

## HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH: POLICY AND PROCEDURES (THE GOLD BOOK)

<b>PART 6 PROGRESS IN HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH</b> .....	2
6.1 Overview and introduction to Part 6 .....	2
6.2 Principles relating to academic progress .....	3
6.3 Administrative requirements related to enrolment of research candidates .....	7
6.3.1 Attendance at the University .....	7
Exceptions to normal attendance requirements .....	7
6.3.2 Leave of absence .....	9
6.3.3 Additional coursework .....	10
6.3.4 University employment .....	10
6.3.5 Expiry of time to complete the course .....	10
6.3.6 Managing changes to the candidate's program .....	11
6.3.7 Discontinuation or withdrawal from a research program .....	11
6.4 Academic requirements for satisfactory progress .....	12
6.4.1 Summary of requirements .....	12
6.4.2 The learning plan .....	13
Background and description .....	13
Development of the learning plan .....	14
Assessment and review of the learning plan .....	15
6.4.3 The research proposal .....	15
6.4.4 Research seminars .....	16
Initial seminar and confirmation of candidature .....	17
Second work-in-progress seminar for PhD candidates .....	19
Final research presentation .....	19
6.4.5 Conference attendance .....	20
6.4.6 Publication during research candidature .....	20
6.5 Annual progress reports .....	20
6.5.1 Summary of requirements .....	20
6.5.2 Procedures .....	21
6.5.3 Quality assurance issues .....	22
6.6 Unsatisfactory progress .....	23
6.6.1 Summary of University policy .....	23
6.6.2 Special progress report .....	24
6.6.3 Academic warning .....	24
6.6.4 Show Cause and Exclusion .....	25
6.7 University monitoring of academic progress and candidate satisfaction .....	26
6.7.1 Quality assurance through the annual progress reporting process .....	26
6.7.2 PREQ and UC annual survey of research candidates .....	26
6.8 Transfers and upgrades between research programs at UC .....	27
6.8.1 General requirements .....	27
6.8.2 Procedures .....	28
6.8.3 Upgrade to doctoral program .....	29

## PART 6 PROGRESS IN HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH

*Note to users:*

*Part 6 of the revised Higher degrees by research: policy and procedures (Gold Book) was approved by Academic Board at meeting 02/6 on 14 October 2002. Amendments were approved at Academic Board meetings 03/1 (3 February 2003); 04/7 (15 November 2004) and 06/1 (30 January 2006). This edition supersedes the Gold Book published in January 1999.*

*In accordance with Board resolution, this policy came into effect from 1 January 2003 for students commencing studies in a course after 1 January 2003. It also applies to students enrolled in their course before this date unless otherwise indicated or required by University legislation or policy. Advice on the applicability of any aspect of this policy may be obtained from the secretary of the University Research Degrees Committee.*

*Forms and administrative guidelines are made available as appendices to the Gold Book. For advice on administrative matters relating to research candidature, contact Imelda Anderson in the Office of Research and Research Degrees. Email [Imelda.Anderson@canberra.edu.au](mailto:Imelda.Anderson@canberra.edu.au) Phone 02 6201 2142.*

*Inquiries relating to this policy should be addressed to Gay Landau, secretary of the University Research Degrees Committee. Email [gay.landau@canberra.edu.au](mailto:gay.landau@canberra.edu.au) Phone 02 6210 5228.*

### 6.1 Overview and introduction to Part 6

- 6.1.1** This Part of the policy sets out requirements and procedures relating to progress of candidates enrolled in higher degree by research programs, from initial enrolment up to submission of the thesis. Advice on thesis requirements is included in Part 7, which deals with examination and completion of research programs. Policy and procedures on supervision are described in Part 4.
- 6.1.2** Flowcharts for progress in each type of higher degree by research program will be prepared as an appendix to the Gold Book.
- 6.1.3** Section **6.2** sets out **Principles** relating to academic progress of candidates in higher degree by research programs.
- 6.1.4** Section **6.3** sets out general **administrative requirements** for candidates enrolled in research programs. These relate to attendance at the University, leave of absence, additional study not required for the research program, University employment and expiry of time to complete the course. Also included in this section is information on procedures to obtain approval for changes to a candidate's program and procedures relating to withdrawal from a research program. (Transfers and upgrades between UC research programs are covered in section 6.8.)
- 6.1.5** **Academic requirements for candidates to make satisfactory progress** are set out in section **6.4**. These include completion of coursework if applicable, development of a personal learning plan and final research proposal, and annual seminar presentations. In addition, each candidate is expected to attend a national conference and to submit a

scholarly paper for publication during candidature. Completion of academic requirements for satisfactory progress is monitored through annual progress reports.

**6.1.6** Section **6.5** describes the process and requirements for **annual progress reporting**.

**6.1.7** **Unsatisfactory progress** is addressed in section **6.6**.

**6.1.8** Section **6.7** provides information on **quality assurance processes to monitor progress** of candidates in research programs at the institutional level.

**6.1.9** The final section in this Part, **6.8**, provides information on **transfers and upgrades between research programs at UC**.

## **6.2 Principles relating to academic progress**

**6.2.1** University policy, procedures and practice relating to research degrees will as far as possible encourage and assist candidates to:

- (a) make steady progress towards the relevant degree;
- (b) achieve objectives of the research project;
- (c) acquire capacities identified as generic skills and attributes for University of Canberra research graduates<sup>1</sup>; and
- (d) complete academic requirements for award of the degree within the standard duration and time limits of funding.

**6.2.2** The progress of candidates in higher degree by research programs is monitored to ensure as far as possible the candidate's steady progress towards the degree for the benefit of both the candidate and the University. Oversight and guidance of the research are provided by the candidate's supervisory panel. Ongoing assessment occurs through regular supervisory contact, development and periodic review of a personal learning plan, confirmation of candidature process, work-in-progress seminars and annual progress reporting.

**6.2.3** Responsibility for oversight of the candidate's progress lies firstly with the chair of the supervisory panel and secondly with the Divisional Research Degrees Committee.

**6.2.4** Within guidelines developed by the University Research Degrees Committee and approved by Academic Board, the Divisional Research Degrees Committee is responsible for matters relating to progress of research candidates. Where indicated below, exceptions to normal policy and practice may be approved by the University Research Degrees Committee on application by the DRDC.

---

<sup>1</sup> See the statement of *Generic skills and attributes of UC graduates from higher degree by research programs* at [http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/council/generic\\_HDR.html](http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/council/generic_HDR.html)

*Administrative requirements and conditions of enrolment*

- 6.2.5** A candidate enrolled in a higher degree by research program may, with the permission of the DRDC, pursue part of the research program and thesis preparation at an organisation other than the University. The candidate will maintain regular contact with the University and particularly with the chair of the supervisory panel.
- 6.2.6** Normally candidates would be required to participate in the academic activity of the University with a minimum of one semester's full-time attendance or equivalent part-time attendance. Exceptions to this rule may be considered by application to the University Research Degrees Committee. Where such an application is made, issues of quality assurance and supervision must be addressed. (See 6.3.1)
- 6.2.7** During the period of study for a higher degree by research, a candidate may apply for leave of absence on medical or personal grounds. Leave of absence is the voluntary suspension of studies, approved by the Divisional Research Degrees Committee, for a specified period. Leave of absence is not counted to form part of the time taken to complete a degree. University policy on leave of absence is consistent with DEST guidelines for the Research Training Scheme. (See 6.3.2)

*Expiry of time to complete the course*

- 6.2.8** At the time of offer, each new candidate entering a research program will be advised of:
- (a) the minimum and maximum duration of their course;
  - (b) the maximum period of any funding that accompanies the offer, if less than the maximum duration stated in (a), and possible consequences for the candidate if the funding limit is exceeded; and
  - (c) implications of undertaking extra units that do not form part of the course requirements.
- 6.2.9** The maximum duration of each type of degree is set out in Part 3 of the Gold Book. From 2003, the continued enrolment of candidates who do not complete within the maximum duration may be subject to the payment of fees.

