University Policy

HDR Candidate Selection Policy

Policy Code: RS1930

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Purpose

This policy describes requirements for admission to FedUni higher degree by research programs and principles for the selection and awarding of higher degree by research scholarships.

Scope
This Policy applies to all higher degree by research candidature applicants and enrolled candidates, persons with supervisory or administrative responsibilities for HDR candidates and candidature applications.

**Legislative Context**

- Federation University Australia Act 2010
- The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act) – establishes TEQSA as an agency which regulates using the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)
- Regulation 5.1 – Higher Doctorates, Doctoral Degree (Research), Doctoral Degree (Professional) and Masters Degree (Research)

**Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>Student enrolled in a higher degree by research program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of Candidature</td>
<td>Milestone by which a candidate confirms that their research project is viable and is approved to continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotutelle award</td>
<td>Award made in partnership with another institution, wherein the candidate is jointly enrolled in both institutions and receives a testamur from both institutions on completion of the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferment</td>
<td>A period of up to 12 months, normally covering the academic year, before a student, who has been offered a place in a higher education course, enrols in that course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated Cohort</td>
<td>An approved group of potential applicants, identified as having common characteristics (such as completion of a particular qualification) for the purposes of gaining special entry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDGS</td>
<td>Dean of Graduate Studies – academic staff member responsible for overseeing HDR programs, HDR candidates and supervisors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFTSL</td>
<td>Estimated full time study load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Any staff member employed by FedUni to undertake academic activity, including permanent, fixed term contract, casual, honorary and adjunct appointments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>The process by which a person, having received a written offer of a place, shall register their program and course of study with FedUni by submitting a form of enrolment signed by both the applicant and the course coordinator or person of equivalent authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOS Act</td>
<td>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000, as amended from time to time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Candidate</td>
<td>Where a candidate conducts their research from an approved external location, such as a laboratory, and an agreement exists between the location and FedUni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>One of the following academic units of Federation University: School of Education and Arts, School of Health, School of Science and Technology, The Federation Business School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPRS</td>
<td>FedUni Postgraduate Research Stipend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Warning - Uncontrolled when printed! The current version of this document is kept on the FedUni website.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Program</td>
<td>One of the following courses of study: Masters Degree (Research), Doctoral Degree (Research), or Doctoral Degree (Professional).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Degree by Research candidate</td>
<td>A FedUni student enrolled in a Masters Degree (Research), Doctoral Degree (Research), or Doctoral degree (Professional).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS</td>
<td>International English Language Testing System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave from studies</td>
<td>Period of either six or 12 months, covering a normal teaching period(s), where an enrolled student is excused from formal study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer</td>
<td>Offer of Admission to Candidature – The written offer provided to an applicant for admission to a HDR program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-campus candidate</td>
<td>Where a candidate studies from a location other than an on campus or an approved external facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Supervisor</td>
<td>A staff member of FedUni who meets the requirements of and has been approved for inclusion to the Register of Supervisors as a principal supervisor and has primary oversight of a HDR candidate’s research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Supervisor</td>
<td>A staff member of FedUni who meets the requirements of and has been approved for inclusion to the Register of Supervisors as a supervisor and provides support to the candidate and to the Principal Supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Supervisor</td>
<td>An individual who is external to FedUni who meets the requirements of and has been approved for inclusion to the Register of Supervisors as a supervisor and provides support to the candidate and to the Principal Supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probationary candidate</td>
<td>A FedUni student enrolled in a Masters Degree (Research), Doctoral Degree (Research), or Doctoral degree (Professional) who has not yet completed the confirmation of candidature process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisional Principal Supervisor</td>
<td>A staff member who does not meet the requirements to be listed as a principal supervisor on the Register of Supervisors but has the support of their School to act as a principal supervisor under the guidance of a mentor who is registered as a Principal Supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHDC</td>
<td>Research Higher Degrees Committee – A standing committee of Academic Board that deals with Higher Degree by Research matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPA</td>
<td>Research Priority Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTS</td>
<td>The Research Training Scheme, provided fee exemption places for candidates enrolled in higher degree by research programs – now superseded by Research Training Program (RTP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTP (Research Training Program)</td>
<td>Federal Government funding scheme that enables the provision of higher degree by research fee offset and stipend scholarships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOSS</td>
<td>Special Overseas Student Scholarship – fee scholarship to cover the cost of tuition fees for international students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stipend</td>
<td>A fortnightly scholarship paid to a candidate to cover living expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate / Supervisor agreement</td>
<td>Formal written agreement outlining meeting methods,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEQSA</td>
<td>Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Policy Statement

