HDR Candidature Management and Support Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the expectations and responsibilities of Institute staff and Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates during the period of candidature. It should be read in conjunction with the *Research and Research Training Policy Framework* and associated policies.

2. Scope

This policy covers candidature management, and applies to all Higher Degree by Research:

- enrolled candidates;
- persons with supervisory responsibilities or administrative responsibilities for Higher Degree by Research candidates.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
candidate	student enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research course.
the Code	*Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research,* Australian Government (2018)
associated policies	the associated policies to *Research and Research Training Policy Framework* and this policy: • Research Policy and Procedure • Responsible Conduct of Research Policy • HDR Supervision and Examination Policy • HDR Examination Procedure.
Confirmation panel	Is the panel responsible for confirming candidates.
Course Coordinator	Is the person appointed as the Course Coordinator of the particular course in which the candidate is enrolled
HDR Committee	provides leadership for delivery of postgraduate research training

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Term	Definition
(HDRC)	and reports to Academic Board. It is responsible for: • overseeing rules, policies and procedures for candidates; • overseeing the confirmation and thesis assessment processes; • overseeing candidate performance; • promoting quality research training environment and outcomes; & • overseeing new, and reviewing current HDR programs.
research training	is a formal course of postgraduate study, currently Masters (Research) degrees, that lead to the acquisition of advanced skills, techniques and knowledge in the conduct of research, and requires the production of a substantial original research output, such as a thesis. Also known as higher degree(s) by research (HDR).
Study period	Means a trimester.

4. Policy Statement

4.1. Resources

4.1.1. The acceptance of a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidate by the Institute indicates that the required finances, space and supervision are available to support the candidate through to timely completion.

The Institute will provide library, counselling, disability and peer support and IT services. The Institute provides support services for diverse groups.

At a minimum, candidates should be provided with:

• access to a desk and chair, with provided power and internet services located in a secure space, (generally provision of a hot desk facility with network connections, with students expected to use their own laptop computers for day -to- day work as required);

• shared access to MIT computers as is provided to all MIT students;

• access to internet services as is provided to all MIT students;

• after-hours access to facilities at times when the campus is open;

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- access to photocopying facilities, at the student's cost, as is provided to all MIT students; and

- any other resources identified as essential to a particular candidate's research program (e.g. scientific and technical equipment, laboratory or studio facilities).

The Institute may provide some financial and other support, such as for conference participation (on a competitive basis, for the presentation of a fully refereed paper resulting from the student's research, and during the period of candidacy only), and a contribution for editing / proofreading of theses (which may be in terms of services provided rather than a financial contribution). Candidates will be advised of the estimated amount of support they will receive and record this information on the HDR Candidate / Supervisor Agreement.

4.1.2 Research Environment & Culture

Schools are responsible for the inclusion and integration of HDR candidates into the academic environment of the School of enrolment. The School should ensure that candidates are:

- included in School-based research seminars/conferences;

- included in academic professional development opportunities where appropriate;

- encouraged to network and interact with Institute staff and any scholarly visitors; and

- provided with opportunities for social interaction with staff and other research candidates.

4.2. Conditions of Candidature

4.2.1 The normal period of candidature is defined as: 2 years full time for Masters by Research candidates, with the maximum period of candidature adjusted for periods of part-time study and approved leaves of absence.

The maximum submission date for examination for the thesis in a Masters Research degree is 3.5 years from commencement. The calculation of the maximum submission date is based on the normal period of candidature, provision for the possibility of the time for completion of the coursework component needing to be extended, and a provision for late submission of the thesis.

Candidates may apply for an extension to candidature, under clause 4.2.2. Any extension of the period of candidature will attract the current course fee and for international students the extension of the CoE and visa requirements.

4.2.2. Enrolment & Lapse of Candidature

It is a requirement that HDR candidates re-enrol in their program each study period[1]. A candidate will be regarded as having abandoned their program of study and their candidature will lapse under one or more of the following circumstances:

- failure to re-enrol, with no response to communication from the Institute;

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[1] Note that trimester T3 may be treated in a different manner for different entry points according to particular degree specifications.

