

Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 2 Enrolments

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure outlines Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) enrolment, re-enrolment, changes to enrolment, auditing of additional units of study and the process for discontinuation of candidature.

Section 2 - Accountability

| Accountable/Responsible Officer | Role |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Accountable Officer | Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research |
| Responsible Officer | Dean, Graduate Research |

Section 3 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to domestic and international candidates and University staff administering this policy.

Section 4 - Definitions

(3) Maximum duration - The normal period of time, deemed by the Commonwealth, for the degree level to be completed (i.e. four years for doctoral degrees and two years for masters degrees). The same duration of candidature is applied for all candidates.

(4) Intermission - Is a period within the normal period deemed by the Commonwealth for the degree level to be completed which does not count towards enrolment. Periods of intermission can normally be granted for up to 12 months irrespective of mode of study. Intermission is only available within the normal period of time, deemed by the Commonwealth, for the degree level to be completed.

(5) Additional Intermission - In exceptional cases, intermission beyond 12 months may be granted.

Section 5 - Policy/Regulation

(6) [Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#)

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

| Roles | Responsibilities |
|---|--|
| Office for Researcher Training, Quality & Integrity | <p>Organise enrolment schedule for new candidates.</p> <p>Check candidate's original documentation and send enrolment form to Enrolments & Student Financials for processing.</p> <p>Advise re-enrolling candidates of the census dates each year.</p> <p>Approve and process applications for intermission and forward to Enrolments & Student Financials for processing on the university database.</p> <p>Approve and process applications for course discontinuation and forward to Enrolments & Student Financials for processing on the university database. If an international candidate, include VUI in correspondence.</p> |
| Research Services | <p>Provide advice regarding change in mode of study for stipend scholarship holders and where applicable, approve a change of study mode, process the application and cease stipend payments via payroll.</p> <p>Approve applications for intermission and cease stipend payments via payroll for the nominated period.</p> <p>Approve applications for annual leave.</p> |
| Flagship Research Institute/Centres | <p>Approve applications for intermission for candidates who have yet to have Confirmation of Candidature approved by the Flagship Research Institute/Centres.</p> <p>Approve applications for additional intermission.</p> <p>Approve the transfer of the candidate from one Institute to another Institute.</p> |

Part B - HDR Enrolment: General

(7) The processes of enrolment, intermission and discontinuation for HDR candidates are outlined in these Procedures. In accordance with clauses 11-13 of the [Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#), and Part B (clause 10) of the [Enrolments Policy](#) a graduate research candidate (candidate) will be required to enrol and re-enrol each year until thesis submission.

(8) The process and timeline for enrolment will vary according to the enrolment category. Candidates may be enrolled in one of the following categories:

- a. Research Training Program (RTP fee offset);
- b. Full-fee paying (local or international); or
- c. Fee-Scholarship (full or partial, local or international).

(9) Full-time enrolment equates to a commitment of 38-40 hours per week, with 15 to 20 hours for part-time candidates. The University would normally expect full-time HDR candidates to have no other study commitments, however, it is not expected that they be studying more than part-time in a second (non-research) course. Outside work and/or study commitments need to include the total number of hours linked to the activity, such as preparation time in the case of tuition/teaching, and should not exceed 15 hours per week in total.

Part C - Initial Enrolment

All candidates

- (10) Initial enrolment is organised by the Office for Researcher Training, Quality & Integrity (ORTQI).
- (11) Domestic applicants must present their letter of offer, evidence of [Australian citizenship](#) and certified hard copies of required academic documents to the ORTQI enrolment session.
- (12) International applicants must bring their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) letter, their passport, the letter of offer and, if a sponsored candidate, also proof of their financial guarantee to VU International (VUI) and the ORTQI enrolment session.
- (13) Candidates are provided with a University @ live email account when they enrol. As the University sends its correspondence to students via their University @ live email account, candidates are expected to access their account regularly and use their account for communication related to their enrolment.
- (14) Candidates will be invited and expected to attend an Orientation session held by ORTQI on census date.
- (15) Candidates cannot be simultaneously enrolled in two research degrees either at Victoria University (VU) or another Australian Institution.

