

GUIDELINES

Guideline Title: Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Transfer of Enrolment between Australian Higher Education Providers

Guideline Owner: Dean, Graduate Research

This guideline supports the University to operationalise the *Research Training Policy* and must be complied with.

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1. INTENT

The purpose of this Guideline is to assist Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Candidates, staff and Supervisors in applying to:

- a. transfer ECU candidature to another Higher Education Provider (HEP) or
- b. transfer their candidature from another HEP to ECU.

2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This guideline applies to all Staff, Candidates and Supervisors involved in any aspect of Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) including adjunct positions and emeritus professors that administer, supervise, or otherwise contribute to HDR Candidates and HDR Courses.

3. DEFINITIONS

The [University Glossary](#) and definitions in the [Research Training Policy](#) apply to this guideline.

4. GUIDELINE CONTENT

- 4.1. This Guideline should be read in conjunction with the [Research Training Policy](#) and associated operational documents.

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Transfer of HDR Candidature from ECU to Another Australian Higher Education Provider (HEP)

- 4.2. This transfer process applies when the Candidate has commenced an HDR course at ECU and wishes to continue their candidature at another Australian HEP.
- 4.3. Prior to commencing the transfer process, the Candidate must contact their Principal Supervisor to discuss their decision to transfer to another HEP. Following this the Candidate should also contact the HEP to which they are planning to transfer for information on the transfer requirements, policy and procedures.
- 4.4. Candidates must address matters including, but not limited to, data access and storage, ethics and integrity, publication agreements and intellectual property, with their supervisory panel, including former Supervisors, if relevant.
- 4.5. The Candidate should then inform Graduate Research Services at grs@ecu.edu.au of their intent to transfer, for Graduate Research Services to facilitate the transfer and notify the Dean, Graduate Research.
- 4.6. Candidates are advised not to withdraw from their HDR course until they have formally accepted a place at another HEP.
- 4.7. International Candidates should seek advice from Student Success before commencing the process of a transfer to another HEP.
- 4.8. Once the Candidate has formally accepted a place at another HEP, they should then withdraw from their candidature at ECU via the following steps:
 - a. Submit a [Variation to HDR Candidature - For Candidates currently enrolled](#) form to discontinue from their course at ECU.
 - b. Contact ECU Admissions at hdr.enquiries@ecu.edu.au to arrange for a letter.
- 4.9. Candidates may request a statement from Graduate Research Services outlining the Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFTSL) consumed to date and any other relevant information regarding their candidature, such as their progress against milestones, to be supplied to the other HEP.
- 4.10. HDR Scholarships funded through ECU (e.g. ECUHDRS or RTP) cannot be transferred to another HEP.

Transfer of HDR Candidature from Another HEP to ECU

- 4.11. This transfer process applies when the prospective Candidate has commenced an HDR course at another Australian higher education provider and intends to continue their candidature and research at ECU. When this occurs, Candidates will have the EFTSL consumed at their previous HEP deducted from the EFTSL allowed for completion of their degree at ECU.

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- 4.12. Prospective Candidates seeking to commence entirely different research with a new supervision team will not be treated as a transfer and apply as a new applicant to the course as per ECU's standard process. They must apply for HDR Admission, and their application will be assessed under standard admission requirements. In this situation the Candidate cannot use any research conducted at their prior institution in their final thesis.
- 4.13. Prior to commencing the transfer process, the prospective HDR Candidate must contact a potential Supervisor to ensure that the Supervisor and relevant School have the capacity to supervise and that the proposed research aligns with Supervisor and School research priorities.
- 4.14. On approval, the School will inform Graduate Research Services at grs@ecu.edu.au of their intent to accept the prospective Candidate's transfer. Graduate Research Services will facilitate a review by the Dean, Graduate Research, whose approval is required to proceed. The prospective Candidate must not start an application for course entry at ECU until advised to proceed.
- 4.15. Candidates would typically not be approved for a transfer if they have already consumed more than three quarters of the total course duration, unless transferring because of their Supervisor's recent employment at ECU.
- 4.16. Once advised to proceed, the Candidate should submit an application for HDR admission via the [ECU Online Application Portal](#). In addition to the documents for standard course entry requirement, the prospective Candidate will need to provide the following at the time of application to ECU:
 - a. An explanation for the transfer.
 - b. A statement from their current HEP which confirms EFTSL consumed to date.
 - c. Details of any milestones achieved.
 - d. A completion plan.
 - e. If applicable, any coursework, unit(s) and/or micro credential(s) undertaken as part of their HDR candidature
- 4.17. The prospective Candidate should also address matters including, but not limited to, data access and storage, ethics and integrity, publication agreements and intellectual property with their potential supervisors, including former Supervisors, if relevant.
- 4.18. HDR Candidates transferring to ECU will be subject to the [Research Training Policy](#) and [Guidelines](#) in place at the time of transferred enrolment.
- 4.19. Applicants are advised not to withdraw from their HDR course at their current HEP until they have formally accepted a place at ECU.
- 4.20. Candidates who transfer to ECU must not commence any research work at ECU until any relevant ethics and milestone requirements required by ECU have been obtained.

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5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Guideline Owner is the *Dean, Graduate Research* and has overall responsibility for the content of these guidelines and their operation.

The *Manager, Graduate Research Services* is responsible for currency of information and provision of advice relating to these guidelines.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Rules

[Admission, Enrolment and Academic Progress](#)

Policies

[Research Training](#)

Operational documents and resources

[Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
Variation to HDR Candidature - For Candidates currently enrolled](#)

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

Guideline Owner	Dean, Graduate Research
All Enquiries Contact	Manager, Graduate Research Services
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8. APPROVAL HISTORY

Guideline approved by:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
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Revision history:	2 September 2025: The guideline was re-formatted to remove inconsistencies. 25 June 2026:

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	The guideline was updated to correct the links to ECU's Legislation, Policy and Governance Documents Directory.
Next revision due:	September 2029
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