*Changes to a candidate's program*

- 6.2.10** Major changes to a candidate's program (see 6.3.6) require approval of the Divisional Research Degrees Committee. The DRDC will consider implications of the proposed change for the candidate and the University, and base its decision on advice from the chair of the supervisory panel and other staff as appropriate.

*Withdrawal from a higher degree by research program*

- 6.2.11** University policy in selecting applicants for admission to higher degree by research programs is to accept candidates with a high likelihood of completion within normal time limits. The University aims to provide a quality research training experience that will meet with a high level of student satisfaction. Withdrawal of candidates from research programs will therefore be both minimised and monitored.

*Learning plan*

**6.2.12** From 2003, each newly enrolled candidate in a higher degree by research program is required to develop a personal learning plan. The learning plan will encompass the six key learning areas of postgraduate research education.<sup>2</sup> The learning plan is designed to ensure achievement of the candidate's research objectives and academic requirements for the degree as well as acquisition of generic skills through the research education program. (See 6.4.2)

**6.2.13** The candidate and chair of the supervisory panel will review and update the candidate's learning plan at regular intervals. Satisfactory completion of the learning plan is assessed and noted in the candidate's annual progress report. Continued enrolment in the research program is subject to satisfactory progress reports.

*Research proposal*

**6.2.14** A preliminary research proposal is required as part of an application for admission (see 5.4.2 above). The full proposal is normally developed after commencement of the research program and is approved with the initial seminar in the confirmation of candidature process within the first year of candidature (eighteen months for part-time candidates). (See 6.4.3)

**6.2.15** The purpose of the research proposal is to clarify the research project for the benefit of the candidate, the academic supervisors and the University. The proposal will:

- (a) assist the candidate to define and plan the research by identifying the research aims, outcomes, methodology and value; and
- (b) enable the supervisors and the University to assess the content and quality of the proposed research and resources required (including supervision), and to judge whether the intended project can be realistically and successfully carried out.

*Research seminars*

**6.2.16** Candidates in higher degree by research programs are required to present research seminars at the appropriate masters or doctoral level in each full-time equivalent year of study. As set out in detail in 6.4.4, seminars include:

- (a) an initial work-in-progress seminar which is assessed and leads to formal confirmation of candidature;
- (b) (for PhD candidates only) a second work-in-progress seminar during the second full-time equivalent year of candidature; and
- (c) for all research candidates, a public presentation of the research to the University and the wider community following submission of the thesis.

**6.2.17** The chair of the supervisory panel, with the DRDC, is responsible for ensuring that research seminars are held.

---

<sup>2</sup> See *Learning plans for higher degree by research students at UC* (in the CELTS series "Ideas for supervising postgraduate students") at <http://www.canberra.edu.au/celts/resources/research-supervision>

*Conference attendance*

**6.2.18** As a norm, each candidate in a higher degree by research program is expected to attend at least one national or international conference in the research area during candidature.

*Publication during candidature*

**6.2.19** As a norm, each candidate in a higher degree by research program is expected and encouraged to submit at least one peer-reviewed paper for publication (or equivalent as recognised by the discipline) during candidature.

*Annual progress reports*

**6.2.20** The chair of the supervisory panel will evaluate a candidate's progress from time to time and report at least annually on the candidate's progress to the DRDC. The report includes input from both candidate and supervisor. The candidate's continuation in the research program is subject to satisfactory progress reports. (See 6.5)

**6.2.21** The DRDC is responsible for ensuring that progress reports are submitted in respect of all research candidates enrolled in the Division; reviewing the reports and providing candidates with feedback prior to re-enrolment for the following year; recommending or acting in response to concerns; and providing an annual summary report on the progress of masters and doctoral by research candidates in the Division to the URDC.

**6.2.22** The URDC is expected to report to Academic Board each year on quality assurance issues raised in or by the annual summary reports from the Divisions, including such matters as rates of progression, difficulties experienced by candidates or supervisors and compliance with the annual reporting process.

*Unsatisfactory progress*

**6.2.23** Candidates in higher degree by research programs whose progress is considered to be unsatisfactory may be subject to:

- (a) a special progress report;
- (b) an academic progress warning;
- (c) a Show Cause direction and decision;
- (d) exclusion from the program.

**6.2.24** The relevant committee (see section 6.6) is responsible for ensuring that action in relation to academic progress complies with University legislation including the *Academic Progress Statute* and *Academic Progress Rules*.

**6.2.25** Where applicable, and subject to policy and procedures in this document, processes relating to research candidates' unsatisfactory progress should follow the model of academic progress policy and procedures for undergraduate courses and coursework postgraduate programs.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> See *Academic Progress: Policy for Undergraduate Courses and Coursework Postgraduate Programs* at <https://guard.canberra.edu.au/cocoon/policydb/displayDocument?DocumentId=115> and *Academic Progress*:

**6.2.26** A candidate may appeal against a Show Cause or Exclusion decision under the *Student Grievance Resolution Procedures*.<sup>4</sup>

**6.2.27** Consistent with the *Academic Progress Rules*, any decision made by the appropriate review authority (see 6.6.1.3) may be reviewed by Academic Board.

## **6.3 Administrative requirements related to enrolment of research candidates**

### **6.3.1 Attendance at the University**

**6.3.1.1** A candidate enrolled in a research program may, with the permission of the DRDC, pursue part of the program and thesis preparation at an organisation other than the University. A candidate may also engage in fieldwork related to the research program. The candidate should maintain regular contact with the University and particularly with the chair of the supervisory panel.

**6.3.1.2** Normally, candidates are required to participate in the academic activity of the University with a minimum of one semester's full-time attendance or equivalent part-time attendance during the period of candidature. Exceptions to this rule may be considered by application to the University Research Degrees Committee. Where such an application is made, issues of quality assurance and supervision must be addressed.

#### **Exceptions to normal attendance requirements**

**6.3.1.3** Application for approval of an exception to normal attendance requirements in accordance with 6.3.1.2 should be made to the URDC through the DRDC. The application may be on behalf of a single applicant for admission, a currently enrolled candidate, or a cohort of off-campus or offshore applicants for admission to a research program. Where the exception to normal requirements relates to an application for admission, approval should be obtained before an offer of place is made to the applicant(s).

**6.3.1.4** The chair of the supervisory panel or other appropriate staff member (in the case of an offshore program, the course convener or course leader) should make the application on behalf of the particular applicant(s) for admission or candidate(s).

**6.3.1.5** Where the application is on behalf of an offshore applicant or cohort in a non-English speaking country, the course leader should take into account the difficulty in acquiring English competence when the candidate(s) remain resident in a non-English speaking environment.

---

*Procedures for Undergraduate Courses and Coursework Postgraduate Programs* at

<https://guard.canberra.edu.au/cocoon/policydb/displayDocument?DocumentId=116>

<sup>4</sup> *Student Grievance Resolution Procedures* at [http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/studgriev\\_proc.html](http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/studgriev_proc.html)

**6.3.1.6** The application for exception to normal attendance requirements should provide evidence of arrangements to ensure a quality program and supervision for the candidate(s) and include an explicit statement that, except where otherwise indicated, policy and procedures will comply with the Gold Book. Quality assurance issues addressed in the application should include the following:

- (a) arrangements for supervision including face-to-face contact (if non-UC supervisors are proposed in addition to UC staff, the persons will need to be registered as UC supervisors – see Part 4, section 4.3 above);
- (b) (in relation to applicant(s) for admission), how compliance with UC entry requirements for the program will be assured, including procedures for processing application(s);
- (c) any issues relating to languages other than English and the development of English language competence (note 6.3.1.5);
- (d) access by the candidate(s) to adequate facilities (computing, library resources, laboratories, databases etc) to support the research;
- (e) relevant issues such as ethics clearance if required for the research;
- (f) arrangements for approval of learning plans, final research proposals, and submission of annual progress reports;
- (g) presentation of seminars including assessment of the initial seminar (it is preferable for seminars to be given at UC; if this is not possible approval may be sought for alternative arrangements, eg delivery by videotape with subsequent discussion at UC recorded by audiotape, or in real-time interactive mode);
- (h) opportunities for participation in the University research culture;
- (i) any proposed visits or brief periods of attendance at UC by the candidate(s);
- (j) examination arrangements if different from normal requirements; and
- (k) availability of Divisional resources to support special arrangements in accordance with 6.3.1.7.

