

Overview

In some instances, a Master by Research candidate may apply to upgrade to a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) course. Candidates applying for an upgrade must be able to demonstrate the capacity to conduct research at the doctoral level. Before commencing the upgrade process, candidates should discuss these guidelines with their supervisor(s).

Candidate Requirements

Before being able to apply for an upgrade, candidates must:

- Be enrolled in a Masters by Research course at Edith Cowan University (candidates enrolled at other institutions or in Masters by Coursework are not eligible),
- Have formal approval of Milestone 1, 2 and 3,
- Be able to evidence *significant* progress in their Master by Research degree and meeting the requirements expected of PhD candidates, and
- Have endorsement from all supervisor(s).

If the candidate meets the conditions above, the candidate will be required to provide evidence of the progress made in their Masters by Research and their capacity to undertake research at the level of the PhD. In the application, candidates should include:

- An overview of the proposed doctoral research project and associated tasks and milestones.
- A detailed overview of how the proposed new research goes beyond what was being conducted at the master level.
- Evidence of work that demonstrates performance at the level expected of a PhD, including:
 - evidence of research excellence and success (e.g. conference papers, journal articles/creative research outputs, and/or grant funding)
 - completed thesis chapter(s), which illustrate appropriate examples of data analysis, research methodologies, development of creative practice
 - a synthesis of the literature, that is of a breadth and depth appropriate to a PhD
 - evidence of any directly related professional experience
 - copies of the proposal reviewer reports for the Masters by Research.

Supervisor(s) Requirements

The principal supervisor, in consultation with the supervisor panel should include a supporting statement with the candidate's application for upgrade, which includes:

- An assessment of the student's ability to undertake doctoral level research;
- An indication the proposed doctoral research project can be completed within the maximum allowed candidature
- A statement that appropriate supervision can be provided for doctoral research.

Upgrade Procedures:

STEP 1: Candidate discusses the upgrade with their supervisor(s).

STEP 2: A case for the upgrade is prepared, including the requirements of both candidates and supervisors, for assessment by the Associate Dean, Research and Dean, Graduate Research.

- STEP 3:** If approval to proceed is granted, candidates prepare a proposal for the PhD, including a background for the research problem, the research questions or hypotheses, significance or contribution of the research, literature review and methodology.
- STEP 4:** The PhD research proposal should be reviewed by two academic reviewers in accordance with proposal reviewer guidelines, and be presented at a seminar. A research proposal reviewer's report will need to be completed for the doctoral proposal.
- STEP 5:** After the proposal review process has taken place the following documents should be forwarded to the Associate Dean, Research:
- a completed Milestone 1, 2 and 3 form (and supporting documents);
 - application to upgrade from Masters to PhD form (Candidature Upgrade from Master by Research (by thesis) to Doctor of Philosophy: Application form found on the [Forms, policies and guidelines](#) webpage)
- STEP 6:** If final approval granted by the Associate Dean, Research, the School will forward documents outlined above to hdr.enquiries@ecu.edu.au.
If a candidate is a research scholarships recipient, then the candidate should contact the Scholarships Office.
- STEP 7:** Research Assessments will note the upgrade on the candidates record.

Any questions regarding the process can be directed to Graduate Research Services at grs@ecu.edu.au

NOTE: *Should the application for upgrade be approved, the candidate is required to submit a new application for ethics approval or an amendment to their current ethics approval. Should the candidate have any questions relating to their ethics application, please contact the Research Ethics Team at research.ethics@ecu.edu.au.*

Implications for remaining funded candidature

Any candidature completed in the Masters by Research course will be deducted from the PhD enrolment.

Guidelines updated July 2024.