

Procedure: Higher degree by research - candidature progression

Purpose

To outline the progression indicators, including milestones, which are component aspects for successful candidature and timely completion.

Procedure

General

1. This document should be read in conjunction with the Research Awards Rule, and the Higher Degree Research Candidature policy and procedures.
2. Progression indicators track the progress of a candidate in the program, and include:
 - a. Milestones;
 - b. Attendance;
 - c. Compliance with reasonable instructions from their supervisory panel;
 - d. Maintaining regular contact with their supervisory panel;
 - e. Ethics approvals;
 - f. Work, Health and Safety requirements;
 - g. Appropriate publications for 'Thesis by Compilation' submissions
3. Candidates are required to satisfactorily complete milestones by the due dates to progress in their Higher Degree by Research (HDR) program.
4. Milestones are formally documented by the University on a candidate's record.
5. The timeframes specified in this procedure, except for Confirmation of Candidature, may be varied by the Delegated Authority according to the circumstances.
6. HDR candidates continue to submit an annual report and annual plan at a minimum every 12 months until thesis submission, or termination of program.

7. Timelines for completion of milestones for part-time candidates is expected to correspond proportionally to those of full-time candidates.
8. HDR candidates may apply for an extension of their program prior to their maximum submission date (192 units FTE PhD; 96 units FTE MPhil).
9. Information about progression indicators is available at:
<https://www.anu.edu.au/students/program-administration/assessments-exams/research-student-milestones>.
10. Progression indicators are mandatory unless otherwise specified.

Non-completion of milestones

11. Non-completion or unsatisfactory progress may have an impact on the Conditions of Award for any scholarships the candidate may hold.
12. The Delegated Authority monitors milestones and determines eligibility for ongoing candidature where milestones remain outstanding for 3 months or more.
13. Unsatisfactory completion or non-completion of milestones are grounds for the Delegated Authority to enforce a supplementary milestone, explore changes to project and/or supervisory panel members, suggest a transfer from a Doctor of Philosophy to a Master of Philosophy or recommend to the Associate Dean termination from the program.
14. A Delegated Authority may determine a thesis not be accepted for examination if a progress indicator has not been completed.
15. Applications for program extension may not be considered if milestones are outstanding or unsatisfactorily completed, unless the Delegated Authority approves otherwise due to extenuating circumstances.
16. If a candidate fails the Research Integrity Training twice, the eForm will pass to the Chair of Panel along with a list of questions the student failed. The Chair is to meet with the candidate to discuss the principles of the code (using the eForm as a guide) and complete the milestone eForm.

Annual Plan (AP) and Annual Report (AR)

17. The Annual Plan (AP) Research plan for at least the coming year. The Annual Plan (AP) outlines what the candidate intends to undertake, with sufficient detail to allow the supervisory panel and Delegated Authority to assess the appropriateness and feasibility of the plan.
18. The first AP is due three months after commencement, and in subsequent years at the same time as the Annual Report.

19. The Annual Report (AR) details research activities during the past year. The Annual Report (AR) also provides an opportunity for a candidate to flag any personal, academic or technical problems which may impact on their research and its timely completion.
20. The Chair of the supervisory panel comments, and makes a recommendation on progress and a candidate is given the opportunity to meet and discuss the comments. The Delegated Authority approves and determines the outcome of the milestone. Annual progress is assessed against the previous Annual Plan.

Completion of Research Integrity Training (RIT)

21. All ANU HDR candidates are required to complete the online Research Integrity Training (RIT) course. This course consists of 10 short modules designed to introduce appropriate research conduct.
22. Candidates are required to undertake and pass a RIT test as evidence of their understanding of the material. HDR candidates must complete the RIT milestone before they can submit any subsequent milestone.
23. The Research Integrity Training completion is due no later than 3 months after commencement, for both PhDs and MPhils.

Ethics approval

24. If required, Ethics approval requirements should be met between 6 and 12 months for PhDs and between 3 and 9 months for MPhils. Subsequent amendments to Ethics requirements may be necessary depending on the nature and development of the research.