**6.3.1.7** An application for exception to normal attendance requirements should be endorsed by the Head of School, as delegate of the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Division, to confirm that resources will be made available to support any special arrangements that may be necessary (eg contract supervision, visits by UC staff to an off-campus or offshore candidate).

**6.3.1.8** The DRDC should consider the application before referring the application with a recommendation to the URDC.

**6.3.1.9** Where an application is approved, all relevant details of the proposed arrangements should be communicated in writing to the applicant(s) or candidate(s). Full information will assist the applicant for admission or enrolled candidate to make an informed decision about accepting an offer of place or continuing in the program, as the case may be.

## 6.3.2 Leave of absence

*Note: University policy on leave of absence (intermission) during research candidature is under review.*

**6.3.2.1** During the period of study for a research degree, a candidate may apply for Leave of Absence of one or more semesters on medical or personal grounds. Leave of absence is the voluntary suspension of studies, approved by the Divisional Research Degrees Committee, for a specified period. Leave of Absence is not counted to form part of the time taken to complete a degree.

**6.3.2.2** Leave of Absence must be taken for one complete semester or longer. Leave will normally be granted for one semester at a time. Except in special circumstances *beyond the control of the candidate* (such as an overseas posting) the total period of leave during the program should not exceed one year.<sup>5</sup> (Different requirements apply to candidates enrolled in research programs who are undertaking coursework units – see Student Administration for advice.)

**6.3.2.3** Leave of Absence is approved by the DRDC on recommendation of the chair of the candidate's supervisory panel.

**6.3.2.4** An application for Leave of Absence should be lodged before the census date in the semester for which leave is being sought. In most cases the candidate should be in a position to apply before the commencement of the semester. Unless there are exceptional circumstances (and subject to DEST requirements for the Research Training Scheme) the DRDC will not consider an application for Leave of Absence that has been made retrospectively.

**6.3.2.5** Before applying for Leave of Absence, the candidate should consult the chair of the supervisory panel and administrative staff to ascertain administrative or academic implications of the proposed leave (including the effect on RTS entitlement or terms of any scholarship). The candidate should then complete an Application for Leave of Absence form and give it to the chair of the supervisory panel to forward, with a recommendation, to the DRDC.

**6.3.2.6** If an application for leave is rejected, the candidate has the options of continuing in the program or discontinuing and applying for readmission in the future. Candidates who discontinue should note that admission to research programs is competitive and previous periods of study will be taken into account in determining funding entitlement.

---

<sup>5</sup> University policy in regard to suspension of studies follows DEST requirements for the Research Training Scheme (RTS). RTS students may apply to their institution to suspend their studies for up to a total of twelve months with approval at the discretion of the institution. The institution may approve suspensions for an accumulated period beyond twelve months "if there are exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control which warrant a further suspension." See *DEST Research Training Scheme Guidelines* at [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research\\_sector/programmes\\_funding/programme\\_categories/professional\\_skills/research\\_training\\_scheme.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/programmes_funding/programme_categories/professional_skills/research_training_scheme.htm)

### **6.3.3 Additional coursework**

**6.3.3.1** During the period of candidature, a candidate may seek to undertake extra coursework units that are not required for the degree program. The DRDC may approve such a request on recommendation of the chair of the supervisory panel, provided that the DRDC and chair of the supervisory panel are satisfied that the candidate will not require additional time to complete the program.

### **6.3.4 University employment**

**6.3.4.1** Subject to satisfactory academic progress, full-time research candidates may undertake limited amounts of University employment on a casual basis. Such arrangements may benefit the University and the candidate. Up to 8 hours per week (with a maximum of 240 hours per year) is permitted for full-time candidates with or without scholarships, provided the DRDC and chair of the supervisory panel are satisfied that progress of the candidate's program will not be impeded. Careful consideration should be given before approving employment of candidates in their final year.

**6.3.4.2** Special permission to undertake a greater amount of employment than the limits set in 6.3.4.1 may be considered by the DRDC:

- (a) subject to conditions of any scholarship being held by the candidate; and
- (b) where the Committee is satisfied that the candidate will still be able to complete the research program within the standard duration and funding time limits.

**6.3.4.3** The DRDC, on the advice of chairs of supervisory panels in the Division, is responsible for approving and monitoring the University employment of full-time research candidates to ensure that candidates' progress towards the degrees in which they are enrolled is not impeded.

### **6.3.5 Expiry of time to complete the course**

**6.3.5.1** The maximum duration of each type of higher degree by research is specified in Part 3. At the time of offer, each new candidate entering a research program will be advised of:

- (a) the minimum and maximum duration of the course;
- (b) the maximum period of any funding that accompanies the offer, if less than the maximum duration stated in (a), and possible consequences for the candidate if the funding limit is exceeded; and
- (c) implications of undertaking extra units that do not form part of the course requirements.

**6.3.5.2** Candidates will be encouraged and assisted as far as possible to complete their program within the standard duration of the course and time limits of any funding (eg DEST entitlements for the Research Training Scheme). The continued enrolment of candidates who do not complete within the maximum duration of the program or time limits of funding arrangements (eg RTS) may be subject to the payment of fees.

**6.3.5.3** The Office of Research and Research Degrees (ORRD) monitors the progress of research candidates in completing their course. Candidates are sent a written reminder before the final semester of their entitlement with information on preparing for thesis submission and consequences of exceeding funding or enrolment entitlement.

**6.3.5.4** Following the census date each semester, ORRD will report to DRDCs and the URDC on candidates who are approaching or have exceeded funding time limits and/or maximum duration of the course. The DRDC should consult the candidates' supervisors, take any action required and advise ORRD. ORRD will provide a summary report to the URDC.

### **6.3.6 Managing changes to the candidate's program**

**6.3.6.1** Major changes to a research candidate's program require DRDC approval. Such changes include:

- (a) a proposed change in the direction of the research which may have resource implications (for information on transfer or upgrade to another research program see section 6.8);
- (b) a change of supervisory arrangements involving the chair or another registered supervisor on the supervisory panel; and
- (c) a change that may affect the estimated time of completion of an RTS candidate.

**6.3.6.2** Where a major change is proposed, the chair of the supervisory panel (or course convener if the chair is unavailable) should apply to the DRDC for approval on the candidate's behalf. The DRDC will consider implications for the candidate and the University, consulting other staff such as the Head of School, ORRD etc as required. When a major change is approved, the DRDC secretary is responsible for advising relevant staff and updating University records.

**6.3.6.3** Proposed changes affecting EFTSU load or completion time for RTS candidates (including change from full-time to part-time enrolment or vice versa) should be reported to ORRD which monitors student load.

**6.3.6.4** Minor change to a candidate's research program include such matters as a change of title of the research project or thesis, methods to be employed in the research or the non-registered membership of the supervisory panel. The chair of the supervisory panel should advise minor changes to the DRDC secretary, who is responsible for advising the DRDC Chair or DRDC if required and updating University records. Minor changes such as change of thesis title should be noted in the candidate's next annual progress report.

### **6.3.7 Discontinuation or withdrawal from a research program**

**6.3.7.1** University policy in selecting applicants for admission to higher degree by research programs is to accept candidates with a high likelihood of completion within normal time limits. The University aims to provide a quality research training experience that

will meet with a high level of student satisfaction. Withdrawal of candidates from research programs therefore will be both minimised and monitored.

**6.3.7.2** Notwithstanding 6.3.7.1, it is recognised that for a variety of reasons candidates may discontinue their enrolment and withdraw from a research program. For quality assurance purposes, candidates who withdraw are asked to provide reasons for withdrawal and feedback on their experience of the research training program. *Note: The URDC intends to develop an exit survey for candidates who withdraw from research programs.*

**6.3.7.3** Candidates considering withdrawal are strongly encouraged to discuss the situation with their supervisor before making a final decision. A candidate who intends to withdraw should lodge a Course Withdrawal form with the DRDC secretary or Student Administration. The Research Degrees Admissions and Enrolments Officer in Student Administration will record the withdrawal and advise ORRD and the DRDC secretary. If the candidate holds a Government or University scholarship, the Scholarships and Prizes Office should be advised without delay.

