



Higher Degree by Research Admissions Policy

Authority Source: Academic Board

Approval Date: 03/04/2019

Publication Date: 15/06/2018

Review Date: 04/06/2021

Effective Date: 03/04/2019

Custodian: Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice-President, Research and Innovation

Contact: GraduateResearch@canberra.edu.au

Accessibility: Public

Status: Published

In developing this policy the University had regard to the provisions of section 40B(1)(b) of the Human Rights Act 2004 (ACT).

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1. This policy provides information on the admission requirements to Higher Degree by Research (HDR) courses.
- 1.2. This document is designed for use by University of Canberra staff.

2. SCOPE:

- 2.1. The policy applies to HDR courses only.
- 2.2. This policy does not apply to undergraduate (including honours) or postgraduate coursework courses.

3. PRINCIPLE:

- 3.1. In approving an offer of a place, the Faculty commits to provide each candidate with a quality research education and training experience for the duration of their candidature.
- 3.2. An offer for a place in a HDR course will be made only when availability of appropriate supervision and adequate resources to support the proposed research has been confirmed by the Faculty through the admission approval process.
- 3.3. Through the admission approval process the Primary Supervisor will sign a Statement of Agreement, to confirm their agreement to comply with the Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy, the Higher Degree by Research Code of Practice, and the Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships.
- 3.4. Admission to any HDR course of the University requires prior completion of an award in a suitable area of study that, in the opinion of Academic Board, has provided an appropriate volume of learning to be used as a pathway to research training at the University.

- 3.5. Admission can also be considered on the basis of learning acquired through means other than formal study, through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- 3.6. For admission to all HDR courses, international applicants must satisfy Genuine Student and Genuine Temporary Entrant (GTE) requirements in accordance with the [Department of Home Affairs regulations](#).
- 3.7. Applications from countries in which sanctions are in force will be assessed for compliance against the [United Nations Security Council and Australian Autonomous Sanctions regulations](#), before an offer of admission will be made.
- 3.8. Where there is a conflict of interest, and it is not appropriate for the Approving Authority to make an academic decision regarding a HDR candidate, a delegate with equivalent or higher authority must be nominated.
- 3.9. Exceptions to normal policy and practice may be approved by the Dean, Graduate Research.

Requirements for Admission

Requirements for Admission to a PhD Course

- 3.10. An applicant to a Doctor of Philosophy course at the University of Canberra will:
- have evidence of advanced knowledge in an area relevant to the PhD topic;
 - have a minimum of four years tertiary study in a relevant field of study, at an Australian university or other recognised higher education institution (e.g. four year bachelor degree or bachelor degree plus coursework masters);
 - have evidence of the capability to undertake complex thinking and problem solving; and
 - provide evidence of significant aptitude for research.
- 3.11. An applicant seeking admission to the PhD course with advanced standing for the 12 credit point coursework component will either:
- have a degree of bachelor with first or upper second class honours awarded by an Australian university or other recognised higher education institution and provide evidence of research training and aptitude for research; or
 - hold an award or have completed work that has first or upper second class honours equivalence in accordance with the [Honours Equivalency Guidelines](#) and provide evidence of significant research ability and/or professional performance.

Requirements for Admission to a Professional Doctorate Course

- 3.12. An applicant to a Professional Doctorate course will have:
- a Master degree or a bachelor degree with honours (first or upper second class) or equivalent; and
 - demonstrated capacity to undertake significant research in the proposed doctoral field.
- 3.13. For the purposes of the admission to the Professional Doctorate based on recognised prior learning, equivalence to a master or honours degree would be established by:
- a degree of bachelor in the relevant professional field;
 - at least five years professional practice in a relevant field; and
 - submission of a resume demonstrating relevant professional experience of high professional standing and an appropriate level of research expertise.

