

Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 1 Admissions

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure outlines Higher Degree by Research (HDR) academic criteria for admission, English language requirements, method for applying and the assessment and offers process.

Section 2 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(2) HESF: 1.1 Admission; 4.2 Research Training; 7.2 Information for Prospective and Current Students.

(3) ESOS Act: Part 3 Division 2; Part 5 Division 2. National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 – Standard 2 and Standard 9.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This Procedure applies to domestic and international HDR applicants, and University staff administering this Procedure.

Section 4 - Definitions

(5) Domestic (onshore applicants) – Australian or New Zealand citizens or Australian Permanent Residents.

(6) International Applicants – A [temporary](#) resident (visa status) of Australia or a [permanent resident](#) (visa status) of New Zealand, or a resident or citizen of any other country.

(7) Advanced Candidature

(8) Accreditation

Section 5 - Policy/Regulation

(9) See [Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#).

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Office for Researcher Training, Quality and Integrity (ORTQI)	<p>Assess applications for minimum academic admission.</p> <p>Send domestic applicants an outcome letter.</p> <p>Provide VU International (VUI) outcome of assessment.</p> <p>Co-ordinate the assessment of applications and make preliminary assessments as to whether an applicant meets minimum academic admission criteria.</p>
Research Institutes	Assessment of applications, deemed to have met minimum academic admission requirements, to determine if the applicant's proposed research is aligned with a priority or accreditation area, research area and suitable supervision is available.
VU International (VUI)	<p>Send successful international applicants accepted by VU Research, an offer letter.</p> <p>Issue a rejection letter to applicants who have not been accepted by the Research Institute.</p>
Research Services	Work with the applicants who wish to conduct part, or all, of their research using facilities through their employment, or in conjunction with a research body external to the University, to prepare an agreement securing the organisation's involvement and resources involved in undertaking the project.

Part B - Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) Admissions: Overview

(10) The admission of applicants to any research degree at Victoria University (VU) is at the discretion of the Accountable Officer in line with [Admissions Policy](#).

(11) The admission of an applicant to a research degree at VU involves consideration of several factors, including whether:

- a. the applicant meets the prescribed minimum requirement for entry to the research degree in which they are applying;
- b. the applicant has sufficient disciplinary preparation and/or demonstrated research capacity to undertake the proposed research project;
- c. the initial research proposal submitted by the applicant appears to be viable (including consideration of its alignment with the Areas of Research Focus and the Fields of Research (FOR) codes deemed by the University as Priority and/or Accreditation codes);
- d. appropriate supervision for the proposed research is available. A principal supervisor and associate supervisor must be nominated at the point of admission. Applicant must submit the completed Prospective Supervisor form;
- e. adequate facilities, infrastructure and project support for the proposed research are available;
- f. research training places are available;
- g. the admission of the applicant and acceptance of the proposed area of research is impacted by specific requirements under Australian law, for example, [Sanctions Compliance](#) or [Defence Export Controls Compliance](#).

(12) All qualifications will be assessed for equivalency in the Australian education system according to [Commonwealth Government guidelines](#) and VU's grading equivalence scales.

(13) Applications are accepted all year round, however refer to [Graduate research applicants](#) for closing dates for forthcoming semesters.

(14) Domestic applicants seeking admission for a Research Training Place (RTP) in the same degree awarded, will not be offered an RTP place on initial enrolment. They will instead be offered a full-fee paying place. Subject to achieving Confirmation of Candidature within the agreed timelines ([Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 3 Pre-Candidature](#)

[and Candidature](#)), they will be considered for an RTP place subject to meeting the requirements of clause (11).

Part C - Academic Criteria for Admission into Higher Degrees by Research

Domestic Applicants

(15) To be eligible for admission into one of VU's higher degrees by research, domestic applicants must be able to demonstrate academic achievement via the Australian Quality Framework (AQF) Levels or international equivalent standards sufficient to undertake the appropriate degree level. Refer to [Graduate research applicants](#) to view eligibility criteria and English language requirements relevant for the:

- a. Master of Research Practice (1 year)
- b. Master of Research (1.5 years)
- c. Master of Applied Research (2 years)
- d. Doctor of Philosophy (4 years)
- e. Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated) (4 years)

International Applicants

(16) To be eligible for admission, international applicants must be able to demonstrate academic achievement via the Australian Quality Framework (AQF) Levels or international equivalent standards sufficient to undertake the appropriate degree level. Refer to [Graduate research applicants](#) to view eligibility criteria and English language requirements. International applicants may apply for the following research degree programs if they meet eligibility criteria and English language requirements:

- a. Master of Research Practice (1 year)
- b. Master of Research (1.5 years)
- c. Master of Applied Research (2 years)
- d. Doctor of Philosophy (4 years)
- e. Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated) (4 years)

Part D - English Language Requirements

(17) Applicants are required to demonstrate competency in English sufficient to work at the HDR level. Refer to [Entry requirements for international students](#) and the [Admissions - English Language Admission Requirements Procedure](#).

