HDR Admission and Induction Guidelines

Policy code:	RS2099
Policy owner:	Dean, Graduate Research
Approval authority:	Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research
Approval date:	05 March 2025
Next review date:	06 November 2026

Table of Contents

Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to outline the steps, processes and requirements for University staff, prospective students and current candidates in HDR admissions and induction actions.

Scope

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

Definitions

Note: definitions throughout this Guideline can be accessed via the Policy Glossary which is currently under development.

Term	Definition
Candidate	Student enrolled in a higher degree by research course.

Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research | Dean, Graduate Research | Original: 06 November 2023 | Approved: 05 March 2025 | Next review: 06 November 2026 | Policy code: RS2099

CRICOS 00103D | RTO 4909 | TEQSA Provider ID: PRV12151 | Provider Category: Australian University

Page: 1 of 9

Confirmation of Candidature (CoC)	Milestone by which a candidate confirms that their research project is viable and is approved by the CoC panel to continue their project.
Deferment	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.
Designated Cohort	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.
DGR	Dean, Graduate Research – academic staff member responsible for overseeing HDR courses, HDR candidates and supervisors.
EFTSL	Estimated full time study load.
Employee	Any staff member employed by FedUni to undertake academic activity, including permanent, fixed term contract, casual, honorary and adjunct appointments.
Enrolment	The process by which a person, having received a written offer of a place, shall register their course and unit of study with Federation University.
GRS	Graduate Research School
GRSB	Graduate Research School Board
HDR	Higher Degree by Research
HDR Course	One of the following courses of study: Masters Degree Research, Doctoral Degree Research, or Doctoral Degree (Professional).
HDR candidate	A Federation student enrolled in a Masters Degree (Research), Doctoral Degree (Research), or Doctoral Degree (Professional).
HDRC	Higher Degree by Research Coordinator
IELTS	International English Language Testing System.
Institute	Academic unit of FedUni
Leave from studies	Period of either six or 12 months, covering a normal teaching period(s), where an enrolled student is excused from formal study.
Offer	Offer of Admission to Candidature – The written offer provided to an applicant for admission to a HDR course.
Off-campus candidate	Where a candidate studies from a location other than on campus or an approved external facility
Principal Supervisor	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.
Associate Supervisor	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 a HDR candidate and to the Principal Supervisor.

Co-Supervisor	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.
Probationary candidate	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.
Provisional Principal Supervisor	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.
RTP (Research Training Program)	Federal Government funding scheme that enables the provision of higher degree by research fee offset and stipend scholarships.
Stipend	A fortnightly scholarship paid to a candidate to cover living expenses.
Scholarship Program	A scholarship or cluster of scholarships that share attributes, strategic alignment, and/or industry engagement
Candidate / Supervisor agreement	Formal written agreement outlining meeting methods,
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency

Legislative Context

- Federation University Australia Act 2010
- The Tertiary Education Quality and StandardsAgency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act)
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- The National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

Guideline Statement

Application and Selection Process

Applicants for HDR Candidature are required to contact a supervisor for the proposed research project prior to applying.

Applicants should be aware that proposed research projects may be amended or changed to accommodate the availability of supervisory expertise.

Applications requesting transfer from another higher education provider are required to provide a letter from the previous organisation confirming the following details:

- course of study that was undertaken,
- that they are no longer a student of the organisation,
- completed milestones,

- the title of the research project, and
- how much candidature has been consumed.

Where an applicant is requesting to transfer ethics approval and /or where their project has been confirmed by their previous institute they must provide supporting documentation.

Where an applicant does not hold an Honours (AQF level 8) degree from an Australian University, it is the responsibility of the applicant and potential supervisor to provide a statement as to how the applicant meets honours equivalence, as outlined in the HDR Candidate Procedure.

Applications from countries impacted by sanctions must follow the processes outlined in the Sanctions Compliance Procedure RS2068.

