



Melbourne College of Divinity

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Higher Degree by Research Course Progress Policy

January 2009

MCD takes seriously its responsibility for monitoring the progress of its students throughout the period of their enrolment, and for implementing appropriate intervention strategies when and if such measures become necessary. Further information about intervention measures can be found in the [MCD Intervention Strategy Policy](#) document.

The progress of Higher Degree by Research candidates is chiefly the responsibility of the appointed supervisor. All supervisors are required to monitor their candidate's progress throughout candidature, keeping dated, detailed and clear records of supervisory meetings, work requirements and correspondence. As specified in the [Supervisors' Workload and Accreditation](#) document, supervisory meetings should be held—either electronically, by phone or face-to-face—for the equivalent of two hours per month for full-time students, and the equivalent for part-time students. Regular meetings and ongoing feedback are vital for providing candidates with structured support, and in identifying any problems related to the research project before they become insurmountable.

The progress of HDR candidates is also evaluated through approval and confirmation proceedings, and the annual submission of progress reports. All HDR candidates are required to submit an annual progress report, which provides an opportunity for both student and supervisor to review and evaluate progress, and to identify any difficulties in candidature. *Completion of progress reports is mandatory for the continuation of enrolment and any scholarship held.* The candidate should read the supervisor's comments and is required to sign after completion of the supervisor's section, before submitting the report to the MCD Research Office.

HDR candidates are expected to make satisfactory progress for each year of their candidature. The achievement of 'satisfactory progress' includes (but is not limited to):

- Approval or confirmation of candidature at the appropriate time;
- HREC submission and approval once the candidate's research status has been confirmed;
- submission of annual progress reports for each year of candidature;
- regular submission of thesis or chapter drafts to the supervisor
- for candidates enrolled in the minor thesis option, a pass mark in both coursework units

In addition to these requirements, the Regulations governing all Higher Degrees by Research stipulate that the Academic Board may, from time to time, determine other course requirements that must be met in order to achieve satisfactory progress.

Candidature may be terminated at any time by the Academic Board on the recommendation of the Research Committee, during probationary or confirmed candidature, if the progress of the candidate is unsatisfactory. The following procedures apply for recommendations of termination:

1. The supervisor must be able to verify that all supervisory requirements have been met and appropriately documented.
2. If, after all appropriate support, guidance and warnings have been offered to the candidate in accordance with the **HDR Student Intervention Policy**, the supervisor remains convinced that the candidate is making no attempt to address the problems identified, the supervisor should inform the candidate *in writing* of the nature of the unsatisfactory progress, copying the letter to the RTI Research Coordinator and the MCD Director of Research.
3. The Research Coordinator and/or the Director of Research may then propose to the Research Committee that candidature should not be confirmed at the end of the probationary period or that the candidature should be terminated. Such a proposal must be justified with written documentation outlining the history of the supervisory meetings, and the candidate's enrolment history, including any measures initiated through the **HDR Student Intervention Policy**.
4. Should the Research Committee agree with this proposal, it will make this recommendation to the Academic Board for its decision.
5. If the Academic Board agrees that the candidature be terminated, it will issue a written warning notifying the student that her or his candidature will be terminated three months from the date of such a letter, and stating the reasons.
6. The student about whom such a decision is made may appeal that decision, in accordance with the provisions set out in Section B3.1 of the MCD Academic Grievance Policy.

Candidates should be familiar with the relevant regulation governing their degree, and with the following documents:

- Working Procedures for HDR Awards
- HDR Student Intervention Policy
- Academic Conduct Policy
- Academic Grievance Policy