Higher Degree by Research Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Procedure is to provide clear and concise directions for admission, enrolment, progression, and award of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) programs at the University of Newcastle (University).

(2) This Procedure must be read in conjunction with:

a. Higher Degree by Research Policy;
b. Responsible Conduct of Research Policy;
c. Code of Practice for Higher Degree by Research Candidature;
d. Disclosure of Interest Policy;
e. Doctoral Degree (Research) Awards and Program Schedule;
f. Masters Degree (Research) - Awards and Programs Schedule;
g. Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degrees and Dual Award Doctoral Degrees Policy;
h. Research Thesis with a Creative Component Procedure;
i. Research Authorship Procedure;
j. Awards and Graduation Policy; and
k. Confirmation of Candidature Guidelines.

Section 2 - Audience

(3) This Procedure should be read and understood by:

a. applicants seeking admission into a HDR program;
b. candidates enrolled in HDR programs; and
c. University staff responsible for the administration, management, and supervision of HDR programs, candidates, and applicants.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This Procedure applies to HDR awards and programs created, established, and offered by the University.

Section 4 - Definitions

(5) Please see the definitions outlined in the Higher Degree by Research Policy which apply to this Procedure.

Section 5 - Admission

(6) An application for admission to a HDR program must be submitted using the University's online application system.

Doctoral Degree (Research) and Masters Degree (Research)

(7) Applicants are required to submit:

a. a research proposal, which is a clear statement describing the proposed area of research. Applicants are required to consult with an academic who is registered as a Principal Supervisor in the area of research interest before submitting the research proposal; and
b. a Supervisor Nomination Form signed by a potential supervisor. Support from a potential supervisor is needed before an application can be considered, but does not guarantee that an applicant will be offered admission.

(8) Graduate Research will assess each application against the relevant admission requirements outlined in the Higher Degree by Research Policy and provide the application to the relevant School for consideration.

(9) If the enrolling School has the appropriate academic expertise, facilities, funding, and resources to support the applicant in their proposed research project, the Head of School or Deputy Head of School may approve admission, subject to endorsement by the Director, Graduate Research.

Doctoral Degree (Research) by Prior Publication

(10) Applicants are required to submit:

a. a thesis proposal, which is a clear statement describing:
    i. a list of publications intended for inclusion in the thesis, along with a statement of authorship;
    ii. how the research work, as manifested in the publications has been developed;
    iii. the original and substantial contribution the works make to the area of research; and
    iv. a thematic overview of how the individual publications will be converted to a single, integrated thesis.
b. an academic referee report that testifies the published works form a complete thesis (pending the completion of an exegesis) and meet the requirements of a PhD.

(11) Upon recommendation of the Head of School or Deputy Head of School, the School shall appoint a panel of assessors that includes the Assistant Dean Research or their nominee, to determine the academic standing and/or professional standing of the applicant and viability of the thesis proposal.

Offers of Admission

(12) Unconditional or conditional offers of admission to HDR programs shall be made in writing by the Director, Graduate Research. A verbal communication, informal email, or any other indication regarding eligibility for an offer of admission is not a formal offer and is not binding.

(13) Unconditional offers of admission will include details of the program, research area, commencement date, thesis submission date, supervision arrangements, residency or fee-liability type/status, location, attendance mode and attendance type, any coursework required, and any details of documents required to be provided to the University prior to enrolment.

(14) When the applicant does not meet certain eligibility and selection requirements (e.g. academic requirements, English language proficiency) the University may issue a conditional offer. The offer will either prescribe:

a. specified requirements that must be met prior to commencement, or
b. subject to approval by the Director, Graduate Research, requirements that must be met within a set time frame as an enrolled candidate.

Applying for Deferment

(15) All applicants are required to enrol by the commencement date stated in their Offer of Admission (usually within six months of the issue of the offer) unless a deferral has been approved.

(16) Domestic HDR applicants may apply for a deferral via myHub or by contacting Graduate Research (graduate-research@newcastle.edu.au).

(17) International HDR applicants may apply for a deferral by contacting Graduate Research (graduate-research@newcastle.edu.au).

(18) Deferral applications from domestic HDR applicants, full fee-paying international HDR applicants, and international HDR applicants on a sponsorship-funded scholarship scheme will be processed by Graduate Research.

(19) Graduate Research will notify the applicant, Principal Supervisor, and Deputy Head of School of the outcome of an application for deferment in writing.

