AUSTRALIS BUSINESS SCHOOL

Higher Degree Research Candidate Progress Procedure

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish how Australis monitors, reviews, and determines the academic progression of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates across all HDR awards.

This procedure sets out the key progression requirements for HDR candidature, including confirmation of candidature, progress review and reporting, continuation of enrolment, submission readiness, and the management of unsatisfactory progress.

This procedure is to be read in conjunction with the *HDR Supervision Policy and Procedure, HDR Assessment and Examination Policy and Procedure* and *Research Ethics and Integrity Policy and Procedure*.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all HDR candidates enrolled at Australis, and to individuals and committees involved in monitoring and determining HDR candidature progression, including members of the Student Supervisory Panel (SSP), the HDR Director, and the Higher Degree Research Committee (HDRC).

This procedure details the progression of HDR candidates through their research candidature, from initial enrolment to thesis submission and examination, and operates in conjunction with other related Australis policies including the *HDR Supervision Policy and Procedure*, *HDR Assessment and Examination Policy and Procedure*, *Research Training and Induction Policy and Procedure*, and *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

3. DEFINITIONS

See the Australis *Glossary of Terms* for definitions.

Candidature: The period during which a student is formally enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) award and undertaking approved research activities under supervision.

Confirmation of Candidature: A formal academic milestone at which a HDR candidate demonstrates readiness to proceed to the substantive research stage of their award. Confirmation requires formal review and a documented progression determination in accordance with the *HDR Candidate Progress Procedure*. Successful confirmation is required for continuation to the research stage of the award.

Progress Review: A formal evaluation of a HDR candidate's academic development, research progress, and compliance with candidature requirements. A Progress Review results in a documented outcome and may include recommendations, conditions, or progression decisions.

HDR Satisfactory Progress: A determination that a HDR candidate is meeting the academic, research, and milestone expectations applicable to their stage of HDR candidature. For coursework stages within a HDR award, HDR Satisfactory Progress is normally demonstrated through successful completion of required units. For research stages, HDR Satisfactory Progress is demonstrated through achievement of approved milestones, documented advancement of the research project, and compliance with candidature requirements.

HDR Unsatisfactory Progress: A determination that a HDR candidate has not met the academic, research, or milestone expectations applicable to their stage of HDR candidature. A finding of HDR Unsatisfactory Progress may result in a defined remediation period and, if not satisfactorily addressed, may result in conditions, corrective actions, or escalation in accordance with this Procedure.

Show Cause: A formal process requiring a HDR candidate to provide written justification as to why their candidature should not be discontinued, following continued HDR Unsatisfactory Progress or failure to meet the requirements of a Remediation Plan.

Maximum Candidature Duration: The maximum period of full-time equivalent enrolment permitted for completion of a HDR award, including any approved extensions, as specified in the *HDR Candidate Progress Procedure*.

Submission Readiness: A determination that a HDR candidate's thesis or research project is sufficiently developed to proceed to formal examination, subject to supervisory endorsement and compliance with submission requirements.

Formal Review Point: A designated stage within candidature at which academic progress is formally assessed and documented for the purpose of determining continuation of enrolment.

4. HDR Candidature Stages and Milestones

4.1. Overview of HDR Candidature Progression

This progression framework applies to all Higher Degree by Research (HDR) awards offered by Australis.

HDR candidature progresses through defined stages, beginning with enrolment and culminating in submission and examination of the thesis. These stages include confirmation of candidature, ethics approval where required, periodic progress reviews, and a pre-submission review prior to examination.

Continuation of candidature is contingent upon satisfactory progress being demonstrated at each formal review point. Where progress is not satisfactory, conditions, corrective actions, or escalation may apply in accordance with this procedure.

4.2. Commencement and Supervision Framework

At the commencement of the HDR candidature:

a. A supervisory team will be appointed in accordance with the *HDR Supervision Policy and Procedure*.
b. A Student–Supervisor Agreement must be completed, setting out expectations regarding roles, communication, feedback, and research responsibilities.
c. Any required research induction or preparatory requirements relevant to the award must be completed.

Completion of these steps establishes the formal academic framework for the candidate's research and is required before progression to substantive research activity.

4.3. Confirmation of Candidature

All HDR candidates must complete a formal Confirmation of Candidature process.

Confirmation requires the candidate to:

a. Submit and present a research proposal appropriate to the level of the award.
b. Demonstrate the academic capability to undertake the proposed research.
c. Establish that the research project is feasible within the normal duration of candidature.
d. Identify any ethics approval requirements and confirm the proposed pathway to gain the required ethics approval.

