



ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES (HDR)

Date first approved: 22 September 2017	Date of effect: 22 September 2017	Date last amended: (refer to Version Control Table) 11 January 2021	Date of Next Review: 1 December 2024
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Supporting documents, procedures & forms:	HDR Award Rules Course Finder English language requirements web-page		
Relevant Legislation & External Documents:	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015		
Audience:	Public		

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1 Purpose

1. The Admissions Procedures Higher Degree Research (HDR) supports the admission provisions in the HDR Award Rules.
2. These Procedures are designed to ensure that admission decisions and processes are applied fairly and consistently, and are designed to ensure that admitted students have the academic preparation and proficiency in English needed to participate in their intended study, and no known limitations that would be expected to impede their progression and completion.
3. These criteria and requirements are summarised on Course Finder, which also describes the application procedure.

2 Scope

1. These Procedures apply to admission to HDR courses.
2. These procedures apply to all teaching locations with the exception of UOW Dubai which has its own Admissions Procedures (HDR).

3 Definitions

1. Refer to HDR Award Rules.

4 Transparency of Admissions

1. The University is committed to publishing transparent information about its admission requirements and selections outcomes.
2. The University will ensure that accurate and timely information is publically available to prospective students to enable them to make informed decisions about their university studies. This information will be written in plain English and include details about courses on offer, including the course design, prerequisites, assumed knowledge, when and where courses/units are offered, mode of delivery, application dates, arrangements for recognition of prior learning, standing credit transfer arrangements, known charges associated with the course, any mandatory placement requirement, pathways to employment and eligibility for registration to practice where applicable.
3. For each course of HDR study, potential supervisors, HPS, ADR's in the relevant course owning Faculty will ensure that both the academic requirement for admission to the course and any additional criteria and requirements for admission are published in Course Finder.
4. While Course Finder specifies the standard admission pathways for HDR degrees together with the minimum GPA or WAM requirements for previously completed qualifications, non-standard admission pathways, based on alternative forms of evidence of research ability, are also possible.

5 Assessment of Applications

1. ADR, HPS and potential supervisors use the online HDR student system to assess student applications.
2. The basis by which admission is granted to HDR courses is recorded on the online assessment form.



3. All evidence considered in the assessment process should form part of the student's official application and be verifiable.

Applications for Admission

4. Applications for admission to a course by direct application follow the procedure prescribed by UOW outlined at <http://www.uow.edu.au/future/>.
5. Applications for admission to a HDR course delivered at UOW-Dubai follows the procedure prescribed for that campus.
6. Applicants making an application for admission to a course may be required to pay an application fee.

Processing times for HDR student applications

7. HPS and ADRs should endeavour to process applications within 30 business days. Potential students need sufficient time to make decisions about study plans, obtain their visa and move to UOW.
8. Delays commonly occur due to the non-completion of the online student record, by principal and co-supervisors. If this happens the HPS should follow up with supervisors by phone or email.
9. If a HPS is satisfied that co-supervision is available for the candidate, the offer can be made without completion of the co-supervisor section in the HDR online system.
10. The ADR can also act as HPS in the online HDR system to ensure timely processing.

Standard admissions pathways; acceptable tolerances

11. Students apply for entry to UOW's postgraduate research degrees on the basis of qualifications gained from one or more of many hundreds of world universities.
12. The degree of relevant research content and training present in these qualifications will vary significantly. Due to this diversity of qualifications and variation in their relevance it is acceptable to reduce the minimum GPA cut-off, by up to 0.3 and WAM cut-off by up to 5%.
13. The reasons for making such a variation to the cut-offs must be stated on the online student record.

Example: An applicant for PhD has a coursework Masters degree with GPA of 3.2/4. The minimum entry requirement is a GPA of 3.5/4. However the applicant presents evidence that the qualification includes a substantial and relevant research project. As the scores are within the allowed tolerances and additional evidence (see 15 for examples of this additional evidence) is provided a PhD offer can be made to the candidate.

Evidence for non-standard admission pathways

14. Candidates can be admitted on the basis of alternative evidence of research ability.
15. These include research experience, professional reporting, independently reviewed research publications, research related prizes or awards and candidate performance in an interview.
16. Admission may be recommended on the basis of a combination of qualifications (that do not meet the criteria for entry via a standard pathway) plus alternative evidence of research ability.
17. The basis for a non-standard admission must be noted on the online student record.