Part D - Offshore Initial Enrolment

- (16) VU will normally only consider applications for offshore enrolment, or a change of status from onshore to offshore, in exceptional circumstances. Those circumstances are:
- a. where the candidate is part of a larger university-endorsed arrangement for a research degree course to be delivered offshore and where there is clear evidence of a suitable academic environment through online and blended course delivery and/or in conjunction with a host institution;
 - b. compassionate and compelling circumstances that prevent or make it difficult for the candidate to study or continue to study in Melbourne.
- (17) The following conditions must be met for candidates who have been granted permission to enrol offshore:
- a. the candidate must declare on the [Apply for Research form](#) the principal location at which research studies will be undertaken;
 - b. candidature is subject to the satisfaction of course progression requirements including:
 - i. completion of required coursework where applicable;
 - ii. candidature confirmation; and
 - iii. ongoing progress review via the candidature milestones;
 - c. the Principal Supervisor must be a member of the University;
 - d. a local Associate Supervisor should be appointed;
 - e. a supervision schedule (for example, monthly Skype meetings, weekly email exchange, annual face to face meetings) must be approved by the relevant Deputy Director, Flagship Research Institute/Centres (or nominee) at the time of enrolment, or at the time the candidate requests to become an offshore candidate. This should be detailed in the Supervisor Agreement.

(18) Candidates will be notified in advance of applicable fees.

(19) University refund policies apply to offshore candidates.

(20) The offshore initial enrolment process follows the process outlined in Part C, depending on residency status.

(21) As a student visa may be required for off-shore international applicants who will be on-shore for periods of more than three months during candidature, Enrolments and Student Financials will need to be involved in the enrolment process.

Re-enrolment

(22) Re-enrolment must be completed by the candidate on an annual basis and be completed no later than the census date that applies to the candidate.

(23) ORTQI will advise candidates of their census dates each year.

(24) When candidates are expecting to submit their thesis in the second semester of the year, candidates are expected to enrol in the full calendar year.

(25) Where candidates fail to re-enrol by their census date:

- a. candidature will lapse and candidates will be required to apply for reinstatement into the degree (see [Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 3 Pre-Candidature and Candidature](#));
- b. any scholarship stipend that a candidate has been entitled to will be suspended effective from the relevant census date.

(26) Re-enrolment after the census date may incur a late enrolment fee.

(27) Supervision and resources can only be provided whilst a candidate is enrolled.

(28) Once a candidate has submitted their thesis for examination they are not required to re-enrol, however they will remain a student of the University until their thesis has been classified. The exception is when a candidate must re-enrol for a major re-write of their thesis (see [Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 9 Submission, Examination and Classification](#)).

Part E - Changes to Enrolment

Change from onshore to offshore

(29) Candidates seeking to transfer their enrolment status from onshore to offshore must seek approval from the ORTQI and attach supporting documentation from their Principal Supervisor. Such candidates must adhere to all conditions for offshore enrolment as outlined in Part C of these Procedures. Failure to do so may result in the University discontinuing the enrolment.

Change in Mode of Study

(30) On shore candidates may apply to change their mode of study from full-time to part-time enrolment or vice versa. Approval will depend on several factors, including:

- a. whether the candidate is in receipt of a stipend scholarship;
- b. availability of places; and
- c. supervisor load.

(31) Any candidate who is considering a change in their mode of study have the approval of their Principal Supervisor, as well as the approval of the Flagship Research Institute/Centres. If the candidate is a stipend scholarship holder, they must inform the Manager, Research Funding of their change, VU Research as normally such a change would

result in the cessation of the stipend.

(32) International candidates are not permitted to enrol part-time except under exceptional circumstances. All international candidates must consult with Enrolments and Student Financials as well as ORTQI if they need to make any change to their enrolment.

