

Confirmation of Candidature

Guide for the Confirmation of Candidature milestone

Graduate Research School
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Overview of Confirmation of Candidature

Confirmation of Candidature (CoC) is a formal milestone that must be attempted by candidates for the Higher Degrees by Research - Masters by Research and Doctor of Philosophy.

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 approved candidature period.

The approved candidature period for the Doctor of Philosophy is three years full-time or part-time equivalent, and for Masters by Research, 1.5 years full-time or part-time equivalent.

Prior to confirmation of candidature, an HDR candidate is considered *probationary*.

Confirmation of Candidature is an opportunity to check that the candidate and supervisors are working well as a team.

The process and requirements for Confirmation of Candidature are mandated in the [HDR Candidature Management Policy](#) and [HDR Candidature Management Procedure](#). The information included in this guide expands on these documents.

Timing of the Confirmation of Candidature milestone

Confirmation of Candidature **must be completed** before:

- 6 months of candidature or part-time equivalent for Master by Research candidates
- 12 months of candidature or part-time equivalent for PhD candidates.

Probationary PhD candidates should attempt confirmation three months prior to the actual deadline (9 months from initial enrolment) to allow for any revisions or amendments to the research project and the CoC document before the 12-month (or part-time equivalent) deadline.

Converting to PhD candidature from the Masters by Research

Masters by research candidates requesting to convert to PhD candidature must

- submit an Intention to Confirm form citing the request to upgrade to PhD candidature **at or before six months** from initial enrolment
- have the support of their Principal Supervisor and [relevant HDR Coordinator](#)
- follow the requirements for PhD confirmation of candidature, and
- complete the confirmation process **within 7 to 9 months** or part-time equivalent from initial enrolment.

Requirements before attempting Confirmation

Skills Development Program

Masters by Research and PhD candidates must complete a required number of core and optional sessions from the Federation University HDR Skills Development Program (SDP) before attempting Confirmation. Details of these requirements are provided in the full program available on the [SDP webpage](#).

Research integrity

All candidates should familiarise themselves with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) when planning their research project. This should be achieved by completing the online Research Integrity module which forms part of the SDP pre-confirmation requirements.

Internship and industry involvement during candidature

Federation University encourages candidates to engage with industry or complete an internship during their candidature and this should be planned before Confirmation of Candidature. Discuss with your supervisor and refer to the GRS Industry SharePoint page for further information.

1. Confirmation of candidature process

Candidates must complete and submit the [Intention to Confirm Candidature form](#) to the Graduate Research School at research.degrees@federation.edu.au prior to their proposed CoC seminar..

The purpose of the Intention to Confirm form is to provide the date of the seminar, confirm whether the Skills Development Program and other requirements are fulfilled and provide nominations for the panel involved in assessing the Confirmation of Candidature. Ideally, this notification of intention to confirm is provided to the Graduate Research School four weeks prior to the proposed seminar date.

The full process for confirmation is outlined in Appendix 1 Confirmation of candidature steps.

Once an approved Intention to Confirm form is received, the Graduate Research School creates a calendar invitation to the candidate, panel members and supervisory team in Microsoft Outlook's TEAMS. This invitation can be forwarded to other interested participants. The seminar link will be included on the [Upcoming confirmations of candidature](#) webpage available to Federation staff and students.

2. Application for extension to the probationary term

Should the candidate and supervisor identify that an extension to the due date of confirmation is required, then they should formally apply for an extension using the [Request to Defer CoC form](#) accompanied by a candidature completion plan to [the Graduate Research School](#).

The candidature [completion plan](#), developed by the candidate and Principal Supervisor must demonstrate how the project will be completed in a timely manner despite the delay in confirmation. The Request to Defer and completion plan is to be endorsed by the relevant HDR Coordinator.

Challenges incurred by the candidate within the probationary period that have necessitated the delay should also be documented in the Annual/Interim progress report.

3. Disability support during CoC

Any candidates requiring assistance due to a disability should contact [Disability and Learning Access Unit](#) (DLAU) who work in collaboration with candidates with disabilities to tailor service provision to their individual needs.

4. Composition of the Confirmation of Candidature panel

The confirmation panel should comprise of:

- the relevant HDR Coordinator or nominee (Chair)
- the Principal Supervisor
- an academic staff member from Federation University with relevant disciplinary experience and knowledge
- An academic / discipline expert from another University.

