

## Postgraduate Research Student Welcome

### SCHOOL OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

The Head of School, Professor Sanjay Chawla, warmly welcomes research students of the School of IT to the 2011 academic year.

This Welcome Pack aims to describe the processes which are already in place to assist new students to settle in quickly and smoothly.

#### Postgraduate (Research) Student Administration Contacts

Dr. Bernhard Scholz (Postgraduate Research Director); 9351 4216; [scholz@it.usyd.edu.au](mailto:scholz@it.usyd.edu.au)  
Shari Lee, School Manager, 9351 4158; [shari\\_lee@usyd.edu.au](mailto:shari_lee@usyd.edu.au)  
Evelyn Riegler, Admin Officer, 9351 4918; [Evelyn.Riegler@sydney.edu.au](mailto:Evelyn.Riegler@sydney.edu.au)

**Once you have enrolled at the Graduate School of Engineering and IT, and obtained your student card, please contact Ms Evelyn Riegler (ask at the reception), so that she can arrange for your orientation.**

#### At your orientation, the following will take place:

- 1. Building Access Card** will be issued by *Workshop* staff on Level 1 of SIT, with a confirmation from Reception on Level 2 SIT. Please bring your student ID card for identification. **The access card** will be set up with the correct access requirements.
- 2. Photos** will be taken by Linda Kristian for the postgraduate student database.
- 3. A computer Login and Email Account** will be set up for you by the duty programmer on Level 1 SIT.
- 4. Postgraduate Database Access** - Each enrolled student may look at his/her own information by logging in (using the School account and password), at <http://php.ug.it.usyd.edu.au/~pgdata/>, Students can also modify any changes to their contact details from within the database and check their progress review results.
- 5. Scholarship Holders** - If you are on an APA/UPA scholarship and are required to complete a 'Commencement of Candidature' form, please have your supervisor sign and return it to Evelyn for processing. If you are a NICTA scholar, please see Evelyn to complete relevant paperwork.

#### Resources

**Supervision:** Each postgraduate research student should have a supervisor and an associate supervisor. If you are unsure of the name of your Associate Supervisor, then please speak with your Supervisor about this.

Your **supervisor** will notify the workshop (Arthur Scott) of suitable workspace for your desk and your equipment needs.

The School provides each full time research student with the following:

- a desk
- access to a computer with email and internet access
- access to printers
- access to a fax for research purposes
- access to a telephone for research purposes
- access to photocopying for research purposes
- stationery and other office supplies
- a lock-up cupboard or filing cabinet
- access to facilities outside working hours subject to OH&S requirements
- support for conference travel (on application). For more information, see: [http://www.it.usyd.edu.au/current\\_students/postgrad\\_research/prts.shtml](http://www.it.usyd.edu.au/current_students/postgrad_research/prts.shtml)
- hardware maintenance support appropriate to the student's research project
- software support – a Duty Programmer is available every day on a roster system. Email [dp@it.usyd.edu.au](mailto:dp@it.usyd.edu.au) if you require help.

### **Communal Kitchen**

There is a shared kitchen on each floor with a fridge. Milk is provided. It is the responsibility of each user to leave the area clean and tidy.

## **Postgraduate Research Progress Reviews**

### **1. Annual Progress Review – APR**

All Postgraduate Research students within the School of Information Technologies will have their progress reviewed annually in October/November, as a condition of candidature, and as required by the University. This is called the Annual Progress Review (APR).

*Note: Students are required to undergo the APR in October/November of their first year of candidature if they commence in semester one, or in February/ March for students who commence in semester 2.*

#### **1.1 APR Process**

During the review meeting, the candidate will be required to demonstrate their ability for independent research, knowledge of the state of the art in his/her field of research, as well as presentation skills.

Two weeks before the APR meetings, the candidate must complete the APR Form and submit it to the PG research administrator. This form helps the review panel to evaluate the performance and the progress of the student, and it helps the student to record their work as they progress.

This review meeting may take up to **30** minutes, which includes the candidate giving a five-minute informal presentation of his/her research and to verbally defend their research by answering questions put forth by the panel. The candidate is expected to demonstrate the level of knowledge relevant to the stage of their degree.

At the end of the meeting, the panel will discuss and then evaluate the performance of the candidate and will complete the progress report on the APR form.

Evaluation of the progress of students may result in the following:

- the panel reports that progress is satisfactory,
- the panel reports on marginal progress
- the panel reports on unsatisfactory progress.