Change of Enrolment Category

(33) All candidates initially enrol in one of the three categories outlined in clauses 8 (a)-(c). However, as candidature progresses, any candidate may request a change to their enrolment category (for example, a local fee-paying candidate may request to be considered for an RTP fee offset place).

(34) Applications for a change of enrolment category will be accepted, but the University reserves the right decline such an application.

(35) Where an application to change enrolment category has been declined a candidate may seek a review of the decision by the relevant authority as outlined in the Reviews and Appeals of Decisions section in the [Enrolments Policy](#).

Change between Flagship Research Institute/Centres

(36) Candidates may change supervisors under conditions outlined in the [Supervision Policy](#) and [Supervision - Supervisor Registration and Development Procedure](#), provided such change is assessed for compliance with specific requirements under any Australian law, for example [Sanctions Compliance](#) or [Defence Export Controls Compliance](#).

(37) Where this occurs, and the new Principal Supervisor is employed in the other Flagship Research Institute/Centres, the candidate may continue to be enrolled in the initial Flagship Research Institute/Centres provided that it can continue to support the candidate and their project.

Changes to Personal Details

(38) It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that any changes to their personal details are updated through submission of a [Personal Details Amendment form](#) or through the [MyVU](#). Stipend scholarship holders must also inform the Manager, Research Funding, VU Research of any changes to their personal details.

Part F - Enrolling/Auditing in a Single Unit of Study

(39) A candidate may enrol in a single unit of study that is not formally part of their higher degree by research. This unit will appear on their transcript as a non-award unit of study. In order to enrol in a single unit, the Non Award Unit of Study Application HE form and a separate Enrolment form must be completed. Candidates will incur a separate fee for the unit.

(40) A candidate may audit a single unit of study to gain further knowledge to assist with their research (for example, research methodology). The candidate must consult with their supervisor before seeking to audit a unit.

(41) Arrangements for a candidate to audit a unit of study are to be negotiated between the candidate's supervisor and the relevant unit coordinator.

(42) A candidate may be required to audit one or more units of study as a condition of enrolment. This will normally be indicated in their offer letter or requested by their supervisor/s.

Part G - Intermission and Annual Leave

(43) Intermission from a higher research degree is only available within the limits of the maximum duration of the relevant degree. i.e. four years (EFT) and two years (EFT) for doctoral and masters by research degrees respectively.

(44) Candidates enrolled in the coursework phase of their research degree can only apply for intermission by semester and subject to approval of both the Senior Lecturer, Graduate Research Academic Programs and the Deputy Director of the candidate's Flagship Institute.

(45) Domestic candidates may apply for intermission for up to 12 months for any reason, including illness, family difficulties or financial hardship. Candidates must complete and submit an [Application for Intermission Form](#) to ORTQI prior to the commencement of their intermission.

(46) International candidates have visa restrictions which limit their ability to intermit whilst still residing in Australia. Intermission is normally only approved in compelling and compassionate circumstances (but does not include financial hardship). Any international candidate who requires intermission must seek approval from Enrolments and Student Financials, in line with the ESOS legislative framework, before an [Application for Intermission Form](#) can be processed.

(47) Stipend scholarship recipients must advise the Manager, Research Funding, VU Research of their intermission application at least two weeks prior to its commencement.

(48) Applications for intermission prior to Confirmation of candidature for any period of more than four weeks will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and must be approved by the relevant Deputy Director, Flagship Research Institute/Centres (or nominee). Pre-candidature applicants requiring extended intermission should consider discontinuing their studies and reapplying when they can return to study.

(49) Candidates who require intermission beyond 12 months must consider one of two options:

- a. [Additional Intermission](#) (see Clause 51);
- b. [Discontinuing](#) with a view to applying for [Reinstatement of candidature](#) (see [Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 3 Pre-Candidature and Candidature](#)) if and when their circumstances change.