Additional members may include:

- An industry partner, where appropriate
- An Indigenous community member, where appropriate.

The Principal Supervisor and Panel Chair should ensure that no conflict of interest exists between panel members and the candidate.

5. Preparing the written report

The body of the written report for the Confirmation of Candidature should be prepared in according to the following word limits:

- 4,000 - 7,000 words for Masters by Research candidates
- 5,000 - 10,000 words for PhD candidates

The word limits for the Confirmation of Candidature written report include the main text, explanatory footnotes and captions and excludes references.

Appendices (including a 'Turnitin' report, if attached to the CoC report as an appendix) will not be included in the word count.

Significantly longer reports may be returned to the candidate for review and prompt resubmission to avoid rescheduling the CoC seminar.

The Federation University [Skills Development Program](#) (SDP) includes a session titled: "Setting up the Thesis in Word", which may be useful for candidates who are not familiar with the creation of large reports. This session is comprised of a series of videos forming a self-paced guide to the use of Word.

The written report must be submitted to the Graduate Research School for distribution to the panel **two weeks prior** to the date set for the CoC seminar.

If the written report contains confidential material the candidate and supervisors should seek advice from the Dean of Graduate Studies (DGS) as to whether a closed panel review should be arranged.

Elements of a Confirmation of Candidature written report

The following is a list of elements you may need to include in your written report, depending on the research project and the requirements of your research discipline. Inclusion and content of any of these sections must be discussed between the candidate and the supervisory team.

- Cover page
- Table of contents
- List of abbreviations and/or glossary
- Purpose and significance of the research; aims, objectives, research questions
- Literature review
- Anticipated contribution of the study to existing knowledge
- Epistemological basis of the study
- Methodological framework: research approach, framework, and methodology
- Methods relevant to the research project
- Preliminary results
- Indication of progress to date
- List of publications / Creative works – completed or intended
- Evidence that issues related to cultural awareness have been, or will be, addressed
- Evidence that ethical issues relating to the conduct of research involving humans or animals have been, or will be, addressed
- Evidence that issues relating to data retention and management have been, or will be, addressed
- Evidence that issues relating to Intellectual Property (IP) have been, or will be, addressed
- Timetable for completion of the research, including thesis preparation
- Proposed project budget
- Acknowledgement of [scholarship and other funding \(for RTP recipients\)](#). These must be in [compliance with](#) Federation University's [RTP Scholarship policy RS2009](#)
- Reference list
- Appendix / Appendices (e.g.: Turnitin report, manuscripts for publication, etc.)

Candidates may consider using a plagiarism detection program such as [Turnitin](#) available through [Moodle](#) before submission to assist in establishing and maintaining academic integrity. The Turnitin report can be attached as an appendix and will not be included in the word count.

5.1. Cover page

Include the current title of your research project, your name, names and roles of the members of your supervisory team and your Research Centre. The date and purpose of the CoC report should also be included.

In many cases, the current title of your research project will be the title provided to the GRS at the time of enrolment. Where the candidate and the supervisor feel that the project has evolved such that a different title is suitable, an alternative project title may be provided. The project title should be as brief as possible while giving a clear indication of the major thrust of the thesis.

Where the title of the research project provided on the written CoC report differs from the research project registered with the Graduate Research School (GRS), the candidate's record will be updated following successful confirmation. The title on the written CoC report becomes the research project's updated title.

Any subsequent change in the research project title post confirmation of candidature can be notified by email to the Graduate Research School with Principal Supervisor endorsement.

5.2. Table of Contents

A formal research report should contain a contents page, showing sections and page numbers. Use the appropriate academic format for your discipline. Use of headings in your word processing program can facilitate the creation of a [Table of Contents](#). It may be appropriate to use a list of sections and subsections with a cascading numbering system, for example Section 2 may have subsections, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 etc.

5.3. List of abbreviations and/or glossary

A list of any abbreviations, acronyms or technical terms used in your report and their definitions should be on a separate page in your report.

5.4. Purpose and significance of the research

This section of the report should make clear the purpose and the significance of the research. In some disciplines, this section will sit more comfortably after rather than before the literature review.

