Higher Degree by Research Admission Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) This Procedure describes the admission process for all higher degree by research (HDR) programs at The University of Queensland (UQ or the University), including the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Professional Doctorate programs.

(2) A HDR program requires candidates to carry out and publish original research in order to progress towards becoming an independent researcher. For these reasons admission into HDR programs involve criteria that are different from those used to determine entry into an undergraduate or postgraduate coursework program.

(3) In addition to program entry requirements, the Dean, Graduate Research School may approve an application provided criteria are met that ensure the admission of candidates only where there is an appropriate fit between the applicant, research environment, available resources and supervision.

(4) Approval of admission to the HDR program should be consistent with the intention of the Research Training Program, which is to support high quality research training and help to develop the next generation of researchers for Australia.

(5) When interacting with applicants, University staff should be mindful of the University's Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

Section 2 - Key Controls

(6) All HDR admissions must be conducted in accordance with the principles and requirements described in the Admission Policy and those described in this Procedure.

Section 3 - Process and Key Requirements

Part A - Admissions Criteria

(7) The Dean, Graduate Research School may approve an application for a program provided that:

a. the applicant is considered to be a developing researcher in their proposed field of research who requires HDR education and training in order to progress towards becoming an independent researcher;
b. the applicant has an appropriate academic background and prior research experience to meet entry requirements for the proposed HDR program;
c. the proposed program can be completed in the set duration of candidature;
d. the applicant has a proposed research project that is academically appropriate for the HDR program;
e. the admission of the applicant and proposed program are in accordance with export controls legislation and Australian sanction laws (United Nations Security Council sanctions regimes and Australian autonomous sanctions regimes);

f. the applicant will create a thesis comprised only of research undertaken while enrolled in the HDR program;
g. the University has sufficient facilities and resources to fund and support the candidate and proposed research project to completion;
h. the University has sufficient academic expertise to support the candidate and supervise the proposed research project; and
i. the Head of Enrolling AOU (Academic Organisational Unit)supports the application for admission.

Part B - English Language Proficiency

(8) Applicants must be proficient in written and spoken English. All applicants must satisfy the English language proficiency requirement for the program in which the applicant seeks to enrol prior to an unconditional offer being made. The English Language Proficiency Admission Procedure, which applies to both international and domestic applicants, sets out the criteria that applicants must satisfy to meet the University's English language proficiency requirement.

(9) Some disciplines may have higher than minimum requirements. Some aspects of a program, such as a clinical placement, may also have higher than minimum requirements.

Part C - Application Process

(10) The applicant should initiate the admission process by nominating a potential advisor via the official UQ applications system with an initial expression of interest.

(11) The proposed advisor will either accept or deny the initial expression of interest.

(12) In the case that the expression of interest is accepted, the proposed advisory team and/or Head of Enrolling AOU will:

a. provide advice and guidance on the feasibility and development of the project;
b. discuss the suitability of the applicant to carry out the proposed HDR program;
c. determine the availability of a suitable advisory team and their compatibility with the applicant;
d. engage in realistic discussions about the availability of necessary resources at UQ;
e. establish that the timing of the project is appropriate for the applicant, the advisory team and the current state of the research field; and
f. if the applicant is a citizen of a sanctioned country, complete a Sanctions Compliance Assessment Form and return to the Graduate Research School, following endorsement of a Faculty Associate Dean (Research) or an Institute Deputy Director (Research). This requirement also applies to applicants who are permanent residents of Australia or hold dual citizenship.

(13) An application for admission is submitted using the University's online application system.

(14) If the enrolling AOU has the appropriate academic expertise, facilities, funding and resources to support the applicant in their proposed research project the Head of Enrolling AOU may recommend the applicant to the Dean.

(15) The Graduate Research School will assess the application against admission criteria in order to determine whether the application will progress.

(16) If applicable, the Graduate Research School will seek advice from UQ Research Ethics and Integrity and the Commonwealth Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade if a potential area of concern is identified through the Sanctions Compliance Assessment Form.

(17) If an application will not proceed any further, the applicant will be given that advice and the reasons for that decision in writing.

(18) A successful applicant will be issued a letter of offer.