(50) [Application for Intermission Form](#) must be approved by the relevant Deputy Director, Flagship Research Institute/Centres (or nominee). Additional Intermission is only granted in exceptional circumstances, such as ongoing medical condition/s, carer responsibilities, bereavement, etc and must be supported by medical certificates and/or other supporting documentation (such as a letter from a counsellor).

(51) Additional Intermission can be applied for in blocks of time up to six months in any one application, provided that supporting evidence is supplied that is judged to justify the granting of additional leave.

(52) Applications for more than 18 months Additional Intermission must be authorised by the Dean, Graduate Research, on the recommendation of the relevant Deputy Director, Flagship Research Institute/Centres (or nominee).

(53) A candidate on intermission has no entitlement to access supervision or training and support programs, and must not undertake any data collection that is subject to the approval and oversight of one of the University's ethics committees during such a period. However, candidates will still have access to University systems during periods of approved intermission.

(54) Candidates are entitled to 20 days annual leave per year. This leave to be agreed upon between the candidate and principal supervisor. Candidature does not cease during this period of leave.

Part H - Discontinuation

Candidate-initiated Discontinuation

(55) A candidate who has achieved Candidature, and who has a documented ongoing medical condition or personal situation over an extended period that affects their capacity to maintain their enrolment may discontinue, documenting these reasons. Should their circumstances subsequently change they will be eligible to be considered for reinstatement through the Reinstatement of Candidature process outlined in under [Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 3 Pre-Candidature and Candidature](#) providing no more than three years has lapsed since their last enrolment.

(56) A candidate may discontinue their course at any stage and for any reason prior to thesis submission by completing and submitting the [Course Discontinuation Form](#).

(57) A candidate who has achieved Candidature and discontinues from their course may reapply to be reinstated into their course (see [Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 3 Pre-Candidature and Candidature](#)). Normally, a discontinued candidate would have no more than three years in which to apply for reinstatement. Reinstatement is not granted automatically and will depend on the reasons for discontinuation, whether the University deems that their research is still viable, current place restrictions, availability of supervision and resources. Applicants who discontinue before achieving Candidature, or who wish to be admitted to a different research degree, must apply for admission to the course they wish to pursue through the Admission Process (see [Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 1 Admissions](#)). If they are accepted into the higher degree by research, and if it is than three years since when they were enrolled in the degree, their expected due date for completion will be determined considering the consumed load of their initial enrolment.

University-initiated Discontinuation

(58) In the unusual circumstance that VU Research does not have the capacity to provide supervision as outlined in the [Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 7 Supervision](#) the Dean, Graduate Research will advise the candidate in writing, requesting that the candidate withdraws from their research degree.

(59) VU Research will provide advice to the candidate to assist them in locating another university in which to undertake their postgraduate research.

(60) If the candidate does not voluntarily discontinue their enrolment within 20 University business days from the written notification, the ORTQI will discontinue their enrolment and the candidate will be advised that will not be entitled to re-enrol in the degree.

(61) International candidates who have been asked to discontinue are required to liaise with Enrolments and Student Financials so that notification of appropriate authorities can be made in relation to their student visa.

(62) ORTQI may also discontinue candidature in certain circumstances such as:

- a. failure to notify of a change to offshore enrolment status;
- b. failure to voluntarily discontinue or transfer to alternative study options where the candidate:
 - i. has not met the requirements to proceed to the research component of a research degree;
 - ii. has not met candidature following the second attempt;
 - iii. has been advised that the Unsatisfactory Progress Panel has reviewed their case and recommended discontinuation of candidature.
- c. where the candidate has been nominated for Unsatisfactory Progress and has not requested a hearing;
- d. the outcome of a formal disciplinary process.

(63) International candidates will be given 20 days' notice of any discontinuation to be effected under any of these circumstances.

Section 7 - Guidelines

(64) [VU Graduate Research Training and Supervision Quality and Standards Framework](#)

Status and Details

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