The way in which the **purpose of the research** is communicated can also vary significantly by discipline. In STEM, this may include articulating an overarching research question, one or more aims and/or hypotheses along with more specific targets which break the work down into a series of steps. Alternatively, the purpose may be adequately communicated by describing an existing research gap that the research project will fill. It is expected that this section of the document will clearly convey the intent of the research.

The **significance of the research** identifies who benefits from the study and how that specific audience will benefit. When articulating this section, it is important to consider the general contribution that your research will make to the research discipline (how will you extend the current literature, or current theory) and the specific contribution that your work may make to specific group of end-users/audience/practitioners.

5.5. Literature review

During the first months of probationary candidature, the candidate undertakes an evaluative study of the peer reviewed literature related to their selected area of study. Depending on the research discipline, this may include review of alternative research frameworks and methodologies. For some research projects, additional sources such as government reports and policy documents may be reviewed in addition to academic resources.

The aim of the literature review is to locate your research project and its significance within the research discipline, and, where appropriate, to justify decisions relating to the approach, framework, methodology and methods chosen for the project. After providing a critical review of the research in their area, candidates are

often encouraged to identify a 'gap' in current knowledge and to describe how their research will address such a gap.

Your supervisory team should assist you to read for, plan and write the literature review. The Federation University [Skills Development Program](#) (SDP) also runs sessions to assist candidates to prepare the literature review.

Requirements for a literature review vary considerably between disciplines. Please discuss the appropriate approach to your literature review with your supervisory team. Some suggestions are included in [Appendix 2](#).

5.6. Epistemological basis of the study

Required in some disciplines only, so discuss with your supervisor to determine relevance.

Analyse the nature of knowledge and how it relates to similar notions such as truth, belief and justification. Deal with the means of production of knowledge, as well as scepticism about different knowledge claims

5.7. Methodological framework: research approach, framework and methodology

Required in some disciplines only, so discuss with your supervisor to determine relevance.

This section may include critical discussions and descriptions of relevant research paradigms or epistemologies/ontologies, justifying the choices made by the researcher in selecting the appropriate theoretical framework(s) and methodologies for the research. Such arguments would normally precede a description and justification of the methods to be used in the study.

5.8. Methods relevant to the research

Provide an outline of the methods used to address the research question or to explore the research topic and ensure that the choice of methods has been justified. Where relevant, include details of data collection techniques, the estimated time commitment involved, and how data will be organised and analysed. If the project includes any procedure that is already established and uses accepted techniques, include clear references to accepted protocols or sources.

In the performing and creative arts disciplines, this section may include an explanation of the links between the various proposed practical works and the thrust of the exegesis.

5.9. Preliminary results

This section may be more or less relevant depending on discipline and research project.

Where relevant, findings-to-date or preliminary results should be presented. Formatting and presentation style should be consistent with published work in the research discipline (e.g., graphs, tables, images, or text).

5.10. Indication of progress to date

In this section of the report, the candidate should clearly summarise the progress made during the candidature period. It is often helpful for the CoC panel to consider the candidate's achievements to date in the context of the work remaining. The candidate may choose to present a Gantt chart (or similar) detailing all planned tasks and highlighting those which have already been achieved

5.11. List of publications / Creative works – created or intended

This section may be more or less relevant depending on discipline and research project.

Here, candidates may present a list of existing and/or planned research outputs deriving from the HDR candidature, including journal articles, conference presentations, creative works etc.

5.12. Evidence that issues related to cultural awareness have been, or will be, addressed

Should the project include research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, Country and knowledge, then with guidance from the supervisor, candidates should demonstrate that they

have proactively consulted as appropriate with Traditional Owners, relevant Indigenous community members and where relevant [Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research](#).

5.13. Evidence that ethical issues relating to the conduct of research involving humans or animals have been, or will be, addressed

All candidates should familiarise themselves with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#).

Where necessary, candidates should demonstrate awareness of the legislative requirements relating to research involving human participants, human data, animal subjects or biosafety hazards. To do this, visit the Federation University [ethics webpages](#), discuss with your supervisor and/or contact the Ethics Officer. For projects requiring ethics approval, such approval **must be in place prior to commencing data collection**.

Note that where applicable, evidence of ethics approval is required upon submission of the thesis for examination.

Ethics applications for health-related research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or communities in Victoria must also be submitted to the relevant state or territory health body dealing with Indigenous related health research ethics. See also section 5.12.

