Faculty of Business and Law

RESEARCH PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCEDURES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date approved:</th>
<th>17 February 2021</th>
<th>Date policy will take effect:</th>
<th>Immediately on approval</th>
<th>Date of Next Review:</th>
<th>3 years from approval</th>
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Approved by: Faculty Executive Committee, 17 February 2021

Author: Senior Manager, Research and Rankings

Responsible School/ Unit: Research Unit, Faculty of Business and Law

Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:
- Higher Degree Research Award Rules
- Higher Degree Research Student Academic Complaints Policy
- Higher Degree Research Supervision and Resources Policy
- Research Proposal Review Guidelines

References & Legislation:
- University Code of Conduct
- Code of Practice – Research
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Research Integrity and Conduct Policy

Audience: Higher Degree Research (HDR) students, HDR Supervisors, Heads of Postgraduate Studies, Faculty Senior Executive, Faculty Research Unit

Expiry date of policy (if applicable): 2023

Relevant AACSB Standard/s: Standard 4

Relevant Strategic Plan/Goals: UOW Strategic Plan 2020-2025 Goal 1

1 Purpose of Policy

1. The Research Proposal Review (RPR) is a key milestone for Higher Degree Research (HDR) students. The RPR process provides an opportunity for HDR students to develop and present a coherent research plan and methodology to Faculty academics and to receive constructive feedback. The Faculty of Business and Law places emphasis on supporting and guiding students through the RPR process whilst maintaining appropriate academic standards.

2. The RPR process also enables the Faculty to determine that adequate resources and appropriate supervision are available to support the HDR candidature.

3. This Procedure is to be read in conjunction with the Higher Degree Research Award Rules, Higher Degree Research Supervision and Resources Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy and UOW Research Proposal Review Guidelines.
4. This Procedure supports the implementation of the UOW Research Proposal Review Guidelines within the Faculty of Business and Law. Specifically, these procedures outline additional Faculty-specific details involved in the preparation, presentation and assessment of the RPR as specified in Section 1.1. The RPR is an important step to ensure that the:
- proposed research project is based on strong academic footing;
- student has the skills required to complete the project at the required standard;
- appropriate supervisory arrangements are in place;
- research can be completed within the appropriate timeframes; and
- aims and objectives of the research can be undertaken adequately with the resources available.

2 Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word/Term</th>
<th>Definition (with examples if required)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADR</td>
<td>Associate Dean (Research)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANCORS</td>
<td>Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security</td>
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<td>EFTSL</td>
<td>Equivalent Full Time Study Load</td>
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<td>FRU</td>
<td>Faculty Research Unit</td>
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<td>GRS</td>
<td>Graduate Research School</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDR Student</td>
<td>Higher degree research student (i.e. PhD, PhD(Int), MPhil, MRes student)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head of School</td>
<td>The Head or Dean of a School in the Faculty of Business and Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>HPS</td>
<td>Head of Postgraduate Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>Intellectual Property</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPhil</td>
<td>Master of Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>RPR</td>
<td>Research Proposal Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>The current schools of the Faculty of Business and Law</td>
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3 Application & Scope
1. This procedure applies to all HDR students, their supervisors and academic units of the Faculty of Business and Law.

4 Timeframe
1. As part of their responsibilities to HDR students outlined in the HDR Supervision and Resources Policy, academic units are expected to conduct the RPR, which is a formal review of the candidate's research proposal.

2. The RPR should be completed early in the candidature, as follows:
   a. between 1.0 and 1.5 EFTSL (1 – 1.5 year full-time enrolment or equivalent) of the thesis component of the degree for doctoral students.
   b. between 0.5 and 1 EFTSL of the thesis component of the degree for Master of Philosophy students.
   c. The Faculty strongly recommends HDR students on a PHD scholarship undertake their RPR at 1 EFTSL.

3. The EFTSL associated with coursework in the MPhil, PhD (Integrated) and professional doctorates should not be counted when calculating when the RPR should take place.
4. Students of the Master of Research do not need to complete a RPR.
5. The FRU will schedule the RPRs at an appropriate time in consultation with the HPS.
6. The Faculty makes provision for HDR students to undertake their RPR outside the timeframe outlined in 4.2, based on academic advice and as approved by the HPS.