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
1.	HDR applicant contacts potential supervisors	HDR applicant	It is recommended that supervisors meet with applicants whom they wish to supervise prior to the application being submitted.
2.	Complete and submit application for HDR Candidature.	HDR Applicant	Complete and submit application and provide documents as outlined on the Federation University website.
3.	Application processing	HDR Team	HDR admissions officer compiles application and checks for completeness, undertakes initial eligibility assessment and forwards to named supervisor or HDRC.
4.	Academic Assessment	HDR Team, HDR Coordinator, Dean, Graduate Research	The application is assessed for suitability of the proposed project area, eligibility against academic entry requirements, availability of appropriate supervision, acceptance of candidate by supervisor and availability of resources to support the research. Additional candidature requirements and conditions of candidature to be included in the Letter of Offer of Admission to Candidature can be stipulated by the Supervisor, HDRC or Dean, Graduate Research. Supervision arrangements must be approved by the supervisor's line managers before an application can be finalised.

Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research | Dean, Graduate Research | Original: 06 November 2023 | Approved: 05 March 2025 | Next review: 06 November 2026 | Policy code: RS2099

CRICOS 00103D | RTO 4909 | TEQSA Provider ID: PRV12151 | Provider Category: Australian University

Page: 4 of 9

			Where an applicant does not meet honours equivalence, the Principal Supervisor may be requested to provide a statement on how the applicant meets entry requirements. This may require the PS to contact the applicant to discuss. Where an application is unsuitable, the supervisor, HDRC or Dean Graduate Research returns the application to the HDR admissions officer to advise the applicant of the outcome.
5.	Approval of offer of probationary candidature	Dean, Graduate Research	Dean, Graduate Research approves Offer of Admission to Candidature.
6.	Offer of Probationary Candidature	HDR Team	An Offer of Admission to Candidature, outlining the terms and conditions of candidature is generated and sent to applicant.
7.	Acceptance of Probationary Candidature	Applicant	The applicant returns a signed acceptance of the letter of offer of probationary candidature within the designated time frame.

Offer of Admission to Candidature

The Letter of Offer of Admission to Candidature must as a minimum include:

- program and course of enrolment,
- principal and associate supervisors,
- period of candidature,
- information on studentfees,
- conditions of candidature, and
- any requirements or conditions specific to a scholarship or researchproject.

Where a candidate does not return the acceptance within the required timeframe as indicated in the Letter of Offer to Admission to Candidature, their offer of candidature will lapse.

Information on Offers of Scholarships can be found in the HDR Scholarships Guidelines.

Designated Cohorts

Applications may be made to the Graduate Research School Board to create special or reduced entry requirements for a cohort of students entering a Higher Degree by Research program. HDR candidates who enter federation University via a Designated Cohort will be required to complete all milestones and progress requirements within the described timelines as stipulated in the Candidature Management Policy. Once approved, applications for entry to a designated cohort will be accepted for a period of 12 months.

Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research | Dean, Graduate Research | Original: 06 November 2023 | Approved: 05 March 2025 | Next review: 06 November 2026 | Policy code: RS2099

CRICOS 00103D | RTO 4909 | TEQSA Provider ID: PRV12151 | Provider Category: Australian University

Page: 5 of 9

Establishing a Designated Cohort

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
1.	Make a case for special entry	Research Centre or academic staff member	The following information should be provided on the Designated Cohort Approval form: • the program for which special arrangements are sought, • estimated size of the cohort intake, • background, type of training, qualifications and experience applicantswill normally hold, • how the deficit in research training will be met, • the contact person (by position), • the rationale for the request, • the supervision arrangements that will be put in place, • details of any industry involvement. • the risksassociated with the special arrangements and proposed risk management procedures, and • proposed semester of enrolment. The Designated Cohort Approval form should be submitted to GRSB for consideration.
2.	Consider application for designated cohort	GRSB	GRSB will consider the application at the next available meeting. GRSB may forward the application to Research Committee with a recommendation to approve, request further information or reject the application.
3.	Consider application for designated cohort	Research Committee	Research Committee will consider GRSB's recommendation for approval of the application for a designated cohort. Research Committee may approve the application, request further information, or reject the application.