**6.3.7.4** The University may initiate a course withdrawal as a result of a candidate's failure to maintain enrolment. Student Administration will action the withdrawal and advise the candidate, chair of the supervisory panel, DRDC secretary, and ORRD.

**6.3.7.5** A supervisor who becomes aware that a candidate has withdrawn without formal notice, or has failed to make contact for an extended period of time (eg over two months) should contact the candidate if possible and inform the DRDC secretary if required. (See also section 6.6 on Unsatisfactory progress)

**6.3.7.6** A summary of candidate withdrawals, including candidature details and reasons for withdrawal where known, should be submitted to the URDC and relevant DRDC after the census date each semester.

## **6.4 Academic requirements for satisfactory progress**

### **6.4.1 Summary of requirements**

**6.4.1.1** A candidate's progression through the research program, from initial enrolment to thesis submission and examination, will encompass the following milestones:

- (a) completion of *coursework* if required before the research phase commences (see Part 3 for information on the structure and content of each type of degree);
- (b) preparation of a *learning plan* within three months of commencement (6.4.2);
- (c) finalisation of the full *research proposal* as soon as possible after commencement (6.4.3);
- (d) presentation and assessment of an *initial seminar*, leading to formal confirmation of candidature (6.4.4);

- (e) submission of *annual progress reports* to the Divisional Research Degrees Committee (section 6.5);
- (f) (if applicable) action the University may take in the event of unsatisfactory progress – special progress report, academic warning, direction to Show Cause and Exclusion (section 6.6);
- (g) (normally) attendance, and if possible presentation, by the candidate at a national or international *conference* during candidature (6.4.5),
- (h) (normally) submission of at least one peer-reviewed paper for *publication* during candidature (6.4.6);
- (i) (for PhD candidates only) presentation of a *second work-in-progress seminar* in the second full-time equivalent year of candidature (6.4.4); and
- (j) a *final seminar* or lecture at or following submission of the thesis, to celebrate the achievement and present results of the research to the community (6.4.4).

**6.4.1.2** The chair of the supervisory panel is responsible for assisting the candidate to meet these requirements and ensuring that milestones are reported at the time and noted in the candidate's next Annual Progress Report. The DRDC secretary will record each candidate's milestones on the University database.

## **6.4.2 The learning plan**

### **Background and description**

- 6.4.2.1** From 2003, each newly enrolled candidate in a research program is required to develop a personal learning plan. The learning plan provides an individual learning program designed to ensure the candidate's achievement of research objectives and acquisition of generic skills through the research education program.
- 6.4.2.2** While learning plans are not a requirement for candidates commencing their research program before 2003, candidates and their supervisors are encouraged to consider development and use of a personal learning plan as an option.
- 6.4.2.3** The learning plan is developed by the candidate in consultation with the chair of the supervisory panel. The plan should be discussed by the supervisory panel before being approved for implementation by the chair of the panel.
- 6.4.2.4** The learning plan should be prepared within the first three months of candidature (or part-time equivalent). The chair of the supervisory panel is responsible for advising the DRDC when the plan is in place. The DRDC will formally note this advice.
- 6.4.2.5** The learning plan will:
- (a) address each of the six key learning areas in postgraduate research education;<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> See *Generic skills and attributes of UC graduates from higher degree by research programs* at [http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/council/generic\\_HDR.html](http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/council/generic_HDR.html) and *Key learning areas in the UC postgraduate research context* at <http://www.canberra.edu.au/celts/resources/ideas/pgsupervisors/keylearning.htm>

- (b) acknowledge and build on the experience, skills and capacities the candidate brings to the research program;
- (c) identify learning outcomes in each key learning area that will assist the candidate to achieve the research objectives and acquire generic skills and attributes in accordance with the University's vision statement for research graduates;
- (d) indicate the learning opportunities and activities the candidate will undertake to achieve each outcome, with proposed timeframes; and
- (e) nominate information to be submitted as evidence of achievement in each case.

**6.4.2.6** The candidate and chair of the supervisory panel should review and update the candidate's learning plan at regular intervals, at least annually. Progress is noted in the candidate's Annual Progress Report (see 6.5). Annual assessment of the plan provides a check on the candidate's achievement and helps to provide quality assurance for the University's research education program.

#### **Development of the learning plan**

**6.4.2.7** In developing a learning plan after commencing the research program, the candidate should:

- (a) discuss with the chair of the supervisory panel the research proposal and needs of the research project;
- (b) become familiar with relevant concepts through the CELTS publications *Learning plans for higher degree by research students at UC*<sup>7</sup> and *Developing a personal learning plan*<sup>8</sup> and the policy statement *Generic skills and attributes of UC graduates from higher degree by research programs*;<sup>9</sup>
- (c) undertake a needs analysis to assess current strengths and weaknesses in each of the six key learning areas;
- (d) in consultation with the chair of the supervisory panel, identify learning needs and outcomes in each key learning area; and
- (e) formulate a plan to achieve those outcomes over the duration of the research program.

**6.4.2.8** When designating learning outcomes for each key learning area, the candidate is expected to take into account the needs of the research and thesis, future work or career plans and wider life skills including UC's generic skills for research graduates. Activities in the learning plan will be linked to stages in the research project, eg literature review, research proposal etc.

**6.4.2.9** In accepting applicants to research candidature the University is committed to providing adequate resources to support the proposed research. A statement of

---

<sup>7</sup> *Learning plans for higher degree by research students at UC* (in the CELTS series "Ideas for supervising postgraduate students") at <http://www.canberra.edu.au/celts/resources/research-supervision>

<sup>8</sup> *Developing a personal learning plan* (in the CELTS series "Gold guides for postgraduate supervisors") at [http://www.canberra.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/7863/goldguide\\_learning\\_plan\\_2005.pdf](http://www.canberra.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/7863/goldguide_learning_plan_2005.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> *Generic skills and attributes of UC graduates from higher degree by research programs* at [http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/council/generic\\_HDR.html](http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/council/generic_HDR.html)

*Minimum facilities for postgraduate research students* is at <http://www.canberra.edu.au/research/policies/minimum-facilities> and each Division develops guidelines within this policy. The University is also committed to ensuring as far as possible that all research candidates develop the generic skills identified in University policy.<sup>10</sup> Candidates and their supervisors should recognise that objectives and strategies proposed in the learning plan may sometimes need to be modified or re-negotiated to ensure they are achievable within resource constraints.

**6.4.2.10** The learning plan prepared at the outset of candidature should as far as possible cover the duration of the research program. It is accepted, however, that needs and objectives evolve with the research project. The plan may be re-negotiated as required.

### **Assessment and review of the learning plan**

**6.4.2.11** As noted in 6.4.2.6, the candidate and chair of the supervisory panel will review the learning plan at least annually to ensure that outcomes and strategies continue to meet the candidate's needs. This review will be noted in the Annual Progress Report. The candidate should provide evidence to show that objectives have been achieved. Where objectives have not been achieved, the candidate is expected to provide reasons and indicate how the objective(s) will be met in later years. The plan may be modified to accommodate changes during the course of study.

### **6.4.3 The research proposal**

**6.4.3.1** Each candidate is required to prepare a detailed research proposal describing the research project. The research proposal clarifies the project for the benefit of the candidate, the academic supervisors and the University. The proposal:

- (a) assists the candidate to define and plan the research by identifying its aims, outcomes, methodology and value; and
- (b) enables the supervisors and the University to assess the content and quality of the proposed research and resources required (including supervision), and to judge whether the intended project can be realistically and successfully carried out.

**6.4.3.2** A preliminary research proposal is submitted with an application for admission to a research program (see 5.4.2 above). While the initial proposal may suffice as a final proposal (eg in a funded research project that is clearly defined at the outset), it is more likely that the research study will be developed and refined in the early months of candidature. The full research proposal is therefore a milestone in the candidate's progress formally accepted by the DRDC after enrolment, usually in conjunction with the initial seminar, as part of the process for confirmation of candidature.