5 Composition of Committee
1. All elements of the RPR will be assessed by the RPR Committee.
2. The Associate Dean (Research) has oversight of Committee composition. The HDR Coordinator will implement the composition of the Committee for each RPR as outlined in 5.3 in conjunction with the HPS.
3. The RPR Committee will consist of the following members:
   a. Relevant HPS (Chair)
   b. Relevant Head of School (or representative)
   c. Academic staff member capable of assessing the research proposal
   d. The student’s supervisors
   e. HDR Student Representative (Observer only)
4. The composition of the Committee will ensure that independent members of the committee are one more than the number of supervisors.
5. Where appropriate, given the research project, a person external to the academic or research unit may be nominated to the Committee.
6. An alternative Chair will be appointed by the HOS if the relevant HPS is the supervisor of a student undertaking a RPR.
7. The RPR should not be restricted to members of the RPR Committee and the Faculty will advertise the schedule of the RPR to the Faculty to encourage attendance. Other University community members may attend on invitation of the ADR. Invitations are subject to current WHS advice.

6 Elements of the RPR
1. The RPR comprises two parts, a written research proposal and an oral presentation.

WRITTEN RESEARCH PROPOSAL
2. The HDR student is to submit a written research proposal in line with Attachment I.
3. The written proposal is to be submitted to the HDR Coordinator in Word or PDF format by the due date which will be at least two weeks prior to the date set for the oral presentation.

ORAL PRESENTATION
4. The HDR student will deliver an oral presentation that meets the standards set in section 6.2 of the UOW RPR Guidelines. Specifically the oral presentation should clearly outline the:
   a. Research question(s);
   b. Aim(s) and significance of the project;
   c. Approach;
   d. Originality of the project and its contribution to knowledge; and,
   e. Preliminary literature review (to demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the field of research including the published findings as well as the areas requiring original research).
5. The oral presentation should enable the RPR committee to assess the student’s capacity to:
   a. Clearly articulate their research question;
   b. Explain the significance of their research;
   c. Explain how the research will be conducted; and,
   d. Respond to questions about their research.
6. The date of the oral presentation will be advised by the HDR Coordinator in line with the requirements set out in section 4 of this procedure.
The oral presentation will be undertaken face-to-face. The RPR may be undertaken in an online format if the student is located interstate, internationally or in line with Public Health Orders. The HDR Coordinator will advise the HDR student and Committee members of the procedure for an online presentation as follows:

- For an online oral presentation, the candidate will upload a 20 minute recorded Zoom presentation (which includes PowerPoint presentation slides) to Moodle by the due date which will be between 10-15 working days prior to the RPR Committee meeting date. Committee members will be provided with the link to the Moodle site and watch the presentation prior to the Committee meeting. On the date of the Committee meeting the candidate and the Committee will join an online meeting where the Committee will have 15 minutes to ask the candidate questions as per section 6.10 and 6.11 of the UOW Research Proposal Review Guidelines. The Chair will then ask the candidate to leave the meeting to allow for the Committee discussion.

8. The oral presentation will be 20 minutes.

9. As outlined in section 6.10 and 6.11 of the UOW RPR Guidelines, the Committee will have the opportunity to ask further questions of the student and their supervisor concerning the appropriateness of the research project for the degree, standard of the research plan, adequacy of resources available for the project and appropriateness of existing supervisory arrangements for completion of the project. These considerations will contribute to the committee’s recommendations.

10. The student will have the opportunity to address the committee directly.

11. The Committee will provide constructive criticism and feedback to the HDR student.

**COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT**

12. Following the face-to-face oral presentation or at the online Committee meeting, the Chair will ask the student and any audience members to leave the room (excluding the Student Representative). After the student and audience have left the meeting, the Committee will discuss the student’s written proposal and oral presentation. The Committee will provide recommendations to the HPS regarding how the student has demonstrated the appropriateness of the research project for the degree, standard of the research plan, adequacy of resources available for the project and appropriateness of existing supervisory arrangements for completion of the project.

13. Once the Committee discussion has concluded, the HPS will make the final determination regarding the outcome of the RPR.

14. The HPS will advise the student directly of the outcome within two working days of the RPR Committee meeting.

15. Detailed formal feedback on the appropriate UOW form will be provided to the student, normally within three weeks of the RPR. Though every effort will be made to meet the three week timeframe, at times of high volume, there may be delays in the written report being provided to the student. The HDR student will be informed if there is any likely delay in provision of the written report.

