Faculty of Business

HDR Research Proposal Review Procedure

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<tr>
<th>Procedure No</th>
<th>FOB-RES-PROC-005</th>
<th>Date approved</th>
<th>Date of Next Review:</th>
<th>1 January 2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>Approved by</td>
<td>Faculty Executive Committee</td>
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<td>Responsible for Monitoring Procedure</td>
<td>HDR Coordinator</td>
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<td>Responsible School/ Unit</td>
<td>Faculty Research Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevant AACSB Standard/s</td>
<td>Standard 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Faculty HDR students and supervisors</td>
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1 Introduction

The Research Proposal Review (RPR) is a key milestone for Higher Degree Research (HDR) students enrolled in the Faculty of Business. It is also the University’s formal process for monitoring the progress of research being undertaken by its HDR students.

2 Scope / Purpose

The purpose of the RPR is to ensure that the:
- proposed research is academically sound;
- student has the skills required to complete the project;
- appropriate supervisory arrangements are in place;
- research can be completed within the appropriate timeframes; and
- aims and objectives of the research, outlined in the original research proposal are being met satisfactorily.

The RPR process provides an opportunity for HDR students to develop a coherent research plan and methodology as well as receive constructive academic feedback. The Faculty of Business places emphasis on supporting and guiding students through the RPR process.

The RPR also allows the Faculty to ensure that it can provide adequate resources for the project.

These procedures should be read in conjunction with UOW policy and supporting references.
3 Research Proposal Review (RPR) Process

3.1 Overview

RPRs should normally be finalised before 48 credit points (i.e. 1 EFTSL) of the degree is completed, except in the case of the PhD-Integrated program where the review should be finalised before 72 credit points (i.e. 1.5 EFTSL) of the degree is completed.

RPRs are normally scheduled for late July and late November. The Faculty’s HDR coordinator will advise the exact dates and times once they have been set. Students unable to present on their allocated date will need to write to the HDR Coordinator to request a deferral. Students need to make a clear case as to why they are unable to present and should have the backing of their supervisors. Requests will be considered by the Associate Dean (Research) and the Head of Postgraduate Studies from the relevant school.

3.2 Format

The RPR is made up of two parts, a written research proposal and an oral presentation. The written proposal is submitted to the HDR Coordinator in Word or PDF format at least three weeks prior to the date set for the oral presentation.

The written proposal and oral presentation are reviewed by the Research Proposal Review Committee. The Committee consists of the following staff members:

- Relevant Head of Postgraduate Studies (standing chairperson)
- Relevant Head of Discipline
- Associate Dean-Research (committee chairperson or delegate)
- The student’s supervisors
- HDR Student representative (observer only)

The Associate Dean (Research) may approve amendments to the Committee members based on recommendations from the HPS. The relevant Head of School and up to two other staff members may be asked to attend by the Associate Dean-Research if deemed appropriate.

3.2.1 Written Proposal

1. The written research proposal should not be more than 30 pages (maximum of 20,000 words – a word count has to be included on the cover page of the proposal)
2. The document should include:
   a. A research plan that includes information about the project’s background, design, methods, hypotheses (if applicable), and theoretical approach
   b. Preliminary literature review
   c. Ethical issues that may be encountered
   d. A research timetable for the duration of the candidature including key milestones
   e. A statement of the resources required to complete the project including a detailed budget
   f. A Turnitin report

3.2.2 Oral Presentation

The oral presentation will be held on the date advised by the HDR Coordinator. The duration of the presentation will be 20 minutes.

The oral presentation should clearly outline the:
- Research question(s)
- Aim(s) and significance of the project
- Approach
- Originality of the project and its contribution to knowledge.
• Preliminary literature review - demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the field of research including the published findings as well as the areas requiring original research

The presentation should enable the Committee to assess the student’s capacity:
• to clearly articulate their research question;
• explain the significance of their research;
• explain how the research will be conducted; and
• respond to questions about their research.

Following the 20 minute oral presentation, the Committee will have 15 minutes to ask further questions of the student concerning aspects of the research project. The Committee will assess the written proposal and the presentation in the subsequent 10 minutes and will then provide the candidate with feedback and the outcome of their RPR.

3.3 Outcomes

Once the committee has deliberated over the proposal they have to decide if what has been presented is satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

If the RPR has been deemed to be satisfactory there’s no further action required at that point in time. The Associate Dean (Research) will complete the required paperwork and the HDR Coordinator will forward it to the Graduate Research School (GRS) to be added to the student’s file.

If the RPR has been deemed to be unsatisfactory the student will be informed that they will need to re-present in three to six months. The committee will provide direction on areas the student will need to improve on in order to be successful in the second RPR.