**6.4.3.3** To enable the research to proceed, the full proposal should be finalised as soon as possible after enrolment, preferably well within the limit of twelve months of the candidate's initial enrolment (18 months for part-time candidates). In programs that include coursework, candidates are encouraged to work on their proposal while

---

<sup>10</sup> *Generic skills and attributes of UC graduates from higher degree by research programs* (2002) at [http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/council/generic\\_HDR.html](http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/council/generic_HDR.html)

undertaking the coursework so that formal approval can be gained soon after commencement of the research component.

**6.4.3.4** When the research proposal is developed to the satisfaction of the candidate and the supervisory panel, the candidate will present the initial work-in-progress seminar (see below). The proposal will be provided to the seminar assessors, who may comment on it in their report. The candidate should then refine the proposal in the light of feedback and forward it to the supervisor, who will oversee any changes (in consultation with other members of the panel as required) before making a recommendation to the DRDC on confirmation of candidature. The DRDC formally approves the confirmation (or otherwise) and records achievement of both milestones on the University database.

**6.4.3.5** Guidelines on writing a research proposal are an appendix to the Gold Book. Candidates should also seek advice from the course convener on requirements regarding content, format and length of proposals that may apply to a specific academic area, course, program or School. The proposal will include a title and brief description of the proposed area of research addressing each of the following points:

- (a) proposed title of the thesis;
- (b) aims and objectives of the research including the context for the research, a reading list describing the content, and a justification of the research;
- (c) problems or issues to be investigated in the thesis;
- (d) methods to be employed in conducting and organising the research;
- (e) expected resources and conditions required to complete the research, including a project budget outlining any particular requirements for equipment, software or field trips, and details of the applicant's funding expectations;
- (f) approvals and permits (including details of any research that will involve humans or animals); and
- (g) the proposed research timetable.

## **6.4.4 Research seminars**

**6.4.4.1** Candidates are required to present research seminars at the appropriate masters or doctoral level in each full-time equivalent year of study. Seminars include:

- (a) an initial work-in-progress seminar during the first year of the research phase (18 months for part-time candidates), which is assessed for formal confirmation of candidature;
- (b) (for PhD candidates only) a second work-in-progress seminar during the second full-time equivalent year of candidature; and
- (c) for all research candidates, a public presentation of the research to the University and the wider community at or following submission of the thesis.

**6.4.4.2** The chair of the supervisory panel, with the DRDC, is responsible for ensuring that research seminars are held. Members of the panel are expected to attend the seminars and to encourage other staff and students to attend.

**6.4.4.3** The chair of the supervisory panel should ensure that research seminars are advertised within the research area and School and across the University. Except in special circumstances (eg information that is commercial-in-confidence), work-in-progress seminars should be open to the public. Special arrangements may be needed where there are confidentiality agreements or issues relating to the ownership of intellectual property.

#### **Initial seminar and confirmation of candidature**

**6.4.4.4** The initial work-in-progress seminar is held within the first twelve months of the research for full-time candidates and within eighteen months for part-time candidates. *Full-time candidates are expected to present this seminar within nine months of commencement.*

**6.4.4.5** The purpose of the initial seminar is to demonstrate that the candidate has clearly defined and described the field and topic of the research and has developed the aims and purposes of the study. The seminar is a valuable opportunity for the candidate to receive feedback on the research project. The initial seminar is assessed. Assessor reports on the initial seminar and final research proposal provide the basis for confirmation of candidature.

**6.4.4.6** In the initial seminar, the candidate will draw on the research proposal to:

- (a) define and describe the relevant background material to establish a context for the research;
- (b) justify the proposed enquiry;
- (c) show development of appropriate aims and objectives for the study;
- (d) explain and justify the chosen methodology and/or methods for the research; and
- (e) show a working plan for the research study with a realistic timetable for completing the project.

**6.4.4.7** In the initial seminar for a program in which the research product is a creative work, the candidate is expected to:

- (a) elaborate how the creative work relates to other works;
- (b) explore the formal, stylistic and aesthetic choices made during the creative process;
- (c) explore the creative process with reference to contemporary debates; and
- (d) show future directions for the creative process.

**6.4.4.8** The chair of the supervisory panel, in consultation with panel members and others as appropriate, will select two assessors to attend the initial seminar and prepare reports. The assessors should meet general UC requirements for thesis examiners (ie research-

active, with expertise in the candidate's field, holding a research degree at the level sought by the candidate, and at least one assessor should be a member of academic staff at a tertiary institution)<sup>11</sup> and should not be closely connected to the candidate. While assessors are not required to be from outside the University the use of external assessors is encouraged. Assessors for seminars by candidates who are members of academic staff should be from outside the School.

**6.4.4.9** In preparation for the initial seminar the assessors should be provided with the Assessment Report form (an appendix to the Gold Book) and:

- (a) the candidate's full research proposal;
- (b) information on requirements for the degree (extract from Part 3 of the Gold Book on the relevant type of degree and UC Handbook entry on the course); and
- (c) UC policy on generic skills for research graduates.<sup>12</sup>

**6.4.4.10** Each assessor will submit a report. On the basis of the criteria and other information provided to them, the assessors are asked to evaluate the conceptualisation of the research project, the potential of the candidate to complete the program at an appropriate level and the potential of the research to meet the requirements for the degree. The assessors may also comment on the research proposal, the candidate's presentation skills and any other relevant matters. Each assessor will make one of the following overall recommendations:

- (a) That candidature be confirmed and the candidate proceed with the program;
- (b) That the candidate proceed with the program subject to conditions as specified (with suggestions for further work or action, including another seminar if appropriate); or
- (c) That the candidate not proceed in the program (with reasons for this recommendation).

**6.4.4.11** The chair of the supervisory panel should discuss the assessors' reports with the candidate and resolve any changes to the research proposal or other matters before forwarding the reports to the DRDC, with a covering recommendation if required. If the reports are conditionally satisfactory, the chair should recommend any conditions to be attached to the candidate's continued enrolment (eg remedial work and/or a further work-in-progress seminar after an appropriate period of study or preparation). The DRDC will formally confirm candidature or otherwise, including any conditions, and advise the candidate accordingly. (See also section 6.6 on unsatisfactory progress.)

**6.4.4.12** If conditions attached to continuation in the research program are not satisfactorily met, the candidate will be advised to discontinue enrolment. The initial seminar should not be re-attempted more than once.

---

<sup>11</sup> See criteria for selection and appointment of examiners in Gold Book Part 7, 7.4.1, below.

<sup>12</sup> *Generic skills and attributes of UC graduates from higher degree by research programs* at [http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/council/generic\\_HDR.html](http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/council/generic_HDR.html)

### **Second work-in-progress seminar for PhD candidates**

**6.4.4.13** PhD candidates should present a second work-in-progress seminar during the second full-time equivalent year of candidature. The timing of this seminar is at the discretion of the supervisory panel and the candidate.

**6.4.4.14** The second work-in-progress seminar provides an opportunity for the candidate to seek feedback and direction on the research before the final write-up of the thesis. Depending on the timing of the seminar, the candidate may be in a position to define and defend the major results and conclusions emerging from the research.

**6.4.4.15** Although the second work-in-progress seminar is not formally assessed, it is expected that the supervisory panel meet after the seminar to discuss the presentation and offer comments and suggestions to the candidate. The candidate's learning plan and University policy on generic skills for research graduates should be taken into account. The panel will recommend action if it has concerns about the candidate's progress or considers the presentation unsatisfactory in any respect.

**6.4.4.16** The chair of the supervisory panel should advise the DRDC secretary when this milestone has been achieved and ensure that it is noted in the candidate's next Annual Progress Report, with comment if required.

### **Final research presentation**

**6.4.4.17** The final seminar for all research candidates is a formal, public presentation that takes place on or after submission of the thesis. The purposes of the final seminar for the candidate and the University are to:

- (a) present the research to the University and the wider community;
- (b) provide an opportunity for the community to share the knowledge and insights gained in the research;
- (c) demonstrate and celebrate the research outcomes and the skills and attributes the candidate has developed or enhanced during candidature; and
- (d) promote the University and its research by showcasing the results of the research program.

