

HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH CONFIRMATION OF CANDIDATURE PROCESS

This document outlines the process by which Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Students are confirmed into their respective programs at USQ.

1.0 Timeline to Seminar

1.1 After Census Date of Relevant Students' Commencements

- The Graduate Research School (GRS) emails each commencing Provisional Candidate, advising them of their Confirmation of Candidature milestones and the process they need to undertake in order to complete it.
- The Student undertakes the relevant Research Planning Tutorials/Modules

1.2 At Least 18 Weeks Prior to Confirmation of Candidature Deadline

- The Student completes Sections 1 and 2 of the Confirmation of Candidature Planner and Feedback to Candidate Form and submits it to the Principal Supervisor.

1.3 At Least 16 Weeks Prior to Confirmation of Candidature Deadline (4 weeks prior to the Seminar Date)

- The Student and Principal Supervisor complete the Resource Requirement Plan.
- The Principal Supervisor completes Sections 3 and 4 of the Confirmation of Candidature and Feedback to Candidate Form and submits it to the GRS alongside the Resource Requirement Plan.

1.4 At Least 4 Weeks Prior to the Seminar Date

- The GRS;
 - Conducts a conflict of interest check of the nominated panel
 - Approves/rejects the nominated panel (Associate Dean (GRS))
 - Sets up a SharePoint site for the Student's Confirmation and uploads all available pertinent documentation
 - Creates and sends a meeting request to participants listed on the CoC Planner inclusive of participant information, SharePoint details, Zoom details, and any room booking for on-campus seminars.
 - Submits the seminar for inclusion in the ReDTrain Bulletin and Research Events Calendar

1.5 At Least 2 Weeks Prior to the Seminar Date

- The Student submits a detailed Research Proposal to the GRS
- The GRS uploads that documentation to the relevant SharePoint site

2.0 The Seminar

Minimum attendance by;

- The Student undergoing Confirmation
- At least one member of the supervisory team
- All panel members

- Seminar bookings are made for 1.5 hours but may extend to 2 hours.
- The presentation is expected to last 30 minutes, followed by a question and answer session, followed by any feedback that the panel may want to deliver verbally.

- The seminar may also include a Panel discussion with the supervisors alone. Discussion topics may include:

- Resources obtained or needed,
- Candidate progress,
- Production of written work,
- Problems encountered so far or problems foreseen.
- The seminar may also include a Panel discussion with the candidate alone. Discussion topics with candidate may include;
 - Progress,
 - Feedback from supervisors on written work,
 - Work and social environment,
 - Problems encountered or foreseen.
 - General discussion,
 - Additional questions from panel
 - Clarification by candidate of any relevant matters presented in seminar or written document.

3.0 Timeline After the Seminar

3.1 Within 2 Weeks of the Seminar

- Panel Chair sends completed feedback to the GRS
- The GRS advises the Student and the Supervisors of the outcome and the feedback.

3.2 Outcome-Specific Timelines

3.2.1 *Pass - Editorial Corrections Only*

- Student to provide revised Proposal to the GRS (up to 2 weeks)
- GRS obtains approval of revisions from Principal Supervisor (up to 1 week)
- Final review of revised Proposal by Associate Dean (GRS) (up to 3 days)
- Student advised of successful completion of Confirmation of Candidature by the GRS (up to 3 days)
- Student advised of protocols associated with access to USQ research funding.

3.2.2 *Minor Revisions*

- Student to provide revised Proposal to the GRS (up to 2 weeks)
- GRS obtains approval of revisions from Principal Supervisor (up to 1 week)
- Final review of revised Proposal by Associate Dean (GRS) (up to 3 days)
- Student advised of successful completion of Confirmation of Candidature by the GRS (up to 3 days)
- Student advised of protocols associated with access to USQ research funding.

3.2.3 *Major Revisions*

- Student to provide revised Proposal to the GRS (up to 6 weeks)
- GRS obtains approval of revisions from Panel Chair (up to 1 week)
- Final review of revised Proposal by Associate Dean (GRS) (up to 3 days)
- Student advised of successful completion of Confirmation of Candidature by the GRS (up to 3 days)
- Student advised of protocols associated with access to USQ research funding.

