



Graduate School

CONFIRMATION OF CANDIDATURE GUIDELINES (PHD, MASTERS BY THESIS and PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE)

PhD candidates are expected to complete this milestone no sooner than 6 months (full-time equivalent) from the commencement of their enrolment, and no later than 9 months (full-time equivalent) from the commencement of their enrolment.

Masters by Thesis candidates are expected to complete this milestone within 6 months (full-time equivalent) from the commencement of their enrolment.

Professional Doctorate candidates are expected to complete this milestone within 6 months (full-time equivalent) from the commencement of their enrolment into the thesis unit.

Please note:

- That the proposal approved by your supervisory team **MUST** be emailed/submitted to the members of your Confirmation Panel ***14 days prior*** to the confirmation seminar.
- The Confirmation of Candidature proposal must be submitted through the University's text matching software Turnitin via the Graduate School Blackboard site prior to being sent to the Confirmation Panel.
- The Turnitin report must be sent to the Confirmation Panel members together with the research proposal.
- Failure to comply with either of the above requirements will mean the cancellation of the Confirmation of Candidature presentation. This will mean the presentation has to be rescheduled and in some instances this may lead to the termination of your candidature.

The Confirmation of Candidature (CoC) process requires the candidate to fulfil the following elements to a requisite standard.

- 1) Confirmation of Candidature requires a written research proposal (at least 7,000 words but no more than 10,000 words), a seminar presentation and, as applicable, the fulfilment of any special conditions required by the Dean, Graduate Studies.**
 - I. The written research proposal must contain the following:**
 - Cover page;
 - Table of contents;
 - A 200 word abstract of the proposed project;
 - A critical literature review identifying gaps in the knowledge and areas for further study;
 - A brief philosophical and/or theoretical framework;
 - Hypotheses and/or study aims and objectives, proposed methodology;
 - Detailed research plan with a timeline;
 - If ethics approvals and other research permits are required (including any specialized WH&S requirements), then an indication of the proposed process and timelines for securing these will need to be provided;
 - Any special conditions required by the Dean, Graduate Studies to ensure the student attains the requisite HDR standard must also be satisfied.



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II. The seminar presentation must:

- Be 20-30 minutes in duration.
- Allow a further 20-30 minutes for questions;
- Be open to other members of staff and other students;
- Where applicable, contain arrangements to enable online students who cannot attend on-campus to present online through the relevant University online forum.

Following the question time, the open component of the CoC is closed and the Confirmation Panel meets privately to discuss the written and oral research proposal, and whether it meets requirements for Confirmation. The Panel will then complete the CoC report. The Candidate will then be invited back into the room and advised of the outcome and what may be further required.

Following the conclusion of the oral presentation of the CoC, the School Director Higher Degree Research Training (HDRT), will ensure that all documents are completed, prepared and submitted to The Graduate School for approval. You and your Principal Supervisor will then be formally advised of the recommended outcome via a letter and email.

2) Confirmation Panel

I. The School Confirmation Committee will comprise the:

- School Director Higher Degree Research Training (as Chair);
- Principal Supervisor;
- Co-supervisor(s);
- Minimum of one independent panel member (please refer to conflict of interest guidelines); and
- As applicable, any other person recommended by the Dean, Graduate Studies.

Note: if the SDHDRT is a supervisor, the Deputy SDHDRT / Head of School / Deputy Head of School or Director of Research/ or Delegate must act as the Chair of the Confirmation Panel.

II. The Panel must provide a written report to the student which contains feedback with respect to the research proposal and the seminar presentation. This report is to be written by the School Director of HDRT in consultation with the Confirmation Panel.

3) What responsibilities and role does the Principal Supervisor have in the CoC process?

The Principal Supervisor is the academic and administrative leader in the supervisory team. It is very important that the Principal Supervisor is involved in determining (with the student), whether or not the student is ready for confirmation. When a candidate is ready for CoC, the Principal Supervisor should advise the School Director Higher Degree Research Training.

The Principal Supervisor's responsibilities are then:

- I. To identify a potential **independent expert to sit on the Confirmation Panel**, and obtain agreement from them to participate in the confirmation;
- II. To advise The School Director HDRT of the identity of the proposed independent member, and who will make up the rest of the panel;



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- III. To provide the School Director with the CV of the nominated independent member, and a statement that there is no conflict of interest (please refer to conflict of interest guidelines). The Principal Supervisor will also be required to provide a brief outline of the expertise/experience of the independent panel member. The SDHDRT will assess the suitability of the proposed independent panel member and advise the Principal Supervisor of any concerns with the suitability of the proposed panel member;
- IV. To inform the School Director HDRT of possible dates for Confirmation (wherein the student, the supervisory team and the independent member are available) and confirm the mode that the independent examiner will be attending (e.g. in person, by Skype/zoom or video conference, etc.).

4) What responsibilities and role does the School Director HDRT have in the CoC process?

The School Director of Higher Degree Research Training is responsible for providing the following advice and documentation to the Graduate School so they can book and advertise the confirmation:

- The identity of the student undertaking the confirmation.
- The date and time they would like the Graduate School to book a room for the confirmation.
- The panel members for the confirmation so the Graduate School can copy the panel members into the confirmation invitation.
- Provide the 200-word abstract of the research proposal so that the Graduate School can advertise the confirmation to all staff and students.
- The Graduate School then books the rooms, advises the School Director and Principal Supervisor of the room bookings and confirmation of times and then advertises the confirmation once the room booking is confirmed and then a follow up reminder advertising the confirmation the day of the confirmation.
- The School Director HDRT will collate and distribute the paperwork to the Confirmation Panel ahead of the scheduled date.
- The School Director HDRT is responsible for the oversight of the completion of the confirmation report/form and notifying the Graduate School of the outcome.

5) The Written Report

- I. As a guide, it is suggested the report includes whether or not the student has demonstrated a capacity to fulfil the following requirements:
 - Critically review literature relevant to the project;
 - A theoretical framework outlining the PhD's ontological, epistemological and theory/ies;
 - Design a feasible research project, with appropriate methodology;
 - Exhibit clear and logical writing and presentation;
 - Appropriately respond to questions and critical feedback on the presentation.



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- II. The Confirmation Report must be submitted to the Dean, Graduate Studies with a recommendation that candidature is:
- (A) Confirmed, with no further work required;
 - (B) Confirmed, with changes recommended by the committee to the satisfaction of the Principal Supervisor;
 - (C) Conditionally confirmed after major revisions to the literature review and research plan as recommended by the Panel and made within 3 months to the satisfaction of the Confirmation Panel (resubmission and final sign-off to be coordinated by the Chair of the Confirmation Panel);
 - (D) Not confirmed but the candidate is required to revise and resubmit their paper and make another presentation within 6 months for Doctor of Philosophy Candidates, and within 4 months for Masters by Thesis and Professional Doctoral candidates;
 - (E) Remedial Action: Remedial action or recommended transfer to Masters by Research (if Confirmation is for PhD)
 - (F) Not Confirmed and candidature is terminated.

Queries in relation to the confirmation of candidature process should be directed to the School Director Higher Degree Research Training, the Principal Supervisor or the Graduate School.