Section 6 - Enrolment

(20) Domestic HDR candidates must self-enrol in their HDR program by following the instructions provided by Graduate Research by email.

(21) Enrolment may only occur within two (2) weeks before or after the commencement date outlined in the candidate's Offer of Admission.

Change in Study Load

(22) A candidate may apply for a change in enrolment load by completing the Change of Load Application Form before the semester census date.

(23) Applications to change a study load may be approved by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School and endorsed by the Director, Graduate Research, upon the recommendation of the Principal Supervisor.

(24) Scholarship recipients are required to enrol on a full-time basis unless approval is granted by the Director, Graduate Research to undertake part-time study as outlined in the Research Training Program Scholarship Policy and Higher Degree by Research Scholarship Policy.

Applying for Leave of Absence

(25) Eligibility criteria for leave of absence is outlined in the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

(26) To apply for a leave of absence, a HDR candidate should complete the Leave of Absence Application Form.

Domestic HDR candidates

(27) Applications for leave of absence that meet the eligibility criteria may be approved by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School and endorsed by the Director, Graduate Research, upon the recommendation of the Principal Supervisor.

International HDR candidates

(28) Applications for leave of absence that meet the eligibility criteria may be approved by the Director, Graduate Research, upon the recommendation of the:

a. the Principal Supervisor; and
b. Head of School or Deputy Head of School.

Off-Campus Enrolment

(29) An application to be enrolled off-campus can be made by the candidate by completing the Off-Campus Enrolment Application Form.

(30) Applications from candidates to be enrolled off-campus may be approved by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School and endorsed by the Director, Graduate Research, upon the recommendation of the Principal Supervisor.

On-Campus Enrolment

(31) A candidate currently enrolled as an off-campus candidate may apply to enrol as an on-campus candidate by completing the On-Campus Enrolment Application Form.

(32) Applications from candidates to enrol on-campus may be approved by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School and endorsed by the Director, Graduate Research, upon the recommendation of the Principal Supervisor.

Coursework

(33) Enrolment in coursework is not consistent with the framework of a Masters Degree (Research) or Doctoral Degree (Research), and will be considered in exceptional cases only.

(34) In accordance with the Coursework Auditing Guidelines, the Head of School or Deputy Head of School may approve a candidate's coursework audit request, subject to recommendation by the Principal Supervisor.

(35) Any application to drop / waive coursework by a HDR candidate is subject to recommendation by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School, and approval by the Director, Graduate Research.

(36) Candidates wishing to withdraw from a course after the census date or from a course that contains a placement without incurring an academic penalty must apply in writing to the Head of School or Deputy Head of School.

(37) Where a candidate is required to undertake coursework as part of their program, examinations in courses will be conducted in accordance with:

a. the Course Assessment and Grading Manual; and
b. any further provisions specified in the relevant Schedule; or
c. the Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD) Agreement or Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD) Agreement of a JADD or DADD program.

Section 7 - Onboarding

(38) Prior to enrolment, candidates will be invited to participate in an in-person session with Graduate Research. This mandatory session provides candidates with information on candidature, progression requirements, and resources and supports available.

(39) All candidates will be enrolled in the First Year Success Program, which should be completed within the first

month of candidature.

(40) All candidates must complete the following online Induction Modules within the first four weeks of candidature and at any subsequent intervals as directed:

a. HDR Induction Module;
b. Research Integrity;
c. Wellbeing, Health and Safety Fundamentals; and
d. Emergency Preparedness.

(41) Candidates will be required to complete the University's Academic Integrity, Consent Matters and Cultural Competency modules in Canvas as notified by the University.

(42) Candidates may also be required to undertake additional training as required by their School, Supervisor or a University policy.

Section 8 - Candidature Progression

Confirmation

(43) Graduate Research will provide candidate data to Schools every quarter, detailing the individual candidates who are required to undergo confirmation within the following three to four months.

(44) The School will advise Graduate Research of the nominated confirmation panel members and confer with Graduate Research in the coordination of the dates and venues for the confirmation. Graduate Research will schedule the confirmation and advise all involved of the set time period and venue.

(45) The relevant HDR Convenor for the School will Chair the Confirmation Committee and convene the committee members. If there is a conflict of interest or lack of availability, Graduate Research may appoint a Chair from the Confirmation Chair Register. The format for the confirmation presentation will be an open forum and the School will encourage other HDR candidates and academics to attend.

(46) The candidate will complete the cover sheet and submit their written proposal via the 'my confirmation' system in myHub. This must be completed with sufficient lead-time to allow the Confirmation Committee members to read the documents prior to the oral presentation.

