Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Next full review
2.1	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research	22 August 2017	22 August 2017	March 2019

Procedure Statement

Purpose	This procedure specifies eligibility and selection criteria and the processes for admission to all Higher Degree Research (HDR) programs at UNSW	
Scope	This procedure applies to admission to all HDR programs at UNSW	
Are Local Documents on this subject permitted?	☐ Yes, however Local Documents must be consistent with this University-wide Procedure	☒ No

Procedure Processes and Actions

Contents

1. Eligibility and Selection 2
1.1. Language Requirements 2
1.1.1 English 2
1.1.2 Other Languages 2
1.2. Minimum Academic Requirements 3
1.2.1 Doctor of Philosophy. 3
1.2.2 Masters by Research. 3
1.2.3 Master of Philosophy. 3
1.3. Specific Program Requirements 3
1.4. Additional Requirements 3
1.5. Requirements for Applicants without Standard Qualifications 3
2. Application Procedures 4
2.1. Application Process 4
2.1.1 Applications must: 4
2.1.2 Supporting documentation should include as a minimum: 4
2.1.3 Full-time or part-time status 4
2.1.4 Working away from the University 4
2.1.5 Change of name 4
2.1.6 Refugee status 4
2.2. Suspension and/or Exclusion 5
2.3. Transferring from Another University 5
2.3.1 Candidates must provide (at a minimum but not limited to): 5
2.3.2 Conditions where transfers will not be approved. 5
3. Offer Procedures 5
3.1. Admission Offer Process 5
3.1.1 Formal admission offers will include: 5
3.1.2 Conditional Offers may be issued: 5
3.1.3. Confirmation of PhD candidatures 6

Archived document

3.2. Deferral Process 6
3.3. Withdrawal of Offer 6
3.4. Expiry of offer 6
4. Denial of Admission 6
4.1. Appeal Procedures 6
5. Acceptance and Enrolment 6
5.1. Acceptance of Offer 6
5.1.1 Acceptance Process 6
5.1.2 Issuing Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) 7
5.1.3 Student Services & Amenities Fee 7
5.1.4. Change of International Status 7
5.2. Enrolment 7
5.2.1. Candidate Responsibility 7
5.2.2. Multiple Enrolment 7
5.2.3. Enrolment Cancellation 7
5.3. Re-admission Procedures 7
5.3.1 Re-admission conditions 7
5.3.2 Re-admission Approval Process 7
5.3.3 Commonwealth Law 8
5.4. Denial of re-admission 8
5.4.1 Termination of Candidature 8
5.4.2 Availability of supervision, space and resources 8
6. Roles and Responsibilities 8
6.1. Responsibilities of the University 8
6.2. Responsibilities of the applicant 8

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1. Eligibility and Selection

Applicants must meet all eligibility requirements prior to being considered for selection.

Selection of candidates for admission to Higher Degree Research Programs will be based on:

- meeting the eligibility criteria, including satisfying English language and program entry requirements, plus any additional requirements specified by the Faculty Research or Higher Degree Committee (HDC) and,
- the availability of appropriate supervision, and the resources considered necessary to support successful completion of a timely research candidature.

1.1. Language Requirements

1.1.1 English

All applicants for Higher Degree Research programs must satisfy the University's English language proficiency requirement as determined by the Academic Board.

1.1.2 Other Languages

Where the research relies on competence in other languages, the appropriate Faculty shall determine the level required.

1.2. Minimum Academic Requirements

1.2.1 Doctor of Philosophy.

An applicant for admission to the degree shall have been awarded:

(i) an appropriate four year degree of Bachelor with first or upper second class Honours from the University of New South Wales; or

(ii) a completed Masters by Research from the University of New South Wales with a substantial research component and demonstrated capacity for timely completion of a high quality research thesis; or

(iii) a qualification from a tertiary institution at a level considered equivalent to 1.2.1 (i) or (ii) by the HDC.

1.2.2 Masters by Research.

An applicant for admission to the degree shall have been awarded:

(i) an appropriate four year degree of Bachelor with honours from the University of New South Wales; or

(ii) a qualification at a level from a tertiary institution considered equivalent to 1.2.2 (i) by the HDC.

Candidates for admission to Masters by Research must also satisfy any additional eligibility requirements specified by faculties for a given Masters by Research Program as specified in the Faculty Conditions for Award.