5.14. Evidence that issues relating to data retention and management have been, or will be, addressed

Where relevant, candidates should provide information about how research data will be managed. This must comply with legislative requirements and take account of requirements of the relevant ethics committee. Candidates should refer to the [Research Data Management Policy](#) and the [Research Data Management Procedure](#).

5.15. Evidence that issues relating to Intellectual Property (IP) have been, or will be, addressed

This section may be more or less relevant depending on discipline and research project. Where relevant, candidates should indicate that issues relating to Intellectual Property have been or will be addressed.

5.16. Candidature completion plan

A candidature completion plan should be included in your CoC document. Templates are available on the HDR Forms website. For further assistance for your completion plan, please refer to [Appendix 3. – Guide to completion plan](#). The completion plan is essentially a timeline and should include target deadlines for key components of your research. Tasks that have already been completed should be included and noted as complete.

5.17. Proposed project budget

A research project budget should be discussed with your supervisor and provided in your Confirmation of Candidature document.

A budget ensures that sufficient resources are available to complete the research work that is proposed. It should be based on a full analysis of expected research project costs.

A well prepared half-one A4 page devoted to the proposed budget will add weight to the argument that you are able to achieve the outcomes set out in your project and give confidence to the panel that the project aims will be achieved within the candidature period.

Suggested items to include in the budget include equipment / software or transcription expenses / lab costs including consumables such as chemicals, kits and glassware / costs associated with production of artworks or exhibitions / conference attendance or other required travel / distribution of survey instruments / glassware.

Please note: Successful confirmation of candidature does not constitute approval of the proposed budget or approval of actual research expenditure; however, the budget is an important component of the written report that the panel will review along with the rest of the research proposal.

HDR funding is now administered by the Graduate Research School. Before any research-related expenditure is made, you **must** apply for and receive formal approval of your proposed research expenditure from the Dean, Graduate Studies. Requests for reimbursement will not be approved. Please see the [HDR Candidate Funding Rules SharePoint page](#) for appropriate forms and guide.

5.18. Acknowledgement of scholarship and other funding (for RTP recipients), must be in compliance with RTP Scholarship policy RS2009

Candidates must ensure that sources of funding for the HDR research project are acknowledged. This includes industry funds and/or funds provided by the University on behalf of the Australian Government, such as Research Training Program (RTP) stipend scholarships and fee offset scholarships.

For candidates in receipt of a RTP Scholarship from the Australian Government, acknowledgment is a condition of the scholarship which must occur whenever the scholarship recipient, their supervisor or any other party publishes or produces material such as books, articles, newsletters or other literary or artistic works which relate to the research project carried out by the candidate in receipt of an RTP scholarship. Use the example wording below:

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

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

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

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

5.19. Reference list

Recommended referencing styles may vary between disciplines, so check with your supervisor about an appropriate style. Consistency is important.

Any sources you refer to in-text must appear in the reference list and the reference list must only contain sources you have referred to in-text.

5.20. Appendix / Appendices

Any large tables, figures, or other material that are too long for your report, but which are necessary for the reader to be able to access while reading your report, should be included in an appendix (or where necessary, several appendices) at the end of the report. Where relevant, manuscripts prepared or accepted for publication can also be attached as appendices. Each appendix should be numbered and titled. Appendices should be included in the Table of Contents and will not be included in the word count.

6. Confirmation of Candidature seminar

6.1 Presentation and Q&A session

The CoC seminar comprises a spoken presentation by the candidate, plus a question-and-answer period. The duration of the presentation by the candidate is normally 20-30 minutes long for Masters and 25-40 minutes long for PhD candidates dependent on discipline and chosen research project followed by time for questions and answers (Q&A).

The CoC panel comprises part of the audience. The panel members will have read your written report prior to attending the seminar. Other audience members may include members of the supervisory team (other than the Principal Supervisor, who is a panel member), representatives from relevant industries or communities, academics, and peers from across the University.

6.2 TEAMS and the online presentation

Confirmation of Candidature seminars are usually presented online via TEAMS and organised by the Graduate Research School team using calendar invitations in Microsoft Outlook. However, seminars can be presented in-person and rooms booked by request with the Graduate Research School. Students, supervisors and HDR Coordinator are encouraged to forward invitation requests to any interested people in order to ensure an audience for the seminar.