Confirmation of Candidature (CoC) (formerly Thesis Proposal Review (TPR))

25. This milestone occurs within 9-12 months from the beginning of PhD candidature and 6-9 months for MPhils and ensures that research candidates have developed a suitable research project and will receive the appropriate support to complete it.
26. ANU Confirmation of Candidature comprises:
 - a. a detailed written component (thesis proposal);
 - b. oral presentation; and
 - c. a meeting with the candidate's Confirmation Review Panel (CRP).
27. The ANU Confirmation of Candidature standard requirements document sets out the conditions for achieving the Confirmation milestone.

28. The requirements around timing, written and oral components of Confirmation of Candidature may be varied at the Program level with the written approval of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Research).
29. Variations must be based on the ANU Confirmation of Candidature standard requirements, using the variation template available online.
30. Approved variations will be available online.
31. The CRP consists of the supervisory panel plus the Confirmation Review Panel Chair, who is external to the supervisory panel and is appointed by the DA or their delegate. Additional members may be appointed to the CRP if deemed necessary by the DA.
32. The thesis proposal indicates the subject of the proposed research, should be provided to the CRP before the oral presentation and must include:
 - a. a literature review;
 - b. the proposed methodology;
 - c. how the research will make an original contribution to the field of study;
 - d. a timeline and project plan that demonstrates the research can be completed within the Program length;
 - e. accessibility requirements if desired by the candidate;
 - f. an assessment of the skills the candidate needs to develop to complete the research.
33. The oral presentation is based on the written thesis proposal review and should be 40-60 minutes in length with time for discussion and questions, as determined by the ANU Confirmation of Candidature requirements, or an approved variation to these.
34. After the presentation the CRP meets to discuss the outcome of the Confirmation. The Chair of the CRP should include comments made during the meeting, and make a recommendation on progress in the eForm. The Delegated Authority approves and determines the outcome of milestone.
35. The CRP will meet with the candidate to communicate the outcome. The outcomes for Confirmation of Candidature may be either confirmed or not confirmed.
36. If not confirmed, the CRP communicate the amendments required at the post Confirmation meeting with the candidate.

Coursework requirements

37. If required, coursework should be completed within 12 months for PhDs and within 6 months for MPhils, or as specified by the Program.

Mid-Term Review

38. If required by the DA, candidates will deliver a Mid-Term Review (MTR). This will take place at around 18 months for PhDs and 15-18 months for MPhils.

Oral Presentation

39. The Oral Presentation occurs up to 12 months before the intended thesis submission date for PhD and within 6 months of the expected submission date for MPhils.

40. The presentation is advertised within the University.

41. The supervisory panel participate and make an evaluation. This is documented in a written report. A copy of the written report is provided to the candidate. The report of the panel is not provided to the thesis examiners.

42. The preparation of candidates for the oral presentation will occur throughout their candidature with similar, less formal presentations.

43. The presentation includes the major objectives, content, results and conclusions of the candidates work. The candidate's supervisory panel assess the presentation against the criteria of:

- a. independent command of the material;
- b. ability to communicate clearly and concisely the analysis of the material and findings;
- c. ability to respond appropriately to constructive commend and criticism.

Supplementary Review

44. If required by the DA, a candidate will complete a supplementary review. A supplementary review may be necessary if a candidate has not met previous milestones.

Notification of Intent to submit (NOI)

45. The Notification of Intent to submit the thesis is done online via a form and must occur at least 2 months before submission of the thesis for a PhD, and at least 2 months before the submission of the thesis for an MPhil.

46. Submission of the thesis including Oral examination is covered in the [Procedure: Higher Degree by Research: submission and examination of theses.](#)

Document information

Title	Higher degree by research - candidature progression
Document Type	Procedure
Document Number	ANUP_012810
Version	
Purpose	To outline the progression indicators, including milestone, that are component aspects for successful candidature and timely completion.
Audience	Students-Graduate-Research, Staff-Academic-Research, Students-Graduate
Category	Academic
Topic	Students
Subtopic	Higher Research Degrees
Effective Date	15 May 2024
Review Date	1 May 2029
Responsible Officer	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Research) (dvc.is@anu.edu.au)
Approved By	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (dvc.research@anu.edu.au)
Contact Area	Graduate Research Office (eo.pvcgr@anu.edu.au)
Authority	Racial Discrimination Act 1975 Research Awards Rule 2021
Printed On	15 Jul 2024

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