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Admission to Candidature

Principles of selection

The principles that FedUni adheres to in considering applicants for entry to its HDR programs are:

• To select quality HDR candidates capable of completing their program within the required time to a high academic standard,
• To select applicants into research environments only where appropriate supervisory expertise and resources are available,
• To meet FedUni’s Strategic Research Plan,
• To ensure diversity and equity in selection.

An offer of entry to HDR candidature is based upon the following:

• Meeting minimum entry requirements,
• Availability of RTP fee-offset scholarship places,
• Availability of discipline-appropriate and experienced supervisors with adequate workload provisions,
• Availability of adequate resources to support the research project,
• Applicant or project not being subject to sanctions,
• Other factors such as adequate workloads and strategic research directions as determined by the school of enrolment.

For an offer of candidature to be issued, potential supervisors must demonstrate relevant experience within the discipline of the research topic. Experience must be demonstrated by peer-reviewed publications in a related area, awarding of grants in a related area or other relevant research experience within the last five years.

Where a proposed research topic is in an emerging field of research, the supervisory team must demonstrate how their research experience collectively engenders the capacity to adequately supervise the candidate.

Minimum Entry Requirements

The academic entry and English proficiency requirements for Masters Degree (Research), Doctoral Degree (Research) and Doctoral Degree (Professional) programs are specified in Regulation 5.1, Parts B, C, and D.

To qualify for admission to a Professional Doctorate or a PhD program, applicants must:

a. possess a degree that is the equivalent to a Bachelor's degree from FedUni with first class Honours or second class Honours, first division, or
b. possess a Masters degree that is equivalent to a Masters degree from FedUni with a relevant research component, or
c. submit other evidence of relevant professional qualifications and experience, or research experience, to satisfy the Chair, RHDC that the applicant possesses a level of relevant research experience equivalent to an award in either clause a or b, and
d. satisfy such additional requirements for admission to a PhD candidature, if any, as may be prescribed by the RHDC

To qualify for admission to Master’s by Research program, applicants must:

a. possess a degree that is the equivalent to a Bachelor's degree from FedUni with second class honours, or
b. possess a Master's degree that is equivalent to a Bachelor's degree from FedUni, with a relevant research component, or
c. submit other evidence of relevant professional qualifications and experience, or research experience, to satisfy the Chair, RHDC, that the applicant possesses a level of relevant research experience equivalent to an award in either clause a or b, and

d. satisfy such additional requirements for admission to a Master's by Research candidature, if any, as may be prescribed by the RHDC.

All applications for candidature must be approved by the Chair, RHDC.

Information for applicants who are required to demonstrate evidence of professional qualifications and experience or research experience (referred to as Honours Equivalence) is detailed in the Selection and Awarding of a HDR Place Procedure.

English language requirements

An international applicant who does not hold a valid passport from and is not a citizen of, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, New Zealand or the Republic of Ireland must provide the required evidence of a satisfactory level of competence in oral and written English as specified by the Academic Board:

- IELTS (International Language Testing System) minimum score of 6.5 with no band less than 6.0; or equivalent, as presented on the FedUni English Language Requirements web page.

English language proficiency exemption requests will only be considered where applicants meet criteria outlined on the Department of Immigration and Boarder Protection website.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Applicants

FedUni is committed to improving HDR research opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants.

Special consideration in selection and admission

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander applicants who do not meet normal entry requirements may be assessed for entry at the discretion of the Chair, RHDC, in consultation with the proposed School of enrolment. Applicants who enter a program under reduced or special entry may be required to participate in other training programs as indicated on their Offer of Admission to Candidature.
- Offering merit based Indigenous HDR stipend/s for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers to undertake full-time or part-time HDR studies.

Special conditions for candidature may include but not be limited to:

- Extending the normal period of candidature for the degree in which the candidate is enrolled,
- Extending the normal period of stipend payment for the degree in which the candidate is enrolled.