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- taking unapproved leave;

- failing to return from leave without having sought approval for additional leave; or

- failing to participate in a progress review and failing to respond to reasonable requests to do so.

Following a lapse of candidature, re-instatement is possible under certain circumstances. Applications for readmission of candidature must be endorsed by the Principal Supervisor and approved by the Head of School.

4.2.3. Variation of Candidature

All applications for change to conditions of candidature will be approved or rejected by the Course Coordinator. In making their decision, the Course Coordinator will consider whether:

- completion within the maximum period will be affected;

- the academic unit will continue to have the necessary physical, financial and supervisory resources necessary to enable completion of candidature;

- compassionate or compelling circumstances exist;

- the Institute can continue to meet its duty of care in relation to the candidate's safety and wellbeing and student experience.

International candidates will be responsible for the management of and adherence to any visa or other government requirements and are strongly encouraged to seek advice from Office of Student Administration and Experience.

All applications must be endorsed by the Principal Supervisor and the Head of School and have out-of-cycle approval of the chair of HDRC.

The outcome of a candidature variation application will be notified via email to the candidate's Institute email account.

Candidates who hold a scholarship may be required to relinquish the scholarship.

4.2.4. In order to complete a HDR program within the period of candidature it is reasonable to expect full-time HDR candidates to spend a minimum of 37.6 hours weekly over the year, and volume of work expectations is aligned with such a commitment. The expectation for part-time study is at least 50% of the full-time load.

Paid employment commitments during the period of candidature will not be accepted as grounds for an extension of either candidature or scholarships.

4.2.5. Candidates may only enrol in another degree or diploma during their candidature under exceptional circumstances, where they have satisfactory progress and with the approval of their Principal Supervisor, Head of School and HDRC. A detailed request must be made to HDRC via the School and include hours of enrolment in the proposed program and how the enrolment will affect their higher degree studies.

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4.3. Candidature Requirements

Milestones and candidature requirements associated with HDR candidature include:

- Satisfactory completion of any coursework units undertaken;
- Research Induction and Orientation;
- Candidate / Supervisor Agreement;
- Prescribed sessions of the HDR Skills Development (included in specified units of study in Masters (Research) degrees;
- Confirmation of candidature;
- Periodic Reviews and Interim Progress Reports;
- Project-specific research-based milestones (various);
- On-campus attendance requirements (as per Candidate / Supervisor Agreement)
- Ethics approval (where required).

4.3.1 Research Induction and Orientation

Candidates must attend the prescribed HDR Orientation Seminar and complete a Research Integrity module as part of their studies. This will normally include an overview of policy, procedure and expectations and information on codes of conduct, integrity and ethics, intellectual property, and other research related issues. Candidates will also undertake OHS and local induction.

4.3.2. Candidate / Supervisor Agreement

Candidates and supervisors are required to complete and submit to the School, the Candidate / Supervisor Agreement within the first four weeks following appointment of supervisors. This is a written agreement containing meeting frequency and methods, expertise provision and other candidature matters. In Masters (Research) degrees this will typically occur during the second trimester of study.

4.3.3. Admission to HDR candidature is on a probationary basis, and candidature must be confirmed.

For Masters (Research) degree candidates, confirmation will be applied for at the end of the third formal trimester of study, being at the end of the first designated "Research Thesis" unit (MR603). Enrolment in that unit is contingent on the student having passed all coursework units in the degree. The student will provide a Progress Report to the Confirmation Panel to assist them in making their decision.

4.3.4. Confirmation Panel

For each research degree, a Confirmation Panel will be established, which, according to the criteria for the degree, will recommend to the HDRC one of the following outcomes:

- Confirmed;
- Confirmed subject to conditions – candidate must meet conditions within a specified

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number of weeks to be confirmed;

- Confirmation deferred – the candidate will be required to attempt confirmation again within a specified number of weeks; or

- Not confirmed – the candidate will be required to 'Show Cause' as to why candidature should not be terminated.

