

Higher Degree Research and Master of Research Termination of Candidature Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Procedure outlines the steps by which Higher Degree Research (HDR) or Master of Research (MRes) candidature can be terminated, due to unsatisfactory performance.

(2) The general principles of the termination procedure appear in the Macquarie University [Higher Degree Research Rules](#) clauses 41 to 46. In accordance with the Rules, the Executive Dean of the Faculty may form the opinion that the Candidate's progress is unsatisfactory and invite the Candidate to a Formal Review of progress. This Formal Review of progress procedure for HDR and MRes candidature is managed by the Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research or nominee. The Executive Dean of the Faculty will then consider the outcome of this Formal Review and may report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) that they recommend termination of Candidature or permit the Candidate to remain enrolled and may impose conditions on continuing enrolment.

Scope

(3) This Procedure applies to all staff and HDR and MRes students (referred to as Candidates) at all campuses and locations of the University.

Section 2 - Policy

(4) Nil.

Section 3 - Procedures

Responsibilities and Required Actions

(5) There is a HDR & MRes Termination of Candidature Procedure Flowchart available for this Procedure.

(6) The associated Procedure toolkits for Candidates, Supervisors and Administrators are available on the Higher Degree Research Office Termination & Appeals webpage.

(7) This Procedure requires actions by the following:

- a. HDR or MRes Candidate;
- b. HDR or MRes Supervisor;
- c. Department HDR Director;
- d. Department MRes Director;
- e. Head of Department;
- f. Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research;
- g. Faculty MRes Director;

- h. Executive Dean of Faculty;
- i. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research);
- j. Faculty HDR Managers; and
- k. Higher Degree Research Office.

Identification of Problem Candidature

HDR / MRes Supervisor

(8) Work with Departmental HDR or MRes Director / Advisor to:

- a. identify early and provide support to HDR and MRes Candidates not making satisfactory academic progress; and
- b. apply clear, fair, timely and transparent internal processes for dealing with Candidates not making satisfactory academic progress.

(9) Indicators of unsatisfactory progress may include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- a. the Candidate is considered unlikely to complete their degree course / program* satisfactorily (including mandatory coursework requirements) within the maximum time allowed;
- b. the Candidate's performance at confirmation of candidature was unsatisfactory; and
- c. the Candidate did not meet candidature milestones as documented and communicated.

(10) Refer cases of unsatisfactory progress to Departmental HDR Director or MRes Director for possible review.

(11) *Note - In accordance with the [Curriculum Architecture Policy](#), from 1 January 2020 'programs' are known as 'courses'.

HDR / MRes Candidate

(12) Work with Supervisor to identify and deal with issues that may cause unsatisfactory progress.

Departmental Review

HDR / MRes Supervisor

(13) Work with Departmental HDR or MRes Director to undertake a review of candidature where there are serious concerns about a Candidate's progress.

Departmental HDR / MRes Director / Advisor

(14) Determine whether a Departmental review will take place or whether the case should be immediately escalated to a Faculty-level review.

(15) In the case of a Departmental review:

- a. work with Supervisors to organise a review of Candidature;
- b. clearly and fully communicate to the Candidate in writing what the concerns are, and give the Candidate the opportunity to address these concerns in either written form or oral presentation;
- c. determine:
 - i. whether candidature is viable;
 - ii. whether an appropriate intervention strategy is to develop a Candidate Action Plan with clear milestones or goals and a clear timeline to assist the candidate in getting candidature back on track;

- iii. whether a subsequent review is necessary, and what form that review should take; and
- iv. whether the candidature should be referred to the Faculty Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research or Faculty MRes Director for Faculty review.

Head of Department

(16) Review any recommendation to the Faculty for HDR or MRes candidature review.

Faculty Review

Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research or Faculty MRes Director

(17) Consider the outcome of any Departmental review and determine if a Faculty review is a beneficial intervention strategy for the Candidate and Supervisor or if the Supervisor is recommended to initiate the Formal Review procedure.

(18) In the case of a Faculty review:

- a. communicate to Candidate in writing why candidature is to be reviewed, and provide the Candidate with time to respond in writing;
- b. appoint and chair a panel that undertakes a review of candidature. The panel should not include anyone involved in a prior Departmental-level review;
- c. consult with the Supervisors and Departmental HDR staff, to either:
 - i. draw up a remedial plan with goals, milestones and a timeline to get candidature back on track using the Candidate Action Plan; or
 - ii. recommend Formal Review of candidature.

Formal Review

HDR / MRes Supervisor

(19) Utilise the Supervisor Decision Tree to ensure Formal Review is to be requested and that other appropriate avenues for candidature management have been exhausted.

(20) If Formal Review is to be requested, upload documentation supporting the request to the system available from the Termination & Appeals webpage.

Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research or Faculty MRes Director with administrative support from the Faculty HDR Managers

(21) Upon receiving and reviewing the request for Formal Review from the Supervisor, Faculty HDR Manager to write to the Supervisor asking them to provide any additional documentation to ensure all documentation supporting the request for Formal Review is on the system.

(22) Faculty HDR Manager to notify the Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research that the request for Formal Review is ready for review.

(23) Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research to declare to the Executive Dean if they have a Conflict of Interest i.e. if they have been involved in the Department or Faculty reviews or for any other reason, and a nominee to be appointed by the Executive Dean.

(24) Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research or nominee to review file using the Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research Decision Tree and escalate the case to other stakeholders if required.

(25) If the Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research or nominee makes the decision that the Formal Review is to proceed, Faculty HDR Manager to write to the Candidate asking them to provide a submission for the Formal Review process providing details on why their candidature remains viable.

(26) The letter to the Candidate must include:

- a. the reasons why it has been decided to ask the Candidate to undergo the Formal Review process;
- b. the date by which the Candidate must respond to the Formal Review Submission Request letter [The Candidate will have twenty (20) working days to respond in the case of a Doctoral or MPhil candidate, or ten (10) working days to respond in the case of an MRes candidate];
- c. the statement: "Failure to respond to this Formal Review Submission Request letter by the indicated due date may result in your candidature being terminated";
- d. the name and address of the person to whom the Formal Review Submission Request letter should be sent;
- e. information about support and advocacy services available through Student Wellbeing; and
- f. information about attending the Formal Review Panel meeting.

Candidate

(27) Provide, by the date specified:

- a. a detailed written response to the issues raised by the Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research / Faculty MRes Director's letter;
- b. a case why candidature is viable and completion within maximum time is likely;
- c. a timeline for completion; and
- d. notification on whether or not they will attend the Faculty Formal Review Panel meeting.

Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research or Nominee

(28) Appoint a Formal Review Panel to review the Formal Review file including the Candidate's response to the Formal Review Submission Request and to meet to interview relevant parties and decide on the outcome.

(29) The panel will not include anyone involved in the Departmental or Faculty reviews.

Normally, the panel would include:

- a. 1. The Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research of the Faculty (Chair) or nominee;
- b. 2. The Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research from another Faculty;
- c. 3. A Head of Department outside the Department of enrolment of the candidate;
- d. 4. Up to two (2) members of Academic staff with experience in HDR supervision; and
- e. 5. Up to two (2) members co-opted by the Executive Dean, on an as needs basis.

(30) A panel will be formed whenever summoned by the Executive Dean of the Faculty.

Faculty Formal Review Panel supported by the Faculty HDR Manager

(31) Determine, based on the Formal Review recommendation and the Candidate's response, whether to recommend termination of candidature.

(32) The Candidate and the Supervisor will be invited to attend the Panel meeting if they choose.

(33) If the Candidate does not provide a written response by the due date, candidature may be terminated. The panel

may interview or seek written reports from other parties involved in the termination process at its own discretion.

Outcome

Faculty Formal Review Panel supported by the Faculty HDR Manager

(34) Send a written report via the system to the Executive Dean, recommending that candidature be continued or terminated and provide reasons.

Executive Dean

(35) Consider the outcome of the Formal Review. Recommend continuation of candidature or termination of candidature.

(36) In the case of continuation of candidature, inform Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research or Faculty MRes Director on the system that candidature is to be continued.

(37) In the case of termination of candidature, inform the Higher Degree Research Office on the system of the recommendation to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) that candidature is to be terminated.

Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research or Faculty MRes Director

(38) In the case of continuation of candidature, liaise with the Department to set a series of milestones and goals over the subsequent three (3) and six (6) month periods (for HDR candidates) or monthly (for MRes candidates) or as appropriate utilising the Candidature Management Plan and Candidate Action Plan.

Supervisor

(39) In the case of continuation of candidature, liaise with the Candidate to achieve goals as specified by the Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research or Faculty MRes Director.

(40) Provide a written report to the Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research or Faculty MRes Director on whether these milestones have been met, or whether a further review is necessary.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

(41) Consider the recommendation from the Faculty Executive Dean.

(42) In the case of decision of termination of candidature, instruct the Higher Degree Research Office to process the termination and inform the Candidate that candidature has been terminated, and the reasons why.

Higher Degree Research Office

(43) In the case of termination of candidature:

- a. inform the Candidate that candidature has been terminated, and the reasons why;
- b. process the termination of candidature;
- c. inform the Candidate of the Appeals processes available to appeal against termination through the [Academic Appeals Policy](#) / [Academic Appeals Procedure](#); and
- d. inform the Higher Degree Research Committee that termination has taken place and the effective date.

Withdrawal

HDR or MRes Candidate

(44) Candidate may withdraw from candidature at any time during the Formal Review process.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(45) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(46) Commonly defined terms are located in the University Glossary. Additional resources are available on the Termination & Appeals webpage.

Status and Details

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