Higher Degree by Research Candidature Progression Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) This Procedure outlines the roles and responsibilities, processes, timeframes and outcomes for supporting Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidate progression at UQ, including early candidature checkpoints and progress reviews.

(2) This Procedure applies to all HDR candidates enrolled at The University of Queensland.

Section 2 - Process and Key Controls

(3) All HDR candidate progression must be managed in accordance with the principles and requirements described in the Higher Degree by Research Candidature Progression Policy and those described in this Procedure.

Section 3 - Key Requirements

Candidate Progression

(4) HDR candidate progression at UQ is supported by a sequence of activities that include an early candidature checkpoint and three progress reviews. These reviews are designed to support progression and candidate development.

(5) Each HDR progress review consists of work submitted by the candidate followed by a meeting with the candidate. Some Academic Organisational Units (AOUs) may also require candidates to deliver a presentation as part of the progress review.

(6) The due date for the submission of review documentation is set by the Graduate Research School based on the date of commencement. PhD candidates are expected to submit review documentation at equal intervals of 12 months full-time equivalent (FTE). MPhil candidates are expected to submit review documentation at equal intervals of 6 months FTE. These timelines will vary for part-time candidates or candidates who have taken an interruption.

Full-time equivalent	MPhil	PhD*
Early Candidature Checkpoint (ECC)	3 months FTE after commencement	3-6 months FTE after commencement
Review 1 - Confirmation of Candidature (R1)	6 months FTE after commencement	12 months FTE after commencement
Review 2 (R2)	12 months FTE after commencement	24 months FTE after commencement
Review 3 (R3)	18 months FTE after commencement	36 months FTE after commencement
Examination	21 months FTE after commencement	42 months FTE after commencement
*Timeline for Progress Reviews for Professional Doctorates specified according to the Professional Doctorates Policy and Procedure.		

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Early Candidature Checkpoint

(7) The early candidature checkpoint is an online checklist completed by the candidate and their Principal Advisor in the first three to six months (FTE) of commencement. The purpose of the early candidature checkpoint is to ensure that the candidate has completed required induction activities and is on track for their first progress review.

(8) The early candidature checkpoint includes the following items:

a. Individual Development Plan (IDP): An Individual Development Plan provides candidates with a structured process to plan for the attainment of UQ's HDR graduate attributes and career goals. The individual development plan should be initiated in the first three months of candidature and revised for each review.
b. Portfolio of Activity: HDR candidates will maintain a portfolio or list of professional development activities undertaken during their candidature. The portfolio will be initiated in the first three months of candidature and an updated version submitted at each review.
c. Research Integrity Module (RIM): The Research Integrity Module is a compulsory online training module that provides information on the policies and procedures around research integrity, ethics, research data management, authorship, and other issues candidates need to be aware of when conducting research at UQ. All HDR candidates must pass the RIM (80% pass mark) prior to attempting confirmation of candidature.
d. ORCID: ORCID is the authority source for external identifiers for University of Queensland researchers and HDR candidates. HDR candidates need to set up and register an ORCID with UQ and link this ID to their UQ eSpace profile prior to confirmation of candidature.
e. Research Data Manager (RDM): The UQ Research Data Manager has been designed to help researchers manage their project's research data, from project conception to the publication and dissemination of results. A record must be created in RDM for the HDR project prior to confirmation of candidature.
f. Advisor-Candidate expectations: The advisory team and candidate should discuss shared expectations and develop a written summary for reference. This is an opportunity for candidates to discuss and agree on supervision arrangements with the advisory team.
g. Attendance at local inductions: Attendance at local inductions and training activities (i.e. relevant orientation, health and safety inductions, etc.)

(9) The Early Candidature Checkpoint is submitted to the candidate's Director of HDR. The Director of HDR ensures the ECC is completed and may request a follow up meeting with the candidate and their advisory team to discuss the early candidature checklist.

