on recommendations in the examiner reports. The classification will determine the scope of revisions, and the timeframes for these. See Procedure 6: Thesis Examination.
- 4.7.5

4.8 SUBMISSION OF THESIS FOR ARCHIVING

- 4.8.1 At the conclusion of the examination process, the candidate will be required to submit a digital copy of the entire thesis (text component of the thesis and, if applicable, any supporting material in digital form) in an electronic format approved by the University Library and a signed copy of the Thesis Submission Form and any supporting documentation to Research Assessments in the Student Services Centre.
- 4.8.2 The University Library shall deposit the digital master for permanent retention in the University Archives. Electronic full text copies of theses will be made available as limited to ECU staff and students via the Library System (password protected) or to the wider community via the Institutional repository (open access). See Procedure 7: Requirements of a Thesis for Archiving.
- 4.8.3 Candidates, with due regard to the University's commitment to open access, may limit or prevent online access to their thesis.

5. APPEALS

A candidate may appeal to the Student Appeals Committee under Rule 8.3 if he or she is dissatisfied with the assessment of their academic work or progress.

6. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The Policy Owner, the Dean of the Graduate Research School has overall responsibility for the content of this policy and its operation in ECU.

Deans of School have the responsibility of ensuring that processes and procedures are managed in line with this policy and that appropriate delegations have been formalised.

Staff/students/contractors are required to comply with the content of this policy and supporting procedures referred herein, and to seek guidance from the Dean, Graduate Research School in the event of any uncertainty as to their application.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- 6.1 The policy is supported by the following Procedures:

- Research Training Procedure 1 – Postgraduate Researcher Support and Development.
- Research Training Procedure 2 – Confirmation of Candidature
- Research Training Procedure 3 – Candidature Management
- Research Training Procedure 4 – Requirements of a Thesis for Examination
- Research Training Procedure 5 – Requirements of a Thesis with Publication
- Research Training Procedure 6 – Thesis Examination
- Research Training Procedure 7 – Requirements of a Thesis for Archiving

6,1 Other documents which are relevant to the operation of this policy are as follows:

- Admission, Enrolment and Academic Progress Rules
- [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)
- Policy AC085 - Supervision of Students Undertaking Higher Degrees by Research (HDR)

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

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9. APPROVAL HISTORY

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