HDR Rules of Candidature

Version	1.0
Short description	Outlines the learning outcomes and the rules governing admission and progress reporting, processes, candidate responsibilities and thesis structure for HDR degrees.
Relevant to	HDR candidates and supervisors
Authority	Academic Board
Policy owner	Director Higher Degree Research
Responsible office	Research Services
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Related Avondale documents	Ethical Conduct Principles
	HDR Confirmation of Candidature Procedure
	HDR Supervision Code of Conduct
	HDR Thesis Examination Procedure
	Intellectual Property Policy
Related legislation	Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
Key words	admission, candidate, examination, HDR, intermission, PhD, MPhil, progression, research, thesis

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This document outlines Avondale's rules and guidelines relating to candidature of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Master of Philosophy (MPhil).

2. SCOPE

2.1 This document applies to all Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidates and supervisors.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 **Candidate (also HDR candidate):** a Higher Degree Research (HDR) student who is enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) or Master of Philosophy (MPhil).

3.2 **Candidature:** the period of time a candidate is enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research course such as the PhD or MPhil.

3.3 **Early candidature plan:** a form completed by a new candidate and their supervisors within the first three months of enrolment. It is designed to ensure the candidate and their supervisors discuss significant milestones, identify areas for skills development and training, and begin to plan the HDR journey.

3.4 **Good Clinical Practice (GCP) Certificate:** awarded after completion of an online training course. All Avondale researchers involved with human research participants in a health-related field are expected to undertake GCP training and maintain current GCP certification. Health research is defined as the "collection and analysis of information to better understand health issues or questions" (Australian Government Department of Health & Aged Care).

3.5 **HDR:** Higher Degree by Research

3.6 **Principal supervisor:** an Avondale staff member who has been appointed to lead a team of two or more supervisors in the provision of guidance and assistance to a candidate in the undertaking of the relevant degree requirements. The Principal Supervisor has official responsibility for the overall management of candidature from enrolment to final thesis examination and will be allocated higher workload hours than the Co-supervisor.

3.7 **Thesis:** a long essay presenting the results of personal research undertaken as part of a postgraduate degree. Also known as a dissertation.

3.8 **Research semester (R1 or R2):** R1: from mid-January to end of June; R2: from early July to mid-December.

3.9 **Show cause:** where a candidate is required to outline to the HDR Committee, in writing, why they consider their enrolment in the HDR program should not be discontinued due to unsatisfactory progress.

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

PhD

4.1 Design, plan and execute an original piece of research, based on an expert mastery of appropriate research methodology, research integrity and ethics.

4.2 Demonstrate a systematic and critical understanding of a substantial and complex body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of work or learning, in one or more fields of study.

4.3 Demonstrate substantial knowledge of research principles and methods relevant to the discipline or area of learning.

4.4 Demonstrate expert cognitive, technical and creative skills, based on a mastery of theoretical knowledge using intellectual independence, to reflect critically on, synthesise and evaluate theory and its application to undertake systematic investigation to generate significant and original knowledge.

4.5 Disseminate research results to peers and the community.

4.6 As a leading scholar at the frontier of a discipline or disciplines, demonstrate intellectual independence, initiative and adaptability to generate a significant, expert and original contribution to knowledge.

MPhil

4.7 Design, plan and execute a substantial piece of research, based on a mastery of appropriate research methodology, research integrity and ethics.

4.8 Demonstrate an advanced and integrated understanding of a complex and specialised body of knowledge that includes the understanding of recent developments, in one or more disciplines.

4.9 Demonstrate advanced knowledge of research principles and methods relevant to the discipline or area of learning.

4.10 Demonstrate expert and specialised cognitive, technical and creative skills, based on a mastery of theoretical knowledge, to reflect critically on, synthesise and evaluate theory and its application to different bodies of knowledge.

4.11 Disseminate research results to specialised and non-specialised audiences.

4.12 As an expert in a discipline or disciplines, demonstrate intellectual independence, initiative and adaptability to make a contribution to knowledge.

