



# Higher Degree Research Annual Progress Report (HDR APR)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT:

**APR** - Annual Progress Report

**HPS** - Head of Postgraduate Studies

**LOA** - Leave of Absence

**GRS** - Graduate Research School

**SOLS** - Student Online Service

**ARC** - Australian Research Council

**HDR** - Higher Degree Research

**DOGR** - Dean of Graduate Research

**SMP** - Student Management Package

**WUPA** - Wollongong Postgraduate Student  
Association

## 1. WHAT DOES THE APR INVOLVE?

The Annual Progress Report contains 4 sections:

- the HDR Candidate's Report, completed by HDR candidates,
- the Supervisor Report on HDR Candidate's Progress, completed by the principal supervisor,
- the HPS recommendation, completed by the HPS,
- the AD-HDR recommendation, completed by the AD-HDR, but not in all instances.

Before completing their section of the APR, candidates and supervisors should meet to discuss progress, impediments, and the plan for next year. The APR also displays candidature details such as the faculty, academic unit, supervisors, accumulated EFTSL, candidature enrolment records for the current year and details of Leave of Absences.

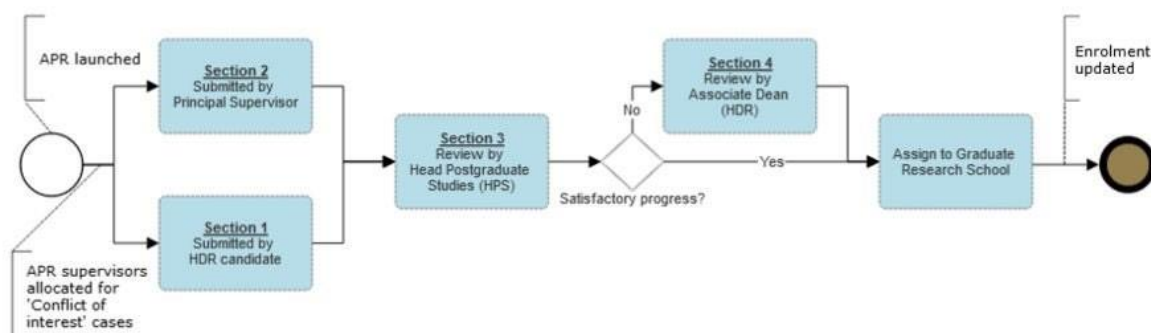


Figure 1: APR workflow process

The HDR Candidate's Report and the Supervisor's Report can be completed concurrently and submitted to the HPS for review. These reports are strictly confidential and available only to the HPS and AD-HDR. That is, **from 2023, the HDR Candidate's Report is not visible to the supervisor, and the Supervisor's Report on HDR Candidate's Progress is not visible to the candidate.**

## 2. WHAT QUESTIONS WILL BE ASKED IN THE 'HDR CANDIDATE'S REPORT' SECTION OF THE APR?

The HDR Candidate's Report comprises 9 sections

1. Ethics and Research Integrity
2. Defence Export Controls Permit
3. Research Outcome and Achievements for [current year]
4. Industry Engagement or Partnership
5. Problems and Issues affecting Research Progress
6. Research Plan for [next year]
7. Satisfaction Ratings
8. Time Management
9. International Conferences

The questions under each of the sections are presented below for reference:

## 1. ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

**Which of the following modules or training on Ethics and Research Integrity have you completed? The current elements of mandatory training are:**

Research Ethics (Epigeum/Moodle) or approved alternative (human ethics)  
compASS Phase 1 online training (animal ethics)  
UOW online animal ethics training  
Animal handling and welfare training Biosafety  
induction course

**Research Integrity training is not mandated, the current options are:**

Research Integrity (Epigeum/Moodle)  
Introduction to Research Integrity & Ethics (Epigeum/Moodle) Other

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**Does your research involve obtaining information from people or conducting experiments on people - in which case you need ethics approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee?**

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**Does your research involve experiments with vertebrate animals - in which case you need ethics approval from an Animal Research Ethics Committee?**

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**Does your research involve biological materials or genetic manipulation - in which case [you must read the information in this link](#) and may need approval from the Institutional Biosafety Committee?**

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**Have you already obtained approvals from the relevant ethics or biosafety committees?**

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## 2. DEFENCE EXPORT CONTROLS PERMIT