Progress Reviews

(10) Progress Reviews are undertaken by a Progress Review Panel (PRP) created to support the candidate. A PRP will consist of a Chair and/or at least one reviewer. The panel may consist of one individual who fulfills the role of both the Chair and reviewer, but a panel of at least two individuals is preferred wherever possible. Advisors are not part of the review panel but will provide feedback on the candidate's progress to support the evaluation and development of the candidate.

Progress Review 1 (R1) – Confirmation of Candidature

(11) Confirmation of candidature (review 1) will take place 12 months FTE (PhD) or 6 months FTE (MPhil) after commencement, or 6 months FTE (professional doctorates) after commencement of the research component. The purpose of the confirmation of candidature is to:

a. assess whether the candidate has a viable research project that is achievable and appropriate for the program in which they are enrolled;
b. identify additional professional development that may be required to ensure timely completion and

demonstrate the HDR graduate attributes (Higher Degree by Research Graduate Attributes Policy);

c. confirm the candidate feels supported and equipped to complete the program within the required timeframes; and
d. ensure the candidate receives independent written feedback about any issues that need to be addressed.

(12) The status of a candidate will change from provisional to confirmed upon the successful completion of the confirmation of candidature.

Progress Review 2 (R2)

(13) Progress review 2 will take place 24 months FTE (PhD) or 12 months FTE (MPhil) after commencement, or 12 months FTE (professional doctorates) after commencement of the research component. The purpose of the second review is to:

a. confirm advisory arrangements and resources are adequately supporting a timely program completion;
b. assess whether the candidate's progress is satisfactory, and the project is on track for completion within the required timeframe;
c. review candidate skills and develop and HDR graduate attributes are developing appropriately; and
d. ensure the candidate receives independent written feedback and direction on any issues that may need to be addressed.

Progress Review 3 (R3)

(14) Progress review 3 will take place 36 months FTE (PhD) or 18 months FTE (MPhil) after commencement, or 18 months FTE (professional doctorates) after commencement of the research component. The purpose of the third review is to:

a. assess whether the candidate's progress is satisfactory, and the project is on track for completion within the required timeframe;
b. ensure that the scope, originality and quality of the thesis will be of an appropriate standard for external examination by the expected submission date;
c. assess whether the thesis engages with the relevant literature and shows an advanced knowledge of research principles and methods relevant to the discipline;
d. ensure the thesis makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge (PhD) or shows originality in the application of knowledge (MPhil/Professional Doctorates);
e. evaluate whether the candidate's quality of writing meets the standard expected of a higher degree;
f. provide independent written feedback about the candidate's readiness for examination by the expected date of submission (see Higher Degree by Research Examination Policy); and
g. confirm that the candidate has demonstrated the HDR graduate attributes.

Progress Review Processes

Nominating the Chair and Reviewer(s)

(15) The candidate will receive a request from the Graduate Research School to nominate a Chair and/or reviewer(s). The Chair and/or reviewer(s) should be identified in consultation with the advisory team, noting that in some AOUs the Chair and/or reviewer(s) will be pre-determined. The Chair/and or reviewer(s) will be reviewed and endorsed by the Principal Advisor and Director of HDR.

Scheduling the Review Meeting

(16) The candidate will be asked to nominate suitable times and dates for their progress review meeting, noting that dates may be pre-determined in some AOUs. The meeting can take place at any time in the research quarter after review documents have been submitted. The review panel and advisory team will indicate their availability and the candidate will then confirm the date and time of the meeting and presentation (if required). Some AOUs may allow a presentation to be delivered at a public forum such a conference, colloquium, or seminar.

Submitting Review Documentation

(17) Candidates will submit review documents by the census date for the research quarter in which the review is due. The review documents will consist of: (a) candidature documents (i.e. candidate statement, Individual Development Plan (IDP) and Portfolio of Activity), and (b) project documents specified by the AOU. Project documents should be submitted to iThenticate prior to submission. The review documents and iThenticate report should be submitted using a my.UQ Progress Review Request at least two weeks prior to the review meeting.