Requirements for Admission to a Master by Research Course

- 3.14. An applicant to a Master by Research course at the University of Canberra will have completed;
- a. a three-year bachelor degree (or an award deemed to be its equivalent) with above average performance in an appropriate field of study;
 - b. a four-year bachelor degree in an appropriate field of study;
 - c. a bachelor degree with honours at any level, an appropriate field of study;
 - d. a three-year degree in any field of study followed by a graduate diploma in the same field as the Master by Research course; or
 - e. had such practical or work experience as is specified for admission to a particular course in the *Determination of Course Particulars* and published on the University of Canberra website; and
 - f. provided evidence of capacity and/or aptitude for research.

Admission for Students (Domestic or International) Holding Overseas Qualifications

- 3.15. To be admitted to HDR courses, applicants must have appropriate educational qualifications, deemed by the University to be equivalent to an undergraduate or graduate degree awarded by an Australian university.
- 3.16. Applicants who provide qualification documentation that is not presented in English must also provide a certified translation of the documents. The qualification document and English translation must be either original or certified.

Admission Based on Recognition of Prior Learning

- 3.17. Applicants who do not possess the minimum academic requirements for entry to an HDR course as specified above, may qualify for admission to a course on the basis of a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessment of their current skills and knowledge.
- 3.18. RPL is the recognition of learning gained outside the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). RPL based admission refers specifically to learning from work or life experience and may include a combination of formal learning and professional experience.
- 3.19. For admission based on RPL the applicant must provide evidence to enable assessment of equivalence to the minimum entry requirement for the relevant HDR course.
- 3.20. A recommendation to grant admission on the basis of RPL must be accompanied by a detailed statement from the Faculty outlining the reasons for the recommendation, against the relevant minimum qualification (AQF).
- 3.21. The Dean, Graduate Research, is the delegated authority to approve a Faculty's recommendation to approve admission on the basis of RPL.

Special Categories of Applicants

- 3.22. Special categories of applicants including University of Canberra staff, research candidates who have commenced research training at another institution, and applicants who apply to undertake their candidature offshore can also be admitted.

University of Canberra Staff

- 3.23. Members of academic and professional staff at the University of Canberra are encouraged to undertake Higher Degrees by Research. University staff members who apply to the University are subject to normal University admission requirements and procedures for HDR courses.

Applicants Transferring from Other Institutions

3.24. Applicants who have commenced a HDR course at another institution and apply to transfer their research to the University of Canberra are subject to normal University admission requirements and procedures for HDR courses.

3.25. An application for admission must be submitted to the University, and must include:

- a. evidence of satisfactory progress at their current institution (through referees' reports and/or copies of progress reports);
- b. a full research proposal, including an outline of expected resources and conditions required to complete the research (e.g. field trips, specialised computer software etc.) in consultation with their proposed University of Canberra supervisor; and
- c. an estimated submission date for the thesis.

3.26. Domestic candidates who were previously enrolled in a research course at an Australian institution will be required to provide an academic transcript or letter from their previous institution detailing their HDR enrolment load at the date of application (full-time equivalent) or Research Training Program (RTP) funding consumed to date. This information will be used to calculate their University of Canberra course dates, and the remaining RTP funding available for the UC course.

3.27. If an applicant has undertaken a RTP funded course at UC or another Australian institution but has not been enrolled in that course for three or more years, they will be eligible for the maximum RTP funding to offset tuition fees for the UC course.

3.28. Information on Research Training Program eligibility and entitlements is available at [Department of Education and Training – Research Training Program](#).

Approval of Offshore Candidature

3.29. All applicants who request an exception to the standard attendance requirements to undertake their course as an offshore candidate are subject to normal University admission requirements and procedures for HDR courses.

3.30. Information on assessment of requests for offshore candidature is provided in the [Offshore Candidature Guidelines](#).

Proficiency in English

3.31. All HDR applicants are expected to be proficient in English expression and comprehension. An applicant must meet the HDR English language requirements of the University to be eligible for admission, or complete an approved pathway program as detailed in this policy (clause 3.51).

3.32. The English language requirements of each course are set out in the *Determination of Course Particulars* and published on the University of Canberra website. Some HDR courses of the University have been approved with higher English language proficiency requirements than the University's minimum standards.