All extensions to stipend and candidature are subject to approval by the School and Dean Graduate Studies.

Fraudulent Applications

Applications that contain falsified information or where the applicant misrepresents their academic or professional achievements will be rejected outright with no recourse for appeal. If an application is found to contain false or misleading information subsequent to an offer of candidature but prior to the applicant’s enrolment, FedUni will withdraw its offer without consultation with no recourse for appeal. If an application is found to contain false or misleading information subsequent to the applicant being enrolled in their program the matter will be managed under FedUni’s Research Integrity Policy.
Australian and United Nations sanctions

Eligibility for an offer of candidature for international students may be impacted by United Nations Sanctions and Australian Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011.

Sanctioned individuals will not be offered candidature.

FedUni will undertake a risk assessment process for all citizens from sanctioned countries applying for HDR candidature. This assessment determines whether:

1. The applicant is a sanctioned individual; and/or,
2. The proposed field of study is sanctioned.

Institutional transfer

HDR candidates from other institutions may apply to transfer their candidature to FedUni. Candidates requesting transfer to FedUni should apply using the standard application method as described on the FedUni website. Applicants will be required to supply:

- A letter from their prior institute outlining the course of study, title of the research project and the amount of EFTSL consumed,
- Evidence of completed milestones, such as confirmation of candidature, where there is a request to waive these requirements at FedUni,
- Evidence of ethics approval, including the initial application for ethics, any approved amendments and written approval of the ethics application where there is a request to transfer the ethics approval. Transfer is subject to FedUni approval.

Requests to waive confirmation of candidature must be approved by the Dean, Graduate Studies.

The period of enrolment at the previous institution will be deducted from the usual period of candidature at FedUni. Transfer to FedUni will not normally be allowed for candidates who have completed more than two years EFTSL of a doctoral program or six months EFTSL of a masters program.

Conditions of candidature

Offer of Admission to Candidature

Applicants will be sent an Offer of Admission to Candidature if their application has been endorsed by the School and approved by the Chair, RHDC. The Offer of Admission to Candidature sets out the terms and conditions of candidature, including any special requirements that must be met before enrolment or confirmation. All offers of candidature are probationary and subject to confirmation. Where conditions of candidature substantially change after enrolment, a revised Conditions of Candidature statement will be issued to the candidate.

Acceptance of Offer

Candidates are required to sign and return an Acceptance of Offer within the designated timeframe as stated in the Letter of Offer to Admission to Candidature. In accepting an offer of probationary candidature, applicants must agree to:

- Commit to completing their designated program within the allowable period of candidature,
- Abide by all relevant legislation, policies, procedures and codes of practice as specified by FedUni.
Conditional offers

An offer of conditional candidature may be made to an applicant. Such conditions will be stated in the Offer of Admission to Candidature and the applicant must sign and return the provided formal acceptance to be admitted to candidature.

Deferment

Applicants who have received an Offer of Admission to Candidature to an HDR program may be granted deferment on application. A written application must be made within two weeks of receiving the Offer of Admission to Candidature. Periods of deferment of six or 12 months can be requested. Deferment cannot be offered once a candidate has enrolled. If a candidate deferring a place has also received an offer of a scholarship, the scholarship offer will be withdrawn and they will be required to reapply for a scholarship in the next round.

Probationary candidature

Initial admission to HDR candidature is on a provisional basis, and an application for candidature to be confirmed must be made as follows, unless otherwise approved by Academic Board:

- Doctoral candidates: no later than 12 months of after commencing full-time probationary candidature or no later than 24 months after commencing part-time probationary candidature.
- Master's candidates: no later than six months after commencing full-time probationary candidature or within 12 months of commencing part-time probationary candidature

For candidature to be confirmed, the candidate must demonstrate that a viable research program has been developed, satisfactory progress has been made, and the degree requirements can be completed within the period allowed. Details of the Confirmation process are provided in the Candidature Management Policy and Candidature Management Procedure.

Duration of candidature

The duration of candidature is prescribed by Regulation 5.1. The minimum period of doctoral candidature is one year of full-time study and the maximum period is four years of full-time study or the equivalent in part-time study. The minimum period of master's candidature is one year of full-time study and the maximum period is two years of full-time study or the equivalent in part-time study.