1.2.3 Master of Philosophy.

An applicant for admission to the degree shall have been awarded:

(i) an appropriate Bachelor degree in the relevant discipline from the University of New South Wales at a level specified by the HDC; or

(ii) a qualification from a tertiary institution at a level considered by the HDC to be equivalent to 1.2.3 (i)

1.3. Specific Program Requirements

In addition to the minimum academic requirements stated above, programs within the University may specify other selection criteria that applicants are required to meet in order to demonstrate their capacity for success in the program. These may include, but are not limited to audition, interview or completion of a questionnaire. The following specific Policies and Conditions for Award should be consulted for information regarding eligibility criteria for these programs:

- **Professional Doctorates – See Faculty specific Conditions for Award**
- **Joint PhD – See Joint PhD Policy**
- **Higher Doctorates – See Higher Doctorates Policy**

1.4. Additional Requirements

(i) If the HDC is not satisfied with the qualifications submitted by an applicant the HDC may require the applicant to undergo such assessment or carry out such work as the HDC may prescribe, before permitting admission as a candidate in the degree.

(ii) Additional assessment of communication skills may be recommended for a program which is linguistically demanding.

(iii) The University, including all relevant Program Authorities, is responsible for ensuring that clear, unambiguous, timely and constructive advice is given to prospective candidates on the precise nature and extent of the additional selection criteria.

(iv) Where industry associations and professional bodies have standards and requirements for graduates, these shall be clearly communicated to all applicants wherever possible prior to the admission cycle. These might include, for example, criminal record checks.

1.5. Requirements for Applicants without Standard Qualifications

In exceptional cases applicants with non-standard qualifications may be considered for admission. Evidence submitted must be considered for equivalence by the HDC. Further information on assessment

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of non-standard qualifications is given in the Higher Degree Research Admissions and Pathways Guideline. Evidence must be submitted in the form of:

(i) transcripts from any tertiary academic qualifications attempted or completed and the grades achieved; and

(ii) documented evidence of formal professional qualifications; and

(iii) any written matter including theses, research reports or other relevant research outputs.

2. Application Procedures

2.1. Application Process

2.1.1 Applications must:

(i) be submitted using the designated method and by the due date advised by the University each year.

(ii) be accompanied by documentation of all qualifications attempted or completed and proof of completion, where applicable.

2.1.2 Supporting documentation should include as a minimum:

(i) academic transcripts. Where these are presented in a language other than English, they must be accompanied by a translation and a statement verifying that this is an accurate translation of the transcript. Such a statement must be notarised by an appropriate authority. UNSW will verify documents via back-to-source checks with the applicant's home institutions and with referees. See information on certification and translation of documents submitted on the Graduate Research School Website.

(ii) a statement of intended area of research (as outlined in Faculty Guidelines)

(iii) proof of interview

(iv) proof of financial capacity to cover living costs

(v) proof of contact with a potential supervisor who has indicated their willingness to supervise

(vi) curriculum vitae

(vii) documented evidence of meeting English language requirements (where required)

(viii) portfolio and/or published papers or other examples of previous research

(ix) contact details of two referees

2.1.3 Full-time or part-time status

(i) Domestic applicants may apply for admission as a full-time or part-time candidate.

(ii) International applicants are normally expected to apply for full-time enrolment.

2.1.4 Working away from the University

(i) Candidates are expected to undertake their research at a UNSW affiliated location such as a UNSW campus, teaching hospital, or other research facility of the University as listed on the Research Gateway website.

(ii) If at the start of the candidature the nature of the research will require the candidate to spend time away from the University, approval must be sought from the Dean of Graduate Research prior to admission. Documentation must be provided by the applicant, the supervisor and the school outlining the arrangements for induction into research at UNSW, confirmation of candidature (PhD candidates only), Annual Progress Reviews, ongoing supervisory contact and provision of research resources.

2.1.5 Change of name

Where qualifications have been completed in another name the application must be accompanied by documentation evidencing the change of name.

2.1.6 Refugee status

Refugees and other applicants who cannot provide documentation of previous educational qualifications due to circumstances existing in their home country should provide a statutory declaration stating the qualification(s) and their inability to obtain documentation, or other information, acceptable to the Dean of Graduate Research.

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2.2. Suspension and/or Exclusion

Applicants who have been suspended or excluded from UNSW or another higher education provider are not permitted to commence study while the suspension or equivalent action remains in force. Applicants with a current or prior record of suspension or exclusion from UNSW or another education provider must disclose this at the time of application.

2.3. Transferring from Another University

The Dean of Graduate Research will consider all applications for transfer of research candidature from another university to UNSW on a case-by-case basis taking into account all relevant factors.

2.3.1 Candidates must provide (at a minimum but not limited to):

(i) documentation of the period of full-time equivalent enrolment at the previous institution. This evidence must be submitted by all domestic and international candidates. The period of time already consumed at any international or Australian institution may be deducted from candidature entitlements at UNSW.