If progress is marginal or unsatisfactory, the panel will report to the Postgraduate Research Director, who will provide a recommended course of action to the Faculty's Postgraduate Research Committee. Additional progress reviews may also be scheduled, and explicit goals provided to assist the student to attain a satisfactory evaluation

## **2. Probation Review**

In addition to the annual progress review, **MPhil** students are required to undergo a Probation Review at the conclusion of **half year of candidature**. **PhD** students are required to undergo a Probation Review at the conclusion of their **first year of candidature** (in November for students who commenced in semester 1. Students will be given an additional chance in March the following year if they do not yet meet probation requirements in Nov; in July for students who commenced in semester 2).

The probation review is intended to assist the students by identifying any difficulties in their research program, and providing timely advice on direction and content. For the probation review, the student is required:

- To produce a substantial **probation report** before the review meeting, with the intention that these reports contain material that can be used later for the student's thesis. The guidelines for the report are provided in the next section.
- To give a 15-20 minute presentation on the progress and results of their research. The overall review may take about 45 minutes

Depending on the progress, possible outcomes of the probation review are:

- a recommendation that the candidate is confirmed as a PhD student,
- a recommendation that the PhD probationary candidature is extended to a specified date,
- a recommendation that the PhD student transfer to the MPhil, and submit a master's thesis instead
- a recommendation that the candidacy of a student is terminated.

In summary, research students are required to be reviewed **annually**. They are also required to attend a probation review: for **PhD** students, it is **one year** since their commencement and for **MPhil** students, it is **six months**.

<b>PhD</b> students who commence in:	
<b>Semester 1 (March)</b> APR (Oct/Nov) Probation (Oct/Nov); <i>if they do not yet meet requirements, then in March of the following year</i>	<b>Semester 2 (July/August)</b> APR (February/March) Probation (February/March); <i>if they do not yet meet requirements, then in Jul/Aug of the same year</i>
<b>MPhil</b> students who commence in:	
<b>Semester 1 (March)</b> APR (Oct/Nov) Probation (Oct/Nov)	<b>Semester 2 (July/August)</b> APR (February/March) Probation (February/March)

### **3. MPhil Upgrade to PhD**

MPhil students in their first year of research may apply for an upgrade to PhD in their second semester by completing the appropriate form. The criteria for upgrade of candidature follow:

1. Has at least a peer-reviewed publication in a Tier-B journal or conference (acceptance rate less than 40%). If the paper is yet to be published, the acceptance email from the organiser should be attached.
2. Has a letter of full support from the primary supervisor indicating the candidate's performance, calibre and work ethics during the Master's year. The letter should focus on the candidate's performance during their candidature at the University of Sydney based on the supervisor's personal experience.
3. Submit a progress report, as per guidelines given below.

The candidate will then be asked to present their case in front of a selected panel. The upgrade review will be run in the same manner as the probation review.

The possible outcomes of such a review are:

- successful conversion to PhD, or
- continuation in the MPhil program

As in a regular progress review meeting, the panel may report on unsatisfactory progress highlighting problems and suggesting actions to resolve the problems.

#### **Guidelines for Progress/Probation Report**

The report for the probation review or for an upgrade of candidature from Master's to PhD, must be submitted a week prior to the scheduled review meeting and must include the followings:

- Clear definition of the problem or problems the candidate is trying to solve;
- Motivation - why the problem(s) are important;
- Literature Survey - a comprehensive document describing all work done related to the candidate's research problem. The survey should cover the archival technical literature.
- Description of how the project relates to and goes beyond what is in the literature.
- Some initial results - possibly, copies of publications or of papers submitted for publication. The initial results of students in their PhD conversion or confirmation meeting must provide sufficient evidence that the student has the research skills required for a successful completion of his/her PhD.
- Future plans - this should include ideas, ways and methodologies the candidate plans to use to solve his/her research problems. It should also include time-lines describing when the planned milestones are to be achieved.

As a guideline, the report is expected to be in the order of 20 A4 pages in length.