(47) The candidate will deliver their oral presentation in an open forum to the Confirmation Committee. As a guide, it is expected that the oral presentation would run for approximately 15-20 minutes.

(48) In a closed setting, with only the committee members, candidate and supervisors present, the Confirmation Committee should ask questions of the candidate about their research proposal and give the candidate the opportunity to address the Confirmation Committee and provide a verbal defence. This should occur on the same day as the presentation.

(49) The Confirmation Committee will evaluate the presentation, verbal defence and written documents submitted and recommend an outcome.

(50) The Chair will verbally inform the candidate of the recommended outcome on the day of the confirmation and advise that if the candidate as concerns about the confirmation process, they may raise these with the Deputy Head of School (Research Training) in writing within 7 working days of the confirmation.

(51) The Confirmation Committee evaluations, recommended outcome and feedback will be recorded in NuStar on the

Confirmation Committee Evaluation Form, and all documentation will be forwarded to the Head of School or Deputy Head of School for their review.

(52) The Head of School or Deputy Head of School will ensure that any concerns arising from the confirmation and/or requests for clarification from the Confirmation Committee are addressed within 14 working days before making a recommendation on behalf of the School. It is also their responsibility to ensure that due process is followed, an appropriate level of feedback is provided to the candidate, and that a documented evaluation is available for Graduate Research to send to the candidate.

(53) Graduate Research will review the confirmation recommendations and processes and, if satisfied, will provide the candidate and their supervisors with written notification of the outcome by sending a copy of the confirmation documentation by email.

(54) Graduate Research will record the outcome on the student system and maintain the system copy of the original documents.

(55) Where an international HDR candidate receives an outcome that requires the candidate to make a second attempt at confirmation, a School Progress Support Plan may be developed if additional supports are needed in accordance with the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act.

(56) Candidates seeking to transfer from a Masters Degree (Research) to a Doctoral Degree (Research) at confirmation must be confirmed in the new program. Transfers of program are considered by the Director, Graduate Research on a case-by-case basis and are subject to Head of School or Deputy Head of School determination that appropriate supervision and resources are available to support the candidate.

(57) The confirmation outcome categories are listed in Table 1 - HDR Candidate Confirmation Outcomes:

Table 1- HDR Candidate Confirmation Outcomes

Outcome	Description
Confirmed	The candidate is confirmed.
2nd Attempt Required	The candidate is not confirmed and is required to undertake confirmation again within 3 months (FTE).
Not Confirmed	A recommendation is made to the Director, Graduate Research to advise the candidate they are required to show cause to the Research Training Sub-Committee as to why their candidature should be permitted to continue.

(58) The Confirmation of Candidature Guidelines provide further information to guide the confirmation process, as well as approved conditions specific to Schools. It should be used by candidates, supervisors, Confirmation Committee Chairs, and Confirmation Committee members as a key resource in understanding their roles and responsibilities.

Monitoring Progress

Progress Reports

(59) Mid-year progress reports must be completed for all international HDR candidates, and for domestic HDR candidates where one or more of the following apply:

a. the previous annual progress report highlighted areas of concern;
b. the Research Training Program (RTP) entitlement has expired;
c. the candidate has returned from a leave of absence taken in semester two;
d. this is the first report round since the candidate commenced their program (all candidates are required to

complete a progress report within six months of commencing their program);

e. the Director, Graduate Research determines that special circumstances require all candidates to complete a mid-year progress report.

(60) Annual progress reports must be completed for all candidates.

(61) The Principal Supervisor and/or the School may submit reports on the candidate's progress to the Head of School or Deputy Head of School and Director, Graduate Research at any time.

(62) The sections in the progress report are outlined in Table 2 - Progress Report Sections:

Table 2 - Progress Report Sections

Section	Description
Section A - Candidate's Report	The candidate will reflect on their progress. The Principal Supervisor does not have access to this section of the report.
Section B - Supervisor's Report	The Principal Supervisor will reflect on the candidate's progress. The candidate does not have access to this section of the report.
Section C - Joint Report	Submitted jointly by the Principal Supervisor and the candidate following agreement on targets for the next 12 months.

(63) Candidates and Principal Supervisors will be advised by email by Graduate Research when a Progress Report round is open.

(64) Progress reports - Section A are to be prepared by the candidate in MyHub. Detailed instructions are included in the Online Progress Reporting System Candidate User Guide.

