Student QnA Sessions 25 and 27 March 2020

Wednesday March 25, 2020 and Friday March 27, 2020

GRS Update from Prof. Joe Luca

Dean of GRS, Prof Joe Luca: Support and resources available to students during this time

COVID-19 Update from the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research, Prof Caroline Finch
- Available online, and was also sent via email.

GRS Programs BlackBoard site:
- Online Research Skills Training Program
- Found under “My Communities” in the BlackBoard portal. BlackBoard can be accessed via your Student Portal. Please contact researchtraining@ecu.edu.au if you require further information or assistance with this.

SOAR Centre Facebook page:
- Runs live sessions every day, and we strongly encourage all HDR students to connect with this group for updates
- Link: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/ecuresearchstudents/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ecuresearchstudents/)

HDR Communication Advisers:
- Resources on Blackboard and one-to-one appointments available
- Delivering the EAL workshops via zoom, online will be ready for second semester
- HDR Skills Centre Blackboard community site
- Link: [https://blackboard.ecu.edu.au/webapps/blackboard/content/listContentEditable.jsp?content_id=_4673543_1&course_id=_624739_1](https://blackboard.ecu.edu.au/webapps/blackboard/content/listContentEditable.jsp?content_id=_4673543_1&course_id=_624739_1)

Establishing an Online Supervisor Teams Workspace Template
- Environment allows people to chat, video conference, track meetings, store documents
- Link: [https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/research/for-research-students/information-for-supervisors/establishing-an-online-supervisor-teams-workspace](https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/research/for-research-students/information-for-supervisors/establishing-an-online-supervisor-teams-workspace)

HDR Candidate Alternative Workplan
- People are in different stages of their candidature and the effect of COVID-19 on your research needs to be documented. The alternative workplan allows us to consider what your thesis will look like in 3,6,9 months time by allowing for contingency plans if the research cannot go ahead. Maybe you can work on lit review, work on analysis, learn methods or software, intermit – the workplan needs to be filled out in detail to provide evidence in case an extension to candidature/scholarship is required.
- Link: [https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/research/for-research-students/information-for-supervisors/alternative-work-plan](https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/research/for-research-students/information-for-supervisors/alternative-work-plan)

ECU University Website – COVID-19 Information
- FAQs for students and staff – specific FAQs for students
VC has said that he does not want any student to be disadvantaged by COVID-19. The university will do its best to help students. Information in video and in email – check ECU website for regular updates and new supports/initiatives.

Support for Students
- If you know of HDR students who are struggling financially, or if you would like to offer help/support to other HDR students, please let GRS know (calvin.wang@ecu.edu.au).
- Dean: Please keep in touch with the Graduate Research School and CLT in these times – it is a stressful and trying time, the Co-ordinators Research Student Support and HDR Communication Advisers are here to help.
- Information has just come out: https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/student/support/student-success/support-for-students
- Ask for help if you need it. If you find these sessions useful, we welcome your feedback on these sessions.

Student QnA Session 25 March 2020
Wednesday March 25, 2020
GRS Update from Prof. Joe Luca

Question and Answer Summary

Q. HDR students are awarded with different scholarships with different timelines. When seeking extensions, would these timelines be revised?
A: Scholarship extension processes have not been changed at this stage. However, keep checking for updates on how ECU is responding to the COVID19 situation. If you require an extension now, this can be applied using the standard form (link below).

Link to form: https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/769065/HDR-Scholarship-Variation-Application.pdf

Q. How might the current situation impact on students preparing for oral examinations or proposal seminars?
A: Oral examinations and proposal seminars should not be overly impacted. These can still proceed virtually/online.

Training for oral examinations and presentations are available online. The Centre for Learning and Teaching HDR Communication Advisers offer a lot of training for oral examination and these will be done in a virtual online environment possibly through TEAMS.

Additionally, all training is recorded and available in Blackboard and accessible through links in the GRS Programs Blackboard and HDR Skills Centre Blackboard sites. These sites hold all the resources for the training. If one-on-one support is required, HDR Communication Advisors and SOAR Ambassadors are available to work with you via ZOOM or TEAMS.

Q. I was supposed to conduct a study with a primary school in May but I anticipate that I will not be able to reach the desired number of participants. Will my thesis be accepted with a note that my participant numbers are low due to COVID or would it be better to aim for an extension?
A: Would be hesitant to submit a thesis that wasn’t robust in data collection, regardless of COVID or not. Idea of PhD is to contribute to knowledge and to do it in a valid and reliable way. If a smaller
sample and methodology is valid, then examiner may accept. Aim for an extension though if data or methodology may be compromised.

Q. With respect to data collection, if COVID affects the way data collection is to be collected, would this mean I have to amend ethics first?
A: If there is a change to the basic methodology used to collect data, yes ethics should be amended.

Q. When will we have the next round of HDR scholarships? Will this be decided by each School?
A: There won’t be another round of scholarships this year, a decision made by the Vice Chancellor. Finances and resources will be channelled towards supporting all students during this challenging period. If a case can be made, the Dean will progress that e.g. international students in WA who could benefit from scholarships.

Please check here regularly for new/updated information on financial and other supports available: Link: https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/student/support/student-success/support-for-students

Q. I’m having problems getting reimbursed for consumables purchased, I have been advised that I need to be on-campus. I prefer to work off-campus right now, what do I do?
Please contact your Supervisor, this problem is being addressed.

Q. Is there any information that you could provide around any dates that we could expect closure on campus? I am currently collecting data at the moment, so this would severely affect my project.
A. Depends on Department of Health advice to the university. Regularly check the ECU home page for updates on access to campus.

