



Higher Degree Research Annual Progress Report (HDR APR)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CONTENTS:	PAGE
1. How is the APR set out?	2
2. What questions will be asked in Section 1 of the APR?.....	2
3. How do I access the online APR?	4
4. Who needs to complete an APR?	4
5. Why is an APR necessary?.....	4
6. I have a disability – should it be recorded?	4
7. What recommendations can be made?	4
8. What is probation?	5
9. What if I want to say something in my APR that my supervisor may not like?	6
10. What if an APR is not completed and submitted?.....	6
11. What is the One Warning Rule?.....	6
12. I will be completing an ARC Linkage progress report. Do I still need to complete an APR?.....	6
13. Do candidates undertaking coursework still have to complete and submit an APR?	6
14. Do candidates taking Leave of Absence (LOA) in the following year have to complete and submit an APR?	7
15. Do candidates who are currently on Leave of Absence (LOA) have to complete and submit an APR?	7
16. Do candidates expecting to submit in the near future still have to complete an APR?.....	7
17. Are candidates with a “Further Period of Study” resolution required to complete an APR?	7
18. Who should initiate the meeting to discuss the APR?.....	7
19. What should the supervisor do if he/she cannot contact a student?.....	7
20. Where can I get help?.....	7
21. How do I complete Question 9 re: Occupational Health & Safety?	7

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
DOR - Dean of Research
SMP - Student Management Package
WUPA - Wollongong Postgraduate Student Association

1. HOW IS THE APR SET OUT?

The first part of the APR contains the following important information to be noted by students and their supervisors:

- Candidature details for the current year
- Coursework
- Ethics and Research Integrity
- Research Progress in the current year
- Challenges and Issues
- Research Plan for next year

Prior to completing Section 1 of the APR, students must meet/discuss progress with Supervisor(s) prior to completing APR online.

The second part of the APR requires input from all parties as follows:

Section 1:	HDR Candidate's Report	to be completed by HDR candidate
Section 2:	Supervisor's Report on HDR Progress	to be completed by supervisor
Section 3:	HDR Candidate's response to Supervisor comments	to be completed by HDR candidate
Section 4:	HPS recommendations	to be completed by HPS
Section 5:	Associate Dean Research, final recommendations	to be completed by Associate Dean, Research

2. WHAT QUESTIONS WILL BE ASKED IN SECTION 1 OF THE APR?

COURSEWORK REPORT

1. Did you fail any subjects in 20XX? If yes, please provide reasons for failure and strategies for not exceeding your course time limits (please discuss with your supervisor).

ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

2.
 - a. Were any of the reasons you failed related to Academic or Research Misconduct?

Yes No

If yes, please provide details and your strategies for addressing these issues?

(See Student Conduct Rules: <https://documents.uow.edu.au/about/policy/rules/uow060095.html>)

- b. Have you completed Ethics and Research integrity training modules?

Yes No

- c. Did you require ethics approval for your project?

Yes No

If yes, list the approval/s and reports which were due and obtained/submitted in the past 12 months.

(See <https://www.uow.edu.au/research-and-innovation/researcher-support/ethics/>)

- d. Do you require ethics approval for your project in 20XX?

Yes No

If yes, list the approval/s you have obtained.

3.
 - a. Did you require a Defence Export Controls Permit to enable you to publish your work?

Yes No Don't know

If yes, provide the permit number.

- b. Have you completed a Defence DSGL Activity Assessment to check your work does not require a Defence Export Controls Permit to allow you to continue? (For information on Defence Control Act, visit



URL: <https://www.uow.edu.au/research-and-innovation/researcher-support/ethics/dec/>

Yes No Don't know

RESEARCH PROGRESS IN CURRENT YEAR

4.
 - a. Briefly describe all research and development outcomes for the 20XX (e.g. data collection, literature review, field trips, thesis writing, presentation, etc.).
 - b. List the participation details of paper presentations, conferences and events attended in 20XX.
 - c. Did you travel overseas in order to conduct or present research in 20XX?