5. LENGTH OF CANDIDATURE

5.1 Length of candidature is calculated based on the date the candidate is enrolled in the course (course enrolment), through to the date the candidate must submit their thesis for examination (thesis submission).

5.2 Candidates will engage in a supervised program of research and study within a timely course completion schedule.

5.3 The PhD degree will typically be completed within:

- 3 years of full-time study OR

- 6 years of part-time study

5.4   The MPhil degree will typically be completed within:

- 1.5 years of full-time study OR

- 3 years of part-time study

5.5   Principal supervisors may request that the HDR Committee consider an extension to the timely course completion schedule on behalf of the candidate. An extension will normally be granted only in special circumstances. An extension beyond a twelve-month period (or part-time equivalent) will not normally be granted.

5.5.1   In special circumstances the HDR Committee may approve a PhD completion schedule of:

- 2 years minimum or 4 years maximum full-time study OR

- 4 years minimum or 8 years maximum part-time study

5.5.2   In special circumstances the HDR Committee may approve a MPhil completion schedule of:

- 1 year minimum or 2 years maximum full-time study OR

- 2 years minimum or 4 years maximum part-time study

6.   ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

PhD

6.1   The minimum requirement for admission to the PhD degree is:

a.   a postgraduate Masters by research degree, including a major self-directed research component, from a recognised institution; or

b.   a postgraduate Masters coursework degree, including a major self-directed research component from a recognised institution; or

c.   a Professional Doctorate, including a major self-directed research component, from a recognised institution; or

d.   a qualification equivalent to any of those listed above.

6.2   Special consideration for entry into the PhD degree may also be given to applicants who can demonstrate research experience and a capacity to complete a PhD.

MPhil

6.3   The minimum requirement for admission to the MPhil degree is:

a.   a Bachelor degree from a recognised institution with a minimum credit level average of 65% and above (or equivalent); or

b.   a Masters coursework degree from a recognised institution with a minimum credit level average of 65% and above (or equivalent);

6.4   Special consideration for entry into the MPhil degree may also be given to applicants who can demonstrate a capacity to complete a MPhil.

Additional requirements

6.5 Acceptance to the PhD and MPhil is dependent on:

    a. The applicant's qualifications and experience;

    b. The applicant's ability to communicate and write in English;

    c. The quality and feasibility of the applicant's research proposal;

    d. The availability of appropriate supervision; and

    e. The availability of appropriate infrastructure and financial resources.

6.6 A formal interview may be conducted by the Director Higher Degree Research (Director HDR) to determine the applicant's capacity to meet the above requirements.

6.7 Applicants from a country in which English is not the first language must provide documentary evidence that an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) score of 7.0 has been achieved, with no band score less than 7.0. If the applicant has completed a degree of at least two years full time equivalent study (AQF Level 7 equivalent or higher) where English was the language of instruction and assessment, English language proficiency evidence is not required.

6.8 Except with the written permission of the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee), a candidate will not concurrently enrol in any other degree or award, whether at Avondale or another higher education institution.

6.9 MPhil candidates may upgrade to a PhD pending evaluation by a confirmation panel that the quality of work is of high enough standard, the candidate has demonstrated capacity to conduct the research and the research project has the capacity to be developed into a PhD study.

7. ATTENDANCE

7.1 There are no timetabled classes and no compulsory attendance required. Candidates typically meet with their supervisors online but may attend on-campus meetings with their supervisors, depending on availability and location.

8. SUPERVISION

8.1 The supervisory team will be allocated and operate according to the *HDR Supervision Code of Conduct*.

9. STUDY LOAD

9.1 Candidates will be enrolled in a full-time or part-time capacity and may change their status by contacting Research Services.

9.2 On average, a full-time study load would require 28-40 hours per week, and a part-time study load would require 14-20 hours per week.

9.3 The candidate and appointed supervisors will negotiate the necessary workload commitments required by the candidate to complete the requirements within the stated timeframes.