If presented as an online seminar, the candidate, panel members and audience members enter the online seminar via the TEAMS link. To avoid issues with the presentation, candidates must log in using their student email address.

7. Preparing for the seminar

The supervisory team should assist the candidate to plan and prepare for the CoC seminar. Preparations may include, as appropriate:

- development of a PowerPoint presentation or other visual aids for a logical flow for the seminar
- clear articulation of the context and purpose of the research, which will normally require reference to the existing body of literature
- an explanation of the significance of the research
- an explanation and justification of the chosen research approach and methodology
- detail regarding the research methods
- communication of progress to date and work remaining
- an indication of the next steps for this research
- consideration of likely questions (and appropriate answers to these).

Several rehearsals prior to the scheduled presentation date are recommended to check timing and flow. Where possible, rehearsals are best made in front of a critical but supportive audience such as supervisors and other HDR candidates and should include a rehearsal of the question-and-answer session.

During the question-and-answer session, members of the CoC panel, and other audience members will ask questions of the candidate. The candidate should respond based on their knowledge of the project to date.

Panel interview with candidate

Following the CoC seminar, the panel will discuss aspects of the seminar, the written report and the candidate's progress to date with the candidate. This is an opportunity to raise and resolve issues and to clarify any misunderstandings.

8. Panel recommendations

The panel is obliged to make a recommendation regarding the outcome of the confirmation of candidature attempt within 5 days of the seminar. The panel may recommend any of the following outcomes:

- Confirmed
- Confirmed subject to conditions
- Confirmation deferred
- Not confirmed

9. Process of second confirmation attempt

Where the outcome of the confirmation of candidature is deferred, the candidate is given an opportunity to revise their work for reconsideration by the panel. This may involve amending the written report and/or the seminar on the basis of feedback from the CoC panel within 12 weeks (or 24 weeks part-time candidature).

Where possible, the confirmation panel members should be the same as at the first confirmation attempt. The supervisory team will provide reasonable assistance to support the candidate to prepare for the second confirmation attempt. The candidate must carefully address the comments made by the CoC panel during the first attempt. Candidates are not usually offered a third opportunity to confirm their candidature.

Full details of the confirmation requirements and process are provided in the [Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management Procedure](#)

10. Other outcomes

Transfer to Masters by Research after unsuccessful PhD confirmation attempt

At the time of confirmation, a candidate who is not successful in confirming as a PhD candidate, may, with the recommendation of the confirmation panel, and provided they meet the requirements, transfer their candidature to a Masters by Research. For further details, refer to section 4.5 *Conversion from a Masters by Research to a PhD program* in the [Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management Policy](#).

At Risk

At risk is a shortened term for 'At risk of not completing by the approved submission date'.

Failure to undertake CoC within the designated timelines and without having received approval following a formal request for extension, is one of several circumstances which will place the candidature 'At Risk'. Candidates 'At Risk' are required to work with their supervisors to prepare a [candidature completion plan](#). Refer to the [Candidature Management procedure](#) for further details.

Show Cause

Show cause is a shortened term for 'the candidate must show cause as to why they should not be excluded from the University'.

Show cause is a formal process facilitated by the Graduate Research School, under various circumstances, including following an unsuccessful CoC. The candidate must present a case to a panel as to why their candidature should not be terminated. Refer to the [Candidature Management procedure](#) for further details.

11. The role of the supervisory team

The Principal Supervisor, having consulted with other members of the supervisory team, will nominate panel members for approval by the HDR Coordinator. Requirements for panel members are outlined in section 12.

The Principal Supervisor is a member of the Confirmation of Candidature Panel. Associate and Co-supervisors are an integral part of the candidate's support team and audience and are invited to observe the discussions with the panel after the CoC seminar, however they are not formally involved in the panel deliberations resulting in the CoC outcome.