3.33. There are three categories in which applicants may demonstrate English language proficiency to a level that meets admission requirements, detailed below.

3.34. The University reserves the right to request that the applicant undertake an English language test in addition to any other evidence of English proficiency provided.

3.35. In exceptional circumstances a case for English language equivalency may be made to the Dean, Graduate Research.

Category One

3.36 Applicants are regarded as meeting the English language requirements if they have achieved the requisite result from a recognised English language test. The University accepts the following English language tests:

- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic
- Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet Based Test (TOEFL-iBT)
- Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic
- Cambridge Assessment English (CAE): C1 Advanced

3.37 The minimum test scores required to meet HDR English language requirements are outlined in the table below.

3.38 Evidence of English proficiency is valid for a period of two years from the date of the test (to the date of application), except for TOEFL-iBT results which are valid for a period of 18 months from the date of the test (to the date of application).

Minimum Standards for English Language Tests

Course	IELTS Academic	TOEFL-iBT	PTE Academic	CAE: C1 Advanced
General minimum entry requirement	Overall ≥ 6.5 No band below 6.0	Overall ≥ 79 Each band ≥ 16	Overall ≥ 58 Each band ≥ 50	Overall ≥ 176 Each band ≥ 169
PhD Clinical Psychology	Overall ≥ 7.0	Overall ≥ 94	Overall ≥ 65	Overall ≥ 185

Category Two

3.39 Applicants are regarded as meeting the English language requirements if they:

- were born in one of the countries or territories listed in the table below;
- have completed at least one tertiary qualification from one of the countries or territories listed in the table below; and
- the language of instruction and assessment of the qualification was English.

3.40 Previous study under this category does not expire and will be valid for any period of time following completion, as evidence of English proficiency.

Countries and territories recognised by the University for the purpose of meeting English proficiency requirements:

Australia, Botswana, Canada, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Samoa (American, Independent State), Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Tonga, Trinidad & Tobago, United Kingdom (including Northern Ireland), United States of America, Zambia or Zimbabwe

Category Three

3.41 Applicants are regarded as meeting the English language requirements if they:

- a. have completed two years (full time equivalent) study at Bachelor level in one of the countries/territories listed at Category Two, where the language of instruction and assessment was English; or
- b. have completed a postgraduate qualification assessed as equivalent to an Australian Master degree, in one of the countries/territories listed at *Category Two*, where the language of instruction and assessment was English.

3.42 Previous study under this category is valid as evidence of English proficiency for a period of two years from the date of completion of the qualification (to the date of application).

Non-standard Admissions Requirements

3.43. Within the parameters of the admission requirements, a Faculty may, in relation to a particular course, seek approval from the Academic Board for admission requirements in addition to those set out above. This request can be made at the time a new course is submitted for approval or by requesting a change to an existing course.

Offers of Admission

3.44. Once the admission requirements are deemed to have been met, an offer of admission can be made.

3.45. Approval to offer a place in a course rests with the Dean of the Faculty on advice from Associate Dean Research and/or Higher Degree by Research Convenor.

3.46. Conditional offers of admission can be made if an applicant meets the academic admission requirements for an HDR course, but English language proficiency requirements have not yet been met, or relevant documentation has not yet been provided.

3.47. Conditional Offers can be made under the following circumstances:

- a. the applicant's demonstrated English language proficiency fails to meet the minimum standards to a specified level (see clause 3.51 for further details);
- b. the applicant is awaiting undergraduate or graduate degree results (e.g. honours results, or Masters thesis result);
- c. the applicant is yet to provide verified documents (e.g. transcripts, passport, birth certificate, citizenship certificate) which are available only after a Letter of Offer has been provided (provided that unverified copies have been submitted in the interim);
- d. the applicant needs to provide further information upon entry into Australia (e.g. copy of entry visa, confirmation of contact details);

- 3.48. Offers of admission will not be made conditional on an applicant being awarded a tuition fee or living expenses scholarship, or any other financial support.
- 3.49. Applicants must meet any and all conditions outlined in their Letter of Offer before the University will accept them into the course.
- 3.50. An offer of admission will be considered to have lapsed if not accepted by the date specified in the offer letter.

