

GUIDELINES

Guideline Title: Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Travel

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 an overview of the roles, responsibilities and support relating to off-campus study and domestic and international travel of Candidates. This guideline is intended to support a range of travel or offshore activities including short term travel, extended overseas study and other travel (e.g. Personal Leave during University related travel).

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](#), [Conducting Research With Integrity policy](#), [Educational Partnerships policy](#), [Authorised Travel policy](#), [Admissions, Enrolment and Academic Progression Rules](#) and associated operational documents.

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Governance and Expenditure

- 4.2. Candidates must familiarise themselves with and follow [ECU's travel steps](#) and the Research Training policy and associated operational documents prior to booking any travel involving research activity or relating to their course. Please also see ECU's [Authorised Travel Policy](#).
- 4.3. Candidates are required to complete the [Student Travel Approval Form](#) prior to any travel involving research activity or relating to their course. This is applicable regardless of whether the travel is one way (e.g., travel overseas to complete degree) or a return trip (e.g., international or domestic conference attendance or research activity), and even if the travel is personally funded.
- 4.4. Guidance on the expenditure process for travel are available at [ECU's travel steps](#) and [Guideline: HDR Development and Support](#).
- 4.5. Several conditions may impact the total duration of time that Candidates can travel or enrol off-campus during their degree. Candidates should discuss intended travel with their Supervisory Panel as early as possible.
- 4.6. International Candidates holding a student visa and planning to travel for longer than three (3) months should meet with the Student Success team to discuss the implications of travel outside of Australia on their visa.
- 4.7. International travel may have implications for HDR scholarship payments. Scholarship recipients should review their Conditions of Award before deciding to travel overseas.

Off-Campus Enrolment

- 4.8. Candidates travelling off-campus for the entirety of a teaching period (i.e., semester) cannot enrol as an on-campus Candidate during that teaching period. Candidates will therefore be required to vary their enrolment to off-campus if traveling for an entire teaching period or greater. Any [variation of enrolment](#) must occur prior to the census dates for that teaching period to avoid penalties. More details on off-campus enrolment are located within [Guideline: Off-campus, Industry-engagement, and Joint Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Programs](#).

Cross-Institutional Enrolment

- 4.9. Candidates wishing to apply for cross-institutional enrolment should discuss with their Supervisor, School and the Student Success team. Details on how to apply are available [online](#).
- 4.10. Candidates should be aware that if you study cross-institutionally, the host institution is under no obligation to offer or provide students with an RTP fee offset, tuition fee scholarship or stipend for scholarships. Candidates should carefully read the fees information provided by the host institution and speak with them directly if you have questions about their fees.

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Personal Travel

- 4.11. Candidates undertaking private travel must book appropriate [HDR leave](#).
- 4.12. If Candidate's are undertaking only private travel (and not conducting study or research) during a period of intermission, personal or extended leave they do not require travel approval. However, if Candidate's private travel includes any research activity or relates to their course, this may have tax, compliance and funding implications and must be recorded on the [Student Travel Approval Form](#). This is applicable to both domestic and international travel, and even if the travel is personally funded.
- 4.13. International Candidates undertaking international travel during personal leave should consider visa or other implications that may influence their re-entry to Australia.

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

[Authorised Travel](#)

Operational documents and resources

[Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
Guideline: Off-campus, Industry-engagement, and Joint Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\)
Programs
HDR Leave](#)

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

Guideline Owner	Dean, Graduate Research
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8. APPROVAL HISTORY

Guideline approved by:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Date guideline first approved:	22 July 2025
Date last modified:	13 March 2026
Revision history:	23 February 2026 The guideline has been updated to ensure that all links to the ECU Travel webpages are current and accurate.
Next revision due:	August 2029
HPCM file reference:	