The Panel will provide a written report of outcomes outlining the reasons for its decision. When applicable the report will include details of what tasks will need to be completed with associated timelines. Where the time taken to complete either "Confirmed subject to conditions" or "Confirmation Deferred" outcome submissions is greater than two weeks, candidates may be required to pay unit fees. Only in exceptional circumstances will more than two attempts to gain confirmation of candidature be permitted. Where the recommendation after a second attempt is 'Not confirmed', Show Cause proceedings, as per section 3.7, should be commenced.

The Confirmation Panel is responsible for providing feedback to the candidate on their research project and associated completion timeline.

The Confirmation Panel is comprised of:

- the Course Coordinator or nominee (Chair);

- the Principal Supervisor;

- an academic staff member from the Institute with relevant disciplinary experience and knowledge;

- An academic/discipline expert, from another Institute; and

- an industry partner, where appropriate.

The Principal Supervisor and Panel Chair should ensure that no conflict of interest exists between panel members and the candidate.

4.3.5. Confirmation Report

The confirmation report is a document of no more than 15 pages in total length at a 1.5 line spacing and Times Roman 12 font.

Suggested sections of the candidature confirmation reports for SITE will include:

- a title, headings and subheadings

- an introduction providing the project context

- a research question (hypotheses are not also required for this report)

- a literature review

- a description of the methodology to be used for the project

- any initial findings (it is expected that students will have completed some exploratory work by the time that they present this report, however, this is not compulsory and these

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findings are only expected to be indicative)

- plans for future publications from the research
- conclusion
- timeline (showing the planned progress of the project)

Suggested Sections of a Business (Social Science) Candidature Confirmation Report will include:

A title, headings, and subheadings.

1. Introduction providing the project context (what is known, what is lacking, what will be done in this research).
2. A literature review, analysis of literature, research problem/research questions/propositions/hypotheses, and appropriate in-text citations and references.
3. A theory to guide the research if relevant.
4. Aims, Objectives, and significance of the study
5. A well-written and justified (with references) research design for the research problem (research paradigm, methodology, methods, research population, sample, sampling technique)
6. Ethical Consideration. Research involving humans will require an approved Low Risk Ethics application.
7. Has an ethics application been submitted to REC?
8. A timetable listing the activities to be completed with timelines for completing each activity.
9. References presented in APA 7, preferably compiled in ZOTERO
10. Appendices, if any
11. An outline of the thesis
12. Resources required
13. Presentation and defense of the research proposal

All HDR candidates are required to submit their written candidature confirmation reports and present their research proposals to the candidature confirmation panel.

Candidature Confirmations are assessed using:

- Master of Business Candidature Confirmation Form
- Master of ICT Candidature Confirmation Form

All HDR candidates are required to abide by the MIT Research Ethics Policy and Procedure

4.3.6. Show Cause

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A candidate may be required to show cause as to why their candidature should not be terminated in any of the following instances:

- candidature is not confirmed by Confirmation Panel;
- candidate was deferred after both a first and second attempt confirmation;
- on recommendation of the Executive Dean or Course Coordinator;
- failure to maintain adequate and regular contact with the Institute;
- failure to submit written reports on academic progress when requested;
- reached the maximum period of candidature; or
- failure to meet the requirements of the Skills Development.

Candidates who are required to show cause will be notified in writing within 5 working days of the decision having been taken, by surface mail to their postal address and via email to their Institute email address.

Candidates are required to provide a written submission within 10 working days of receipt of the show cause notification detailing why their candidature should not be terminated. Where a report is not provided by the candidate, candidature will be terminated. Applications for Leave from Studies will not be considered once a candidate has been identified as having to Show Cause.

A HDR Course Progress Review Committee (CPRC), consisting of three members of the HDRC, convened by the Chair, HDRC will consider the candidate's Show Cause submission and details of candidature, and make one of the following recommendations:

- Candidate's progress is actually satisfactory, and the Show Cause determination was not warranted,
- Candidate's enrolment for the degree is terminated, or
- Candidate's enrolment for the degree continues, with conditions.