(19) Conditional offers may be issued for applicants seeking external funding.

(20) An unconditional offer of admission will only be provided once funding arrangements are in place.

Part D - Minimum Requirements for Consideration for Entry

(21) Minimum program entry requirements are not necessarily sufficient for consideration of admission to a HDR program. Meeting the requirements does not guarantee acceptance and the following must also be considered:

a. Limitations on the capacity of an enrolling AOU to admit students means that it may deny support for admission if there is a lack of available and appropriate supervisory capacity and/or insufficient resources to support a potential candidate.
b. Enrolling AOU's can also determine the quality of students admitted into the HDR program within the AOU by requiring a standard of academic and/or other achievement that is greater than the UQ minimum program entry requirements. These standards should be publicly available.

(22) The applicant's degree and/or professional experience must be in an area that is relevant to the intended HDR program.

(23) The applicant's degree and/or professional experience must demonstrate that the applicant's knowledge of the discipline is current and have been undertaken in the ten years immediately prior to intended entry to the HDR program.

Doctor of Philosophy

Eligibility requirements

(24) Applicants must meet one or more of the following requirements:

a. A bachelor's degree with honours class IIA or better from approved universities which includes relevant research experience, approved by the Dean.
b. A research master's degree, approved by the Dean.
c. A coursework master's degree with an overall GPA equivalent to 5.65 on the 7-point UQ scale which includes relevant research experience, approved by the Dean.
d. A postgraduate degree of at least one year full-time equivalent with an overall GPA equivalent to 5.0 on the 7-point scale together with demonstrated research experience equivalent to honours IIA will be considered by the Dean on a case-by-case basis.
e. A bachelor's degree plus at least 2 years of documented relevant research experience including research publications, approved by the Dean.

Relevant Research Experience

(25) Research experience requirements may be met by one of the following:

a. Courses directed at the formation of research skills and/or a supervised research project that includes a written report completed as part of the bachelor's or coursework master's degree with a minimum course volume equivalent to 4 units at UQ and comprise a minimum value of 1 unit at UQ (e.g. 50% of a 2 unit course), or

equivalent. Research carried out in groups should have been graded individually.

b. Scholarly papers involving a substantial contribution by the applicant as an author, appearing in recognised academic journals or in volumes published by recognised academic publishers.
c. Research or technical reports prepared for industry, government or business which adhere to the broad conventions of academic publishing (i.e. contain an up-to-date review of relevant literature, a description of relevant research methods and an evaluation of results, etc.) and which identify the applicant as a significant contributor.
d. A portfolio of published creative work together with published critical discussion of some or all of the work, or of a comparable body of work by others, and which demonstrates the applicant's development of scholarly approach to creative work as research investigation.
e. Demonstrable industry or work experience where the applicant can demonstrate a planned and executed project working with a high level of independence.

Master of Philosophy

Eligibility Requirements

(26) Applicants must meet one of more of the following requirements:

a. A bachelor's degree with honours class IIB or better from approved universities which includes relevant experience, approved by the Dean.
b. A postgraduate degree of at least one year full-time equivalent with an overall GPA equivalent to 5.0 on the 7-point UQ scale which includes relevant experience, approved by the Dean.
c. A bachelor's degree plus at least two years of documented relevant experience, approved by the Dean.
d. Other qualifications and/or experience to satisfy the Dean that the candidate is suitably qualified for entry will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Relevant Experience

(27) Research experience requirements may be met by one of the following:

a. Courses directed at the formation of research skills and/or a supervised research project that includes a written report completed as part of the bachelor's or postgraduate degree with a minimum course volume equivalent to 2 units at UQ and comprise a minimum value of 1 unit at UQ (e.g. 50% of a 2 unit course). Research carried out in groups should have been graded individually.
b. Scholarly papers involving a substantial contribution by the applicant as an author, appearing in recognised academic journals or in volumes published by recognised academic publishers.
c. Research or technical reports prepared for industry, government or business which adhere to the broad conventions of academic publishing (i.e. contain an up-to-date review of relevant literature, a description of relevant research methods and an evaluation of results, etc.) and which identify the applicant as a significant contributor.
d. A portfolio of published creative work together with published critical discussion of some or all of the work, or of a comparable body of work by others, and which demonstrates the applicant's development of scholarly approach to creative work as research investigation.
e. Demonstrable industry or work experience where the applicant can demonstrate a planned and executed project working with a high level of independence.