The outcome of Confirmation of Candidature is determined by the HDR Director or delegated authority, with oversight by the HDRC and must be formally recorded. Outcomes may include:

- Confirmed;
- Confirmed subject to conditions;
- Deferred pending further development; or
- Not confirmed.

Where conditions or revisions are required, the candidate must address them within a timeframe determined by the HDRC or delegated authority. A determination of "Not confirmed" may result in discontinuation of candidature, subject to the review and appeal provisions of this Procedure.

4.4. Ethics Approval

Where a HDR candidate's project involves human research under Australis institutional responsibility, the candidate must obtain the applicable documented exemption or ethics-review outcome through the approved HREC Standard Operating Procedures, before commencing the relevant human-research activities. Any determination that ethics approval is not required must be made and recorded through the authorised process. HDR candidates must comply with applicable conditions and record the project's ethics status during progress reviews.

4.5. Periodic Progress Reviews

HDR candidates are subject to Progress Reviews throughout their candidature.

a. A Progress Review must occur at least annually.
b. Additional Progress Reviews may be required where determined by the Student Supervisory Panel (SSP), HDR Director or the HDRC.
c. Progress Reviews assess the candidate's academic development, research advancement, compliance with milestone requirements, and the ongoing viability of candidature.

Each Progress Review results in one of the following outcomes:

- Satisfactory Progress; or
- Satisfactory Progress with Conditions; or
- Unsatisfactory Progress.

Where Unsatisfactory Progress is determined, the candidate may be required to undertake a Remediation Plan in accordance with this Procedure.

Failure to participate in required Progress Reviews, or to submit required documentation, may constitute Unsatisfactory Progress.

4.6. Submission Readiness and Intention to Submit

Prior to submitting a thesis for examination, the HDR candidate must provide formal notice of their intention to submit, normally at least six (6) weeks before the proposed submission date.

Before submission, the SSP will review the thesis and confirm whether it is ready to proceed to examination and meets the academic standards of the award.

All required compliance matters, including ethics clearance (where applicable) and authorship declarations, must be completed prior to submission.

Thesis examination is conducted in accordance with the *HDR Assessment and Examination Policy and Procedure*.

4.7. Maximum Candidature Duration and Variations

Each HDR award has an approved normal duration of candidature, as set out in the relevant course documentation.

Candidates are expected to complete their award within the normal duration. The maximum duration of candidature will not normally exceed the equivalent of one additional year beyond the approved full-time duration of the award, calculated on a full-time equivalent basis.

Where additional time is required, an extension of candidature may be approved by the HDR Director, having regard to academic progress and the circumstances presented.

Requests for extension, changes to enrolment load, or leave of absence must be submitted prior to the expiry of the candidate's current enrolment period and considered in accordance with relevant Australis policies.

Failure to complete the award within the maximum candidature duration, without an approved extension, may result in the candidate being required to show cause as to why their candidature should not be discontinued. A decision to discontinue candidature will be made by the CEO or delegated authority, following consideration of academic advice.

5. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES

HDR candidature progression at Australis involves HDR candidates, the supervisory team (including the Student Supervisory Panel), the HDR Director, and the Higher Degree Research Committee (HDRC). The appointment, composition, and supervision responsibilities of supervisors and the Student Supervisory Panel are set out in the *HDR Supervision Policy and Procedure*.

5.1. HDR Candidates

HDR candidates are responsible for actively managing their candidature in accordance with this procedure and the requirements of their enrolled award.

In particular, HDR candidates must:

a. Meet all prescribed milestones and participate in formal review processes, including confirmation of candidature, periodic progress reviews, and pre-submission review where applicable.
b. Submit required documentation and progress reports within specified timeframes and respond in a timely manner to feedback, conditions, or corrective actions arising from formal reviews.
c. Ensure that research involving human participants, organisations, or non-public data does not commence prior to receiving ethics approval, where required.
d. Maintain enrolment and seek approval for extensions, variations to enrolment load, or leave of absence prior to the expiry of their current enrolment period.
e. Engage constructively with the supervisory team and take reasonable steps to address risks or challenges identified during the progression process.

Further detail regarding supervisory arrangements and expectations is set out in the *HDR Supervision Policy and Procedure*.

5.2. Student Supervisory Panel (SSP)

The Student Supervisory Panel (SSP) is responsible for conducting formal candidature review processes at defined progression points in accordance with this procedure.