Full-time and part-time candidature

Domestic HDR candidates may enrol on a full-time or a part-time basis, subject to approval by the school of enrolment and the Dean Graduate Studies International students on Australian student visas are required to enrol on a full-time basis.

Off campus candidature

External candidature

Candidates may study off campus provided they have the approval of the Principal Supervisor, School Associate Dean Research and Chair, RHDC, to conduct their research at another suitable location. Off campus candidates are responsible for:

- sourcing their location of study,
• OHS requirements
• Having access to a computer and internet technologies to assist with research and communication.

International candidates located within Australia and holding a student visa must study on campus or from a specified location, such as an external laboratory. International candidates cannot elect to enrol off campus.

All off campus candidature arrangements must be supported with a Student / Supervisor agreement and will be reviewed at every progress review.

In the case of off campus enrolment, the School of enrolment must confirm that the prospective applicant has the research experience to pursue independent, sustained and structured research off campus and that the research project and supervision arrangements are appropriate to the arrangement. Final approval of any case for off campus enrolment will be made by the Chair, RHDC.

Candidates may be required to study from an external location where research is principally being undertaken at another research site (e.g. archives repository, field site, laboratory, commercial or governmental research station, another university, etc.), the Principal Supervisor and Associate Dean Research of the School of enrolment must ensure that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) exists between that site and FedUni and that the site provides a research environment which offers appropriate resources, facilities and research expertise for the duration of the enrolment. All instances of external enrolment must be approved by Chair, RHDC.

Additional requirements for external candidature

An MOU must be jointly signed by the Dean of the School of enrolment and a representative of the external site. The MOU must cover, but is not limited to:
• Occupational Health and Safety training relevant to the research location,
• Agreement on ownership of intellectual property,
• Any site-specific requirements for the candidate,
• Use, ownership and storage of materials and data,
• Clarification on publication of papers resulting from the research including authorship, affiliation and embargos.

Articulation between standard and external enrolment

Candidates may be permitted to transfer between standard and external/off-campus enrolment, as assessed by the School and approved by the Dean Graduate Studies on a case-by-case basis.

Codes of conduct for HDR candidates

FedUni is committed to the conduct of ethical and responsible research and research training. HDR candidates are bound by the:
• Ethical Conduct of Research Policy
• Applying for Human Research Ethics Procedure
• Applying for Animal Research Ethics Procedure
• Authorship Procedure
• Research Integrity Policy
• Research Integrity & Misconduct Procedure
• Research Data Management Policy
Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)
FedUni is committed to establishing best practice in providing a workplace and environment that are, as far as practicable, safe and without risk to health. HDR candidates are bound and protected by FedUni’s Health and Safety Policy and Health and Safety Management Procedure.

Equal Opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation requirements
FedUni is committed to providing a workplace and environment that are free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. HDR candidates are bound by the FedUni’s Equal Opportunity and Valuing Diversity Policy.

Complaints, Grievances and Appeals
Students may submit a complaint, grievances and appeals in relation to the application of this or any other procedure in accordance with the Student Grievances Policy, the Student Complaints Procedure and the Student Appeals Policy.

Special circumstances for entry

Designated Cohorts
Schools may apply to the RHDC, through the Dean of Graduate Studies, to create special or reduced entry requirements for a cohort of students entering a higher degree by research program. Application is made under the designated cohort process and is outlined in the Selection and Awarding of a HDR Place Procedure.

The primary purpose for a designated cohort is to recognise industry specific skills and training alongside formal research training as a mechanism for entry to HDR programs.

Honours Equivalence for Nominated Federation University Programs
FedUni programs by coursework, which include significant research components, can be recognised as honours-equivalent. Subject to satisfactory completion of the required courses, graduates of these programs will be deemed to meet honours equivalence and are therefore eligible for an offer of probationary candidature in an HDR program. Further information regarding nominated FedUni programs is presented in the Selection and Awarding of Higher degree by research Places Procedure.