Part E - Selection

(28) Applicants must have the support of an advisory team and an enrolling unit, with a project that is strategically

aligned with the research priorities of the discipline.

(29) Merit-based selection for a HDR program requires a selection rank or Grade Point Average (GPA) for admission. The applicant must provide official academic transcripts as evidence of their previous studies for a GPA to be determined.

(30) Merit-based selection will be managed by scheduled application and offer rounds.

Scholarship Supported Places

(31) The University sets the number of scholarship supported places annually, with caps on domestic and international places.

(32) Scholarships are awarded to eligible applicants following a Scholarship Selection Committee process.

(33) Eligible domestic applicants may be awarded an RTP Tuition Fee Offset Scholarship only without the need for Scholarship Selection Committee review.

(34) International applicants cannot hold a Tuition Fee Offset Scholarship without a Living Stipend Scholarship.

Part F - Offers

(35) On approving admission, the Dean will issue a letter of offer outlining:

a. The program for which the applicant has successfully applied,
b. the program duration,
c. the commencement date,
d. the fees for the program,
e. any special conditions of admission, if applicable, and
f. all relevant terms, conditions and policies.

(36) If applicable, the Dean will issue a letter of offer for scholarship or scholarships at the same time as the letter of offer for admission.

(37) The Dean may set conditions on the enrolment of candidates, such as satisfactory completion of coursework.

(38) The Dean may approve admission to an alternative program if the applicant’s academic background and research experience is more suited to a different level of entry.

(39) An applicant who has been refused enrolment at another institution due to academic or non-academic reasons may be refused admission.

(40) The Dean may withdraw a letter of offer if it is found or suspected that the applicant has provided false, misleading, incomplete or inaccurate information in their application.

(41) The Dean may withdraw a letter of offer if it has been issued in error.

(42) In the event the Dean withdraws an offer, the applicant will be notified in writing.

Part G - Deferral of offer

(43) A successful applicant may request to defer their offer of admission to the HDR program for up to 12 months.

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(44) Requests to defer offers of scholarships will be considered but different timeframes may apply.

Part H - Enrolment Status

(45) Enrolment is in research quarters and commencement in a research quarter is fixed to a specific period, as noted within the letter of offer. Official commencement will be recorded as the first day of the relevant research quarter.

(46) An applicant may apply to enrol full-time or part-time with the approval of the Dean, Head of Enrolling AOU and advisory team.

a. Full-time status is the equivalent of a standard five day working week, usually between the hours of 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday for at least 48 weeks per year with public holidays excepted.
b. The actual pattern of research and study may vary depending on the candidate's personal circumstances and other commitments. The actual working hours are to be negotiated with the advisory team.
c. Part-time status is the equivalent of 50% of the timeframe specified in clause 46(a).

(47) In addition to clause 46(a), a full-time candidate may undertake limited employment. The Head of Enrolling AOU and advisory team must be satisfied that the candidate's progress will not be impeded.

(48) A candidate is expected to be located at UQ, or other location approved by the Graduate Research School, for their research and study, unless approved as remote.

a. A domestic applicant may apply to study remotely onshore subject to the recommendation of the Head of the Enrolling AOU, and approval of the Dean.
b. The advisory team and applicant are responsible for ensuring there is a feasible plan to manage the progress of the remotely enrolled student.
c. The enrolling AOU are to advise the Graduate Research School if a student placement agreement is required. A copy of the fully executed agreement is to be added to the student record in UQ's record management system prior to commencement of study.

(49) An applicant may apply to enrol on an approved concurrent enrolment program with the approval of the Dean, Head of Enrolling AOU and advisory team.

Part I - Duration of Program

(50) The duration of the PhD program is a minimum of 3 years and a maximum 4 years, FTE. The duration of the MPhil program is a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 2 years, FTE.

(51) The HDR program is CRICOS registered for 4 years PhD, 2 years MPhil, FTE.