7 Outcomes of the RPR

**SATISFACTORY OUTCOME**

1. If the RPR has been deemed to be satisfactory no further action is required. The relevant HPS will complete the relevant paperwork and the HDR Coordinator will forward it to the Graduate Research School (GRS) to be added to the student’s file.

**UNSATISFACTORY OUTCOME**

2. If the RPR is deemed unsatisfactory the student will be informed that they are required to represent their RPR within three months. The HPS will provide direction regarding areas requiring improvement in order to be successful in the second RPR. The formal advice will be provided on the appropriate UOW form once approved by the Associate Dean (Research).

3. The HDR Coordinator will forward the documentation to the student and the GRS to be added to the student’s file. The GRS will then write to the student to formally notify them of the outcome of their first RPR.
Representation

4. Consistent with the expectation of the first RPR, for the second RPR students will need to submit a revised written research proposal and make an oral presentation to a RPR Committee by the due date.

5. Though there is the intention to keep the panel consistent with the first RPR, the members of the Committee may or may not be the same depending on staff availability.

6. The procedure for the second RPR will be the same as those outlined in section 6 of these procedures. In addition, the revised written proposal and oral presentation should highlight how they have addressed and achieved the improvements recommended by the Committee the first RPR. All Committee members (including the supervisors) will complete the RPR Assessment Rubric, following the same procedure as for the first RPR representation.

7. At the conclusion of second RPR, the panel will make one of the following recommendations:
   a. Allocate a satisfactory outcome for the RPR; or
   b. Allocate an unsatisfactory outcome for the RPR and
      i. Downgrade the student’s enrolment to a Master of Philosophy;
      ii. Place the student on probation (see section 3.5 of these guidelines) for a designated period;
      iii. Make changes to the supervisory team;
      iv. Refer the student to RESH900/901 Fundamentals for HDR Writing; or
      v. Recommend to the Dean of Graduate Research that the student be discontinued (see section 9 of these procedures).

8. The completed RPR report must be signed off by the HPS and lodged with the GRS. A copy will also be kept by the Faculty Research Unit.

9. If the second RPR is deemed unsatisfactory, the RPR Committee will make a recommendation to the Associate Dean (Research) regarding the student's continued candidature. The Associate Dean (Research) will refer this request, with their comments, to the Dean of Graduate Research who will make a final determination.

8 Probation

1. If the student is placed on probation, a probationary supervisor will be appointed by the HPS.

2. A meeting will be held with the student, the probationary supervisor and current supervisors, to define the milestones and timeframes to be completed.

3. A written copy of these milestones will be provided to the supervisors, students and GRS.

4. These students need to be managed as per the probation process and not be required to represent their RPR for a third time while on probation.

5. Students who successfully complete probation must present their RPR within 0.5 EFTSL, or one session of completing probation.

6. In the case of a student who does not complete probation successfully, the Associate Dean (Research) will make a decision on the student’s continued candidature which will be referred to the Dean of Research for a final decision.

9 Discontinuation

1. In the case of a recommendation for discontinuation, the RPR panel should make a recommendation to the Associate Dean (Research).

2. If the Associate Dean (Research) supports the recommendation, they will refer the RPR report and discontinuation recommendation to the Dean of Research.

3. The Dean of Research will review the report and any other associated information.

4. If the Dean of Research supports the recommendation for discontinuation, they will write to the student to inform them of their discontinuation.

5. The student will have 20 working days to appeal their discontinuation, as per the HDR Student Academic Complaints Policy.
10 Degree Upgrade

6. If the candidate wishes to upgrade from an MPhil to a PhD degree they can do this either as part of the RPR process or, if they have successfully completed their RPR, as a separate presentation. If the candidate is planning to apply for an upgrade as part of the RPR they will need to inform the FRU immediately when they are contacted about scheduling the RPR. The process is similar to a normal RPR, except for the following:
   a. The candidate must have completed the required coursework components of the degree
   b. The candidate must have completed approximately 9 months (0.75 EFTSL) of the thesis component of their degree
   c. The candidate’s supervisor must complete the HDR Course Transfer Report
   d. In the written proposal, the candidate will need to include 1-2 chapters of their thesis as it stands at the time of the review. This will be additional to the word count outlined in Attachment I.