(ii) documentation showing the acknowledgement of the previous institution of the transfer. This includes:

- copies of all research progress review documentation
- details of current or previous research scholarships
- statement outlining reasons for requesting transfer
- permission to contact relevant staff at the previous institution
- where appropriate, agreement to transfer of any research and/or intellectual property, when candidates transfer their research.

2.3.2 Conditions where transfers will not be approved.

(i) If the candidate is within 12 months of the completion of a HDR degree at another institution unless there are exceptional circumstances.

(ii) If the transfer request is due to a dispute or lack of progress at the other institution.

(iii) Where progress is not satisfactory. The most recent progress review must endorse that the candidate is on track to complete within 4 years FTE (PhD) or 2 years FTE (Masters).

(iv) The ESOS Act National Code requires that an international candidate on a student visa may not transfer from another Australian registered provider's course prior to the candidate completing six months of his or her principal course of study unless under specified exceptions as outlined in the National Code.

(v) If there are IP issues that cannot be resolved with the previous institution.

3. Offer Procedures

3.1. Admission Offer Process

Offers of admission to higher degree research programs shall be made only by the Dean of Graduate Research or nominee. A verbal communication, informal email or other indication regarding eligibility for an offer is not a formal offer and is not binding.

3.1.1 Formal admission offers will include:

(i) details of the supervisory team. Prior to an offer being made by the Dean of Graduate Research, the relevant Faculty, School or Centre is required to confirm the supervision arrangements and the availability of appropriate space, resources and infrastructure for the candidature.

(ii) the program, research area, commencement date, supervision arrangements, residency or fee-liability type/status, location, attendance mode and attendance type and any coursework required.

3.1.2 Conditional Offers may be issued:

(i) to applicants on the basis of expected academic and English proficiency requirements. Only applicants who subsequently provide evidence of meeting any prescribed conditions can be admitted to the University.

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(ii) in the form of a packaged offer may be provided to applicants who have the academic qualifications required for entry, but who do not currently meet UNSW English proficiency requirements. Packaged offer arrangements are only applicable for prescribed English courses studied at the UNSW Institute of Languages, and are subject to acceptance by the Institute of Languages. Applicants will only be admitted to the research program once UNSW English proficiency requirements have been met.

3.1.3. Confirmation of PhD candidatures

All offers of admission to a PhD are subject to Confirmation within the first 12 months of candidature.

3.2. Deferral Process

The Dean of Graduate Research approves deferral of commencement of enrolment in HDR programs from one admission period to another after the School and/or Faculty has confirmed that appropriate space, resources and supervision are able to be provided at the later commencement date.

(i) Where deferment in a program is permitted, the standard deferment period is one semester.

(ii) In extenuating circumstances, a deferment of two semesters may be approved, provided appropriate supervision, space and resources are available.

(iii) Applicants must apply for deferment using the method and by the due date advised by the Graduate Research School each year.

(iv) Applicants will receive confirmation of their deferred place.

(v) If the deferment period lapses, the offer is no longer valid. However, the applicant may be permitted to reapply for admission.

(vi) A candidate who is granted a deferment will be liable for any tuition or other fees at the rate applicable in the year of enrolment.

3.3. Withdrawal of Offer

The University reserves the right to withdraw an offer or cancel the enrolment of a person where an offer is made in error or is made on the basis of incomplete, inaccurate, fraudulent or misleading information supplied by the applicant or certifying authority or where there is a failure to meet any condition of offer by the specified date. Fees paid may be forfeited.

3.4. Expiry of offer

The University reserves the right to set expiry dates on offers at its discretion.

4. Denial of Admission

Where the University considers an applicant to be unsuitable for a place in a particular course or program or for attendance at the University in general, it reserves the right to exclude the applicant from admission or prohibit enrolment or transfer into a particular course or program. If a school or faculty does not wish to recommend an offer of admission to the Dean of Graduate Research, the applicant will be notified by the Dean of Graduate Research or nominee.

4.1. Appeal Procedures

An applicant not selected for a Higher Degree Research Program may have the right of appeal on the basis of procedural fairness to the Dean of Graduate Research. Evidence of a lack of procedural fairness in regard to the decision to deny admission is required to support appeals.

5. Acceptance and Enrolment

5.1. Acceptance of Offer

5.1.1 Acceptance Process

Applicants who have received an unconditional offer can accept, defer or decline their offer online via myUNSW. International applicants will be required to sign a declaration of financial capacity and most will be required to pay a deposit. See information about the acceptance process provided on the Graduate Research School website.

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5.1.2 Issuing Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)

Once international applicants have accepted their offer and either paid the deposit or submitted sponsorship information, a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) will be issued by the Graduate Research School. This document can be used to apply for a student visa.

5.1.3 Student Services & Amenities Fee

All candidates are required to pay a student amenities fee in each semester of enrolment. Please see the Graduate Research School website for more information.