10. PROGRESS REPORTING

10.1 Progress is reported bi-annually in April and September.

10.2 Reports are completed in three parts:

Part A - Candidate response

Part B – Supervisor response

Part C – Collaborative response by candidate and supervisor

10.3 The progress reporting process ensures the freedom of the candidate and supervisor to comment openly on candidate progress, identifying any difficulties a candidate may experience and providing opportunity for support where needed.

10.4 If special enrolment conditions or extensions to candidature have been set, candidates may be required to submit additional progress reports.

10.5 Progress reports are signed-off by the Director HDR. In the case of conflict of interest, the reports are signed-off by an appropriate proxy.

10.6 A report outlining matters relating to HDR candidate progress is tabled at Research Committee in May and October each year.

11. MILESTONES & MANDATORY ACTIVITIES

11.1 Induction/Orientation session with Director HDR (in the first semester of enrolment), followed by the online module Induction to Research which has been designed as a preventative action to mitigate foreseeable risks to academic and research integrity. This module will include the following:

o   Codes of conduct

o   Ethics

o   Work Health & Safety

o   Intellectual Property

o   Any other relevant policies

11.2 Academic Integrity Module (AIM) (within the first research semester of enrolment)

11.3 Completion of Early Candidature plan (within three months of initial enrolment)

11.4 Completion of Progress Reports (biannually)

11.5 Confirmation of Candidature (PhD: within 6-12 months of full-time enrolment, or within 12-24 months of part-time enrolment; MPhil: within 6 months of full-time enrolment, or within 12 months of part-time enrolment)

11.6 Submission of ethics application (if required), including evidence of completion of a Good Clinical Practice Certificate where appropriate (within three months of Confirmation of Candidature)

11.7 Submission of thesis for examination (to meet timely course completion schedule)

11.8 Upload of approved thesis to Avondale's research repository (immediately after conferral)

12. INTERMISSION

12.1 Candidates may apply for up to 12 months of intermission by completing an *Intermission or Withdrawal Form*. The form must be submitted to Research Services for approval by the Director HDR.

12.2 Upon resuming study after intermission, a candidate must be enrolled for at least one research semester before being permitted to submit a thesis.

12.3 The period of intermission will not be counted as part of the prescribed period of candidature.

12.4 In exceptional circumstances, additional intermission may be approved by the Research Committee.

12.5 For further details relating to intermission, candidates should refer to the *Course Intermission Policy*.

13. WITHDRAWAL

13.1 Candidates may withdraw from their degree by completing an *Intermission or Withdrawal Form*. The form must be submitted to Research Services.

13.2 Withdrawal shall take effect from the date of receipt of the form.

13.3 Candidates may be withdrawn from enrolment in their degree if they do not respond to requests to re-enrol before Census date.

13.4 Candidates may also be withdrawn if they are not considered by the Director HDR to be actively engaged in the course for 3 months or more.

14. CANDIDATE RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

A candidate has the right to expect supervisors will adhere to the responsibilities outlined in the *HDR Supervision Code of Conduct*.

A candidate will:

14.1 Assist in establishing clear expectations for contact and communication with supervisors at the start of candidature and maintain regular contact with the supervisory team.

14.2 Diligently apply themselves to their study in order to make satisfactory progress, meet milestone deadlines and achieve timely completion.

14.3 Become familiar with the accepted academic standards of acknowledgement of sources and copyright laws by completing the Academic Integrity Module (AIM) by the end of their first semester of enrolment.

14.4 Complete Progress Reports as requested by Research Services.

14.5 Submit regular drafts of work within the timeframe agreed with the supervisory team.

14.6 Ensure they are enrolled in the correct unit of study prior to the commencement of each research semester.

14.7 Heed advice and feedback provided by the supervisory team, and implement changes as required.

14.8 Read and adhere to the guidelines outlined in the *Intellectual Property Policy.*

14.9 Abide by the guidelines stated in the *Ethical Conduct Principles* for conduct of their research study. If the research topic involves human subjects, they will:

- Submit an ethics application to the Avondale Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

- Complete Good Clinical Practice (GCP) training and provide a GCP Certificate with their ethics application where appropriate

- Ensure no data is collected until the HREC has approved the project

14.10 Ensure the content and format of the final version of the thesis is correct before it is submitted for examination.

15. UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS

15.1 Candidates who consistently fail to meet course milestones and/or the targets set by the supervisory team will not make satisfactory progress and may be given an Unsatisfactory grade.

15.2 Should a candidate receive an Unsatisfactory grade, the Director HDR will meet with the supervisory team and the candidate to explore options for improving candidate success going forward.

15.3 A candidate who receives more than one Unsatisfactory grade will usually be asked to show cause, to the HDR Committee, as to why they should remain in the HDR program. Candidates who continue to fail to meet course milestones and/or the targets set by the supervisory team, or receive multiple Unsatisfactory grades, may be withdrawn from the course.

16. THESIS STRUCTURE

16.1 The thesis will be a coherent exposition of the research study and follow an ordered sequence in which the research objectives, methodology and strategies employed, and the results obtained, are identified.

16.2 The thesis will be written in English and formatted according to the *HDR Thesis Style Guide* available on the HDR Hub on Moodle.

16.3 The thesis is expected to meet the thesis examination criteria outlined in the *HDR Thesis Examination Procedure*.

16.4 The thesis must:

- consist of the candidate's own account of the research they have undertaken, the greater part of which must have been completed after admission to candidature for the degree. Work done conjointly with other persons may be accepted, provided the Research Committee is satisfied with the candidate's part in the joint research; and

- not contain, as its main content, any work or material which has previously been submitted for a university degree or other similar qualification, unless permitted by the Research Committee in writing.

16.5 Submission of the thesis for examination should be according to the *HDR Thesis Examination Procedure*.

PhD

16.6 The PhD thesis may take the form of one of the following:

a. A written thesis

The thesis word count will be 80,000-100,000 words, inclusive of words in tables, figures and footnotes, but exclusive of words in reference lists, bibliographies and appendices.

b. A combination of written thesis (or exegesis) and creative and/or performance practice where the research is derived from creative and/or performance research areas.

- The work produced is equivalent in intellectual scope and level to a PhD but is presented in non-traditional formats.

- The substantial creative work (typically a folio of four performances) will be the equivalent of a 50,000-60,000-word piece, accompanied by a 30,000-40,000-word thesis.

- The creative work may be in any genre and medium but must reflect research as well as creative practice, fitting into a tradition of research in an area, demonstrating a clear understanding of the current state of knowledge in that area, have a clear research question, and generate data that addresses that question.

- The thesis will provide a clear synthesis and statement of the new knowledge produced by the creative project.

c. Thesis by publication

- The thesis by publication word count will typically be 50,000-80,000 words including the published papers.

- Typically a thesis by publication is made up of a minimum of four papers published, accepted, under review or in-press, in a variety of publications. The number of publications required may vary between disciplines and candidates should be guided by their supervisors. Each paper is written in consultation with the supervisors and contextualised with the discipline. More than four papers may be submitted. All research presented in the thesis must have been completed during the period of enrolment.

- The candidate must be responsible for the key ideas, the development of the study and the writing of each paper.

- The candidate will obtain endorsement from their Principal Supervisor for undertaking this thesis format prior to Confirmation of Candidature.

- In considering a candidate's request to undertake the thesis by publication, the Principal Supervisor will guide the candidate on the appropriate quantity and quality of papers, and on realistic peer review and publication timeframes for work in the discipline.

- The supervisory team will advise the candidate on journals and other publication outlets that are of sufficiently high repute that examiners will likely consider that the publications meet the standard for the award:

  o Journals should be reputable, of high quality and peer reviewed.

- o Books or book chapters should be published with recognised publishers.
- o Works must be researched and written during the period of candidature.