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Example: An applicant for PhD has a coursework undergraduate degree with a high GPA but little evidence of formal research training. However the applicant has worked in a research laboratory and published a number of journal papers. A PhD offer can be made to the candidate.

Candidate interviews

18. In cases where the HPS and/or supervisors are uncertain about making an offer a candidate interview with the potential supervisors should be undertaken.
19. This interview can be conducted electronically, via phone or Skype.
20. Performance in an interview can be used as evidence to refuse admission or as additional evidence to make an admission offer.
21. The interview should be noted in the HDR online system.

Verification of evidence

22. Properly certified degree certificates, transcripts, award and prize certificates must all be included as part of the online application. Copies of any research publications with publisher branding and publication evidence must also be included as part of the application.

6 English Language Requirements for Admission

English Language Tests

1. Satisfactory performance in an accepted English language test will meet the University's English language requirements, provided the test was taken no more than two years prior to the commencement of the UOW course.
2. UOW recognises a number of English language tests, the primary one being the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The list of accepted tests is provided at <https://www.uow.edu.au/future/international/requirements/english/index.html#previous>.
3. UOW sets minimum IELTS (or equivalent) performance standards for each course which are listed on Course Finder.
4. UOW determines IELTS equivalencies based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and benchmarking data for comparable Australian universities. The approved list of equivalence is provided at: <https://www.uow.edu.au/future/international/requirements/english/index.html#previous>.
5. This list is maintained by the Admissions team within the Student and Accommodation Services Division and is reviewed at least every three years in consultation with an English language expert.
6. All applicants for admission to a UOW course delivered either in Australia or overseas must provide evidence that their English language ability meets the minimum requirements for admission.
7. English language requirements for each course are determined by the Faculty Education Committee (FEC) and approved by the Academic Senate as part of the course approval process. They are formally reviewed every five years as part of the course review process. Any variations outside the five year course review cycle must be endorsed by the Faculty Education Committee and approved by the Delegated Authority.



Faculty Assessment of English language proficiency

8. Where English language test results are borderline or where alternative evidence of English language proficiency exists, an application may be referred to the relevant Faculty for additional assessment.
9. The Faculty may request additional information be submitted by the applicant to support this assessment of English language proficiency. Examples of evidence that may be taken into consideration include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Interview with student with an independent corroboration of skills where practical.
 - b. Sample of written work attested to by an independent source.
 - c. Evidence of work experience requiring English language proficiency.
 - d. Evidence of study taught and examined solely in English but less than the required two years' full time duration.
 - e. IELTS test results within a 0.5 margin in any band (or equivalent for alternative English language tests).
10. The outcome of the Faculty assessment will be recorded and, where deemed as satisfying the English language requirements, approved by the Delegated Authority.
11. In such cases, if English language proficiency is approved, then a condition should be placed on the candidate's offer that the subject RESH900/901 Fundamentals of HDR writing be completed after enrolment and before their Research Proposal Review.

Previous Study in English

12. Previous study in English can also satisfy UOW's English language proficiency requirements. The specific requirements for HDR admission are:
 - a. within the last five years have completed a degree, of at least two years duration AND one of the three conditions b, c, d, listed below:
 - b. the degree was taught and assessed entirely in English and the institution is located in a country where the official language is English. Qualifying countries are Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Canada, Fiji, Ireland, Jamaica, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Tonga, Trinidad & Tobago, UK and USA; OR
 - c. the degree was taught and assessed entirely in English, but the institution is not located in one of the qualifying countries listed in rule b. above. Acceptable evidence must be provided, such as an official university web page or letter from the Registrar's office (or equivalent) stating the degree was taught entirely in English; OR
 - d. the degree was completed in an Approved country and a major assignment or thesis was written in English. Approved countries are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.
13. The basis for accepting this evidence must be stated on the online student record.