The Chair of the HDRC will formally advise the candidate of the decision, within 5 working days of the decision, and the process for appeal, via their MIT email address and postal address.

4.3.7 Ethics Approval

Research projects and practices must conform to accepted community standards and to the Institute's *Responsible Conduct of Research Policy*. Any research project involving human or animal subjects, or the use of personal data or data which identifies participants or organisations (even if not obtained directly for the research) must be approved by the Research Ethics Committee. This may involve interaction with the appropriate ethics officer.

Where projects involve research involving human or animal subjects, data cannot be collected before formal ethics approval has been granted. Any data collected before such approval cannot be presented in the thesis or published under the Institute's name. Ethics project approval codes are generally required to publish data. The ethics committee will invite external experts to review research projects involving animal subjects and provide a ethics outcome determination

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consistent with national standards for animal research.

4.3.8 Student Evaluation of the Postgraduate Program Survey (SEPP)

The Student Evaluation of the Postgraduate Program (SEPP) is an evaluation by the candidate of the HDR program. All HDR candidates are encouraged to complete the SEPP; responses are anonymous. HDR candidates are invited to complete an evaluation annually until they submit their thesis/portfolio for examination.

4.4. Variations to Candidature

4.4.1. Leave from studies and leave of absence

Leave of absence entitlements do not automatically extend scholarship or candidature periods.

4.4.2. Extension of Candidature

Under exceptional circumstances, candidates can request an extension of up to one study period, or part time equivalent, subject to the approval of the HDRC.

Candidates may request a second extension to candidature beyond the periods of candidature where their HDR studies have been severely impacted by circumstances beyond their control. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

Documented medical issues with substantial periods of leave,

Unforeseen circumstances which affect the progress of a candidate's research topic, e.g. natural disaster in a data collection area.

Requests for extension to candidature must be submitted at least four weeks prior to the approved thesis submission date. Candidates who do not submit their thesis or request an extension to candidature prior to their approved submission date will be considered as having lapsed candidature and section 4.2.1 of this policy will apply.

Extensions to scholarships are considered separately from extensions to candidature.

4.4.3. Change of thesis title

A candidate may request a change to the title of their research project (and therefore their thesis). Applications for change of thesis title must be approved by the candidate's Principal Supervisor and HDRC. A change in thesis title may occur without significant change to the research topic.

4.4.4. Change of research topic

A proposed change in research topic by the candidate must show that suitable supervision and other required resources are available for the new research topic, and the proposal must be approved by the Head of the School of enrolment and endorsed by the HDRC. There will be no extension to the total duration of candidature arising from change in either research topic or a change in supervisory team, or both.

Significant changes to a candidate's research topic may require the candidate to undertake the Confirmation of Candidature process again as determined by HDRC.

A change of thesis title and a change of thesis topic are requested using the Change of Thesis

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Title Form and Change of Thesis Topic Form.

4.4.5. Withdrawal from Studies

Information on ceasing candidature is located in the *Enrolment Policy and Procedure.*

4.4.6. Readmission to candidature after withdrawal

Readmission to candidature after withdrawal may be considered where support from the Principal Supervisor and Head of School exists. Candidates must readmit to the same program within 12 months of withdrawing and may be re-admitted on terms specified by the HDRC.

5. Dissemination and communication of HDR student research and results

This policy ensures that HDR students are provided with the support and opportunity to publish and disseminate their research findings and make contributions to the development of their field of research.

5.1 It is expected that all HDR students will disseminate their research findings either through (1) a peer-reviewed academic journal publication, (2) an accepted and subsequently presented full academic conference paper with published proceedings, (3) an academic research book published by a substantial publishing house, (4) an article in a substantial and critical public media magazine which regularly publishes findings from research projects, such as "The Conversation" or (5) an article in the MIT School of Business Working Paper Series or the MIT School of IT and Engineering Working Paper Series.