Supervisors are expected to:

- ensure that the candidate attends the prescribed Skills Development Program (SDP) sessions, so that the probationary candidate is eligible to undertake CoC.
- guide the probationary candidate through the candidature requirements outlined in the [HDR Candidature Management Policy](#).
- meet with the candidate in the early months of enrolment to discuss the CoC milestone and associated timelines.
- observe the candidate's progress and identify and address any issues constraining their progress or preparations for CoC.
- work with panel members and the Graduate Research School to set a date for the CoC seminar which allows attendance by all panel members unless other arrangements have been made. Where an agreed date cannot be found, panel membership may need to be revised.
- mentor the probationary candidate to ensure readiness, knowledge, and capacity to undertake the CoC process within the required timelines, so as not to jeopardise the continuation of their candidature and/or scholarship (where awarded).
- mentor the probationary candidate regarding the critical importance of research ethics and integrity in research, including issues relating to authorship and Intellectual Property. Ensure that relevant ethics approvals have been sought and approved, or that appropriate progress has been made towards this, and that this information is included in the written and CoC seminar for CoC.
- provide the probationary candidate with timely feedback during preparation of both the written report and CoC seminar for CoC.

Supervisors must support the candidate to understand the outcome of the CoC process, particularly where the outcome is *Confirmed subject to conditions*, *Confirmation deferred*, or *Not confirmed*.

Where the panel recommendation is *Confirmed subject to conditions*, supervisors are to assist the candidate to meet the conditions outlined in the panel report within the time period set by the CoC panel.

Where the outcome is *Not confirmed*, supervisors are expected to provide mentoring and support to the probationary candidate through the process of Withdrawal from Candidature or the '[Show Cause](#)' procedure' as detailed in the Candidature Management procedure.

12. The role of the Confirmation Panel

The role of the Confirmation Panel is to determine whether the candidate has completed such processes as determined by the Academic Board to demonstrate that a viable research program has been developed, satisfactory progress has been made, and that the degree requirements can be completed within the period allowed.

The CoC panel will review the candidate's written report to ensure that the purpose, significance, scope, methodology and methods are clearly articulated and appropriate for the project. The study design and proposed methods must be in accord with discipline conventions, and the project must be designed within the scope of the resources available to support its execution within the given time frame for the program. The report should provide evidence of sufficient progress to date so that the panel is confident that the candidate will complete their research project prior to the end of their candidature period.

The CoC Panel will evaluate the candidate's seminar, considering whether the candidate demonstrates a sound understanding of the research topic, both during the presentation and in the verbal defence of their research during questioning.

The CoC panel will meet with the candidate following the seminar in order to explore any concerns regarding the candidate's research and the likelihood of timely completion. Verbal feedback may be provided during this meeting.

The CoC panel will, via the Chair's report, provide written feedback to the candidate, summarising their view of the candidate's likely capacity to progress their research efficiently to its conclusion within the designated minimum timeframe of their program.

Formal and informal feedback to the candidate should include congratulatory statements where warranted.

The Chair's report is to be submitted to the Graduate Research School within 4 days of the seminar date, so the candidate record may be updated, and the candidate formally advised of the outcome within 5 business days of their CoC seminar.

In the case of a second confirmation attempt, the confirmation panel will have documented all aspects of the candidate's work considered inadequate in the first confirmation attempt, and this report will be shared with the candidate and supervisory team. The confirmation panel will also have advised the candidate of the possible consequences of an unsuccessful second confirmation attempt.

12.1 Composition of the Confirmation of Candidature Panel

The Principal Supervisor will nominate appropriate panel members for the CoC panel, conferring with the HDR Coordinator for advice regarding suitability of the nominees where required. The CoC panel will consist of a minimum of four members as described in section 4 of this document.

12.2 Suggested agenda for the CoC seminar and panel meeting

A suggested agenda for the CoC seminar is as follows:

- Supervisor introduces the candidate
- Candidate presents
- Questions from the floor (chaired by supervisor or panel chair)
- Informal proceedings end - Audience leaves

A suggested agenda for the CoC panel meeting is as follows:

