

PROGRESS PLANNING AND REVIEW FOR HIGHER DEGREE BY RESEARCH STUDENTS POLICY 2015

The Academic Board, as delegate of the Senate of the University of Sydney, adopts the following policy.

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	17 April 2024 (administrative amendments)

Signature:

Position: Chair, Academic Board

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PART 1 PRELIMINARY

1 Name of policy

This is the Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2015.

2 Commencement

This policy commences on 1 January 2016.

3 Policy is binding

Except to the extent that a contrary intention is expressed, this policy binds the University, staff, students and affiliates.

4 Statement of intent

- (1) The University aspires for all higher degree by research students to have a quality research training experience and to produce research of the highest calibre, including:
 - (a) the development of skills and knowledge necessary to be a successful researcher in the chosen discipline; and
 - (b) support towards the timely completion, and successful examination, of their research projects and thesis.
- (2) The University will partner with students to plan their progression throughout their candidature and set clear expectations for satisfactory progress.
- (3) The University will provide appropriate institutional support and resources, regular evaluation, including a written submission and meeting,

- (4) The University will support students in maintaining research integrity and quality.
- (5) This policy details the elements of the higher degree by research progress planning and evaluation process. It should be read in conjunction with the:
 - (a) [University of Sydney \(Higher Degree by Research\) Rule](#) ('the Rule');
 - (b) [University of Sydney \(Delegations of Authority\) Rule](#);
 - (c) [Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Procedures](#) ('the Procedures'), and
 - (d) [Higher Degree for Research Supervision Policy](#).
- (6) This policy supports the conduct of research education in a safe manner which is conducive to student wellbeing.

5 Application

- (1) This policy applies to higher degree by research students, staff and affiliates.
- (2) It is a condition of each student's admission to candidature that the student complies with their obligations under this policy.

6 Definitions

- (1) In this policy:

activity	means a specific requirement in a student's candidature that contributes to the completion of a milestone.
Associate Dean	means the Associate Dean responsible for overseeing higher degrees by research in the relevant faculty.
Dean	means the Executive Dean or Dean of the relevant faculty, or Head of School and Dean of the relevant University school.
degree	means the relevant higher degree by research.
disability support academic plan	means the statement of support and adjustments for educational needs provided for students registered with Disability Services
faculty	means, as appropriate, a faculty or University school and refers to the student's faculty or University school of enrolment.
goal	means a research or personal development activity with a defined completion date. Goals can be set by the student or the supervisor.
higher degree by research	means a doctorate by research or masters by research, as defined in the Rule .
lead supervisor	has the meaning and the responsibilities set out in subclauses 8(6) and 13(4) of the Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy

milestone	<p>means a significant event or activity in a student's candidature that must be completed. They may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set by the University, faculties or schools; and • specific to a given degree or degree pathway within a faculty
postgraduate coordinator	<p>means the academic staff member with overall responsibility for the planning and coordination of higher degree by research students within a faculty, University school or school.</p> <p>Note: In the Faculty of Medicine and Health, this role is performed by the Research Education academic director.</p>
progress	<p>means the student's progress against the requirements specified in subclause 13(1).</p>
progress evaluation	<p>means an evaluation of candidature progression conducted in accordance with Part 3.</p>
progress evaluation panel	<p>means a panel established to conduct a progress evaluation in accordance with clause 11.</p>
progress plan	<p>means a progress plan developed in accordance with Part 2.</p>
Research Education Candidature System (RECS)	<p>means the software system provided by the University to support higher degree by research students and the management of research education candidature.</p>
research period	<p>means a research period set by the University and published on its website.</p> <p>Note: Research periods are published at: http://sydney.edu.au/study/study-dates.html</p>
Rule	<p>means the <i>University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule</i>.</p>
school	<p>has the meaning given in the <i>University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule</i>, which at the date of this policy is:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">an academic unit, however so called, responsible for a student's higher degree by research candidature. It may be called a discipline.</p>
student	<p>means a person who is currently admitted to candidature in a higher degree by research award course of the University.</p>
supervisor	<p>means a person appointed to discharge the responsibilities set out in the <i>Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy</i>.</p>
supplementary progress evaluation	<p>means a progress evaluation conducted in accordance with clause 17.</p>