(65) Progress reports - Section B and Section C are to be prepared by the Principal Supervisor in Nustar.

(66) Each progress report is to be reviewed by the:

a. Head of School, Deputy Head of School or HDR Convenor (if applicable); and
b. Director, Graduate Research or nominee.

(67) Graduate Research will provide written feedback to each candidate following the review of their progress report.

School Progress Support Plan

(68) A School Progress Support Plan may be implemented for any candidate who is identified to be at risk of not making satisfactory progress by their supervisors, Head of School or Deputy Head of School, or the Director, Graduate Research.

(69) The School Progress Support Plan will be developed by the candidate's supervisors in conjunction with the Head of School or Deputy Head of School.

(70) The Head of School or Deputy Head of School will notify the candidate in writing that:

a. their progress is considered to be at risk of not being satisfactory;
b. a School Progress Support Plan is to be implemented to assist them to achieve satisfactory progress.

(71) The School Progress Support Plan will include details of the:

a. milestones required to be met by the candidate to achieve satisfactory progress; and

b. appropriate support available to the candidate to assist them to achieve satisfactory progress.

(72) If after implementation of the School Progress Support Plan, progress remains to be unsatisfactory the University will initiate the termination of candidature process (Section 13).

Section 9 - Candidature Changes

Changes to a Research Topic

(73) A candidate may apply for a change in research topic by completing the Change of Research Topic Form.

(74) Applications from candidates to change their research topic may be approved by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School and endorsed by the Director, Graduate Research, upon the recommendation of the Principal Supervisor.

Supervision Changes

(75) A candidate may apply for a change in supervision by completing the Change of Supervisors Form.

(76) Changes to supervision must remain consistent with requirements of the Code of Practice for Higher Degree by Research Candidature.

(77) Applications from candidates to change supervision arrangements may be approved by the Director, Graduate Research, upon the recommendation of the:

a. proposed Principal Supervisor; and
b. Head of School or Deputy Head of School.

Internal Transfer

(78) To apply for a transfer of program at the same AQF level, or to transfer between a Masters Degree (Research) and a Doctoral Degree (Research), a HDR candidate must complete the Transfer of Program Application Form.

(79) Applications from candidates to transfer between programs at the same AQF level may be approved by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School and endorsed by the Director, Graduate Research, upon the recommendation of the Principal Supervisor.

(80) Applications from candidates that meet the eligibility criteria to transfer between a Masters Degree (Research) and a Doctoral Degree (Research) may be approved by the Director, Graduate Research, upon the recommendation of the:

a. Principal Supervisor; and
b. Head of School or Deputy Head of School.

(81) A transfer of program may also occur at confirmation, as outlined in Section 8 - Candidature Progression.

Transfer of candidature from another university

(82) To apply for a transfer from another university a HDR candidate must apply for admission as outlined in Section 5 of this procedure and provide evidence of any previous enrolments for incomplete research programs.

(83) Graduate Research may request further information from the candidate and their previous institution on their prior program, including but not limited to:

a. commencement date;
b. withdrawal date;
c. research project topic;
d. details of confirmation, if applicable;
e. details of any approved Leaves of Absence;
f. study load;
g. Equivalent Full Time Student Loading (EFTSL) utilised;
h. transfer of intellectual property, if applicable, and;
i. ethics approvals obtained, if applicable.

(84) Graduate Research will provide all documentation to the relevant School for their assessment.

(85) Any approved prior period of enrolment will be specified in the candidate's Offer of Admission.

Extensions of Submission

(86) Candidates are required to submit their thesis for examination within 3.5 years for PhD and 1.75 years for MPhil programs (FTE). If a candidate is unable to submit their thesis for examination by the submission date, they must submit an An Application for Extension of Submission Form at least four weeks before their thesis is due for submission.

(87) An extension of submission may be requested in conjunction with an approved School Progress Support Plan.

(88) Applications for extension of submission will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

(89) It is recommended that candidates discuss with their supervisors and/or Graduate Research about any circumstances that arise that may impact on their progress so that timely intervention and guidance can be developed and provided to support a successful and timely completion of their program.

(90) Applications from candidates to extend submission may be approved by the Director, Graduate Research, upon the recommendation of the:

a. Principal Supervisor; and
b. Head of School or Deputy Head of School.

(91) Candidature will be automatically extended for eligible in-time candidates if:

a. a candidate has been granted a Leave of Absence (LoA) or placed on a period of exclusion or academic suspension; or
b. for domestic HDR candidates, their study load has been approved to change from full-time to part-time.