**6.4.4.18** The final research seminar will normally be presented at the University. Where this is not possible or suitable, arrangements may be made to hold the seminar at another venue.

**6.4.4.19** The candidate and chair of the supervisory panel should organise the final seminar and ensure the event is publicised well ahead of time. Members of the supervisory panel, the DRDC and URDC, University community and others should be invited.

**6.4.4.20** The chair of the supervisory panel is responsible for advising the DRDC that the candidate's final research presentation has taken place. In the case of doctoral candidates, the DRDC secretary should notify the URDC. The relevant committee should note the information before resolving the candidate's completion of the research program.

## **6.4.5 Conference attendance**

- 6.4.5.1** As a norm, each candidate in a research program is expected to attend at least one national or international conference in the research area during candidature. It is desirable for the candidate to be involved in presenting a paper, workshop or poster or chairing a session.
- 6.4.5.2** Opportunities for conference attendance should be discussed by the candidate and chair of the supervisory panel and incorporated into the candidate's learning plan for a suitable time during the research program.
- 6.4.5.3** The Division is expected to provide financial assistance to support conference attendance within the funding allocation for research students.

## **6.4.6 Publication during research candidature**

- 6.4.6.1** As a norm, each candidate in a research program is expected to submit at least one peer-reviewed paper for publication (or equivalent as recognised by the discipline) during candidature.
- 6.4.6.2** The issue of publication during candidature should be discussed by the candidate and chair of the supervisory panel early in the candidature and, if possible, incorporated into the candidate's learning plan. Discussions should cover matters of authorship, intellectual property and appropriate acknowledgment of contributions.

## **6.5 Annual progress reports**

### **6.5.1 Summary of requirements**

- 6.5.1.1** The chair of the supervisory panel will evaluate a candidate's progress from time to time and report at least annually in writing to the DRDC. The Annual Progress Report includes input from both candidate and supervisor.
- 6.5.1.2** Annual progress reporting is of benefit to both the candidate and the University.<sup>13</sup> The report enables the candidate and the DRDC to assess the candidate's progress towards the degree over the year. It enables the University to monitor progress and identify candidates at risk. Committee oversight should ensure attention to any concerns identified by the chair of the supervisory panel or the candidate, whether related to the

---

<sup>13</sup> UC practice in regard to progress reporting by research candidates follows Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) guidelines, which emphasise the importance of written reports being frank appraisals by both the supervisor and student of the student's progress and the need for reports to be seen by the students after the supervisor and other staff have added their comments to the report, noting that openness at this stage could obviate problems later. See *Universities and their students: principles for the provision of education by Australian universities* at [http://www.avcc.edu.au/documents/publications/Principles\\_final\\_Dec02.pdf](http://www.avcc.edu.au/documents/publications/Principles_final_Dec02.pdf)

individual's progress or to broader issues requiring a response at School, Divisional or University level.

**6.5.1.3** Progress reports are required for each candidate each year during the research phase of a higher degree by research program, including recent commencers. (Reports are not required for candidates undertaking coursework prior to the research phase.)

Candidates on leave of absence should submit reports unless the suspension covers the full calendar year. For completeness of the record, reports are requested but not required from candidates who submitted their thesis during the year.

**6.5.1.4** A candidate's continuation in the higher degree by research program is subject to satisfactory progress reports.

**6.5.1.5** Candidates are provided with written feedback on their Annual Progress Reports.

**6.5.1.6** The Office of Research and Research Degrees (ORRD) and DRDC secretaries administer the annual reporting process for doctoral and masters candidates respectively. Responsibilities of the DRDC in regard to annual progress reporting are set out in 6.5.3.1. Annual Progress Reports are monitored at Divisional and University levels (6.5.3).

**6.5.1.7** In addition to the annual report, a special progress report may be required where the DRDC is not satisfied with the progress of a particular candidate (see 6.6.2).

## **6.5.2 Procedures**

**6.5.2.1** Annual Progress Report forms (see appendix to the Gold Book) are forwarded to research candidates during second semester, normally in September. Chairs of supervisory panels are advised. The report form is completed by the candidate, then the supervisor, then returned to the candidate to review the supervisor's evaluation and add further comments if desired. After endorsement by the Head of School (or nominee), the report is forwarded to the DRDC secretary for Committee consideration. The timeframe for annual reporting enables the candidate to receive feedback on their progress before enrolling for the following year.

**6.5.2.2** The Annual Progress Report on each candidate includes:

- (a) candidature details (for updating by the candidate and supervisor if required);
- (b) the candidate's summary of work done since the last report, progress with the learning plan and research education program, any problems encountered, a timetable for the remaining work and the expected date (month and year) of submission of the thesis;
- (c) academic milestones attained during the year and planned for the following year;
- (d) comments by the chair of the supervisory panel including an overall assessment of the candidate's progress on a scale from 1 to 5 (Unsatisfactory to Highly Satisfactory) (if progress is assessed as unsatisfactory, the chair of the supervisory panel is asked to indicate how this has been brought to the candidate's attention and what action has been taken or will be taken as a result);

- (e) declaration and signatures of the candidate and chair of the supervisory panel; and
- (f) endorsement with a recommendation to the DRDC from the Head of School or nominee.

**6.5.2.3** Responsibilities of chairs of supervisory panels in relation to progress reporting are set out in Part 4 on Supervision (4.7.1.22) above. Supervisors should encourage prompt return of reports and remind candidates if necessary that failure to comply with reporting requirements jeopardises their continued enrolment in the research program. If a candidate fails to complete an annual report, the supervisor should still report to the DRDC on the candidate's progress and assist in any action required.

**6.5.2.4** It is recommended that completed Annual Progress Reports are reviewed by an administrative or academic staff member before Committee consideration. Satisfactory reports may be summarised for the DRDC identifying highlights as well as issues to be noted in feedback to candidates. Reports for candidates at risk (unsatisfactory or marginally satisfactory) should be provided to the Committee in full for individual consideration and resolution.

**6.5.2.5** After considering advice on the progress of each candidate, the DRDC should formally resolve:

- (a) that the candidate should proceed with the program;
- (b) that the candidate may proceed subject to a satisfactory special progress report or other conditions; or
- (c) that the candidate be given an academic progress warning (see 6.5.2.6 and 6.6.3).

**6.5.2.6** Candidates whose progress is assessed by the supervisor as unsatisfactory (overall assessment of 1 on the scale of 1 to 5) will normally receive an academic progress warning. Candidates with an overall assessment of 2 (marginally satisfactory) may receive a warning. The supervisor should be consulted before an academic progress warning is issued.

**6.5.2.7** Candidates identified as at risk (overall assessment of 1 or 2) should be followed up with a special progress report after three months (early in semester 1). The DRDC secretary should be asked to arrange this report which may be informal providing it is in writing (eg an email exchange with the supervisor). The DRDC Chair or nominee will review the written advice and decide on further action if required. The outcome of this process should be noted by the DRDC.

**6.5.2.8** The DRDC will respond to each Annual Progress Report in writing, providing feedback on the candidate's progress as well as addressing any concerns. The advice should be copied to the supervisor with a summary to the Head of School.

### **6.5.3 Quality assurance issues**

**6.5.3.1** The DRDC is responsible for:

- (a) ensuring that Annual Progress Reports are submitted in respect of all research candidates enrolled in the Division (and following up promptly if reports are not received by the due date);
- (b) considering the reports, confirming the result for each candidate and stipulating any conditions attached to continued enrolment;
- (c) providing all candidates with written feedback on their progress;
- (d) recommending or acting on individual or systemic issues raised in the reports; and
- (e) ongoing oversight of candidates deemed to be at risk.

**6.5.3.2** The DRDC should prepare an annual summary report on the progress of research candidates in the Division for the URDC (using a form supplied by the Office of Research and Research Degrees).