3.2.4 Resubmission – Candidature to be continued with conditions

- Student to provide revised Proposal to the GRS (up to 9 weeks).
- GRS asks Panel to reconvene. Panel Chair may request an additional presentation and additional revisions (up to 6 weeks).
- Final review of revised Proposal by Associate Dean (GRS) (up to 3 days)
- Student advised of successful completion of Confirmation of Candidature by the GRS (up to 3 days)
- Student advised of protocols associated with access to USQ research funding.

3.2.5 Candidature to be reviewed

- Associate Dean (GRS) and/or Dean (GRS) reviews candidature in consultation with Panel Chair and Supervisory team.
- Student advises of seminar outcome by the GRS within 1 week of receipt of feedback.
- Potential outcomes of review include but not limited to
 - Resubmission of Confirmation of Candidature under Conditional Academic Standing.
 - Candidate asked to show cause as to why they should remain in the program.
 - Cancellation of candidature.

4.0 Panel Selection

The Principal Supervisor is responsible for the nomination of the Panel and for agreeing a date/time for the seminar with that panel.

- The Panel must comprise at least 2 members including the Panel Chair.
- The Panel Chair need not be an expert in the field, but must be a senior member of USQ's Academic Staff.
- The Panel Member(s) are to have appropriate expertise in the related area and be appropriately qualified i.e., doctoral-qualified for doctoral seminars.
- The Panel Member(s) may be external to the University.
- A third Panel Member with discipline-specific knowledge may also be nominated

Please note: Neither the Chair nor the Member(s) can currently be, or have been, a member of the candidate's supervisory panel, or involved with their research project. Normal conflict of interest provisions also apply.

The nominated Panel will be reviewed by the Graduate Research School (GRS) and is subject to approval by the Associate Dean (GRS).

5.0 The Role of the Panel

5.1 Purpose

The confirmation review panel shall make one (1) of the following recommendations by the candidature due date:

- Candidature be confirmed (with appropriate modifications to proposal document);
- Candidature continue for up to three (3) months with conditions; or
- Candidature be reviewed

5.2 Confirmation Panel Responsibilities and Guide

5.2.1 All Panel Members:

- Read the candidate's thesis proposal;
- Attend the seminar and ask questions as appropriate;
- Participate in the panel discussions with the candidate and supervisors; and
- Provide feedback to the Chair

Panel deliberations may be aided by the following:

- *Guidelines*
 - See USQ Guidelines for Confirmation of Candidature
 - Does the proposal have all the necessary elements indicated in the guidelines?
 - Does the proposal conform to the guidelines (e.g., 20 pages for the main text, excluding figures, tables and references, double spaced)?
- *Aims and Research Question/s and/or Hypotheses*
 - Has the candidate described the aim of the research?
 - Are specific research questions or hypotheses stated?
- *Literature Review and Context for Research*
 - Does the candidate discuss the current state of knowledge and its present limitations?
 - Does the candidate demonstrate how the research fits into the broad framework of theory and knowledge in relevant fields?
 - Does the candidate indicate the extent to which their work will result in an original contribution to understanding in those fields?
- *Methods*
 - Does the proposal describe the methods that will be used to address the research questions?
 - Do the research methods draw on appropriate theoretical or analytical tools?
 - Are such methods reasonable (given the available time frames, research infrastructure, experience of the candidate and other resources)?
 - Has there been adequate progress made to date?
- The Panel indicates the outcome to the candidate and supervisors at the conclusion of the Panel discussions and prepares a summary of primary discussion points and/or requested modifications and/or improvements to the written document as required.

5.2.2 The Panel Chair:

- Chairs the seminar.
- Introduces the candidate.
- If relevant to the Faculty and/or school in which the study is located, convenes the Panel at conclusion of seminar and outlines the process to those present.
- Collates and completes the assessment and feedback information into Sections 5 through 9 of the Confirmation of Candidature and Feedback to Candidate Form.
- Sends the completed form to the GRS within 2 weeks of the seminar date.