(52) The duration of a part-time program is double the full-time equivalent.

(53) The HDR project must be scoped appropriately within the program duration outlined in clause 50.

Shortened Duration

(54) An applicant may apply for admission with a shortened program duration with the approval of the Dean, Head of Enrolling AOU and advisory team, on the basis of work that:

a. was done while enrolled in the HDR program at UQ (readmission) or another institution (transfer of study);
b. was done since the candidate satisfied the program entry requirements for the current HDR program;
c. has not been counted towards a completed award;

d. was appropriately conducted and monitored; and
e. is of a nature and quality appropriate to the current program.

(55) The Dean must consider a report from the Head of Enrolling AOU and/or advisory team containing:

a. comments on the nature and duration of the work completed, and the guidance exercised, including progress reviews;
b. comments on the suitability of the work to the program to be shortened;
c. comments on the quality of the work done;
d. a recommendation on how much the program should be shortened; and
e. proposed dates for future progress reviews.

(56) The total program duration should not exceed 4 years PhD, 2 years MPhil, FTE, including previous periods of enrolment at the University (readmission) or another institution(s) (transfer).

(57) Applications for transfer to the University from another institution should occur before Progress Review 2, or equivalent.

(58) The candidate is required to undertake at least one third of the work required to produce the thesis at the University.

Part J - Grievances and Complaints

(59) The Student Grievance Resolution Policy sets out the grievance resolution process to be followed for all matters relating to admission to the HDR programs. Formal grievances and appeals by HDR applicants regarding decisions made during selection for admission therefore follow the processes outlined in the Student Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedure and the Academic Administrative Appeals by Students Policy and Procedure.

Section 4 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Dean, Graduate Research School

(60) The Dean, Graduate Research School approves admission to all HDR Programs at UQ. Delegation may be given to the Deputy Dean when required.

Director, HDR

(61) The DHDR makes an assessment of the HDR applicant quality, project viability and resourcing, and supervision and recommends an applicant to the Dean for admission on behalf of the Head of the Academic Organisation Unit (AOU).

Principal Advisors

(62) Principal Advisors are approved UQ staff members that take primary academic responsibility for the candidate during their candidature.

(63) The detailed academic role, accountabilities and eligibility for Principal Advisors are specified in the Eligibility and Role of Higher Degree by Research Advisors Policy.

Advisors

(64) Advisors are suitably qualified persons who provide expertise related to the candidate's research and are available to provide advice throughout candidature.

(65) The detailed academic role, accountabilities and eligibility for advisors are specified in the Eligibility and Role of Higher Degree by Research Advisors Policy. The responsibilities and accountabilities should be stated in simple, easy to understand terms and be action oriented (i.e. what needs to be done and who needs to do it).

Section 5 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(66) Review of, and compliance with, this Procedure is overseen by the Dean, Graduate Research School and the University Higher Degree by Research Committee.

Section 6 - Recording and Reporting

(67) All applications must be lodged by the official UQ Application system.

(68) All student applications and University decisions are filed in the student's personal record in UQ's digital student record system.

Section 7 - Appendix

Definitions, terms, and acronyms

Term	Definition
Advisor	suitably qualified person who provides expertise related to the candidate's research and is available to provide advice throughout candidature.
AOU	an Academic Organisational Unit that directly enrols HDR candidates.
Dean	Dean, Graduate Research School or delegate.
DHDR	Director HDR, appointed by the Head of the AOU.
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent.
HDR	Higher Degree by Research comprising MPhil, PhD and PDR.
MPhil	Master of Philosophy.
PDR	Professional Doctorate by Research.
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy.
Principal Advisor	approved UQ staff member who takes primary academic responsibility for the candidate during their candidature with their role and eligibility outlined in the Eligibility and Role of Higher Degree by Research Advisors Policy.
Thesis	the material outcomes of a sustained program of supervised research undertaken by a candidate whilst enrolled in an HDR program.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	7th August 2024
Review Date	7th August 2029
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Approval Date	26th June 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Policy Owner	Virginia Slaughter Dean, Graduate Research School
Enquiries Contact	Graduate Research School

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