**6.5.3.3** The URDC is expected to monitor annual progress reporting and report to Academic Board on performance of candidates in research programs as indicated in the Divisional summary reports. Quality assurance issues includes rates of progression, difficulties experienced by candidates or supervisors, progress of different cohorts (eg full-time/part-time, PhD/PD/Master's, etc), effectiveness of academic progress policy, and compliance with the annual reporting process.

## **6.6 Unsatisfactory progress**

*Note: The policy and procedures for research candidates set out below will be amended to re-establish consistency with new academic progress policy and procedures for students in undergraduate and postgraduate coursework courses implemented in 2005.*

### **6.6.1 Summary of University policy**

*Note: Academic progress procedures apply to enrolled candidates only. The University may initiate course withdrawal where a candidate fails to maintain enrolment – see 6.3.7.4.*

**6.6.1.1** Candidates in postgraduate research programs whose progress is considered unsatisfactory may be subject to:

- (a) a special progress report;
- (b) an academic warning;
- (c) a Show Cause direction and decision;
- (d) exclusion from the program.

**6.6.1.2** The relevant committee (see 6.6.1.3) is responsible for ensuring that action in relation to academic progress complies with requirements of University legislation including the *Academic Progress Statute* and *Academic Progress Rules*.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> UC statutes and rules may be consulted at <http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/legislation/index.html>

**6.6.1.3** In relation to academic progress matters such as Show Cause and Exclusion, the Divisional Research Degrees Committee is the “appropriate review authority” under section 4 of the *Academic Progress Statute 1995* for students in masters by research programs and the URDC is the “appropriate review authority” for doctoral students.<sup>15</sup> References in this section to “the relevant committee” should be interpreted in the light of this statement.

**6.6.1.4** Where applicable, and subject to policy and procedures laid out in this document, processes relating to research candidates’ unsatisfactory academic progress follow the model of the academic progress policy and procedures for undergraduate courses and coursework postgraduate programs.<sup>16</sup> (See, however, the note at the head of this section.)

**6.6.1.5** A candidate may appeal against a Show Cause or Exclusion decision under the *Student Grievance Resolution Procedures*.<sup>17</sup>

**6.6.1.6** Consistent with the *Academic Progress Rules*, any decision made by the appropriate review authority may be reviewed by Academic Board.

## **6.6.2 Special progress report**

**6.6.2.1** A special progress report may be required at any time in relation to a candidate whose progress is of concern to the DRDC. The DRDC, on advice from the chair of a supervisory panel and/or course convener or on its own initiative, will ask the chair of the supervisory panel to prepare such a report and determine action to be taken if required.

**6.6.2.2** A special progress report may be required in relation to a candidate who is not making regular contact with the chair of the supervisory panel. The chair of the panel should advise the DRDC if a candidate fails to make contact without prior notice and agreement for a significant length of time, eg two months. (See also 6.3.7.5)

**6.6.2.3** A special progress report may precede an academic warning.

## **6.6.3 Academic warning**

**6.6.3.1** Where the relevant committee (see 6.6.1.3), on the recommendation of the chair of the supervisory panel (and/or the DRDC if applicable), or on its own initiative, considers that the progress of a candidate is unsatisfactory, it may warn that unless the candidate makes satisfactory progress, he or she will be given a direction to Show Cause.

---

<sup>15</sup> Academic Board Resolution AB 00/4/5 of 19 June 2000.

<sup>16</sup> See *Academic Progress: Policy for Undergraduate Courses and Coursework Postgraduate Programs* at <https://guard.canberra.edu.au/cocoon/policydb/displayDocument?DocumentId=115> and *Academic Progress: Procedures for Undergraduate Courses and Coursework Postgraduate Programs* at <https://guard.canberra.edu.au/cocoon/policydb/displayDocument?DocumentId=116>

<sup>17</sup> *Student Grievance Resolution Procedures* at [http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/studgriev\\_proc.html](http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/studgriev_proc.html)

- 6.6.3.2** An academic progress warning may be given immediately after an unsatisfactory initial seminar assessment or Annual Progress Report. The DRDC may however decide to seek a special progress report after three months before deciding whether or not to issue such a warning to the candidate (see 6.5.2.6-7).
- 6.6.3.3** The letter informing the candidate of the academic warning will provide details of the unsatisfactory progress and advice on steps that may be taken to rectify the situation.
- 6.6.3.4** A candidate who is given an academic warning is strongly encouraged to obtain further advice from the chair of the supervisory panel or other appropriate staff member (eg course convener or DRDC Chair) on respects in which the candidate's progress is said to be unsatisfactory and steps the candidate needs to take in order to make satisfactory progress.

#### **6.6.4 Show Cause and Exclusion**

- 6.6.4.1** This information should be considered in conjunction with the summary of University policy in 6.6.1. As noted in 6.6.1.3, in relation to academic progress matters such as Show Cause and Exclusion, the Divisional Research Degrees Committee is the "appropriate review authority" for students in masters by research programs and the URDC for doctoral students.<sup>18</sup> References in this section to "the relevant committee" should be interpreted in the light of this statement.
- 6.6.4.2** The Office of Research and Research Degrees and the DRDC secretary are responsible for correspondence relating to Show Cause and Exclusion matters for doctoral and masters by research candidates respectively.
- 6.6.4.3** Show Cause and Exclusion matters relating to doctoral students are normally referred to the URDC with advice and recommendation from the DRDC.
- 6.6.4.4** A direction to Show Cause will normally be preceded by an academic warning.
- 6.6.4.5** If the relevant committee (on the advice of the chair of the supervisory panel, DRDC if applicable or on its own initiative) considers that the progress of a candidate who has received an academic warning continues to be unsatisfactory, it shall issue a direction to the candidate to Show Cause why he or she should not be directed to discontinue the program.
- 6.6.4.6** The letter informing a candidate of a Show Cause direction will:
- (a) advise the candidate of the legislative basis of the Show Cause action (ie *Academic Progress Rules*);
  - (b) explain why the candidate's progress is considered unsatisfactory;
  - (c) request a written response in a timeframe that allows the candidate reasonable time to prepare a submission;

---

<sup>18</sup> Academic Board Resolution AB 00/4/5 of 19 June 2000.

- (d) strongly recommend that the candidate discuss the situation with the chair of the supervisory panel as soon as possible;
- (e) provide information on sources of advice and assistance available to the candidate (eg Students' Association, Health and Counselling Centre); and
- (f) include information on courses of action open to the Committee following consideration of the candidate's response (including a non-response).

**6.6.4.7** Following consideration of the candidate's response to the Show Cause direction (or lack of response, as the case may be), the relevant committee (on the advice of the DRDC if applicable) may decide:

- (a) that the candidate be excluded from the program immediately;
- (b) that the candidate may continue in the program subject to conditions laid down by the relevant committee; or
- (c) that no further action is necessary under the *Academic Progress Rules* and guidelines.

**6.6.4.8** The administrative officer in ORRD or DRDC secretary (as applicable) should notify Student Administration of the outcome of a Show Cause or Exclusion matter. The chair of the candidate's supervisory panel and other relevant staff should be informed.

**6.6.4.9** As noted in 6.6.1, a candidate may appeal against a Show Cause or Exclusion decision under the *Student Grievance Resolution Procedures*, and consistent with the *Academic Progress Rules* any decision made by the appropriate review authority may be reviewed by Academic Board.

## **6.7 University monitoring of academic progress and candidate satisfaction**

### **6.7.1 Quality assurance through the annual progress reporting process**

**6.7.1.1** Requirements for Annual Progress Reports are set out in 6.5.3.

### **6.7.2 PREQ and UC annual survey of research candidates**

**6.7.2.1** The University participates in the Graduate Destination Survey and the Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ) administered to research graduates from all universities by the Graduate Careers Council of Australia. The PREQ collects information relating to graduates' perceptions of their higher education experience.

**6.7.2.2** From 2003, the URDC has conducted an annual survey of research students to provide independent feedback on student satisfaction with their research training experience and quality of research supervision. The UC survey complements the PREQ by collecting data from current research students on all aspects of their experience at UC.

Survey results are a performance indicator for the quality of the University's research training.