5.1.4. Change of International Status

If an international Higher Degree Research candidate gains Permanent Resident status:

(i) after gaining admission but before the census date in any semester, the candidate will be transferred to domestic Higher Degree research enrolment status and will not be liable for tuition fees for that semester.

(ii) after gaining admission but after the census date in any semester, the candidate will remain liable for fees at the international candidate fee rate for that semester.

5.2. Enrolment

5.2.1. Candidate Responsibility

Candidates are required to ensure enrolment and contact details are correct by regularly checking myUNSW.

5.2.2. Multiple Enrolment

No candidate shall be permitted to enrol in a degree, diploma or certificate program at the same time as he/she is enrolled for any other degree, diploma or certificate in the University or at any other tertiary institution in Australia or overseas, except with the approval of the Faculty or Faculties concerned and the Dean of Graduate Research.

5.2.3. Enrolment Cancellation

The Dean of Graduate Research may discontinue higher degree research enrolment in the following cases:

(i) Any candidate who is found to be enrolled, without approval in more than one degree, diploma or certificate program. If the multiple enrolment is not resolved after the period of suspension, the Dean of Graduate Research may cancel the enrolment.

(ii) Transcripts or other information provided during the application process or during the candidature are subsequently found to be inaccurate, or full disclosure of prior study is not given, the University reserves the right to withdraw an offer or cancel an enrolment at any time.

(iii) Supervision arrangements for a candidate change and a suitable alternative supervisory team cannot be found within a reasonable time period, the Dean of Graduate Research may discontinue the enrolment.

(iv) A candidate declares they do not have sufficient funds to support themselves and their dependents in accordance with the Variation of Candidature Procedure.

5.3. Re-admission Procedures

5.3.1 Re-admission conditions

A candidate wishing to re-enter a program after a period of nonattendance without an approved leave of absence or after withdrawing from or discontinuing a program must apply for approval of re-admission.

5.3.2 Re-admission Approval Process

Applications for re-admission under conditions outlined in 5.3.1 will be considered by the appropriate faculty Higher Degree Committee and a recommendation made to the Dean of Graduate Research on whether or not re-enrolment should be approved.

(i) A candidate who is permitted to re-enrol following a period of nonattendance, will be required to satisfy the program requirements which apply at the time of readmission. Depending on the length of absence and developments in the area of research during the intervening period, the candidate will not necessarily retain credit for any work completed prior to the absence.

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(ii) Applications for re-admission must be made using the method and by the due date advised by the Graduate Research School.

5.3.3 Commonwealth Law

Relevant Commonwealth Government regulations relating to schemes such as the Research Training Scheme (RTS) must be taken into account when considering re-admission of a candidate.

5.4. Denial of re-admission

5.4.1 Termination of Candidature

Admission or re-admission to a research program will not be permitted following termination of candidature at UNSW or another education provider

5.4.2 Availability of supervision, space and resources

Re-admission will not be permitted if appropriate supervision, space and resources are no longer available.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. Responsibilities of the University

UNSW is responsible for ensuring that:

(i) information about programs, entry requirements and application procedures are accurate and communicated to applicants in a timely fashion;

(ii) admission processes are explicit, fair, transparent, inclusive and consistent across the University;

(iii) the quality of admission services are maintained at a high-level and that the University engages in activities which continually improve the delivery of those services.

6.2. Responsibilities of the applicant

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that:

(i) the information provided in their application is accurate;

(ii) they follow the correct process and adhere to any conditions the University stipulates;

(iii) they have secured adequate funding to cover their living costs and health insurance (where applicable)

Accountabilities	
Responsible Officer	Dean of Graduate Research
Contact Officer	Director Graduate Research School
Supporting Information	
Legislative Compliance	This Procedure supports the University's compliance with the following legislation: *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cth) *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000* (Cth) *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW) *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) *Disability Standards for Education* (2005)
Parent Document (Policy)	Admissions Policy
Supporting Documents	Higher Degree Research Admissions and Pathways Guideline

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Related Documents	English language proficiency requirement Conditions for Award of Degrees Joint PhD Policy Higher Doctorates Policy Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy and Procedures Progress Review and Confirmation of Research Candidatures Procedure Facilities and Resources to Support Higher Degree Research Candidates Guideline UNSW Delegations of Authority
Superseded Documents	Admissions to HDR Programs Procedure Version 1.0 (Approved 23 March 2011)
File Number	2016/00736

Definitions and Acronyms

	No terms have been defined

Revision History

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
1.0	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	23 March 2011	23 March 2011	New Procedure
2.0	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research	16 March 2016	16 March 2016	Full Review
2.1	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research	22 August 2017	22 August 2017	Section 2.1(iv); 5.2.3; 6.2

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