4.	Notify decision and place approval on special/eligibility register	Research Committee	The applicant will be informed of the outcome. Where the designated cohort has been approved, it will be added to the Register of Designated Cohorts.

Enrolment

Candidates will be enrolled in the PhD or Master by Research course and unit that aligns with their project discipline.

Candidates are required to self-enrol in the appropriate unit via the student management system each semester until they submit their thesis. Candidates on 'Leave from Study' are not required to enrol.

Commencement, Induction and Orientation

The Graduate Research School will administer the following commencement and induction activities for the new HDR candidate:

Prior to commencement:

- arrange provision of a Federation University systems account to access required university-supported services and programs,
- order university-supported laptop, sufficient for the course requirements, and
- arrange security access to the required building, laboratories, or on-campus facilities (where sufficient notice has been provided)

On the candidates' first day:

- the allocation of a university laptop,
- the allocation of a desk for on-campus students,
- a campus tour, and
- OHS induction:
  - Where to report health and safety incidents,
  - Identifying the Health and Safety representative,
  - Outlining OHS risks inherent to the student's workspace, and
  - Emergency processes and evacuation points.

Within the first four weeks of candidature:

- Contact the candidate to ensure that they have been able to access resources, university systems and resolve any administrative issues.

Within the first two months of candidature:

- Provide an 'induction to candidature' training session.
- On receipt of the Academic Plan template, contact the candidate to discuss transition to PhD or Masters by Research study.

University laptops remain the property of the University and must be returned to the Graduate Research School before candidature is complete.

Supervisory team responsibility

Supervisory teams are responsible for the following induction and orientation activities:

First day:

- meeting with the candidate, and
- introducing on-campus candidates to academic colleagues and other candidates.

Within the first week of candidature:

- completing the GRS Local Induction checklist, and
- undertaking the OHS induction processes, including lab-based induction.

Within the first month of candidature:

- completing the Candidate / SupervisorAgreement with the candidate.

Within the first eight weeks:

- completing the HDR Academic Plan template with the candidate

Copies of documentation relating to the GRS Local Induction, OHS Induction and Candidate / Supervisor Agreement, and Academic Plan must be submitted to the Graduate Research School.

Orientation

Commencing candidates will be enrolled in the Skills Development Program and provided with information regarding the compulsory sessions they must attend as part of the candidature requirements. The SDP will provide a compulsory Orientation to HDR session.

Supporting Documents

- [Research and Research Training Policy](#)
- [HDR Candidate Procedure](#)
- [HDR Candidature Guidelines](#)
- [HDR Supervision Procedure](#)
- [HDR Scholarship Guidelines](#)
- [RTP and HDR Scholarship Procedure](#)

Responsibility

- The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research (as the Approval Authority) is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this procedure.
- The Dean, Graduate Research (as the Document Owner) is responsible for maintaining the content of this procedure as delegated by the Approval Authority.

Promulgation

The [HDR Admission and Induction Guidelines](#) will be communicated throughout the University via:

1. an Announcement Notice under 'FedNews' website and through the University Policy - 'Recently Approved Documents' webpage to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy;
2. inclusion on the University Policy, Procedure and Forms website; and/or
3. distribution of e-mails to Head of School / Head of Department / University staff; and/or

Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research | Dean, Graduate Research | Original: 06 November 2023 | Approved: 05 March 2025 | Next review: 06 November 2026 | Policy code: RS2099

CRICOS 00103D | RTO 4909 | TEQSA Provider ID: PRV12151 | Provider Category: Australian University
Page: 8 of 9

4. documentation distribution, eg. posters, brochures.

Implementation

The HDR Admission and Induction Guidelines will be implemented throughout the University via:

1. Information Sessions; and/or
2. Training Sessions.