

# Overcoming Procrastination

When you begin your HDR journey, the time before thesis submission can seem infinite. However, as you progress, procrastination may start to take hold. Some reasons HDR students experience procrastination include:

Lack of Confidence	Unsure of how the system works	Not sure of the standard of research and writing required
Too busy	Trying to achieve perfection	Unsure where to start
Thinking “I’ll start tomorrow!”	Telling yourself you work better under pressure, so you will leave it for now	Unsure how to start

## Tips to overcome procrastination

Be honest with yourself! Admit your procrastination and why you’re procrastinating	Reward yourself at the end of your study session! Chocolate? TV? Gym?
Make others aware of your commitment and ask them to hold you to it	Set up a meeting with your supervisors to discuss expectations
Allocate clear time frames for study and stick to them	Change your surroundings. Try studying outside or in a different room
Choose a study time when you are most energetic and able to focus	Do the difficult tasks first—don’t leave them looming
Make a ‘to do’ list for daily and weekly tasks	Be kind to yourself if you have procrastinated—make a plan so it doesn’t happen next time

## Staying ahead of procrastination

Don't let confusion and uncertainty lead to procrastination! Reaching out to your supervisors is a great way to set clear goals from the start and ensure that all of you are aware of your HDR plan. Topics to discuss could include:

**Thesis-** the structure, length, referencing style, standard of work expected, quality literature and sources

**Meetings-** how often? How long? What will the structure of the meeting be? Whose responsibility is it to schedule a meeting? What to do if someone is unable to attend

**Advice & support-** how much input will your supervisors have? How will you receive advice and feedback? What content and resources can your supervisors provide you with? Where can you go for methodology training? What is the best way to keep notes? Submission deadlines

**Time frame-** how long should you allow to complete chapters or sections of your thesis? What is a realistic completion date? What are the dates for key milestones, e.g.: confirmation?

**Ethics-** are there ethical issues for your project? How do you go about getting ethics clearance?

**Intellectual and industrial property-** are there aspects of the research which make a formal agreement necessary or desirable? If so, how do you go about this?

## Things to Remember

Make sure you understand what you will be doing before you sit down to research or write. Having a written plan with goals is a great way to help you stay on track and actually see your To-Do list getting shorter!

Ask questions ahead of time, or as soon as you think of them—don't let uncertainty stop you from making progress. Remember that thesis writing is not quick and easy; it is messy and circular.

Be conscious of your procrastination and confront yourself about why you are procrastinating—then take steps to fix the problem. The end goal is a completed thesis and will be worth it in the end.

Academic Learning Support offer free individual consultations and group workshops for HDR students. For more writing, study, and academic support contact [learningsupport@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:learningsupport@newcastle.edu.au) or call 02 4921 5350.