Yes No

If Yes, list the countries and the research activity.
 - d. What has the impact of your research been over the last 12 months, including on industry, government policy, communities or commercialisation?
5. Please list the name of all industry partners (external to UOW) and external supervisors you have engaged with in 20XX as part of your research. **Please include all engagements with a duration of 30 days or more.**
6. Have you published in the past year? If Yes, please list full citation(s).
7. Have you received any awards in the past year? If Yes, give details.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

8. Has the progress of your coursework or research been affected adversely in any way in 20XX? Please provide details of any technical, resource, funding, supervisory, personal, disability, work commitment or other issues affecting your research progress.
If you have issues that are negatively affecting your research you may consult the [HDR Student Academic Complaints Policy](#).
9. Have these issues been addressed? If yes – how, if No - why not?

RESEARCH PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR

10. List below coursework subjects to be completed in 20XX. If you have completed all coursework requirements in 20XX and will be doing your thesis only in 20XX you do not need to complete this Question.
11. Please describe briefly your intended research/thesis goals/outcomes for 20XX, including milestones and timelines.
12. Have you completed and documented all workplace health and safety requirements in relation to the next 12 months of your research project? See [Working Safely - Students](#) for further information.

Yes No

If No, give reason.
13. Do you have any other comments that you would like to make or issues you would like to raise?
14. Have you discussed your progress and your APR report with your Supervisor?

If Yes, how?

In Person Email Phone

If No, why not?



3. HOW DO I ACCESS THE ONLINE APR?

HDR candidates can access their APR via the HDR Annual Progress Report link in SOLS. New APRs are released in September each year. To access SOLS students use their student email username and password. SOLSMail messages are sent to HDR candidates advising them to access SOLS when APR input is needed.

Supervisors, Heads of Postgraduate Studies and Associate Deans, Research access the APR via the "APR" link in SMP. Email messages are automatically sent to academic staff when they are required to provide input to APR's. For step by step instructions on the online process please refer to the HDR Student and Supervisor "Guidelines for completing online APRs".

4. WHO NEEDS TO COMPLETE AN APR?

All HDR students **MUST** complete the APR. This includes students who are:

- currently on Leave of Absence – it is important that they establish a research plan for the next year;
- planning to go on Leave of Absence – the APR must be completed before Leave of Absence can be approved;
- intending to submit their thesis before the start of session in the following year – the APR must be completed for the year passed, and should include intended submission date; or
- currently doing coursework – it is important that the student's progress in coursework is monitored and research plans put in place for ensuing year(s).
- Students who have commenced their enrolment in Spring 20XX must complete an APR it is important that they establish a research plan for the next year;

An APR **will not** be generated for HDR students who have submitted their thesis to the Graduate Research School for examination prior to the release of the APRs. Therefore those students **are not** required to complete an APR. However students who have submitted their thesis and have received a resolution of 'Further Period of Study' from the Thesis Examination Committee will have an APR generated for them and will be expected to complete it.

5. WHY IS AN APR NECESSARY?

The APR is primarily designed to provide a structure for planning and reflection on your progress. It gives you and your supervisors an opportunity to review your work and to plan for the coming 12 months. Students find the process of completing the APR very useful for keeping them on track within a schedule, even though this schedule has to be fairly flexible to allow for unexpected developments.

A second, very important, function of the APR is to give you an opportunity to document any issues or problems you are having with your research so that your supervisors and the University are alerted to issues and can take action on these. This is especially important if you have a scholarship, and there are circumstances outside your control (for example, an equipment failure). In the event that you need to apply for an extension of your scholarship, you will need to have documented the problems at the time they occurred.

Finally, the APR is intended to demonstrate that you are active and making progress as a research student. Without evidence of progress, the University will review your standing as a candidate. If progress is unsatisfactory, your candidature may be terminated.

6. I HAVE A DISABILITY – SHOULD IT BE RECORDED?

The University will endeavor to provide reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities to assist them to study in an environment free from discrimination and in an atmosphere conducive to realisation of their full potential (Disability Policy – Student (2008)).