(92) For international HDR candidates, an extension of candidature may only be approved under compassionate or compelling circumstances. Upon approval, the candidate will be issued with a new Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE).

Withdrawal from Program

(93) A candidate may withdraw from their program by emailing graduate-research@newcastle.edu.au from their student email account. Candidates are expected to discuss their intention to withdraw with their supervisor prior to notifying Graduate Research. The withdrawal will be effective from the date of receipt of such notification.

(94) Once withdrawn, candidates wishing to restart their HDR program will need to re-apply for admission.

Section 10 - Thesis Examination

Appointment of Examiners

(95) The Principal Supervisor will:

a. contact potential examiners and advise them of the approximate date of submission of the thesis, the length of the thesis, and the expectation that their report is required within two months of receipt of the thesis;
b. complete all sections of the Appointment of Examiners Form, providing all necessary information; and
c. forward the completed form to the Head of School or Deputy Head of School and email it to thesis@newcastle.edu.au no less than 8 weeks prior to the submission of thesis for examination.

(96) The Head of School or Deputy Head of School will:

a. consult with supervisors about the potential examiners to confirm there are no conflicts of interest, and that the requirements of examiners as outlined in the Higher Degree by Research Policy can be met;
b. determine if sufficient justification for examiner selection is provided, and if so, approve the Appointment of Examiners form; and
c. forward the completed form to Graduate Research (thesis@newcastle.edu.au).

(97) The Director, Graduate Research shall appoint the number of examiners as prescribed in the relevant Awards and Programs Schedule on the recommendation of the relevant Head of School or Deputy Head of School.

(98) The names of examiners must not be disclosed to the candidate prior to the submission of the written thesis, nor released after the examination process, unless the examiner(s) specifically approve the release of their identity, and subject to any relevant University policy and associated legislation.

(99) Communication with the examiners is restricted while the thesis is under examination, and must only be undertaken by the Director, Graduate Research or their nominee, unless required and permitted for a particular kind of creative component (please see Research Thesis with a Creative Component Procedure). Breaches of this communication provision will be referred to the Research Training Sub-Committee and may be interpreted as misconduct and be subject to disciplinary action.

Submission of Thesis for Examination

(100) A candidate will submit their thesis to Graduate Research via the online portal in the prescribed format with a completed Thesis Examination Application Form.

(101) In the case of a JADD or DADD program, candidates will submit their thesis in accordance with the conditions stipulated in the JADD or DADD Agreement.

(102) For theses in the creative arts, candidates shall refer to the Research Thesis with a Creative Component Procedure for details on thesis submission requirements.

(103) Candidates should discuss with their supervisors whether their thesis requires a period of embargo and, if so, submit the required Application for Embargo form to Graduate Research.

(104) The Principal Supervisor must approve the Thesis Examination Application Form:

a. declaring that the candidate has completed the program under the direction of the supervisor; and
b. confirming that the thesis is of sufficient merit to warrant examination.

(105) In the event that the Principal Supervisor does not approve the Thesis Examination Application Form within two weeks following submission, or the form is not approved, a candidate may make a request in writing to the Head of School or Deputy Head of School that the thesis nevertheless be accepted for examination. The Head of School or Deputy Head of School will seek the comments of the supervisor/s on the thesis and other information as required, and determine whether or not the thesis will be accepted for examination.

(106) If the Head of School or Deputy Head of School determines that the thesis will not be accepted for examination, they will notify the candidate and Principal Supervisor in writing, and the candidate may be required to satisfactorily participate in a School Progress Support Plan or be issued with a Notice to Show Cause.

(107) A candidate may make a request to the Director, Graduate Research to embargo a thesis for a specified period using the Application for Embargo Form. The Director, Graduate Research will consider this request, taking into account advice from the School, and may determine that the thesis will not be made available electronically or in print form without the written consent of the author for a specified period.

