

Guideline Title: Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Progression Plan

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

This Guideline outlines the process and requirement for Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Progression Plans, which are an agreement made by the Candidate, in consultation with the Supervisor Panel. Progression Plans outline tasks and goals required to be completed by the Candidate in a set timeframe, to achieve satisfactory progress or Course completion.

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

Progression Plan

4.1. The University will require a Candidate to enter a Progression Plan in the following circumstances:

- a. as an intervention strategy, at any point during candidature where a Candidate's progression is identified as at risk;

- b. where a Candidate has received an extension to a milestone, or their candidature;
- c. where a Candidate has received a Marginal Progress (MP) grade as assessed within their Progress Report; or
- d. any other circumstance resulting in a Red Academic Progress Status as outlined with the Admission, Enrolment and Academic Progress Rules.

4.2. All Progression Plans must:

- a. be prepared in collaboration with the Supervisor Panel and Candidate;
- b. be established within the timeframes outlined in the [Higher Degree by Research Academic Progression Procedures](#).
- c. be approved by the relevant Associate Dean (Research) and returned to Student Administration.

4.3. Following discussion with their Supervisor Panel or Associate Dean (Research), a Candidate may decide to intermit from studies; in this instance the Candidate must still submit a Progression Plan within the required timeframe. If a Candidate fails to enter into a Progression Plan, they may be excluded pursuant to the Admission, Enrolment and Academic Progress Rules.

Intervention

4.4. Where two or more Supervisors agree that a Candidate's progression is not at the level required at any point in the candidature, Candidates and Supervisors will be required to meet to discuss progression and identify possible reasons for sub-optimal progression. These may include insufficient training, poor communication, unclear instructions, a misunderstanding of expectations, unrealistic timeframes, or other pressures that are impacting progression. These discussions may be within the Progress Report discussions or other general meetings. If contributing factors have been addressed and performance is still not at the level expected, the Supervisors will notify Research Assessments.

4.5. A Candidate's Principal Supervisor, Supervisor Panel or the relevant Associate Dean (Research) may require a Candidate to enter into a Progression Plan. Candidates who are required by the University to enter into a Progression Plan will be given a Red Academic Progression Status at the next relevant Progression Panel meeting. Early intervention will establish a framework and structure to meet required tasks and goals, and ensure the Candidate is referred to, and provided with, appropriate support.

Marginal Progress

4.6. The Marginal Progress grade indicates insufficient progress has been made during the relevant Teaching Period and that the Candidate has not performed as expected. Receiving a Marginal Progress will result in a change in the Candidate's Academic Progression status. A Candidate that receives a Red Status will be required to complete a Progression Plan. Further details (including timing) are described in the [Higher Degree by Research Academic Progression Procedures](#) and Admission, Enrolment and Academic Progress Rules.

Extension to Milestone or Candidature

- 4.7. When a Candidate requests approval to extend a milestone (see [Guideline: HDR Milestones](#)), this must be supported by a proposed Progression Plan. The proposed Progression Plan must contain sufficient information for the Associate Dean Research to determine if an extension to candidature is warranted. In this instance the proposed Progression Plan should be for the duration of the extension requested. See [Managing your Candidature](#) and [Guideline: HDR Milestones](#).

Developing a Progression Plan

- 4.8. The Candidate should prepare the Progression Plan in consultation with their Supervision Panel. The Candidate and Supervisors must meet to discuss the progression concerns and identify possible reasons for sub-optimal progression. This could be due to compassionate or external factors beyond the Candidate's control that affect their wellbeing or study. The Candidate and Supervisors should discuss and develop realistic goals and timelines for inclusion in the Progression Plan. In this meeting the Candidate and Supervisors should also discuss possible solutions to the sub-optimal progression, including a discussion on the relevant support that may be required (see [Support Services](#)). The Candidate is strongly encouraged to meet with [Student Success](#) when establishing their Progression Plan. The duration of the Progression Plan should typically be for a 6 month period. However, in cases of an extension to a milestone of candidature, the duration of the Progression Plan should be for the duration of the extension request (maximum of 6 months).

The Progression Plan should contain the following:

- a. a brief overview of progress to date and details of anything that has impacted on progress;
- b. realistic and measurable goals/tasks, timelines and actions that can be achieved within the duration of Progression Plan, for example, edit chapter X, write conclusion, editing, nominate examiners;
- c. an outline of meetings for the duration of the Progression Plan;
- d. strategies for overcoming logistical or other barriers that have contributed to the sub-optimal progression or request for extension; and
- e. any support services that may help in overcoming the issue.

Failure to meet Progression Plan

- 4.9. Where a Candidate does not meet the requirements of a Progression Plan, they will be given a Purple Status and excluded from the course as outlined in the Admissions, Enrolment and Academic Progression Rules.

Conflict, Complaints, Grievances or Appeals

- 4.10. Any concerns that are unable to be resolved between Candidates and Supervisors in the development of a Progression Plan will be managed as outlined in [Guideline: HDR Supervision](#). Where concerns remain unresolved, Candidates may also refer to the University's Complaints Policy and processes.

- 4.11. A Candidate may request a review or appeal if dissatisfied with the assessment of their academic work or progress as per the [Admission, Enrolment and Academic Progress Rules](#).

5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Statutes and Rules

[Admission, Enrolment and Academic Progress](#)

Policies

[Higher Degree by Research Academic Progression](#)

[Research Training](#)

[Testamurs - Issue and Control](#)

Operational documents and resources

[Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

[Forms, Policies and Guidelines](#)

[Guideline: HDR Supervision](#)

[Guideline: HDR Milestones](#)

[Guideline: Progression Plan](#)

[Higher Degree by Research Academic Progression Procedures](#)

[Off Campus PhD Agreement](#)

[Support Services](#)

[Student Life](#)

[Student Hub](#)

[Student Success](#)

[TEQSA - Joint and Dual Higher Degrees by Research Between Australian Higher Education Providers](#)

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

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8. APPROVAL HISTORY

Guideline approved by:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
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