Higher Degrees by Research Admissions Procedure

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 - Scope

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

Section 3 - Policy/Regulation

(3) Higher Degrees by Research Policy

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Admissions, Enrolments and Graduations (Student Administration)	Manage the HDR domestic course intakes via the Domestic application portal. Assess and triage applications to establish minimum academic admission criteria has been met and is eligible for research assessment by the Research Institutes. Co-ordinate academic-based assessment of applications with Research Institutes. Send domestic applicant outcome letters outlining academic, research and scholarship assessment outcomes (where relevant).
Research Institutes	Assessment of applications, deemed to have met minimum academic admission criteria, to determine if the applicant's proposed research is aligned with a priority, accreditation or emerging research area and suitable supervision is available. Complete sanction compliance risk assessment 2B where relevant and required as outlined at Sanctions Compliance.

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Roles	Responsibilities
VU Global	Manage the HDR international course intakes via International application portal (EAAMS). Assess and triage international applications that have established minimum academic admission criteria and are eligible for research assessment by the Research Institutes. Co-ordinate academic-based assessment of international applications with Research Institutes. Complete sanction compliance risk assessment 1 for international applications where relevant and required as outlined at Sanctions Compliance. Send international applicant outcome letters outlining academic, research and scholarship assessment outcomes (where relevant).
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

(4) 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.

(5) To be considered eligible for admission to a research degree at VU a person must demonstrate that:

a. they meet the prescribed minimum requirement for entry to the research degree in which they are applying (refer to Admissions Procedure – Part A – Eligibility for Admission and apply for graduate research);
b. they have 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 and/or Emerging 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; and,
f. the admission of the applicant and acceptance of the proposed area of research is not in breach of the specific requirements under Australian law, for example, Sanctions Compliance or Defence Export Controls Compliance.

(6) All qualifications will be assessed for equivalency in the Australian education system in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework and VU's grading equivalence scales.

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

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

(8) To be eligible for admission into one of VU's higher degrees by research, applicants must be able to demonstrate academic achievement via the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Levels or international equivalent standards

sufficient to undertake the appropriate degree level. Refer to Apply for graduate research to view eligibility criteria and English language requirements relevant for the:

a. Master of Research (1.5 years)
b. Master of Applied Research (2 years)
c. Doctor of Philosophy (4 years)
d. Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated) (4 years)

Part D - English Language Requirements

(9) Applicants are required to meet the minimum English Language requirement for the level of study for which they are seeking entry. Refer to the Admissions - English Language Admission Requirements Procedure.

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

Part E - Application Process

(11) Applicants are to refer to Apply for graduate research for information pertaining to how to apply for a research degree and in accordance with the Admissions Procedure.

Part F - Assessment of Application

(12) The assessment of applications will be undertaken as per Clause (11a-f) and the Admissions Procedure. In addition, applicants applying for a Research Training Place will be assessed for eligibility by the relevant Associate Director, Research Institute or nominee (clause 25).

(13) All completed applications will receive a formal selection outcome.

(14) The authority to select or deny applicants for admission into a higher degree by research rests with the relevant Associate Director, Research Institute or nominee.

Advanced Standing of the Coursework Units

(15) 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 as part of their course application.

Advanced Candidature of the Degree

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

(17) 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.

(18) Applicants for Advanced Candidature must complete the Application for Advanced Candidature with all relevant supporting documentation and submit it along with their application for admission as per the Admissions Procedure for the relevant Associate Director, Research Institute or nominee for consideration and outcome.

(19) An applicant who has successfully completed Confirmation of Candidature and has been accepted with Advanced Candidature, will be admitted as a candidate. 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 (1.5 years)
b. Master of Applied Research (2 years)
c. Doctor of Philosophy (4 years)
d. Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated) (4 years)

(20) An applicant who has not achieved Confirmation of Candidature and has been accepted with Advanced Candidature, will be admitted as a student. 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 (1.5 years)
b. Master of Applied Research (2 years)
c. Doctor of Philosophy (4 years)
d. Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated) (4 years)

(21) 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 Graduate Research Academic Programs and Professional Development in GRS.

Collaboration with External Research Bodies

(22) 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 (VU) prepare an agreement securing the organisation's involvement and resources involved in undertaking the project.

(23) Such arrangements with organisations external to the University must be made under the stewardship of the Applicant's supervisor/s and include consideration of the following matters (not an exhaustive list):

a. matters associated with ethics and integrity (including codes of conduct);
b. matters associated with intellectual property ownership and rights (including licensing and potential commercialisation rights);
c. matters associated with publication rights, copyright and Moral Rights as defined in the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth);
d. the ownership, storage, retention of and access to research data generated during the project and destruction of research data after project completion;
e. the handling of personal data of individuals compliance with relevant privacy and data security laws;
f. indemnities, limitations of liability and insurance requirements;
g. any specific legislative, regulatory and policy requirements that the University is required to comply with (including but not limited to, Sanctions Laws, Defence Export Laws, Foreign Interference, Conflict of Interest, Privacy & Data Protection, Modern Slavery, Culturally Sensitive Intellectual Property).

(24) Any arrangement or potential agreement with organisations external to the University must be submitted for consideration and final approval by the appropriate delegate in VU Research.

Part G - Outcome letter

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

(25) Successful domestic applicants will be considered for a place funded under the Commonwealth Research Training Program (RTP). An RTP fee offset place is awarded at the discretion of the Research Institute assigned to assess the application and is subject to funding availability. It 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).

(26) Off-shore RTP fee offset enrolments may be considered by the relevant Associate 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.

(27) Where an application for admission is approved by the Research Institute, however the domestic applicant has not been successful in being awarded an RTP fee offset place, they will be offered a full-fee paying place.

(28) A RTP fee offset place may be combined with a RTP Stipend 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.

(29) A RTP fee offset place may be awarded with a RTP Stipend with allowances to successful international applicants via a graduate research scholarship round - refer to Higher Degree by Research Scholarships Procedure.

(30) Domestic applicants will receive, in writing, a formal outcome letter signed by the Chief Student Officer.

(31) International applicants will receive, in writing, a formal outcome letter by Chief International Officer.

Response to outcome letter

(32) An international applicant who intends 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.

(33) Upon acceptance of the offered degree, the GRS will provide the applicant with enrolment documentation.

(34) Once the applicant has returned the enrolment documentation, the GRS will:

a. process the enrolment (domestic applicants)
b. process the enrolment on confirmation of arrival in Melbourne (international applicants)

Deferment of Offer

(35) If an international applicant is unable to present and enrol into the accepted degree due to compassionate or compelling circumstances, they may contact VU Global to apply for a deferment and advise of the intended period for deferment. VU Global will notify GRS 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 research period.

(36) If a domestic applicant is unable to present and enrol into the accepted degree, they must seek advice as deferment for research is assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Research Institute. 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 research period.

Section 5 - TEQSA/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

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

(38) 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 6 - Definitions

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

(40) 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.

(41) Advanced Candidature

(42) Accreditation

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	17th October 2025
Review Date	27th November 2027
Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Impact
Approval Date	24th September 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Accountable Officer	Andrew Hill Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Impact andy.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.

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