(18) Applicants who do not meet the English language requirements will not be admitted into a research degree.

Part E - Application Process

(19) Applicants are to refer to [Graduate research applicants](#) for information pertaining to how to apply for a research degree.

Part F - Assessment of Application

(20) The Office for Researcher Training, Quality and Integrity will coordinate the assessment of applications that include all documentation as stated in clause (11) and will make a preliminary assessment as to whether an applicant meets the minimum academic admission criteria.

(21) Incomplete applications will not be considered.

(22) Applicants who are assessed as not meeting one or more of the minimum eligibility criteria will normally be informed within 20 University business days from receipt of the application.

(23) Applications that are assessed to meet minimum academic admission criteria and have sufficient disciplinary preparation and/or demonstrated research capacity will then be forwarded to the relevant Deputy Director, Research Institute (or nominee) for assessment and an outcome.

(24) The final decision on admission lies with the Deputy Director, Research Institute or nominee. The applicant will receive written notification normally within 20 University business days from receipt of the application and the outcome is final.

Advanced Standing of the Coursework Units

(25) HDR Candidates who have undertaken previous formal study, work experience, or have various types of practical learning that satisfy the learning outcomes/objectives of one or more of the coursework units, are eligible to apply for Advanced Standing. Candidates are requested to submit an enquiry via research.coursework@vu.edu.au to seek advice prior to submitting this application.

(26) An application must be lodged via research.coursework@vu.edu.au no later than two weeks prior to the relevant census date. Applications received after this period will not be considered.

Advanced Candidature of the Degree

(27) An applicant may be enrolled with Advanced Candidature if they have already achieved Confirmation of Candidature, or equivalent, at another university. The application must provide evidence that they are making satisfactory progress in their degree.

(28) Applicants granted Advanced Candidature must normally be enrolled for a minimum of 12 months prior to submission of the thesis for examination. In addition, there must normally be at least 12 months EFT Candidature time available before reaching the timely duration for the research degree in which the applicant is enrolled.

(29) Applicants for Advanced Candidature must complete the [Apply for Research](#) and the [Application for Advanced Candidature](#) with all relevant supporting documentation and submit it to apply.research@vu.edu.au for the relevant Deputy Director, Research Institute or nominee for consideration and confirmation.

(30) An applicant who has successfully completed Confirmation of Candidature and has been accepted with Advanced Candidature, will be admitted as a candidate immediately. Time already consumed, through enrolment at another university, will be deducted from the timely allowable duration for the respective course as outlined below:

- a. Master of Research Practice (1 year)
- b. Master of Research (1.5 years)
- c. Master of Applied Research (2 years)
- d. Doctor of Philosophy (4 years)
- e. Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated) (4 years)

(31) An applicant who has not achieved Confirmation of Candidature and has been accepted with Advanced Candidature, will be admitted as a provisional candidate. The applicant will be required to undertake this milestone as specified in the letter of offer. Time already consumed, through enrolment at another institution, will be deducted from the timely allowable duration for the respective course as outlined below:

- a. Master of Research Practice (1 year)
- b. Master of Research (1.5 years)

- c. Master of Applied Research (2 years)
- d. Doctor of Philosophy (4 years)
- e. Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated) (4 years)

(32) An applicant accepted with Advanced Candidature may be granted Advanced Standing for any required coursework units on submission of an Application for Advanced Standing to be assessed by Academic Programs in ORTQI.

Collaboration with External Research Bodies

(33) Applicants who wish to conduct part, or all, of their research using facilities through their employment, or in conjunction with a research body external to the University, must in conjunction with Research Services at VU to prepare an agreement securing the organisation's involvement and resources involved in undertaking the project.

(34) Such arrangements with organisations external to the University must be made under the stewardship of the supervisor/s and include consideration and agreement about:

- a. matters associated with ethics and integrity;
- b. matters associated with [intellectual property ownership and rights \(Intellectual Property Regulations 2013\)](#);
- c. the ownership, storage, retention of and access to research data generated during the project; and
- d. any specific legislative requirements that may apply. For example, requirements under [Sanctions Compliance](#) with regard to dealing with persons or entities from sanctioned countries and requirements under [Defence Export Controls Compliance](#) to obtain a permit to transfer materials, software or technology relating to military or dual-use goods and technologies to persons located outside Australia.