- Panel convenes to discuss the CoC outcome
- Candidate is asked to leave the (virtual or actual) meeting room while the panel discusses the written report and the presentation. This discussion should include an opportunity for the Principal Supervisor to comment on the candidate's progress to date, the suitability of the project design and the likelihood of timely completion; and raise any special circumstances relevant to the candidate or the project.
- The panel may formulate an agreed tentative outcome before inviting the candidate to return to the meeting room.
- The candidate is invited to join the panel and the Supervisor(s) are asked to leave the (virtual or actual) meeting room while the remainder of the panel meets with the candidate.
- Discussion with the candidate should include an opportunity for the candidates to comment on his/her progress to date, the suitability of the project and the likelihood of timely completion; and raise any special circumstances.
- The panel should specifically ask the candidate to comment on the adequacy and appropriateness of the supervisory (and other) support provided by the University.
- The supervisors should be invited to return to the meeting room.
- If the tentative agreed outcome remains unchanged following discussions with the candidate, the chair should inform the candidate verbally of the outcome and any subsequent consequences.
- If the panel requires further discussion before finally deciding an outcome, these deliberations may take place in the presence of the candidate at the discretion of the chair. If the candidate is asked to leave, they should return to be verbally informed of the final outcome.
- Chair completes Panel Report Form on behalf of the CoC panel.
- Chair forwards Panel report to the Graduate Research School for updates to the candidate's record and the Graduate Research School formally notifies the candidate of the CoC outcome.

12.3 Panel assessment

The CoC panel must assess the confirmation document and seminar against a number of questions and statements. The categories can be found on the [Panel Report Confirmation of Candidature](#) document in the 'Assessment of candidature' section.

12.4 Key information to be communicated by the panel

The Panel is required to provide feedback to the candidate with regard to all points outlined above. The CoC panel report form guides the panel in this respect.

Feedback to the Candidate should include advice on areas that need to be strengthened and congratulatory feedback where appropriate.

13. Useful links

Federation University Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

[Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management procedure](#)

[Higher Degree by Research Scholarship policy](#)

[HDR Forms](#)

[Library resources](#)

[University Academic Board](#)

[Regulation 5.1](#)

Government Legislation

[Higher Education Standards \(Thresholds Framework\) 2015 4.2:1C](#)

[Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

Ethics

[National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 \(updated 2018\)](#)

[Guidelines for Ethical conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research](#)

[Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition 2013](#)

[Office of the Gene Technology Regulator: Institutional Biosafety](#)

Other publications

'Planning your PhD' by Hugh Kearns and Maria Gardiner- www.ithinkwell.com.au

Appendix 1 – Confirmation of candidature steps

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
1	Probationary candidate participates in mandatory SDP sessions, completing any required activities	Probationary candidate	Probationary candidate completes the SDP sessions.
1.5	Candidate and supervisor discuss the possibility of an internship	Probationary candidate and supervisor	Refer to the GRS SharePoint page to seek relevant information on internships and industry connections.
2	Notification of Intention to Confirm	Probationary candidate	Candidate submits Notification of Intention Confirm form to supervisor for approval to undergo confirmation at least four weeks prior to confirmation date.
3	Submission of written proposal	Probationary candidate	The candidate submits a written research proposal, prepared in accordance with CoC guidelines, to Graduate Research School (GRS) two weeks prior to the seminar date.
3	Confirmation seminar and panel review takes place	Probationary candidate, Confirmation Panel Supervisory team	<p>The Probationary candidate makes an CoC seminar of no more than 25 minutes (plus time for questions and answers) to the Confirmation Panel and audience in accordance with CoC Guidelines.</p> <p>The candidate responds to questions on their research from the Panel and audience at the conclusion of the seminar.</p> <p>Panel members, not able to physically attend the seminar, may dial in to the seminar and /or provide feedback on the Candidate's written report, to the Panel Chair, prior to the seminar date.</p>
4	Panel provides feedback to the candidate / probationary candidate	Panel Chair – Graduate Research School	In all outcomes the Panel will provide a written report to the candidate via GRS within five days of the presentation, outlining the reasons for its decision.
	Outcome: Confirmed	GRS	GRS forwards panel report to the candidate, advising of outcome.
	Outcome: Confirmed subject to conditions	Candidate	1. Where the recommendation is that candidature be confirmed 'Subject to conditions' the report will include details of what tasks will need to be completed with associated timelines, to confirm candidature.