The University encourages students to disclose the nature and extent of their disability with a Disability Liaison Officer and/or their HDR Supervisor so that we can ensure that we can best support their needs where ever possible.

7. WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS CAN BE MADE?

After assessing the student's progress Principal Supervisors may make one of the following recommendations:

- a. **Satisfactory progress** - re-enrolment into the next year will be confirmed. The student will receive confirmation of his/her enrolment status for the new academic year. HDR students will be enrolled by GRS).



- b. **Satisfactory with issue** – your re-enrolment into the next year will be confirmed however your supervisor has identified issues with your progress which are beyond your control (examples include: equipment issues, health issues; personal issues; supervisor absence). Appropriate action will be put in place by your supervisor.
- c. **Borderline** – your supervisor indicates that your progress is slower than should be and is held up due to matters within your control (examples include: failed Research Proposal Review, too much part-time work, not meeting with supervisor enough; lack of basic knowledge on use of software or equipment. Your supervisor will take appropriate action and your APR will be referred to the HPS followed by the Associate Dean, Research with strategies put in place to assist your progress.
- d. **Unsatisfactory progress** - determine which of the following recommendations is appropriate:
 - i. Changes to enrolment pattern (eg. Leave of Absence, part-time studies).
 - ii. Change of supervisor (eg. co-supervisor, new supervisor).
 - iii. Internal review – Faculty to assess progress in 3-6 months on agreed milestones.
 - iv. Probation (see below).
 - v. Suspension of scholarship (if applicable)
 - vi. Other (e.g. change of Thesis Title, change of Research Strength etc): (please give details):

8. WHAT IS PROBATION?

Probation is a process of supporting the performance of the candidate over a set period subject to specified milestones.

See HDR Progress Guidelines: <https://documents.uow.edu.au/about/policy/uow238025.html>

If dissatisfaction is expressed in an APR, the Associate Dean (Research) or delegate will consult with both parties independently not later than one month after lodgement of the unfavourable report. If the matter is not resolved, the Associate Dean (Research) or delegate may recommend a period of probation to the Dean of Research.

If the HDR candidate has an objection about the probation they should submit their objection in writing to the GRS. The Dean of Research will decide whether or not the probation should be imposed.

If Dean of Research's final recommendation is probation, the Dean of Research will appoint a senior academic to oversee the supervision process and research progress for between 3 – 12 months. At the end of probation, in a report to the Dean of Research, the senior academic will make recommendations addressing any perceived problems.

If a HDR student fails to make satisfactory progress during probation period recommendations may include:

- changes to enrolment pattern (for example, Leave of Absence, part-time studies)
- change of supervisor
- 6 monthly review – Faculty to review process in 3-6 months
- probation extension
- course downgrade
- discontinue enrolment
- other appropriate action

If a HDR student/supervisor disagrees with any of the above outcomes decisions may be appealed by following the HDR Student Academic Complaints Policy.



9. WHAT IF I WANT TO SAY SOMETHING IN MY APR THAT MY SUPERVISOR MAY NOT LIKE?

Students are sometimes reticent to make negative statements about how their work is going or about their supervisor, or Faculty and so on. This is understandable, as your supervisor and Head of Postgraduate Studies get to see the report. Nonetheless, if there is something you are concerned about then you should take action. You have several options.

Firstly, you could contact the other supervisor in your team (co or external supervisor) or contact the Head of Postgraduate Studies in your academic unit or Faculty. This person is a senior academic with the job of ensuring your progress and welfare as a research student is satisfactory. Or, you could make contact with the Head of your Unit or the Associate Dean (Research) of your Faculty. The Wollongong University Postgraduate Association (WUPA) also helps students with issues, as does the Dean of Students. And, of course, Student Services is another useful source of assistance available to all students in the University. You may also choose to complete a confidential information sheet (see question 10 below).

Whatever you do, if you take action to resolve your concerns, you will find there are many people at the University of Wollongong who are keen to advise you and help sort out any issues that you have. It is up to you to initiate action in the first instance.