- The candidate must include a declaration that specifies:
  - o the title, authorship and publication outlet of each paper;
  - o the current status of each paper or work not already published (in press, accepted, under review); and
  - o A statement about the candidate's contribution to specific elements of the published papers, including the percentage contribution to the writing of each section of each paper, and the percentage contribution of each of the analyses or experimental procedures in the paper. This statement must be verified by each of the co-authors of each paper.

- The thesis may include appendices of other papers not related to the main themes of the thesis, raw data, programs, questionnaires and other material appropriate to the discipline.

- The thesis will be formatted as outlined in the *HDR Thesis Style Guide* (see HDR Hub on Moodle). Journal formatting can be preserved for journal articles included.

- Works included in the thesis should be presented as individual chapters or, where two or more works are closely linked, may be combined in one chapter.

- As well as the published works, there must be a comprehensive introduction and final synthesis to link the work and establish their broad academic context. Each work must also have a brief introduction to place it in the context of the whole thesis. In addition, the thesis may include a detailed methodology chapter if more details of the methodology employed in the publications are warranted.

- The thesis should constitute an integrated account that:
  - o introduces the field of study and the hypothesis or research questions, and how these are addressed in the ensuing chapters, giving a general account of the theory and methodological components of the research where these components may be distributed across separate papers or chapters;
  - o links texts to establish the relationship between one chapter and the next, such as an introduction to each chapter;
  - o draws together the published works in a conclusion, addressing how the individual works are linked to the theory and methodology adopted, and evaluating the contribution of the research in the publications to advancing the area of research; and
  - o provides further discussion if necessary where restrictions of journal publication or exhibition have limited full exposition of the findings and their significance and/or shortcomings.

MPhil

16.7 The MPhil thesis may take the form of one of the following:

a. A written thesis

The thesis word count will be 40,000-50,000 words, inclusive of words in tables, figures and footnotes, but exclusive of words in reference lists, bibliographies and appendices.

b. A combination of written thesis (or exegesis) and creative and/or performance practice where the research is derived from creative and/or performance research areas.

- The work produced is equivalent in intellectual scope and level to a MPhil but is presented in non-traditional formats.

- The specialised creative work (typically a folio of two performances) will be the equivalent of a 20,000-25,000-word piece, accompanied by a 20,000-25,000-word thesis.

- The creative work may be in any genre and medium but must reflect research as well as creative practice, fitting into a tradition of research in an area, demonstrating a clear understanding of the current state of knowledge in that area, have a clear research question, and generate data that addresses that question.

- The thesis will provide a clear synthesis and statement of the new knowledge produced by the creative project.

16.8 A thesis by publication is not offered in Avondale's MPhil degree.

17. CANDIDATE SUPPORT

17.1 The research training program is offered in an environment conducive to research activity or other creative endeavour, inquiry and scholarship. The supervision and resources required for candidates' projects will be made available.

17.2 Candidates should consult with their supervisors regarding support services available to students enrolled in HDR degrees at Avondale. These services include library tutors, the reference librarian, the HDR Hub, Studiosity, access to the on-campus Scholars' Centre and the Research Training Program.

18. THESIS AVAILABILITY

18.1 An electronic copy of the thesis that has satisfied the requirements for the degree will be uploaded to Avondale's research repository according to the *HDR Thesis Examination Procedure*.

19. GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

19.1 Candidates and supervisors are expected to seek negotiated solutions to any problem prior to initiating a formal complaint.

19.2 When grievances cannot be resolved between the supervisory team and candidate, formal resolution can be sought by:

   a) candidates in accordance with the *Complaint Resolution Procedure*; and

   b) supervisors in accordance with the *Grievance Resolution Procedure (Staff)*.

Table of amendments

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Short description of amendment	Major revision: • Combination of previous separate *Rules of Candidature* for PhD and MPhil. • Updates to accommodate recommendations from reaccreditation panel • Updates to reflect changes of structure, titles and language • Addition of Candidate Support information		