PART 2 PROGRESS PLANNING

7 Progress plans

- (1) Students and supervisors must begin progress planning at an early stage in each student's higher degree by research candidature.
- (2) Progress plans describe the collection of planned activities, goals and milestones that lay out a student's progress towards the award of a higher degree by research:
 - (a) Students and supervisors plan candidature to align and manage student, University and faculty expectations about what is required to achieve the award of the degree, and achieve the student's personal development goals.
 - (b) Progress plans will be described as individual milestones and goals within a student's profile in RECS.
- (3) All students must start building a plan for progress throughout candidature within three months from the date of commencement of candidature, or pro-rata for part-time students.
- (4) A student's progress plan must include all activities, goals and milestones required to achieve the award of the degree, including:
 - (a) formulation and approval of research proposal;
 - (b) formulation and approval of research projects;
 - (c) securing necessary ethics approvals for research involving humans or animals as required by the [Research Code of Conduct](#);
 - (d) thesis development and examination;
 - (e) researcher development and training activities;
 - (f) other compliance and risk management activities required by the research.

Note: See Part 4 for information on activities, goals and milestones.
- (5) The timing of University milestones and any other required activities as specified in Schedule 1.

8 Planning progress

- (1) Students and supervisors must use RECS to deliver and enable:
 - (a) candidature planning;
 - (b) scheduling of development activities; and
 - (c) progress evaluation.
- (2) Students and supervisors are responsible for maintaining progress plans in RECS through recording planned and completed activities.

- (3) Faculties are responsible for ensuring faculty milestones are approved and kept up to date within RECS.

Note: See Part 4

- (4) A student's individual candidature plan will be automatically populated in RECS with University and faculty milestones, according to degree type and faculty or enrolment.
- (a) Completion of each of these will be reported through RECS.
- (5) For students with disabilities, all activities must be planned with consideration for the needs identified in the [Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2019 - 2024](#).

9 Maintaining and varying progress plans

- (1) Students are responsible for keeping their progress plan up to date, and for identifying any variations required, with the participation and support of their lead supervisor.

Note: See clauses 15(9) and 16(7) of the [Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy](#) for the responsibilities of supervisors and students in relation to managing progress.

- (2) Students and their supervisors have a responsibility to identify, and to eliminate and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.

Note: See the [Research Code of Conduct](#), the [Staff and Affiliates Code of Conduct](#), and the [External Interests Policy](#)

- (3) A variation to a progress plan may be required for many reasons, including:

- (a) where a student:
- (i) changes attendance mode;
 - (ii) requests a leave of absence or suspends candidature;
 - (iii) transfers to another supervisor;
 - (iv) achieves a milestone;
 - (v) fails to achieve or is delayed in achieving a milestone;
 - (vi) submits a request for an extension of candidature;
 - (vii) has encountered unanticipated barriers to progress; or
- (b) where it becomes clear that the student's research project needs improvement or is not viable.

- (4) Changes in a student's health or disability status may require a variation to project approaches and support.

- (5) Variations to progress plans may be material or non-material.

- (6) Material variations are variations that:

- (a) extend the date for achievement of a University, faculty or school milestone:
- (i) by more than three months from the original date; or
 - (ii) from one year of candidature into the next;

- (b) require a change to the thesis submission date to:
 - (i) a new research period; or
 - (ii) a date that is beyond the latest date for submission, as defined in sections 2.20, 3.20 and 4.19 of the [Rule](#);

or

- (c) substantially change the nature of the research.

Note: Sections 2.20, 3.20 and 4.19 of the [Rule](#) authorise an Associate Dean to permit a student to submit their thesis after a period of time greater than the maximum periods specified .

- (7) Material variations to progress plans must be:
 - (a) endorsed by the student's lead supervisor; and
 - (b) approved by the postgraduate coordinator.
- (8) Students should discuss non-material variations to progress plans with their lead supervisor.