### **Useful Web-links**

The “**Welcome Pack**” information for new research students is also available on the School website <http://sydney.edu.au/it> under ‘current students’ and ‘research’. Please read all the information at this site, as soon as you can. Other information covered is:

- Postgraduate Research Allowance Policy
- Postgraduate Progress Reviews
- Research group meetings schedule
- Occupational Health and Safety Information
- Access to the Postgraduate Research Student Database
- School of IT thesis guide

- Guidelines for upgrading candidature from Masters to PhD
- Code of Conduct

In particular, please familiarise yourself with the postgraduate research policies and processes, as found in the following handbook:

[http://sydney.edu.au/handbooks/handbooks\\_admin/postgraduate.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/handbooks/handbooks_admin/postgraduate.shtml)

**You will need a variety of forms** for varying your candidature such as taking leave, changing your supervisor, extending scholarships, submitting thesis, applying for upgrade/downgrade of candidature, candidature suspension/discontinuation etc. You will find these forms at the GSE (Graduate School of Engineering of Information Technologies) Website:

<http://sydney.edu.au/engineering/gse/forms.shtml>

*Please Note:* A copy of all forms is to be passed to Shari for your file, after the relevant signatures are obtained. The postgraduate Research Director has the delegation of authority to approve candidature changes on behalf of the Head of School.

### **Postgraduate Student Facilities**

The University has a postgraduate student association (SUPRA) which provides representation of postgraduate students across the University. For more information, visit <http://sydney.edu.au/supra>

### **Support for Academic English**

The University's Learning Centre conducts free essay writing and learning support courses for enrolled students: [http://sydney.edu.au/stuserv/learning\\_centre](http://sydney.edu.au/stuserv/learning_centre)

English courses are available through the Centre for English Teaching: <http://sydney.edu.au/cet/>

### **Occupational Health and Safety**

The School wishes to provide all staff and students with a safe working environment. If you notice something which may cause a problem, please notify Shari Lee (x 14158) the School's OHS contact person.

Diagram of School's OH&S reporting lines:

[http://sydney.edu.au/engineering/it/current\\_students/postgrad\\_research/ohands.pdf](http://sydney.edu.au/engineering/it/current_students/postgrad_research/ohands.pdf)

### **Emergencies**

In cases of emergency, please telephone the University's security service directly on extension 13333. Security in your room

Please get to know the other students who are sharing your wing with you, so that you become aware if someone is in the room, which does not belong there. And remember, if you are the last person in any room, then please the door is closed properly behind you.

### **Ergonomic matters**

Students, who spend a considerable part of the day on screen, are asked to read the 'Posture check-list' [http://sydney.edu.au/ohs/ohs\\_manual/ergonomics/posture\\_checklist.pdf](http://sydney.edu.au/ohs/ohs_manual/ergonomics/posture_checklist.pdf), together with other ergonomic guidelines: <http://sydney.edu.au/ohs/policies/ohs/ergonomics/ergoguide.shtml>

### **First aid kits**

The School's First Aid kits are located in the common room and the photocopier room, and in the cupboards next to the fridges in the breakout areas on Level 3 and Level 4. The workshop and programmers on level 1 also have kits. Please contact [Witold Janus](#) or [Will Calleja](#) if supplies are needed.

**First aid officer**

[Witold Janus](#) and or [Will Calleja](#) are the First aid officers in the School of IT building. They are located on Level One in the workshop. Their phone numbers are; Witek 14359, and Will 69706.

Note that the closest medical centre is in on Level 3 in the Wentworth building.

**Emergency evacuation of the School of IT building**

All staff and students are required to evacuate the building immediately on activation of the EVACUATION TONE (“Woop.....woop”). The voice-over message (“Evacuate the building”) will only activate on an automatic fire trip. Therefore, there will not be a voice-over when the alarms are activated manually, i.e. if the fire detection systems fail or during a non-fire emergency, i.e. gas leak, chemical spill, structural fault etc.

Staff and students are to proceed to the nearest exit point, and move to the assembly point as directed by the Warden. Assembly points are on the lawn at the end of Engineering Walk and the Seymour Centre forecourt.

Building Wardens have been instructed to guard specific building entry points and others have been instructed to marshal evacuees to the established assembly areas.

Current Floor wardens (from the School of IT) are as follows:

Arthur Scott	<a href="mailto:arthur@it.usyd.edu.au">arthur@it.usyd.edu.au</a>	1E- 1E03	x12623
Greg Ryan	<a href="mailto:gregr@it.usyd.edu.au">gregr@it.usyd.edu.au</a>	1W-1E30	x14360
Tom Cai	<a href="mailto:tomc@it.usyd.edu.au">tomc@it.usyd.edu.au</a>	3E-344	x13271