- 6.7.2.3** The *University of Canberra Higher Degree by Research Student Survey* covers demographic information, candidates' goals and expectations, learning plans and the research education program, research infrastructure and administration, research culture, supervision, feedback on work, and equity and grievances.
- 6.7.2.4** The UC survey is forwarded to research candidates with the Annual Progress Report form. To maintain confidentiality, candidates return the completed questionnaire directly to the Planning and Resource Development unit, which analyses the responses and reports in the first instance to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Information Management).
- 6.7.2.5** Findings and action from the annual survey are reported to research candidates with the following year's survey. A report is also prepared for Academic Board.
- 6.7.2.6** As noted in 6.3.7.2, the URDC intends to develop an exit survey for students who withdraw from research programs without completing.

## **6.8 Transfers and upgrades between research programs at UC**

### **6.8.1 General requirements**

- 6.8.1.1** This section sets out requirements and procedures for candidates to transfer from one higher degree by research program to another at UC. (Candidates transferring to UC from other institutions are dealt with in Part 5, Admission.)
- 6.8.1.2** In principle, candidates may transfer between any types of higher degree by research program (PhD, PD by research or masters by research) at UC or from one program or study area to another within the same program type. A candidate may transfer at any time after completion of one year from initial enrolment up to the time when the candidate might otherwise have been ready to submit the thesis.<sup>19</sup> If approved the transfer takes effect the following semester.
- 6.8.1.3** If the preferred course is in a different research area or School (eg because of a change of emphasis in the research), the request to transfer is considered an application for admission.
- 6.8.1.4** Applications for transfer are approved by the DRDC on advice and recommendation from the candidate's supervisory panel, endorsed by a senior staff member in the Division. Criteria for approval are:

---

<sup>19</sup> University policy provides for the award of a masters degree to a student enrolled in a doctoral program, in circumstances where requirements for a doctoral degree have not been met, *following examination of the thesis* (see 7.8.5). This is **not** a transfer between programs within the meaning of this section.

- (a) recommendation from the supervisory panel (which must include assurance that the candidate can complete the new program in the time remaining for candidature) (6.8.2.3);
- (b) meeting admission requirements for the program, if the transfer involves a change of research area or School (6.8.2.2);
- (c) willingness of the Division to continue to support the research (availability of resources and supervision etc); and
- (d) in the case of upgrade to the doctoral program, additional requirements in 6.8.3.1-9.

## 6.8.2 Procedures

**6.8.2.1** Candidates enrolled in a UC research program seeking transfer to another UC research program should discuss the proposal with their supervisory panel first. Considerations will include:

- (a) meeting entry and/or academic requirements of the preferred program (in accordance with Part 3 of this policy and details of the particular course in the *University Handbook*);
- (b) any modification or further development of the research that will be required for the new program;
- (c) the need to maintain satisfactory progress and complete the new degree within the maximum period of enrolment and funding entitlements;
- (d) availability of a place in the new program (consult the relevant course convener); and
- (e) implications for the candidate's RTS place and/or scholarship, to be ascertained from ORRD and the Scholarships Office. (RTS candidates should be aware that the University is required to deduct time taken in the current course from the entitlement for the new course.<sup>20</sup> Scholarship recipients should note that transfer or extension of a scholarship is NOT included in the approval to transfer to another research program. The candidate will need to apply separately for the scholarship to be transferred to the other degree and, if relevant, extended. *Extensions to scholarships are subject to the availability of funds.*)

**6.8.2.2** If the candidate decides to proceed, the chair of the supervisory panel will apply to the DRDC for approval on the candidate's behalf. Documentation should include:

- (a) recommendation from the chair of the supervisory panel (6.8.2.3);
- (b) advice from ORRD on the candidate's RTS consumption and remaining entitlement if the transfer takes place;
- (c) if the change involves a different research area or School, a completed admission form for the preferred program clearly establishing that entry requirements are met; and

---

<sup>20</sup> See DEST guidelines for the Research Training Scheme at [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research\\_sector/programmes\\_funding/programme\\_categories/professional\\_skills/research\\_training\\_scheme.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/programmes_funding/programme_categories/professional_skills/research_training_scheme.htm)

- (d) endorsement by the Director of the University Research Centre, Head of School or nominee to confirm continuing support for the research, availability of resources and supervision etc.

**6.8.2.3** The recommendation from the chair of the supervisory panel should cover the following:

- (a) reasons for recommending the transfer;
- (b) an assessment of the candidate's progress in the current program to date (referring to Annual Progress Reports etc);
- (c) the level of the candidate's current research and written work;
- (d) an estimation of the period required to complete candidature in the new program and any credit (advanced standing) that may be granted;
- (e) additional information below in the case of upgrade to the doctoral program; and
- (f) any other relevant academic or administrative matters.

**6.8.2.4** The DRDC will approve or reject the application specifying any conditions attached to approval. The DRDC secretary will advise the applicant, chair of the supervisory panel, ORRD and the Scholarships Office as required. If applicable, a summary sheet for the new admission (with completed admission form) will be forwarded to Student Administration to prepare a new letter of offer. The candidate's enrolment in the new program will commence the following semester.

### **6.8.3 Upgrade to doctoral program**

**6.8.3.1** The following requirements, *in addition to those above*, apply to candidates upgrading to a doctoral program at UC. Candidates and their supervisors should consider carefully the factors set out in 6.8.2.1 as well as the information in this section.

**6.8.3.2** Candidates considering upgrade to a doctoral program should be advised that expectations, requirements and characteristics of research in masters and doctoral programs are different (refer to Part 3 of this policy). Transition, particularly at an advanced stage in a masters program, may be difficult. Problems may be encountered in developing the research project to a new conceptual level or integrating research from the masters and doctoral programs into a coherent thesis. A candidate seeking to upgrade should consider completing the masters degree then enrolling for a doctorate rather than transferring part-way through the research.

**6.8.3.3** A candidate in a PD or masters program with a coursework component, who applies to transfer to the PhD program, should be advised that no recognition may be available for coursework units completed as part of the PD or masters program.

**6.8.3.4** Before recommending an upgrade, the candidate's supervisory panel should give careful consideration to the applicant's potential to conduct doctoral level research, including whether the proposed development of the masters research project is likely to yield a thesis at doctoral level. Conversion should take into account the differences between masters and PhD or professional doctorate objectives outlined in Part 3.

**6.8.3.5** Candidates applying for upgrade to the doctoral program must:

- (a) prepare a full PhD or professional doctorate research proposal; and
- (b) present a public upgrade seminar.

**6.8.3.6** The supervisor's recommendation to the DRDC (6.8.2.3) in the case of an upgrade should specifically address these points:

- (a) quality of the applicant's current work (including assurance that the applicant is progressing with work at a standard and rate which will be likely to ensure that a thesis of the required standard is submitted within the time remaining for candidature);
- (b) potential of the applicant to conduct research at the doctoral level; and
- (c) potential of the masters research project for upgrading to doctoral level.

**6.8.3.7** The upgrade seminar and research proposal will be evaluated by two assessors chosen by the chair of the supervisory panel who are qualified in the field, meet academic requirements for appointment as doctoral examiners and are not closely connected to the candidate or supervisors. At least one assessor is expected to be external to the University. The supervisor should ensure that assessors receive relevant material at least a week before the seminar. This will include the assessor's report form (an appendix to the Gold Book) and:

- (a) the candidate's doctoral research proposal;
- (b) substantial written work (preferably at least two chapters of the draft masters thesis or, for creative projects, a sizable portion of the creative work and exegesis);
- (c) UC requirements for the appropriate doctoral degree and thesis (from Part 3 of this policy); and
- (d) any other information the supervisor considers relevant.

**6.8.3.8** It is recommended that the assessors meet the candidate and supervisors in closed session after the seminar for further discussion and feedback. Each assessor will then submit a report (via the supervisor to the DRDC) recommending whether the upgrade should proceed and specific action to clarify any outstanding issues. Approval may be conditional on another seminar being held to ensure problems are resolved.

**6.8.3.9** The DRDC will make a decision on the basis of the assessors' reports in conjunction with other information.