Grade requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA (%)</th>
<th>Honours equivalence</th>
<th>HDR Program Eligibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;80</td>
<td>First class honours</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree (Research, Professional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 - 79</td>
<td>Second class honours, upper A division</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree (Research, Professional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 74</td>
<td>Second class honours, lower A division</td>
<td>Masters Degree (Research)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 69</td>
<td>Second class honours, B division</td>
<td>Masters Degree (Research)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;60</td>
<td>Third class honours</td>
<td>Not eligible for entry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Requirements for honours equivalence (where a full year of study is taken as 120 credit points):
- The program must include at least 60 credit points of research-related coursework including a research project.
• One course must include a research project, assessment of which involves the production of a thesis of at least 12,000 – 15,000 words.
• The thesis must be worth at least 30 credit points.
• The thesis must be assessed in the same manner as an honours thesis, i.e. normally two examiners.

Higher Degrees by Research in partnership

FedUni will offer HDR awards in partnership with suitable partner higher education institutions. These awards include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cotutelle type award</th>
<th>Joint award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrolment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simultaneous enrolment in a higher degree by research at FedUni and an approved higher educational institution overseas. Both institutions oversee the progress</td>
<td>Simultaneous enrolment in a higher degree by research at FedUni and an approved higher educational institution within Australia or overseas. One institution is designated as lead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis submission</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The candidate will submit one thesis for assessment by both institutions.</td>
<td>The candidate will submit one thesis to the lead institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Testamur</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The candidate will be awarded two testamurs, one from each institution.</td>
<td>The candidate will be awarded a single testamur bearing the crests of both institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two graduation ceremonies</td>
<td>One graduation ceremony</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where the agreement has been made to partner with an international institute, all requirements, policies and procedures of FedUni must be followed.

Awarding of testamurs under joint or cotutelle awards will be governed by TEQSA requirements for both domestic and international partnerships.

The research study program proposed at the partner institution must be approved by Academic Board on the recommendation of the Research Higher Degree Committee. Where the partner is an international institution, the HDR program must comply with the Higher Education Partner Provided Delivery Policy if applicable. The international partner institution must be approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and University Council.

A Memorandum of Understanding between FedUni and the partner institution should be prepared concerning the awarding of a joint or cotutelle HDR.

Confidentiality and Privacy

All personal information collected by FedUni is governed by the Information Privacy Policy. The following are examples of instances where FedUni will use and disclose an HDR student’s personal information for legitimate purposes:

• providing information to Centrelink;
• releasing statistical information to relevant government bodies such as the Department of Education, and the Office of Training and Tertiary Education;
• releasing relevant information to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), the Department of Education, and the Australian Taxation Office
Supporting Documents

- Selection and Awarding of Scholarships Procedure RS1932
- Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship Policy RS2009
- HDR Candidature Management Policy RS1935
- HDR Candidature Management Procedure RS1937
- HDR Supervision Policy RS1928
- Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Candidates Procedure RS1929
- Ethical Conduct of Research Policy RS1921
- Applying for Human Research Ethics Procedure RS1922
- Applying for Animal Research Ethics Procedure RS1923
- Authorship Procedure RS1957
- Research Integrity Policy RS1501
- Research Integrity & Misconduct Procedure RS1502
- Research Data Management Policy RS1990
- HDR Application Form - Supervisor Section (docx, 218kb)
- HDR Application Form - School Section (docx, 236kb)
- Department of Immigration and Boarder Protection
- United Nations Sanctions
- Australian Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011

Responsibility

- Responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this policy and its accompanying procedure/s – Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation
- Responsible for maintaining the content of this policy as delegated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation, Dean Graduate Studies
- Responsible for the administrative support for the maintenance of this policy as directed by the Dean Graduate Studies, Research Integrity & Policy Coordinator

Promulgation

The HDR Candidate Selection Policy RS1930 will be communicated throughout the University community in the form of:

1. An Announcement Notice via FedNews website and on the ‘Recently Approved Documents’ page on the ‘Policies, Procedures and Forms @ the University’ website to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy,
2. Distribution of e-mails to Head of School / Head of Department / University staff, and/or
3. Notification to Schools

Implementation

The HDR Candidate Selection Policy RS1930 will be implemented via:

1. An Announcement Notice via FedNews website and on the ‘Recently Approved Documents’ page on the ‘Policies, Procedures and Forms @ the University’ website to alert the University community of the approved Policy,
2. Training sessions.