10. WHAT IF AN APR IS NOT COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED?

With the new government regime for funding of research students, pressure for students to complete their studies in minimum time has increased substantially. Additionally, there is greater competition for admission to research degrees. With these pressures has come the need for the University to ensure that places are not being held by students who are not making genuine progress towards completion of their work. This means that the approach by the University to APRs has to be very rigorous.

Completion of an APR is COMPULSORY for HDR candidates. Candidates will not be re-enrolled if they have not completed and submitted an APR.

If there are difficulties in completing the APR within the timeframe the Faculty and the GRS must be advised. If the completed APR is not received by the Graduate Research School by the due date your scholarship stipend payments may be suspended until an APR is completed.

11. WHAT IS THE ONE WARNING RULE?

HDR Students who do not complete Section 1 or 3 of the APR by the due dates will be given **one written warning**. Those students who have not completed Section 1 or 2 by due date **will have their candidature discontinued**. Re-enrolment once discontinued, may only be possible by submitting a new application for admission through the online application process. Approval for admission in these cases will be at the Faculty's discretion.

Students are responsible for checking if their APR has been submitted by the due dates. If your supervisor has not submitted Section 2 for your review please contact them **BEFORE** the due date. If your supervisor is unavailable/unable to be contacted please advise GRS **IMMEDIATELY**.

12. I WILL BE FILLING IN AN ARC LINKAGE PROGRESS REPORT, DO I NEED TO COMPLETE AN APR?

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

13. DO CANDIDATES UNDERTAKING COURSEWORK STILL HAVE TO COMPLETE AND SUBMIT AN APR?

Yes. It is necessary for you to consider the direction your research will take for the following year. You will also need to consider what subjects you will be doing (if coursework has yet to be completed) and include them within your APR.



14. DO CANDIDATES TAKING LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA) IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR HAVE TO COMPLETE AND SUBMIT AN APR?

Yes. Candidates need to report on the work they have done for the previous 12 months and also need written approval from their supervisor to take LOA, which can be completed within the APR.

15. DO CANDIDATES WHO ARE CURRENTLY ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA) HAVE TO COMPLETE AN APR?

Yes. It is necessary for candidates to report on the plan of work they will follow when they return from leave.

16. DO CANDIDATES EXPECTING TO SUBMIT IN THE NEAR FUTURE STILL HAVE TO COMPLETE AN APR?

Yes. They will need to report on the work they have done for the previous 12 months and also indicate a submission date.

17. ARE CANDIDATES WITH A 'FURTHER PERIOD OF STUDY' RESOLUTION REQUIRED TO COMPLETE AN APR?

Yes. Given they are currently enrolled they will be required to complete an APR until they submit their thesis for the second time.

18. WHO SHOULD INITIATE THE MEETING TO DISCUSS THE APR?

It is the responsibility of both the supervisor and the student to ensure that the meeting takes place at a mutually convenient time.

19. WHAT SHOULD THE SUPERVISOR DO IF HE/SHE CANNOT CONTACT A STUDENT?

If you are unable to contact one of your students, you should advise the GRS. Please note that continuation of candidature is conditional upon completing the APR. Students who do not complete an APR will not be re-enrolled and their candidature discontinued.

20. WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

You can obtain help by:

- using the "HELP" button in SOLS or SMP;
- reading the online APR Guidelines for Students - <https://documents.uow.edu.au/content/groups/public/@web/@raid/documents/doc/uow238181.pdf>; or
- contacting the GRS on (02) 4221 5452

21. HOW DO I COMPLETE QUESTION 9 REGARDING OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY?

Question 9: Have you completed and documented all workplace health and safety requirements in relation to the next 12 months of your research project?

This question is to determine whether there is any training required for the HDR student. Training needs analysis can be done by matching up work to be done, skills or equipment to be used by the HDR student and determine if there are training gaps – in this instance we are primarily talking about health and safety training but the process can include other types of training. The student identifies what areas they need to cover the skill gap – this can be as simple as a UOW health and safety course or attend external training course.

See <https://www.uow.edu.au/about/services/safe-at-work/safety-topics/students/> for further information.



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.