Conducting the Progress Review Meeting

(18) A progress review meeting provides the candidate and their advisory team with an opportunity to discuss the candidate's professional development, research progress and other issues (if any) that need to be addressed. The review meeting also allows the candidate to address any questions raised by the reviewer(s) and to receive verbal feedback on their progress.

(19) The meeting will provide the candidate with an opportunity to present an overview of their progress and to respond to questions from the review panel. Both the candidate and the advisory team will be given the opportunity to meet separately with the panel if they wish to do so. The candidate and advisors should be provided with a verbal summary of the Review Panel's decision before concluding the meeting. The Chair will submit a written report summarising the outcomes within five working days of the meeting. The Director of HDR is to be consulted if further advice is required.

(20) Some AOUs will require candidates to deliver a presentation as part of one or more progress review meetings. These presentations may be delivered in an open format where other members of the academic community are invited to attend and pose questions; or a closed format consisting only of the review panel and/or the advisory team. Candidates are advised to consult local AOU guidelines to determine when a presentation will be required.

Outcomes

(21) Following the review meeting, the Chair will submit a report summarising the feedback of the Review Panel by completing a my.UQ request within five working days of the review meeting. In addition to a general review of the candidate's progress, the Chair may include further feedback and documentation to satisfy local AOU reporting requirements.

(22) The Chair can recommend one of the following outcomes.

Review Successful

(23) This outcome will be recommended if the panel feels the candidate's progress is satisfactory for the stage of candidature. However, the panel may request changes and adjustments and the candidate will be expected to liaise with the advisory team to implement any feedback provided by the Chair and reviewer(s).

Repeat Review

(24) This outcome will be recommended if the panel has significant concerns about the candidate's ability to complete the project within the required time frame. The Review Panel will advise the candidate and advisory team both verbally and in writing that the candidate and/or project requires further development.

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(25) The Chair's report should clearly outline why progress has not been satisfactory and must outline the tasks, timelines, and deliverables the candidate needs to undertake before re-attempting their review. The report should also include constructive advice on strategies to improve performance and outline the support and resources available to the candidate to help them to progress their candidature.

(26) The candidate will be given a maximum of three months FTE for a PhD, or 1.5 months FTE for an MPhil, to address the feedback provided by the Review Panel.

(27) It may be necessary to convene a follow-up meeting after the candidate has revised and resubmitted additional documentation to the panel. The Chair must ensure adequate feedback is provided to the candidate in a final written report confirming the decision made by the Review Panel following the repeat attempt.

Review of Candidature

(28) Candidates are permitted to attempt each review twice. If the repeat attempt is not satisfactory, the Chair and the advisory team will counsel the candidate about their options, which may include a Review of Candidature if sufficient progress has not been made.

(29) The Chair may also initiate a Review of Candidature Request if suitable advisory arrangements can no longer be provided due to the departure of members of the advisory team.

Change of Program

(30) The review panel can also recommend a change of program. This option would be used in cases where the panel approves a transfer from the MPhil to the PhD, the PhD to the MPhil, or a Professional Doctorate to another HDR program. The candidate will submit a Change of HDR Program request via my.UQ and upload this document to support the request.

Transfers

(31) A candidate who is transferring from another institution may be deemed to have completed a review if:

a. proof of completion of an equivalent review elsewhere is provided; or
b. the enrolling AOU makes a case to the Dean, Graduate Research School that, based on the AOU's assessment of the candidate's research work to date, the candidate has demonstrably achieved the standard required for the review(s).

Withdrawal

(32) Candidates who fail to:

a. attempt a progress review within the required timeframe; or
b. demonstrate satisfactory progress at their second review attempt; or
c. submit the thesis by the expected submission date

may be issued with a notice of intention to withdraw in accordance with Higher Degree by Research Candidature Policy.

Candidate Grievances

(33) If a candidate has any concerns in relation to their review or their candidature, a one-on-one meeting should be convened with the Chair and/or the Director of HDR to discuss ways to resolve these concerns.