Examination Outcomes

(108) Each examiner will submit an independent, written report on the merits of the thesis which will contain an assessment of the thesis in relation to the stated thesis objectives and as a requirement for the award of a Higher Degree by Research. The report will include one of the following outcomes in Table 3, where the outcome for the type of award is permitted under the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

Table 3 - Thesis Examination Outcomes

Thesis Examination Outcome	Description
Award (including typographical amendments)	The thesis is examined and determined to meet the required standards in terms of the nature and quality of work undertaken, and the degree can be awarded without any further work by the candidate, other than the correction of a small number of typographical or similar minor errors in the final copy.
Corrections Required	The thesis is examined and determined to meet the required standards in terms of the nature and quality of work undertaken, and the degree can be awarded without further examination once the candidate has made a number of corrections and clarifications in the thesis, as specified in the examiners reports. The required corrections are more substantive than typographical and other minor errors and may include additional revisions to literature, method, analysis and discussion, revisions to creative works, additional experiments and/or data analysis, which improve but do not change the outcomes of the research. The corrections are to be done to the satisfaction of the Principal Supervisor and Head of School or Deputy Head of School, and must be completed within six months from the date the candidate is advised of the outcome.
Revise and resubmit for further examination by the original examiners	The thesis is examined and determined to not currently meet the standard required for the award of the degree, but with further work it is believed that the required standard may be achieved. The required amendments (to be specified in the report), are substantive and may include new experiments or data collection, additional analysis, revision of the scientific method or any essential work that may alter the conclusions drawn in the thesis. The candidate is required to re-enrol for up to 12 months to carry out the further work required. The thesis must then be resubmitted for re-examination.
Fail	The thesis is examined and classified as failed, without the right to resubmit, on the basis that a significant amount of additional research work and/or major, substantive revision will not raise the thesis to an acceptable standard.

(109) Where both examiners' recommendations are Award or Corrections Required, The Director, Graduate Research or their nominee will review the complete sets of examiners' reports prior to their distribution to the supervisors and Deputy Head of School.

(110) If the supervisor or Head of School has a concern over the examination outcome, they may request a delay to the release of the outcome to the candidate and subsequently provide a recommendation and statement for

consideration within five working days. If no request is submitted within five working days, the outcome letter and examiner reports will be released to the candidate advising of the examination outcome consistent with outcome from Table 4:

Table 4 - Thesis Examination Recommendations: Award or Corrections Required

Examiner 1 Recommendation	Examiner 2 Recommendation	Examination Outcome
Award	Award	Award
Award	Corrections Required	Corrections Required
Corrections Required	Award	Corrections Required
Corrections Required	Corrections Required	Corrections Required

(111) Where the supervisors or Deputy Head of School recommend an alternative outcome to that outlined in Table 4, or one or both of the examiners of a thesis recommend either “Revise & Resubmit for Further Examination by the original examiners” or “Fail”, the Research Training Sub-Committee (RTSC) is authorised to:

a. consider the reports of examiners; and
b. may inform itself by seeking the opinion of the supervisor, Head of School or Deputy Head of School or any other person that the RTSC deems suitable to provide a professional opinion.

(112) Before making any recommendation, the RTSC may take one or more of the following actions:

a. appoint an additional examiner;
b. appoint an arbiter;
c. invite the examiners to confer with each other and/or with the RTSC, with a view to achieving a consolidated recommendation; or
d. specify the candidate undertakes further examinations as necessary, or other work (either oral, written, or practical).

(113) Following receipt of the recommended outcomes from all examiners reports, the RTSC may recommend a Thesis Examination Outcome from Table 3, to the Director, Graduate Research.

(114) A candidate permitted to revise and resubmit the thesis must re-enrol within 3 weeks of notification of the outcome, subject to the availability of supervision and resources to complete the work required.

(115) If a candidate does not revise and resubmit the thesis within the 12 month time period, the candidate will be required to show cause to the RTSC as to why their candidature should not be terminated (Section 13).

Academic Defence of Thesis

(116) Where the RTSC recommends that the thesis be classified as Fail, the candidate will be advised that they may provide an academic defence of the thesis, in oral and/or written form, in response to the reports of the examiner(s).

(117) Upon receipt of an academic defence from the candidate the RTSC will consider the defense, review their determination and make a final recommendation to the Director, Graduate Research.

Recommendation of a Masters Degree (Research) following an Unsuccessful Doctoral Degree (Research) Thesis Submission

(118) Where it is recommended that the candidate's Doctoral Degree (Research) thesis is not of an acceptable standard and candidature is to be terminated, the RTSC may recommend that the award of a Masters Degree

(Research) be considered.

(119) The decision to award a Masters Degree (Research) will be made in consideration of:

a. the examiners' reports;
b. any arbiter's report;
c. consultation with the School and any other appropriately qualified person deemed suitable by the RTSC.

(120) In recommending that a Masters Degree (Research) be awarded, the RTSC may require that revisions are to be made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the Head of School or Deputy Head of School prior to the awarding of the Masters Degree (Research). Any revisions must be submitted in electronic form by the candidate within six months of official notification of examination outcome.