Following the first RPR the Associate Dean (Research) will complete the required paperwork and will include clear deliverables, as recommended by the Committee, for the student to achieve by the next RPR. The HDR Coordinator will forward the documentation to 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.

As with the first RPR students required to re-present will need to submit a written research proposal and make an oral presentation to a RPR committee (the members of the committee may or may not be the same depending on staff availability). The written proposal and the oral presentation should highlight the achievement of the deliverables set out after the first RPR.

The duration of the oral presentation will again be 20 minutes. This will then be followed by 15 minutes of questions from the Committee. The Committee will then deliberate for approximately 10 minutes before informing the student of the outcome they will be recommending to the Dean of Research. There are five possible recommendations the Committee can make as a result of the second RPR:

1. **Pass** – Sufficient progress has been made following the first RPR and the committee is happy for the candidature to continue.
2. **Downgrade to a Master of Philosophy** – Students whose research is deemed not to be at the standard required for a PhD or DBA but is still a worthwhile project may be downgraded to the MPhil.
3. **Change of supervisory arrangements** - The Committee may decide that the student would benefit from alternative supervision. If this is the case, the HPS will work with the Associate Dean (Research) and Head of School to determine a new supervisory team. The new supervisory arrangements will be recommended to the Dean of Research who will then confirm the new Supervisory team. In cases where the supervisory team has been changed, the student will need to complete a third RPR as they have not yet satisfied the requirements of the course. The third RPR will take the same format as the first two and will be held within three/six months after changing supervisors.
4. **Probation** – The Committee may recommend that a student who does not meet the required standard for their degree be placed on probation. Following the RPR the Committee will recommend a probationary supervisor to the Dean of Research who will then inform the student of the outcome via an official letter. The probationary supervisor, in consultation with the student’s supervisors and HPS, will develop a set of deliverables for the probationary period. The Associate Dean (Research) will review and approve these deliverables. The probation period can range from three to six months.
and during this time the student will work with the probationary supervisor, in addition to their supervisory team, to achieve the set deliverables. At the end of the probationary period the probationary supervisor completes a progress report and recommends an outcome to the Dean of Research. Two possible outcomes from the probationary period include continuation of the candidature or termination of the candidature. The Dean of Research will officially notify the student of the outcome.

5. **Termination of Candidature** - If the committee believes there has not been sufficient progress from the first review and the project is not viable, termination of candidature can be recommended.

In all cases the Committee will make a recommendation on the outcome of the RPR to the Dean of Research. The Dean of Research will then write to the student, officially informing them of the outcome and any follow-up action they may need to take.

3.4 **Grievances against an outcome**

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

In all cases students should try and resolve their grievance informally with the parties involved prior to moving to stage 2 of the process although, this may not always be possible.

All grievance cases need to be made within 10 working days of the incident occurring.
4 The Research Progress Review Process – Flowchart

- **Pass – No further action**

- **Research Proposal Review 1**
  - Unsatisfactory
    - RPR report sent to GRS. Clearly documents requirements for RPR 2. GRS formally informs the student of the outcome and the requirements.

- **Research Proposal Review 2**
  - Termination of Candidature
  - Change of Supervisor(s)
    - Repeat the RPR 2 Process
  - Unsatisfactory
    - Downgrade to Master of Philosophy
    - Probation
      - Student to work with Probationary Supervisor to achieve set deliverables.

- **Sufficient progress, candidature to continue**
  - Report to Dean of Research
    - Insufficient Progress, candidature terminated
    - Dean of Research informs student
      - Students have 20 days to respond to outcome

- **Students have 20 days to respond to outcome**
5 Related Documents

- Higher Degree Research (HDR) Progress Review Guidelines
- Higher Degree Research (HDR) Academic Complaints Policy
- Higher Degree Research Supervision and Resources Policy
- Code of Practice – Research
- Faculty of Business Grievance Policy
- UOW Course Rules

6 Version Control Table

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<tr>
<th>Version Control</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
<th>Author/Reviewer</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20/08/2014</td>
<td>Faculty HDR Coordinator</td>
<td>Faculty Research Committee (resolution number 2014/3)</td>
<td>New Guideline</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>20/04/2015</td>
<td>Associate Dean Research and Research Project Manager</td>
<td>Faculty Executive Committee (resolution number 2015/17)</td>
<td>Clarify the Research Proposal Review Committee and include a turnitin report in the written report. Administrative amendments have been made to reflect the change from the Research Student Centre to the Graduate Research School, name change from Guidelines to Procedures to reflect Faculty conventions, and general formatting to increase readability of Procedure.</td>
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