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Section 4 - Roles and Responsibilities

Director of HDR

(34) The Director of HDR is responsible for providing guidelines to manage progress reviews at the AOU level. These guidelines specify the:

a. configuration and membership of the Progress Review Panel (PRP), including appointing the Chair;
b. format, scope, quality and amount of work submitted for each review;
c. format, timing and duration of the review meeting and presentation (if required) for each review; and
d. timing of written feedback provided by reviewer(s).

(35) The guidelines for each AOU will be approved by the Dean, Graduate Research School and will be made available on the UQ Graduate Research School website. The guidelines will also be communicated at a formal induction session for all commencing candidates.

Panel Chair

(36) The Chair provides academic oversight of the review process and provides a recommendation to the Dean, Graduate Research School about attainment of the review. The Chair can also assume the role of a reviewer. The Chair should be a UQ staff member included on the Principal Advisor Registry and not be a member of the candidate's advisory team. The Chair must hold a degree of a level equivalent to or greater than the program being undertaken by the candidate. When practical it is encouraged that the Chair would be appointed for the duration of candidature and should serve as the Chair of Examiners for the Oral Examination of the candidate.

(37) The Chair will:

a. consider the feedback provided by the advisory team, candidate and reviewer(s);
b. endorse the release of feedback from reviewer(s) to the candidate and advisory team;
c. chair the review meeting and presentation (if required); and
d. provide a Chair's report summarising the outcomes of the review and further work (if any) required by the candidate.

(38) Where practical, it is encouraged that the Chair would be appointed for the duration of candidature and should serve as the Chair of Examiners for the Oral Examination of the candidate.

Reviewer

(39) One or more reviewers are nominated to provide an independent appraisal of the candidate's progress. A reviewer can also serve as the Chair of the review panel. A reviewer is not a member of the candidate's advisory team and where practical, drawn from the UQ community. In cases where this is not feasible (i.e. due to capacity or disciplinary norms) a reviewer may be external. However, external reviewers are generally not remunerated for their time and are not eligible to serve as a Chair.

(40) The reviewer(s) will:

a. provide independent written feedback on the candidate's progress; and
b. attend the review meeting and presentation (if required).

(41) Where practical, reviewers should be appointed for the duration of candidature.

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Candidate

(42) The review is a candidate-led process and so the candidate will:

a. work with their advisory team to nominate a Chair and/or reviewer(s) for endorsement by the Director of HDR after consulting with their advisory team;
b. submit candidature and project documents using a my.UQ Progress Review Request;
c. nominate suitable times for an review meeting and presentation (if required) using a my.UQ Progress Review Request;
d. attend the review meeting and present their research (if required) at the scheduled time and location; and
e. implement feedback in consultation with their advisory team.

(43) Enrolling AOUs will ensure that candidates receive appropriate support from their advisory team prior to and during each progress review.

(44) The Principal Advisor will:

a. assist the candidate to nominate a Chair and/or reviewer(s);
b. review and endorse the nomination of a Chair and/or reviewer(s);
c. submit the Principal Advisor's statement to the Chair;
d. review the candidate’s work prior to submission to the Review Panel; and
e. attend the review meeting and presentation (if required).

Section 5 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(45) Review of, and compliance with, this Procedure is overseen by the Dean, Graduate Research School, and the Academic Board's Higher Degree by Research Sub-Committee.

Section 6 - Recording and Reporting

(46) All candidate records including progress review outcomes and University decisions are filed in the candidate’s electronic record.

Section 7 - Definitions, Terms, and Acronyms

Term	Definition
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
Census Date	Research quarter census date
Dean	Dean of the Graduate Research School or delegate
Director of HDR	Director of Higher Degree Research
AOU	An Academic Organisational Unit that directly enrols HDR candidates.
ECC	Early candidature checkpoint
FTE	Full-time equivalent enrolment
HLO	Higher Degree Liaison Officer
HDR	Higher Degree by Research

Term	Definition
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
ORCID	Open Researcher and Contributor ID
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
Professional Doctorate (research) (PDRes)	A professional doctorate administered by the UQ Graduate Research School where at least two thirds of the program is research.
PRP	Progress Review Panel

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