5.2 The HDR programs offered by MIT provide students with the skills necessary for future research projects, publishing and engagement in future HDR studies. MIT commits to providing a range of support services which will assist HDR candidates to familiarise themselves with formal and informal channels for communicating and disseminating their research while undertaking their program at MIT and after.

5.3 HDR Candidates will attend a two-day training program on the dissemination of research outputs, scheduled annually and occurring at the mid-point of the student's HDR program.

5.4 MIT will also provide opportunities for HDR candidates to publish and communicate their research, including (but not limited to):

5.4.1 Internal research conference(s);

5.4.2 Other channels such as library displays, blogs, videos, and social media, as deemed appropriate by supervisors and in accordance with Institute policies;

6. Student Publication Authoring Expectations

Publication is the goal of academic research and is an expectation for research students at the Institute. This policy ensures the authoring rights of students for publications based on their work.

6.1 Supervisors are required to discuss the issue of authorship with students early in the development

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of papers and, where the student has made a significant contribution, it is expected that students will be acknowledged as the first author in the paper. It is acceptable for a different author to be the correspondence author, given that the article review process frequently takes more than 12 months.

6.2 It is expected that supervisors provide guidance for the preparation of the paper, however, it is also acknowledged that some students may be experienced research writers and that the supervisor and student may agree that the student will be the sole author of the paper. In the instances where the student is the sole author, it is appropriate to acknowledge the role of the supervisor in the paper as an advisor.

7. Research Integrity and Compliance

7.1. Candidates should be aware of the Institute's *Intellectual Property Policy and Procedure* prior to undertaking research.

The Institute and supervisors have a responsibility to assist candidates in understanding authorship requirements and providing guidance in publishing their work during candidature and immediately following submission of the thesis for examination.

7.2 Candidates must be aware of data management and storage requirements, as outlined in the *Research and Research Training Policy*.

7.3. Misconduct

Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to conduct that involves academic fraud, plagiarism, and any other dishonest conduct to gain academic or general advantage; or conduct that otherwise contravenes the provisions of the Institute's academic rules, policies and procedures. The *Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure* applies to all MIT students.

The Institute adheres to the The Code, and requires all researchers, including HDR candidates and research managers to be familiar with, and abide by its provisions and to conduct their research and related tasks in accordance with these provisions and all other relevant legal, regulatory and policy requirements.

The *Responsible Conduct of Research Policy* applies to all staff and students. Breaches of the Research Integrity Policy will be dealt with under the Institute's policies for managing complaints or serious misconduct.

7.4 Grievances and Appeals

HDR Candidates should refer to the *Student Complaints and Grievances Policy and Procedure* regarding processes and principles for submitting a grievance.

8. Responsibilities

8.1   The candidate's responsibilities are to:

- work semi-independently, with support from their Supervision Panel;
- select an appropriate methodology;

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- appreciate the ethical implications of their project;

- relate their project to the body of existing research literature and outputs;

- conduct research or develop new creative work;

- generally become well-socialised to international norms for and approaches to research;

- adhere to norms for research as defined by the relevant discipline.

8.2 The Institute will provide:

post-thesis submission support for candidates. This may include publication support, career counsellors and other services. The Institute places theses in open access repositories;

the candidate with support to determine short, medium and long-term goals that assist the candidate with employability skills and their broader development as a researcher;

attention to career development for the candidate during candidature, and after submission of the thesis for examination.

8.3   Records

All Institute records shall be retained and disposed of in accordance with the Institute's *Record Management Policy and Procedure*.

9. Implementation and communication

This policy will be implemented and communicated through the Institute via:

- Announcement on the Institute's website;

- Staff professional development.

10.   10. Supporting documents and References

Australian Government (2018), *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

Australian Government, *The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2025*

Australian Government, *The Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition (2013)*.

Australian National Data Service, Guide *to Data sharing considerations for Human Research Ethics Committees (2020)*.

Australian Qualifications Framework

MIT:

Intellectual Property Policy and Procedure

HDR Supervision and Examination Policy

HDR Examination Procedure

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Records Management Policy and Procedure

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