Section 11 - Completion of Program

(121) Once the final electronic copy of the thesis has been received, the Director, Graduate Research and the Vice-Chancellor will approve the award of the degree.

Section 12 - Posthumous Awards

(122) Where a HDR candidate passes away before their thesis is submitted the Head of School or Deputy Head of School responsible for the program will establish if, at the time of death, the candidate had substantially completed the requirements of the award.

(123) If there is evidence that all substantive chapters have been drafted and minimal additional work would need to be undertaken for the thesis to be considered ready to submit, the Head of School or Deputy Head of School will provide this evidence to the Research Training Sub-Committee (RTSC) and propose that the candidate be considered for a posthumous award.

(124) The RTSC may elect to invite an independent assessor to review the work to confirm that the thesis has been substantially completed.

(125) The supervisor/s or such other suitable person(s), as considered appropriate by the Director, Graduate Research, may be invited to compile the work into a format suitable for examination in accordance with this procedure.

(126) The supervisor/s may be invited to provide supplementary and/or explanatory material to assist the examiners in assessing the work. Any additional work undertaken must be clearly identified to the examiners, and in the thesis.

(127) Before proceeding to examination, the supervisor must gain permission from the next of kin of the candidate (as defined by the Deceased Students Reporting Procedure) and explain the examination process and possible outcomes.

(128) The examiners are to be informed that the candidate is deceased, advised of the arrangements undertaken to prepare the submission, and reminded that examiners' reports will be inserted in the library copy of the thesis. The examiners to participate in the examination process must be appointed by Graduate Research.

(129) Following examination of a deceased candidate's work, there are three possible outcomes:

a. Award;
b. Corrections Required; or
c. Fail.

(130) In the event that the examiners recommend the outcome of ‘Corrections Required’ the RTSC must determine whether inviting the supervisor/s or a suitable person to make amendments is reasonable considering the nature and extent of the changes required.

(131) A statement must be inserted into the thesis explaining any amendments, along with a copy of the examiners’ comments.

(132) Where a candidate has submitted their thesis but passes away before an outcome is received, and the subsequent outcome is either ‘Corrections Required’ or ‘Revise and Resubmit’ (as per Table 3 - Thesis Examination Outcomes):

a. before proceeding with any action, the supervisor must gain permission from the next of kin of the candidate and explain the examination process and possible outcomes;
b. the RTSC will make a determination as to whether it is reasonable to invite the supervisor/s or other suitable person to make the required amendments, taking into account the nature and extent of the changes required; and
c. a statement must be inserted into the thesis explaining any amendments, along with a copy of the examiner’s comments.

(133) Where a candidate has submitted their thesis and received a ‘Corrections Required’ or ‘Revise and Resubmit’ (as per Table 3 - Thesis Examination Outcomes), and passes away prior to completing the amendments or resubmitting:

a. before proceeding with any action, the supervisor must gain permission from the next of kin of the candidate and explain the examination process and possible outcomes;
b. the RTSC will make a determination as to whether it is reasonable to invite the supervisor/s or other suitable person to make the required amendments, taking into account the nature and extent of the changes required;
c. a statement must be inserted into the thesis explaining any amendments, along with a copy of the examiner’s comments.

(134) The President of Academic Senate must approve the waiver of program requirements to grant a posthumous award.

(135) If the degree is awarded posthumously the next of kin shall be invited to attend the Graduation Ceremony to accept the award. Graduate Research will advise Graduations, Examinations and Timetabling Unit of the circumstances of the awarding of the degree.

Section 13 - Termination of Candidature

(136) Where there are grounds to terminate candidature under the provisions of clause 90 of the Higher Degree by Research Policy, the Director, Graduate Research will issue the candidate with a Notice to Show Cause outlining:

a. the grounds for termination of candidature;
b. sources of independent advice and support available to the candidate; and
c. an opportunity to provide a written statement for consideration before a determination is made.

(137) Where there are grounds to terminate candidature under the provisions of clause 91 of the Higher Degree by Research Policy, the Director, Graduate Research will issue the candidate with a Notice to Show Cause outlining:

a. the grounds for termination of candidature;

b. sources of independent advice and support available to the candidate; and
c. an opportunity to provide a written statement to the Research Training Sub-Committee (RTSC) and address the RTSC in person or remotely; and
d. the opportunity to bring a support person to any show cause hearing.