7 Making and Accepting Offers

1. Applicants are sent a formal notification of outcome, which will be one of the following:
 - a. an unconditional offer;



- b. a conditional offer;
 - c. a packaged offer to two or more courses of study, such as as a BRes – MRes offer; or
 - d. no offer.
2. An offer of a place in a course is issued to the successful applicant in writing using a UOW offer letter template approved by the Delegated Authority.
3. The offer letter is the University's contract with the student and will set out clearly the student's rights and obligations, including all charges associated with the proposed course; as well as information on changes to or withdrawal from offers, acceptance and enrolment, course commencement date, tuition protection and refunds of charges.
4. In addition, the offer letter will set out any particular conditions of enrolment that might apply to particular courses of study, such as health requirements for students undertaking clinical work, requirements for security checks, particular language requirements and particular requirements of work placements.
5. Only delegated officers may make offers of admissions as specified in the Delegations of Authority Policy.
6. On receipt of a written offer of admission to a course, an applicant will either:
 - a. accept the offer;
 - b. apply to defer entry where allowed within the course rules;
 - c. decline the offer; or
 - d. take no action, in which case the offer will lapse after the specified period.
7. To accept an offer following direct application, the applicant must follow the instructions specified in the written offer.
8. Students are admitted to a course and enrol in subjects that form part of a course. Once admitted to a course, it is common usage to refer to a student as being registered for the course.
9. The admission process will be deemed to be completed when an applicant has accepted an offer of admission and enrolled in subjects.
10. If an applicant fails to enrol in any subject in the first session of the course into which they have been admitted, and has not been granted a deferral or leave of absence, the offer of admission will be considered to have lapsed.

Packaged offers

11. A packaged offer of admission may be granted where a student does not meet the University's direct entry requirements or where an integrated undergraduate and postgraduate offer is made.
12. Students will be admitted to the next level of study only once their eligibility to progress has been confirmed. A new application is not required; however the University may require the student to indicate that they are seeking to be admitted to the next level in line with their original offer.
13. A packaged offer may include an offer to study a relevant English language course at UOW College Australia (UOWC) and a conditional offer to study a formal course at the University. Students gain entry to the University course on completion of the UOWC course(s) at the required level.



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14. A packaged offer involving completion of a UOWC English language course and a University course will be issued by the Delegated Authority on behalf of the University.
15. A packaged offer may also be a Bachelor of Research, Master of Research, for domestic students, where upon completion of the BRes students enter the second year of the MRes.

8 Deferring an Offer

1. An applicant, who has received an offer of a place, may request to defer their offer for up to 12 months, subject to clause 8.2 below.
2. Applicants must submit a formal request for deferral online at <https://www.uow.edu.au/future/youroffer/index.html>
3. Applicants accepted for deferral will be issued a new offer letter with a new commencement date.
4. Applicants who do not take up the deferred offer within the 12 months will be required to submit a new application for admission.
5. The University may, at its discretion, withdraw a deferred offer if the applicant fails to enrol in the deferred course by the enrolment date or fails to comply with any requirements prescribed by the University in relation to the deferment.
6. An applicant taking up their deferred offer will be admitted to the current curriculum of their course, provided that the course has not be discontinued, in which case the applicant will be offered admission to a comparable course, where available.

9 Re-Admission

1. If a person has:
 - a. discontinued a course of study, or
 - b. failed to enrol or re-enrol in subjects by the last date for enrolment/re-enrolment
2. an application to resume studies in the course will be treated as a new application for admission. This means it will be considered in competition with all other applications for admission to the course in accordance with the normal selection process for the course concerned.

10 Record Keeping

1. The University will maintain appropriate records of the basis of admission of applicants so that:
 - a. the effectiveness of admission criteria can be evaluated; and
 - b. the performance of student cohorts by admissions pathway can be monitored and reviewed.
2. Documentation supporting admissions decisions must be retained according to the NSW State Records Act 2005 – General Retention and Disposal Authority – University Records GDA23.

11 Monitoring and Review

1. The Academic Quality and Standards Sub-Committee will regularly monitor and review policies, procedures and decisions relating to admission to courses and report on this monitoring and review via the University Education Committee to Academic Senate.



2. Each Faculty Education Committee will regularly monitor and review course selection requirements with respect to the performance of student cohorts by admissions pathway for courses owned by that Faculty to ensure that they remain current and valid for each course; and report on the results of this monitoring and review to the Academic Quality and Standards Sub-Committee.