**Are you collaborating with parties overseas as part of your research - in which case complete a Defence DSGL Activity Assessment to check your work does not require a Defence Export Controls Permit? (For information on Defence Control Act, visit URL: <https://www.uow.edu.au/research-and-innovation/researcher-support/ethics/dec/>)?**

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## 3. RESEARCH OUTCOME AND ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2023

**Please specify the research activities you have completed since your last annual progress report or since you first enrolled.**

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**Please list all your achievements, including publications, awards, or anything else you have accomplished.**

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## 4. INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT OR PARTNERSHIP

**Over the last 12 months, specify how your research has, if at all, been commercialised or shaped government policy, industry, communities, or other organisations, besides universities or their subsidiaries.**

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**Are any members of your supervision panel employed at an organisation that could benefit from your research?**

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## 5. PROBLEMS AND ISSUES AFFECTING RESEARCH PROGRESS

What are some problems that impeded progress in your research?

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Have you discussed these impediments with your supervisor?

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If these problems have not been addressed, record actions you and your supervision panel will initiate to solve, or at least begin to solve, these impediments.

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## 6. RESEARCH PLAN FOR 2024

Have you changed your research design substantially since the last annual progress review?

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Have you changed the title of your research?

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Specify the research activities you plan to complete over the next 12 months.

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Research plan attached?

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What skills or qualities would you like to develop over the next 12 months - such as research skills or communication skills? How will you develop these skills or qualities?

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## 7. SATISFACTION RATINGS

To what extent are you satisfied with (1 - Very Dissatisfied, 2, 3, 4, 5 - Very Satisfied)

Your Principal Supervisor:

Your Co-Supervisors:

The level of compliance with the Commencement of Candidature form:

The degree to which your supervisors inform you of recent advances or discoveries in your field:

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On the items in which you were not satisfied to a large or very large extent, please explain your concerns.

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## 8. TIME MANAGEMENT

On average, how many hours do you devote to your studies each week?

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On average, how many hours a month do you meet at least one of your supervisors - in person, over telephone, or in videoconference?

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How frequently do you meet with your supervisors?

Weekly

Fortnightly

Monthly

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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On average, how many hours of paid work do you complete each week?

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### 9. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

If you participated in any international conferences, international competitions or research experiences in 2023, please detail them here

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## 3. WHAT QUESTIONS WILL BE ASKED IN THE 'SUPERVISOR(S) REPORT ON HDR CANDIDATE'S PROGRESS' SECTION OF THE APR?

The 'SUPERVISOR(S) REPORT ON HDR CANDIDATE'S PROGRESS' comprises of 11 questions presented below for your reference:

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1. To what extent are you satisfied with (1 - Very Dissatisfied, 2, 3, 4, 5 - Very Satisfied)

The progress of this candidate:

The research skills of this candidate:

The time and effort this candidate has devoted to this research:

The feasibility of this research:

The level of compliance with the Commencement of Candidature form:

The extent to which the candidate conducts research independently and creatively:

The extent to which the candidate conducts research responsibly:

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2. On the items in which you were not satisfied to a large or very large extent, please explain your concerns.

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3. Have you discussed these concerns with the candidate?

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4. What is your plan to address these concerns? Please discuss this plan with the co-supervisors.

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5. How do you feel the School, Institute, or Faculty could help address these concerns and support the candidate better?

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6. How do you feel the Graduate Research School could help address these concerns and support the candidate better?

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7. Have you confirmed the candidate has read this [webpage](#) around workplace safety - and followed the protocols that are relevant to their research?

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8. Could this research possibly be used to support conventional, chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons overseas - or the delivery of these weapons? If uncertain, complete the [Defence DSGL Activity Assessment](#) to check.

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9. In 2024, for any extended period, will you be unable to supervise this candidate?

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10. The likely date of submission of the thesis is \_\_\_\_\_

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11. Supervisor recommendations

**Probation recommended** (I believe the candidate should be assigned a period of intensive supervision, sometimes called probation. Choose this option if you believe the concerns you raised in Question 2 are very unlikely to be addressed satisfactorily.)

**Progress review by AD-HDR** (I believe the AD-HDR should be granted an opportunity to read this progress report, consult the supervisors, and suggest actions on how to proceed. Choose this option if you believe the concerns you raised in Question 2 are unlikely to be addressed satisfactorily.)