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
			<p>2. The candidate will be provided with up to eight weeks to meet the conditions.</p> <p>3. The candidate must provide evidence that the conditions have been met to the Confirmation Panel.</p> <p>4. The Confirmation Panel must advise the GRS that the conditions have been met within five days of approving the Candidate for candidature.</p>
	<p>Outcome: Confirmation deferred</p>	<p>Candidate Supervisory team CoC Panel</p>	<p>1. Where the recommendation is that 'Confirmation is deferred' the report will include details of what tasks will need to be completed with associated timelines.</p> <p>2. The candidate will be provided with up to twelve weeks to revise the seminar and/or written submission.</p> <p>3. The candidate must recommence the confirmation process with only one of the following outcomes to be recommended:</p> <p>Confirmed</p> <p>Not confirmed</p>
	<p>Outcome: Not Confirmed</p>	<p>Confirmation Panel GRS</p>	<p>The Confirmation Panel provides confirmation report to GRS to commence Show Cause process. The report will include justification as to why the candidate has not been confirmed.</p> <p>The panel must advise the probationary candidate that the outcome is 'not confirmed'</p> <p>The GRS will advise the candidate of the 'Show Cause' procedure.</p>

Appendix 2 – Elements of a literature review

Provide an introduction and a conclusion to your literature review, as well as a body or 'main' section. The body of the review should be comprised of paragraphs and organised in a logical manner, for example chronologically or by subtopic. The introduction will tell the reader what this review is about; the body defines your topic area, and the conclusion identifies the 'gap(s)' in the field of study that require further research.

Your introduction could include some or all of the following:

- the purpose of the review / why the topic is important
- the scope of the review - what aspects of the topic will be discussed
- the criteria used for your literature selection (e.g., type of sources used, date range)
- an explanation of the organisational pattern of the review.

The body may cover

- a critical account of research methodologies relevant to your research project, perhaps leading to identification of an appropriate research approach for your own project.
- a critical review of other published work relating to your research project undertaken; perhaps identifying a 'gap' within the research area, to which the knowledge generated by your own project will contribute.
- identification of leading scholars in the field, and a critical review of their contributions and omission.

Your conclusion could include some or all of the following:

- your overall perspective on the topic
- the main agreements and disagreements in the literature
- the most appropriate research approach for your project
- gaps or areas requiring further research (often identification of such gaps leads directly into your proposed research question).

After completing a first draft of your literature review, consider the following:

Where possible when citing other people's work, make the author the focus rather than the information. This is called an author prominent citation.

Sometimes you may need to add a little more detail about the study that you are discussing. For example, instead of: "xxx is important (Nameofauthor, 2016)", an author prominent citation will read, for example, "Nameofauthor (2016) pointed out the importance of xxx in her study of yyy in regional areas of Africa."

Make sure that your own opinion is clear, signalling your position on the topic to your reader.

Work through each paragraph in the body of the literature review, checking that every paragraph has:

- a. A topic sentence.
A "topic sentence" sums up the main idea of the paragraph. It tells your audience what the paragraph is going to be about. It is usually the first or second sentence of the paragraph.
- b. A number of supporting sentences.
This is where you discuss the work of other authors which fits under the topic of this paragraph.
- c. A concluding sentence (this is where your position can be signalled, if appropriate).

Appendix 3 – Elements of a completion plan

The purpose of the Confirmation of Candidature milestone is to discern whether you are likely to successfully complete the requirements of the Higher Degree by Research within 3 years FTE (full-time equivalent) for PhD and 1.5 years FTE for Masters by Research. You must provide a timeline demonstrating how you will achieve completion within that time. A completion plan can be presented as a simple table, an Excel spreadsheet, or a Gantt chart to display your timeline provided it is clear and can be understood by the CoC panel members.

A completion plan may include the following elements:

- start date of your candidature
- due date for the CoC milestone
- dates for Annual and Interim progress report milestones
- known family or holiday commitments e.g., University Christmas closedown period, planned events such as weddings, children starting school etc.
- ethics approval application and expected approval dates (if required)
- realistic timing for key data collection activities: for example, field work, laboratory tests, creation of creative works, case studies, surveys etc.
- timing and duration for other activities such as data analysis; preparation of and exhibition or performance of creative works
- conference attendance or preparation of journal articles
- writing up the thesis which may take as much as 8-9 months for a full-time candidate and is best undertaken throughout candidature rather than in one chunk at the end.

Allow for unexpected setbacks such as illness, stress and for work/life balance. Plan for annual leave.

Setbacks can include field work delays, equipment failure or an exhibition that does not go according to plan. You may experience changes to your supervisory team. Anything is possible during three years of striving toward your goal. Leave yourself a buffer zone – it would be most unusual to not need one!