Part G - Letter of Offer

Domestic Applicants - Research Training Program Fee Offset Places and Full-fee Paying Places

(35) Successful domestic applicants for HDR will be considered for a place funded under the Commonwealth [Research Training Program](#) (RTP). An RTP fee offset place exempts the candidate from paying tuition fees for the timely duration of their degree in which they are enrolled. Candidates exceeding the timely duration of their degree may be charged a tuition fee. Every candidate (except for full-fee paying domestic and international applicants) at VU is required to pay the [Student Services and Amenities Fee](#) (SSAF).

(36) Off-shore RTP enrolments may be considered by the Deputy Director, Research Institute or nominee on a case by case basis with their decision being final. Conditions may be placed on the offer such that applicants have access to adequate study support and facilities off-shore through a formal arrangement between VU and an off-shore research institution, and that applicants undertake the coursework and candidature milestone presentations associated with their degree at a VU campus.

(37) Where an application for admission is approved by the Research Institute, but the applicant has not been successful in being awarded an RTP place, they will be offered the option of taking up a [full-fee paying place](#). Conditions may be placed on the offer such that applicants have access to adequate study support and facilities off-shore through a formal arrangement between VU and an off-shore research institution, and that applicants undertake the coursework and candidature milestone presentations associated with their degree at a VU campus.

(38) An RTP fee offset place may be combined with a VU RTP or Industry stipend scholarship with or without allowances. Applicants for domestic [scholarships](#) who have been awarded a stipend scholarship are automatically awarded an RTP fee offset place.

Acceptance of Domestic Offers

(39) If a domestic applicant is recommended for acceptance by the Research Institute, ORTQI will send the applicant an offer letter, which will include:

- a. name of degree and course code;
- b. the name of the provisional Principal Supervisor;
- c. major course progression requirements that related to performance in required coursework units and commencement date of the coursework unit;
- d. a request to provide evidence of citizenship;
- e. a request to provide certified hardcopies of academic documents;
- f. details regarding the compulsory SSAF;
- g. the date by which enrolment must occur;
- h. any conditions, such as any course to be audited or enrolled in after enrolment;
- i. conditions of RTP fee offset place (if offered).

(40) The applicant will have 20 University business days from the date of letter of offer to accept/decline the offer via apply.research@vu.edu.au.

International Applicants

(41) VUI will send successful international applicants accepted by VU Research, an offer letter, which will include:

- a. any conditions which must be met before a full offer is made;
- b. the fees (and/or details of any agreed fee scholarship arrangements);
- c. start date for commencement of the degree;
- d. arrangements for health cover;
- e. the name of the provisional Principal Supervisor;
- f. course code;
- g. major course progression requirements, such as that related to performance in required coursework;
- h. any conditions, such as any course to be audited or enrolled in after enrolment;
- i. conditions of any scholarship if applicable.

Acceptance of International Offers

(42) Applicants who intend to accept an offer must return the [Offer Acceptance form](#) and pay the required fees before being issued with a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE). Applicants are required to provide a CoE to immigration authorities in order to be granted the appropriate student visa.

(43) Upon acceptance, ORTQI will advise the applicant of the enrolment session details and the applicant must confirm their attendance.

Deferment of Offer

(44) If an international applicant is unable to present and enrol into the accepted degree due to compassionate or compelling circumstances, they may contact VUI to apply for a deferment and advise of the intended period for deferment. VUI will notify ORTQI of the request and this is to be forwarded to the Research Institute for an outcome. The decision is at the discretion of the Research Institute and is subject to compassionate or compelling circumstances, supervisory capacity and availability and currency of English language requirements. Normally applicants can only apply to defer their commencement for one semester.

(45) If a domestic applicant is unable to present and enrol into the accepted degree, they must contact ORTQI via apply.research@vu.edu.au. They may apply for a deferment and advise of the intended period for deferment. ORTQI will forward this request to the Research Institute for an outcome. The decision is at the discretion of the Research Institute and is subject to supervisory capacity and availability. Normally applicants can only apply to defer their commencement for one semester.

Status and Details

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Accountable Officer	Andrew Hill Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Impact Andrew.Hill@vu.edu.au
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Accreditation" - Educational accreditation is a type of quality assurance process under which services and operations of educational institutions or programs are evaluated by an external body to determine if applicable standards are met. If standards are met, accredited status is granted by the appropriate agency. For Victoria University (VU), the relevant accreditation bodies are the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Authority (TEQSA) for higher education, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) for vocational education, and the National ELICOS Accreditation Scheme (NEAS) for English language intensive programs.

"Advanced Candidature" - Where an applicant has conducted Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) studies towards a research degree at another institution.