**No action needed** (Choose this option if you believe the candidate has made satisfactory progress.)

**Other actions, please specify**

**Regardless, supervisors should**

- **implement the actions they recommended in Question 4**
- **encourage the candidate to implement the actions that they proposed in the annual progress report**
- **request for candidature variations (such as leave of absence, change of study pattern, change of supervision, etc.) by following the instructions [here](#).**

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#### 4. HOW DO I ACCESS THE ONLINE APR?

HDR candidates can access APR through SOLS from October each year. Candidates can login to SOLS using their student email username and password and click the HDR Annual Progress Report link to view the active APR. Once the APR is ready for candidate's inputs, the candidate will receive a SOLSMail message. Candidate will receive SOLSMail notifications when the supervisor, HPS or the AD-HDR submits their report or recommendations.

To access the APR, each principal supervisor, HPS, and AD-HDR can click the "APR" link in SMP Central. Email messages are automatically sent to academic staff in these roles when they need to complete or update their APR sections. For more information, "Guidelines for completing online APRs" will be sent to candidates, supervisors, HPSs, and AD-HDRs.

#### 5. WHO NEEDS TO COMPLETE AN APR?

Unless they have already submitted their thesis, all HDR candidates **must** complete the APR. To illustrate why, the APR is even relevant to candidates who

- are on Leave of Absence so they communicate their research plan for the next year;
- are planning a Leave of Absence so their Leave of Absence can be approved;
- are currently completing their coursework so they can discuss how they may commence their research afterwards;
- commenced this session so they can outline their research plan for the future.

Candidates who have submitted their thesis and have received a resolution of 'Further Period of Study' from the Thesis Examination Committee are also expected to complete their APR.

#### 6. WHY IS AN APR NECESSARY?

The APR grants candidates an opportunity to

- report problems or challenges they are experiencing—enabling supervisors, schools, faculties, and the GRS an opportunity to address these barriers as well as helping candidates justify tuition waivers in the future, and
- set goals and plans, enhancing motivation and progress.

The APR grants the university an opportunity to

- collect data that must be reported to the government and can help the universe mitigate risks,
- identify candidates who have not progressed sufficiently—warranting support, remedial actions, or intensive supervision

#### 7. SHOULD I RECORD ANY DISABILITIES?

The University attempts to reasonably accommodate candidates who report disabilities, enabling these individuals to study in a conducive environment, devoid of discrimination, so they can fulfil their potential (Disability Policy – Student, 2008). The University also encourages candidates to disclose the nature and extent of their disability with a Disability Liaison Officer as well as their HDR Supervisor to arrange this support.

#### 8. WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS CAN BE MADE?

After assessing the progress of candidates, Principal Supervisors may recommend one of the following options:

- a. **Probation recommended:** If this option is recommended, HDR candidates will be assigned a period of intensive supervision or probation following a review by the HPS and AD-HDR.
- b. **Progress review by AD-HDR:** If this option is recommended, the AD-HDR will read the APR responses and may suggest other measures, such as additional workshops.
- c. **No action is needed:** If this option is recommended, the supervisor confirms that no intervention is necessary.
- d. **Other actions, please specify:** Supervisors may also recommend other actions, such as additional workshops, in the textbox that appears below the option.

## 9. WHAT IS PROBATION?

Probation is a period of intensive supervision, designed to support the performance of the candidate. During this period, candidates must demonstrate progress against specified milestones. See these [HDR Progress Guidelines](#)

If the APR report indicates unsatisfactory progress, the AD-HDR or delegate will consult the candidate, supervisor, HPS, and potentially other staff—and may recommend a period of probation to the Dean of Graduate Research. HDR candidates are granted 20 days if they want to object to this arrangement.

If the probation is approved, the AD-HDR will appoint a senior academic to set milestones, assist the candidate, and appraise research progress, usually for 3 to 6 months. At the end of probation, the senior academic may recommend

- that the candidate may continue without probation because progress was adequate,
- changes to enrolment pattern, such as Leave of Absence,
- a change of supervisor,
- a further period of probation,
- downgrading the course to a Masters,
- discontinuation of enrolment,
- other appropriate actions

HDR candidates or supervisors may appeal the outcome, in accordance with the HDR Student Academic Complaints Policy.