At confirmation of candidature, periodic progress reviews, and pre-submission review, the SSP will:

a. Review the candidate's submitted documentation and progress against agreed milestones.
b. Assess whether progress is satisfactory, whether conditions or corrective actions are required, or whether concerns should be escalated.
c. Provide written feedback to the candidate outlining the outcome of the review and any required actions.

Following each formal review, the SSP will provide a documented recommendation regarding the candidate's progression status to the HDR Director or delegated authority for determination.

The appointment, composition, and broader supervisory responsibilities of the SSP are detailed in the *HDR Supervision Policy and Procedure*.

5.3. HDR Director

The HDR Director is responsible for overseeing the implementation and adherence to this procedure and ensuring that candidature progression processes are applied consistently and in accordance with Australis policies.

In relation to candidature progression, the HDR Director or delegated authority will:

a. Determine progression outcomes following formal review processes, having regard to the recommendation of the Student Supervisory Panel.
b. Approve routine extensions of candidature and variations to enrolment status, where appropriate.
c. Identify and escalate significant concerns regarding candidature progression to the HDRC for oversight or further consideration.
d. Ensure that formal review outcomes and progression determinations are recorded appropriately and communicated to candidates in a timely manner.

The HDR Director reports on HDR progression trends and systemic matters to the HDRC to support institutional oversight and continuous improvement.

5.4. Higher Degree Research Committee (HDRC)

The HDRC provides institutional oversight of HDR candidature progression.

In relation to this procedure, the HDRC will:

a. Monitor patterns and trends in HDR candidate progression, including progression outcomes, extensions, and escalations.
b. Review escalated cases of significant concern, including cases where discontinuation of candidature is being considered.
c. Provide guidance to the HDR Director on systemic issues affecting HDR progression and recommend improvements where necessary.
d. Report to the Academic Board on HDR progression matters in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

The detailed functions, composition, and authority of the HDRC are set out in the *Governance Charter and Delegations Framework*.

6. MONITORING AND REPORTING

HDR candidate progression is not limited to formal milestone points. In addition to the structured reviews set out in Section 4, Australis maintains an ongoing process of monitoring, documentation, and oversight to ensure that progression decisions are transparent, consistent, and appropriately supported.

This section sets out how progression decisions are recorded, how emerging concerns are identified between formal reviews, how matters are escalated where required, and how oversight is maintained by the HDRC. It does not restate the supervisory arrangement details described in the *HDR Supervision Policy and Procedure*, but operates alongside them.

6.1. Recording Decisions and Actions

All formal progression decisions made under this Procedure must be recorded in writing. Where progression decisions are based on candidate progress reports, those reports must be submitted using the current approved *HDR Candidate Research Progress Report Template*.

This includes decisions arising from:

- Confirmation of Candidature;
- Annual Progress Reviews;
- approved variations to candidature status, including extensions or changes to research scope; and
- determinations made following escalation under this Procedure.

The written record must clearly state:

- the outcome of the review or decision;
- any conditions, actions, or revised milestones required; and
- the timeframe for completion of those actions, where applicable.

Records of progression decisions are maintained in accordance with Australis' Records and Information Management requirements and must be accessible for internal review, audit, and regulatory reporting if required.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that agreed actions are communicated to the candidate. The HDR Director or delegated authority is responsible for ensuring that formal determinations are appropriately recorded and retained.

6.2. HDR Progression Outcomes

Coursework assessment and grading are governed by the *Assessment Policy and Procedure*. Ongoing academic performance monitoring for coursework components of a HDR award is

governed by the *Student Academic Progression Monitoring and Intervention Policy and Procedure*.

This section addresses HDR candidature status decisions made at formal research review points and does not replace or duplicate those policies.

Following a formal HDR review point under Section 4 of this Procedure, one of the following progression outcomes may be recorded in relation to candidature status.

(a) Satisfactory Progress

The candidate is meeting the academic and research standards required to continue in the HDR award.

No additional conditions are imposed. The candidate continues enrolment in accordance with the approved research plan.

(b) Satisfactory Progress with Conditions

The candidate is progressing overall, however specific concerns have been identified in relation to research performance, milestone completion, or overall academic capacity to continue.

Conditions may include:

- revision of research milestones;
- additional supervisory engagement;
- structured review points;
- targeted development activities; or
- other corrective actions considered appropriate.

Continuation of candidature is subject to meeting the specified requirements within the timeframe determined by the HDR Director or delegated authority.

(c) HDR Unsatisfactory Progress

The candidate is not meeting the standards required for continuation in the HDR award.