Q. Currently intermissions are only possible for a minimum of a full semester at a time. Is this likely to be adjusted to permit shorter intermissions for students whose research is temporarily derailed or will it be retained as full semester chunks only?
A. Shorter intermissions (than current 1 semester requirement) are being looked into. Please check for updates/further notices on this.

Some issues to consider if you do apply for intermission (for any duration):
- financial support (if you are on a scholarship, your stipend payments will stop for the duration of your intermission – yes, stipend will resume when you resume your studies)
- [for international students] may have implications for your COE and satisfying conditions of your student visa

Q. Does access to the library and email stop during intermittence?
A: Yes, it does. GRS will follow up on this issue. The HDR Coordinators in GRS are always available for help.

Q. Is the SOAR Centre still open?
A. SOAR is open for business - online. The booking form has been updated to reflect this, just choose a platform for an appointment. Using TEAMS and ZOOM – which has screen sharing facilities. Ambassadors still working on their usual day.

ECU Research Student FB page – daily half-hour live feed between 12.30-1pm. Say hi and ask questions. Ambassadors coordinating page to provide support and reduce isolation to ensure students keep connected to the research community.
Q. How were individual work stations assessed for compliance with social distancing?
A. Each School should have regulations for social distancing.

Some students want access to work stations at home, with software. Work stations (laptops, desktops, monitors, etc.) are owned by Schools. Please contact your Supervisor and School for information/process for taking work stations home.

If you cannot afford to have internet access at home, please contact your Supervisor and School as you may be able to use your school research support funds for this.

Student QnA Session 27 March 2020
Friday, March 27, 2020
GRS Update from Prof. Joe Luca

Question and Answer Summary

Q: Where is the link for the upcoming workshops in blackboard
A: Face-to-face has been cancelled, but we do have lots of self-paced online resources (including videos, slides, activities, links to other related training) available on the GRS Programs BlackBoard site. Look out for new initiatives in the coming weeks; e.g., program plans, facilitated sessions, etc.
   • Online Research Skills Training Program
   • Found under “My Communities” in the BlackBoard portal. BlackBoard can be accessed via your Student Portal. Please contact researchtraining@ecu.edu.au if you require further information or assistance with this.

Q: Student is in school of science and PhD is reliant on field trip that was planned for early June. At this point, everything is uncertain – if that can't go ahead there is no data. (Student has not received confirmation yet)
A: If someone is due for confirmation or oral exams, they will be able to do it online using Teams or Zoom. Re: the data collection – this is where you can use the alternative work plan. Is it possible to restructure the study if you cannot collect data, refocus on other activities/tasks? Potential to go part-time or intermit but be careful of impact on scholarship, ECU IT access, etc.

Comment from Heather: If there is any HDR student who is not sure about what is the best option, or don't know what the options are, contact the HDR coordinator research student support for your area, and they can help in discussing the options for the next few months.

Q: Trying to access the workstation using Teams viewer but needs access on a commercial license. Are you able to help?
A: The schools own the computers that students use. You may be able to ask to take your desktop computer, monitor, etc. home in order to use specific/licensed software.

Q: Can we borrow monitors?
A: See above – contact your school officer to ask for help.
Q: How would you be able to access the computer from home aside from using TeamViewer (remote software).
A: See above – you can ask your School for permission to take the computer home with you.

GRS: have people accessed GRS Programs before?
There are a lot of resources in the site. Self-paced. We are looking at a lot of other things in that space in the coming months.

Q: Who do we have to ask about WiFi routers if we take the computer home?
A: That would be the school – can ask for research funds, or the school may cover internet access.

Emma (SOAR Manager) comment: Paying for internet access – staff may have some tax options, but don’t know if students can claim as well. Would need to go through the ATO.

ECU Student Research Facebook page is growing by the day, we are growing a community, and hopefully it is a support for you. It is run by our SOAR ambassadors who are research students themselves so they are affected similarly, they are facing the same issues as you are. We have 2 ambassadors each weekday, you can make an appointments via Teams or Zoom, if you need support there are also screen sharing options, which is handy if you need to share a software issue Every day from 12:30pm – 1pm we are running a check-in live video feed – trying to gauge people’s emotional well-being, and how working from home or with kids is going.

Q: Hi, I just want to double check. I just received an email saying that from Monday onward the Building 18 will close, except for the Level 3. My desk is located in the level 4. Does it mean that I cannot enter my lab anymore?
A: If they say that the building is closed, then you may not be able to access. However, if there is equipment that you may need to take, you will need to liaise with the school operations manager and your supervisor about taking any equipment home.

Q: Can I access the lab tomorrow, so I can take my stuff?
A: It would be school by school so you would need to ask them.

Q: Once you submit, are the timeframes for examiners going to be extended given the current situation. (Student has one examiner who wants a print version)
A: There should not be any delay of the examiners marking the thesis, unless there are extenuating circumstances e.g. examiner gets ill. Talk to Research Assessments to ask the examiner if they will accept a digital copy, given the restrictions on accessing printing and sending materials.

Q: Can we access our labs 24x7
A: This is a school-specific question. I suspect that labs will be restricted – everything looks like it will be tighter, so please check with supervisor and the school about the situation with the labs.

Dean of GRS, Prof Joe Luca: I appreciate you coming, trying to get information about where things are at is important. I encourage you to stay in touch with your Supervisors, GRS, Student Success if you need financial help. The last email sent out by the VC outlines different avenues for financial support.