## 10. HOW CAN I REPORT INFORMATION THAT I DO NOT WANT A SUPERVISOR OR CANDIDATE TO SEE?

Only the HPS or designate and AD-HDR can view the responses of candidates or supervisors to the APR; that is, the APR is now confidential. So, candidates and supervisors should feel safe to respond honestly in this report. If a HPS or AD-HDR also supervises some candidates, a delegate will be arranged to read the responses of these candidates instead to maintain this confidentiality.

Besides reporting your concerns in the APR, candidates who are experiencing challenges or problems can also

- contact other supervisors in their team, their HPS, or their AD-HDR if necessary;
- convey anonymous feedback to the Dean of Graduate Research using this [link](#);
- contact the Wollongong University Postgraduate Association or Student Advisory Committee—student representatives who support candidates
- contact Student Services.

All these individuals will strive to assist you and help you to feel as confident and enthusiastic as possible.

## 11. WHAT HAPPENS IF AN APR IS NOT COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED?

To fulfil industry standards, **candidates cannot be re-enrolled and stipends cannot be continued if they have not completed and submitted an APR.** If you are unable to complete the APR within the timeframe, advise the GRS as soon as possible to explore other arrangements or options.

## 12. WHAT IS THE ONE WARNING RULE?

HDR candidates who do not complete the *HDR Candidate's Report* section by the due date will receive **one written warning.** If they do not heed this warning, their candidature may be discontinued. They will then be able to re-enrol only if they submit

a new application for admission through the online application process. Approval for admission in these cases will not be guaranteed.

HDR candidates are responsible for checking if their APR has been submitted by the due date.

**13. I WILL BE COMPLETING AN ARC LINKAGE PROGRESS REPORT. DO I STILL NEED TO COMPLETE AN APR?**

Yes. Under the ARC Conditions of Grant, each ARC Linkage postgraduate research candidate must provide an ARC Progress Report to the Graduate Research School. The Annual Progress Report is *in addition* to your ARC progress report.

**14. WHO SHOULD INITIATE THE MEETING TO DISCUSS THE APR?**

Both the supervisor and candidate are responsible to ensure they meet to discuss the APR—such as progress, impediments, and plans for the next year.

**15. HOW SHOULD SUPERVISOR RESPOND IF THEY CANNOT CONTACT A CANDIDATE?**

If you are unable to contact one of your candidates, advise the GRS.

**16. WHO SHOULD COMPLETE THE REPORT IF A PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR IS UNAVAILABLE?**

In exceptional circumstances, principal supervisors who cannot complete the report on time may delegate this role to a cosupervisor. However, co-supervisors may complete the report only if they are eligible to be principal supervisors—such as if they have supervised a candidate from commencement to completion.

**17. WHERE CAN I REQUEST HELP?**

You can seek help by:

- using the "HELP" button in SOLS or SMP;
- reading the online [APR Guidelines for Students](#);
- contacting the GRS on (02) 4221 5452.



## Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment
1.	21 February 2013	Dean of Research	Updated delegated authority from Dean to Associate Dean, Research
2.	15 July 2013	Director, RSC	Updated wording APAI to ARC Linkage Scholarship. Add new APR recommendations and One Warning Rule
3.	2 September 2014	Manager, RSC	Updated wording in point 14. Updated link and phone number in point 20. Updated question in point 21 and web link.
4.	16 July 2015	Manager, GRS	Replaced RSC with GRS. Updated the name of the new HDR Student Academic Complaints Policy.
5.	22 June 2016	Manager, GRS	Updated due to new UOW branding.
6.	18 September 2017	HDR Project and Compliance Officer	Updated wording in point 4.
7.	20 August 2018	HDR Project and Compliance Officer	Removed point 2 in regard to paper based APR and replaced it with information relating APR questions.
8.	17 September 2019	HDR Project and Compliance Officer	Removed references to Confidentiality Report as this is no longer available for use. Updated website links.
9.	05 October 2023	HDR Systems, Reporting and Analytics Coordinator	Removed questions that are no longer relevant. Updated questions to align with changes to the APR process in 2023. Added a question on the responsibility of APR when principal supervisor is unavailable. Included the SOLS questionnaire and process flow.
10.	26 October 2023	HDR Systems, Reporting and Analytics Coordinator	Added the details of the 'SUPERVISOR(S) REPORT ON HDR CANDIDATE'S PROGRESS'