In such cases:

- a defined review or remediation period may be imposed;
- specific performance requirements will be documented; and
- failure to meet those requirements may result in termination of candidature.

The candidate must receive written notification outlining the HDR progression outcome decision, reasons, required actions, timeframes, and the right to seek review or appeal in accordance with Australis policy.

6.3. Escalation and Early Intervention

Where concerns arise regarding a candidate's research engagement, milestone completion, quality of work, or overall capacity to progress, early intervention will be initiated at the supervisory level.

Concerns may include, but are not limited to:

- missed agreed milestones;
- repeated delays in submission of work;
- persistent quality concerns in draft material;
- lack of engagement with supervisory advice; or
- emerging risks to timely completion.

The Principal Supervisor will ordinarily address such matters in the first instance through discussion with the candidate and, where appropriate, adjustment of short-term research expectations.

Where concerns persist or are of a more serious nature, the matter must be referred to the HDR Director. The HDR Director may:

- require a structured improvement plan;
- set revised milestones with defined review points;
- require additional supervisory engagement; or
- initiate a formal HDR Progression Outcome under this Procedure.

Where a matter may result in suspension, termination, or other significant change to candidature status, the decision will be made by the HDR Director or delegated authority in accordance with this Procedure.

All formal interventions must be documented and communicated in writing to the candidate, including the reasons for the intervention, required actions, and review timeframe.

6.4. Suspension, Termination and Withdrawal of Candidature

Where continuation of candidature is no longer appropriate following review under this Procedure, or where a candidate seeks to pause or withdraw from their enrolment, the following provisions apply.

(a) Suspension of Candidature

A candidate may apply for a temporary suspension of candidature where documented circumstances materially affect their capacity to progress.

Applications must be submitted in writing to the HDR Director and supported by relevant information. The HDR Director or delegated authority may approve suspension and determine its duration and conditions.

During an approved suspension period, candidature is paused and milestone expectations are adjusted accordingly.

(b) Termination of Candidature

The HDR Director may recommend termination of candidature where a candidate:

- fails to meet the requirements of an agreed improvement plan; or
- is determined to have made HDR unsatisfactory progress following formal review; or
- is found to have engaged in academic misconduct or research integrity breaches in accordance with relevant Australis policies,

A decision to terminate candidature will be made by the CEO or delegated authority, following consideration of academic advice and procedural fairness.

The decision will be communicated in writing and will include the reasons for the decision and information regarding the candidate's right to seek review or appeal under the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

(c) Voluntary Withdrawal

A candidate may withdraw voluntarily from the HDR award by providing written notice to Australis.

Where appropriate, alternative award pathways or exit options may be considered in accordance with relevant Australis policies.

7. Review and Continuous Improvement

This Procedure is overseen by the Higher Degree Research Committee (HDRC) and subject to the oversight of the Academic Board. Its implementation will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective, operationally workable, and aligned with regulatory requirements.

Feedback from HDR candidates, supervisors, and relevant committees may inform improvements to this Procedure. Amendments may be made where required to maintain compliance with external standards and to support effective HDR governance at Australis.

This Procedure will be formally reviewed at least every five years, or earlier where regulatory, structural, or operational changes make review necessary.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS, EXTERNAL REFERENCES AND VERSION CONTROL

8.1. Related/Referenced documents

- Academic Freedom, Integrity and Freedom of Inquiry Policy
- Assessment Policy and Procedure
- Governance Charter and Delegations Framework
- Graduation and Awards Policy and Procedure
- HDR Assessment and Examination Policy and Procedure
- HDR Examination Guidelines
- HDR Supervision Policy and Procedure
- HREC Standard Operating Procedures
- HREC Terms of Reference
- Research Ethics and Integrity Policy and Procedure
- Research Training and Induction Policy
- Responsible Conduct of Research Policy and Procedure
- Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Student Academic Progress, Monitoring and Intervention Policy and Procedure

8.2. Related legislation and external references

- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)
- Australian Privacy Act
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Revised 2025)
- TEQSA Guidance Note: Research and Research Training (Version 2.0, September 2022)
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2021

8.3. Version Control

Version	Date	Reviewed/approved by	Key notes/changes
2.0	19/02/26	HDRC	Major revision to clarify HDR progression details applicable to all HDR awards
2.1	26/02/26	AB	Reviewed and approved at the AB 26/02/26 meeting
3.0	05/11/26	AB	References updated and editorial improvements incorporated

8.4. Document Review

To be reviewed at least every five (5) years from the date of final approval