Offers Conditional on English Language

- 3.51. Applicants who have met the academic entry requirements for a course but have provided an English language test that does not meet minimum standards required for entry can be made an offer of admission conditional on English, or a packaged offer, as set out below:
- An applicant who has provided an English language test with IELTS 5.5 overall and no less than 5.0 in any band (or equivalent) can be made a packaged offer for *Academic English* (20 week program) and the HDR course.
 - An applicant who has provided an English language test with IELTS 6.0 overall and no less than 5.5 in any band (or equivalent) can be made a packaged offer for *Academic English* (10 week program) and the HDR course.
 - An applicant who has provided an English language test with IELTS 5.5 overall and no less than 5.0 in any band (or equivalent), can be made an offer of admission for the HDR course conditional on providing an English language test that meets the minimum requirements for entry, within the following six month period.
- 3.52. Applicants who provide an English language test with results lower than IELTS 5.5 overall or 5.0 in any band (or equivalent) will not be considered for admission to an HDR course at the University.
- 3.53. An applicant who has not met the English proficiency requirements for direct entry (under either Category One, Two or Three) may be made an offer of admission for the HDR course conditional on providing an English language test that meets the minimum requirements for entry, within the following six month period (excluding applicants that fall under 3.52).

Deferrals

- 3.54. An applicant may seek deferment of acceptance of an offer. The applicant's intention to defer should be communicated before the date given for accepting the offer of place in the course.
- 3.55. Offers may be deferred for a maximum of six months from the course commencement date on the letter of offer. An offer can only be deferred once.
- 3.56. International applicants with a deferred status are guaranteed enrolment subject to the following conditions:
- the applicant's eligibility for admission does not change;
 - the deferment period is no longer than six months from the course commencement date on the original letter of offer;
 - the University still offers the course to which the applicant was originally admitted. Where the University no longer offers the course or no longer has the capacity to supervise the student in the original area of research, the applicant may be offered a place in another comparable course of their choice provided they would have been eligible for admission to the course when the initial offer of place was made;
 - the fee type status of the applicant remains unchanged;
 - the applicant has deferred only once; and

- f. the applicant will revise and update their research proposal at the time of commencing their HDR course, as directed by the appointed supervisory panel [\[1\]](#).

3.57. A person who has a deferred offer of place but who wishes to obtain admission to a different course must complete a new application for admission to the alternative course.

Readmission of Excluded Candidates

3.58. A student who has been excluded from the University must not again be admitted to a course of study for a period of five years. An application for admission following a period of exclusion will be in accordance with the admission policy and application processes applicable at the time of application.

Appeals

3.59. An applicant who wishes to appeal an admission decision may submit a request in writing to the Admissions Review Officer (Dean, Graduate Research) within 60 days of receiving a notification regarding admission from the University.

3.60. If an application for appeal has been reviewed and rejected by the Admissions Review Officer no further appeal can be made within the University.

[\[1\]](#) A different supervisory panel may be assigned to the student depending on available resources when the student commences their HDR course following a period of deferment.

4. LEGISLATION:

4.1. Commonwealth and Territory Governing Framework and Legislation

- Higher Education Support Act 2003
- Australian Qualifications Framework
- Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2017
- Migration Act 1958 - Direction Number 69 (Genuine Temporary Entrant)
- Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011
- Australian Autonomous Sanctions Regulations 2011
- Charter of the United Nations Act 1945

4.2. University Statutes and Rules

- [University of Canberra Admission Statute 1995](#)
- [University of Canberra Admission Rules 2017](#)
- [University of Canberra \(Courses and Awards\) Statute 2010](#)
- [University of Canberra Courses and Awards \(Courses of Study\) Rules 2013](#)
- [University of Canberra \(Student Conduct\) Rules 2018](#)