12 Appeal Process

1. An applicant not selected for or refused admission has the right of appeal against the decision on the following grounds:
 - a. the applicant satisfies all University and course selection requirements;
 - b. the application for admission was lodged on time, in the correct manner, with all relevant documentation included to enable the application to be assessed;
 - c. the applicant was not selected due to the incorrect application of the HDR Award Rules, Admissions Procedures (HDR) or other relevant University policies; and
 - d. the applicant believes the University has not taken account of all relevant circumstances in arriving at a decision to refuse admission.
2. An applicant must lodge a written statement specifying the grounds on which an appeal is being made to the Dean of Graduate Research within 10 working days of receiving notification that their application for admission has been unsuccessful.
3. If the written appeal statement meets the conditions specified in clauses 12.1 and 12.2, the Dean of Graduate Research or nominee will consider the appeal and review the admission application in consultation with staff that processed the application for admission or made an application decision. In the case of an appeal against a decision of the Dean of Graduate Research, the Dean will nominate the Student Ombudsman as their nominee.
4. Upon consideration of the appeal, the Student Ombudsman will determine the appeal as follows:
 - a. appeal denied; or
 - b. appeal upheld and
 - i. make an offer of admission to the course instance for which the application was made; or
 - ii. make an offer of admission in the next available course instance.
5. The Dean of Graduate Research or nominee must notify the applicant of the outcome of the appeal within 20 working days of the University receiving the written appeal.

13 Conflict of Interest

1. University staff responsible for making admission decisions and offers of admission must not participate in any decisions affecting applicants where a potential or actual conflict of interest arises due to a close personal relationship with an applicant; in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy.

14 General Savings Clause

1. To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any particular case, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) may relax any provisions of this Procedure.



15 Roles & Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of HPS and supervisors to ensure that all Faculty admissions practice is compliant with UOW entry standards as outlined in these guidelines and that all variances to standard entry requirements are within tolerable limits.
2. It is the responsibility of the ADR in each Faculty to oversee the admission of HDR students and to resolve any conflicts arising from the application of these guidelines.
3. The Dean of Graduate Research is responsible for the application of these guidelines across UOW and will conduct all reviews and updates as per the UOW guidelines update timeframe.
4. Positions with Delegated Authority to make admissions decisions are specified in the Delegations of Authority Policy.
5. Broad responsibilities for admission processes and decision making are as detailed below:

Academic Senate is responsible for:

6. Approval and re-approval of course-level admission requirements as part of the course approval and review cycle.
7. Quality assurance of admission processes and procedures by receiving reports and making recommendations to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Faculties and Student and Accommodation Services Division as appropriate.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) is responsible for:

8. Instructing that no further offers are to be made and approve the withdrawal of current offers to a HDR course for which the Strategic Course Development Committee has accepted a notice of discontinuation;
9. Approval of the re-admission of a student excluded from UOW or another institution, on the recommendation of the relevant Faculty;
10. Approval of changes to course admission requirements made outside the course approval and re-approval cycle, including changes to minimum English language requirements.

The Faculty, through the appropriate Delegated Authority, is responsible for:

11. Recommending course-level admission requirements for approval by Academic Senate as part of the course approval and review cycle and, outside that cycle, by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation);
12. Assessment of admission applications which require discretionary decision making;
13. Approval of an alternative assessment of English language proficiency;
14. Approval of a course transfer;
15. Record keeping of selection processes and decisions undertaken within the Faculty;
16. Monitoring and review of course admission requirements with respect to the performance of student cohorts by admission pathways for courses managed by that Faculty.

The Dean of Graduate Research is responsible for:

17. Determining appeals made against an admissions decision.



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UOW College Australia, through the appropriate Delegated Authority, is responsible for:

18. Making offers to students who meet the admission requirements for a packaged offer which involves a UOW College English language course.



16 Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment
1	22 September 2017	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)	Formalisation of existing guidelines.
2	22 September 2017	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)	Amendment to English language proficiency requirements.
3	16 August 2019	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)	Amendment to include information contained within the Admissions Procedures (Coursework)
4	1 January 2020	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)	Changed from Guidelines to Procedures. Major amendments made to improve transparency and clarity.
5	9 June 2020	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)	Administrative amendments to reflect change from Dean of Research to Dean of Graduate Research
6	11 January 2021	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)	Administrative amendments to reflect divisional and faculty realignments.