(138) The outcome will be one of the following:

a. candidature is permitted to continue;
b. candidature is permitted to continue, with specific conditions attached;
c. candidature is to be terminated.

(139) The Director, Graduate Research will inform the candidate in writing of the determination, including reasons for the determination and any right to appeal the determination.

Section 14 - Appeals

Appeals against classification of thesis

(140) Appeals against a Fail classification of a thesis that meet the criteria outlined in the Higher Degree by Research Policy should be submitted to DVCRI@newcastle.edu.au.

(141) The appeals process will be commenced within 10 working days of the University receiving an appeal.

(142) Upon receipt of an appeal the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will:

a. review all relevant information in a timely manner to determine if a case exists for reconsideration of the candidate's thesis classification; and
b. consider the appeal in accordance with the provisions of the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

(143) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation will make a determination in relation to appeals.

(144) The candidate will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal within 10 working days of the determination, in accordance with the requirements of the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

Appeals Against Termination of Candidature

(145) Appeals against termination of candidature that meet the criteria outlined in the Higher Degree by Research Policy should be submitted to DVCRI@newcastle.edu.au.

(146) The appeals process will commence within 10 working days of the University receiving the appeal. Notwithstanding the provisions for immediate suspension outlined in the Student Conduct Rule, candidature will not be terminated by the University during the appeals process.

(147) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will consider the appeal in accordance with the appeal provisions of the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

(148) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) is authorised to:

a. dismiss the appeal; or
b. uphold the appeal, re-admit the candidate and, if required, impose conditions on their candidature.

(149) The candidate will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal within 10 working days of the

determination in accordance with the requirements of the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

Section 15 - Governance

(150) The Head of School will consult with the Director, Graduate Research on the appointment of a Deputy Head of School (Research Training) to oversee the HDR portfolio within their School.

(151) The School will provide information, as requested by Graduate Research, for the purposes of maintaining an accurate HDR Governance Register.

(152) The Deputy Head of School (Research Training) will attend regular meetings of the HDR Management Group, chaired by the Director, Graduate Research.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	2nd April 2026
Review Date	9th October 2028
Approval Authority	Dean of Graduate Research
Approval Date	2nd April 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Rohan Walker Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Enquiries Contact	Graduate Research

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Working day" - Any day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a public holiday in Newcastle, on which business may be conducted.

"Applicant" - Where referring to a student, an applicant is an individual seeking entry to a program or course offered by the University or its partner organisation/s. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Award" - When referring to a University qualification, this term means an academic qualification approved by Academic Senate that is conferred when a student has met the relevant program requirements. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Candidature" - The period of time between acceptance of offer and termination, withdrawal from, or completion of a higher degree by research program, including periods when a candidate is not enrolled.

"Census date" - The date in each term on which a student / candidate enrolled in a course is deemed to be financially liable for the course.

"Confirmation Committee" - A panel convened by the School of the Higher Degree by Research (HDR) program in which the candidate is enrolled, for the purpose of confirmation of candidature.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Candidate" - With regard to Higher Degree by Research it has the same meaning as student. For all other instances it is a person considered for appointment to a position.

"Disciplinary action" - When used in relation to staff of the University, this is as defined in the applicable and

current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, or the staff member's employment contract. When used in relation to students of the University, this refers to the range of penalties that may be applied under the Student Conduct Rule.

"Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD)" - Is an arrangement whereby a doctoral degree candidate is jointly supervised by the University and another institution, is enrolled at both institutions, and receives two testamurs, each acknowledging the dual award. Each DADD candidature is governed by an individual Candidate Agreement.

"Intellectual property" - Intellectual property (IP), as defined by the World Intellectual Property Organisation, refers to creations of the mind: inventions; literary and artistic works; and symbols, names and images used in commerce. Intellectual property is divided into two categories: Industrial property includes patents for inventions, trademarks, industrial designs and geographical indications; and Copyright covers literary works (such as novels, poems and plays), films, music, artistic works (e.g. drawings, paintings, photographs and sculptures) and architectural design. Rights related to copyright include those of performing artists in their performances, producers of phonograms in their recordings, and broadcasters in their radio and television programs.

"Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD)" - Is an arrangement whereby a doctoral degree candidate is jointly supervised by the University and another institution, is enrolled at both institutions and receives one award bearing the seals of both institutions. Each JADD candidature is governed by an individual Candidate Agreement and a JADD Agreement between the collaborating institutions.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Thesis" - A dissertation involving research by a candidate for the award of a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) qualification.