7. If a candidate combines their application to upgrade with their RPR, then the review determines both assessment of progress in the research degree and the outcome of the upgrade.

11 Grievance and Appeals Against Outcome

1. HDR Students who believe they have a grievance with the outcome of their RPR should consult the HDR Student Academic Complaints Policy.

12 Roles & Responsibilities

Associate Dean (Research):
- To implement the Research Proposal Review and Probation assessment processes (when needed) for HDR candidates within the Academic Units for which they have responsibility.
- To ensure that the proposed research project is appropriate for the award and to the discipline area.
- Maintains oversight of this procedure
- To foster a supportive environment for HDR students.

Head of Postgraduate Studies:
- To implement the Research Proposal Review and Probation assessment processes (when needed) for HDR candidates within the Academic Units for which they have responsibility.
- To ensure that the proposed research project is appropriate for the award and to the discipline area.
- To foster a supportive environment for HDR students.
- Undertake responsibilities under this procedure to ensure fair and equitable outcomes.

Faculty Research Unit:
- Provision of policy and procedure advice to the RPR Committee.
- Provision of support to the ADR and HPS in the execution of their duties.
- Management of the administrative support to the RPR process.
- Escalate matters to the ADR when they contravene UOW or Faculty policy or procedures.
- Foster a supportive environment for HDR students.

HDR Coordinator:
In addition to the role and responsibility of the FRU, the HDR Coordinator will:
- Provide administrative support to this procedure.
- Undertakes responsibilities as outlined in sections 4, 5, 6 and 7.
- Support the Heads of Postgraduate Studies in undertaking their duties.

HDR Student:
- Consult with their supervisors in preparation for their RPR.
- Respond to feedback from their supervisors and address any issues that have been raised.
- Prepare the appropriate written and oral research proposal presentation as outlined in these procedures.
- Submit written proposal by the due date.
- Respond appropriately to questions and concerns raised by the RPR Committee.
Supervisors:
- To foster a supportive environment for HDR students.
- Provide support and timely feedback to the HDR student in the preparation for their RPR.
- Complete the RPR assessment rubric as outlined in the procedures.

RPR Committee:
- To foster a supportive environment for HDR candidates.
- Undertake responsibilities on the Committee in accordance with the relevant UOW and Faculty policies and procedures.
- Provide constructive feedback to HDR students on their RPR.
- Complete the RPR assessment rubric as outlined in the procedures.

HDR Student Representative:
- Observe the RPR presentation to uphold a fair RPR process for the HDR student.
- Observe UOW and Faculty policies and procedures, whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality when needed.

13 Version Control and Change History

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<th>Version Control</th>
<th>Date Effective</th>
<th>Approved By</th>
<th>Amendment</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17 February 2021</td>
<td>Faculty Executive Committee – 17 February 2021</td>
<td>First BAL RPR procedure</td>
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ATTACHMENT 1: Written Research Proposal Template

1. The written research proposal should not be more than 30 pages (maximum of 8,000 words). For the School of Law, normally the word limit should include approximately 5,000 word literature review, excluding footnotes and bibliography.

2. A title page (with full name, current thesis title, names of supervisors, word count and date of review)

3. Abstract (not included in word count)

4. Table of contents for the written Research Proposal (not included in word count)

5. Research plan that includes:
   a. Information about the projects background, design, methods, hypotheses (if applicable)
   b. Theoretical framework/approach
   c. Outline of the thesis chapters
   d. The identification of any ethical, conflicts of interest, IP and safety issues relevant to the project and how these will be addressed, and any potential problems likely to impede progress and suggest solutions to these problems.
   e. Preliminary literature review as outlined in section 6.7 of the UOW RPR Guidelines.
   f. Draft timelines that include a research timeline for the duration of the candidature including key milestones. Ensuring that any planned fieldwork or scholarly activities are factored in up to the submission of the thesis.
   g. A statement of resources required to complete the project including a detailed budget and in line with section 6.8 and 6.9 of the UOW RPR Guidelines.

6. A Turnitin report

7. COVID-19 contingency plan

8. Appropriate referencing following relevant School referencing style