PART 2A COURSEWORK IN HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH

10 Application of this part

This part only applies to students commencing candidature from 1 January 2021 for:

- (a) the Doctor of Philosophy;
- (b) doctorates other than the Doctor of Philosophy; and
- (c) masters by research.

11 Coursework requirements

- (1) All candidates admitted to a higher degree by research governed by Parts 2, 3 or 4 of the [Rule](#) have the opportunity to complete coursework.
 - (a) Awards subject to this requirement are masters by research, Doctor of Philosophy and doctorates other than the Doctor of Philosophy, but not higher doctorates.
- (2) The Progress Evaluation Panel may recommend students to complete coursework:
 - (a) as a faculty milestone; or
 - (b) as units for student academic development.
- (3) The course requirements for doctorates by research other than the Doctor of Philosophy are set out in the course resolutions for the award.
 - (a) PhD coursework requirements will apply unless otherwise stated in the course resolutions.
- (4) The course requirements for masters by research degrees are set out in the course resolutions for the award.

12 RESCINDED

PART 3 PROGRESS EVALUATION

13 Progress evaluations

- (1) Progress evaluations (including supplementary progress evaluations) must be conducted in accordance with this policy and the procedures.
Note: See also [Higher Degree by Research Guidelines for Progress Evaluation Panel Members](#)
 - (a) Progress evaluations are University milestones as described in Schedule 1.
- (2) All parties in a progress evaluation panel must engage with the process in a professional and collegial manner with the aim of promoting the success of the student's candidature.
- (3) The purpose of a progress evaluation is to evaluate:
 - (a) whether the student has adequate support and resources to achieve their research project, candidature development goals, and thesis in accordance with the progress plan;
 - (b) whether the current supervisory arrangements are satisfactory;
 - (c) the feasibility of the progress plan; and
 - (d) the student's progress towards a successful examination of a thesis.
- (4) Details of the student's achievements of planned milestones and goals will be provided to all parties involved in the progress evaluation through RECS.
- (5) A progress evaluation must be conducted ;
 - (a) at least once a year; or
 - (b) more frequently as required by the postgraduate coordinator.
- (6) Delay or failure to:
 - (a) complete records in RECS;
 - (b) meet planned milestones or goals; or
 - (c) complete planned activitiesis not a valid reason to delay or fail to conduct a progress evaluation meeting as and when required by this policy.
- (7) Students re-enrolling for more than one research period as a result of a requirement to revise and resubmit in a previous thesis examination, must participate in a progress evaluation between three and six months from the date of re-enrolment.
- (8) Students returning from a period of suspension or extended leave of absence greater than one research period must have a progress evaluation meeting within three months of recommencing.
- (9) Progress evaluations should be informed by the documentation of the outcomes of supervision meetings as required under the [Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy](#).

14 Progress evaluation panel

- (1) The postgraduate coordinator must:
 - (a) appoint two academic staff members to form a progress evaluation panel for each student's evaluation;
 - (b) nominate one of the panel members to act as chair;
 - (c) inform the student of the panel members identities as soon as possible after their appointment; and
 - (d) record the appointments in RECS.
- (2) In appointing members of a progress evaluation panel, the postgraduate coordinator:
 - (a) may appoint from outside the school or faculty;
 - (b) must not appoint any of a student's supervisors;
 - (c) must consider and manage any conflicts of interests; and
 - (d) may consult with the student about any conflicts of interest.

Note: For information on evaluating and managing conflicts of interest, see the [External Interests Policy](#).
- (3) Progress evaluation panel members must be experienced supervisors of higher degree by research students and have:
 - (a) expertise in the general field of the thesis or
 - (b) other relevant specialist knowledge.
- (4) The panel chair has a responsibility to escalate to the appropriate delegate, matters which may involve breaches of:
 - (a) University policy or codes of conduct;
 - (b) regulatory requirements; or
 - (c) legislative requirements.

15 Progress evaluation meetings

- (1) Students must participate in a progress evaluation meeting as required by the postgraduate coordinator.
- (2) Progress evaluation meetings will be aligned to the student's candidature stage.
 - (a) At confirmation evaluations, the panel will assess whether the student has shown sufficient progress to meet the conditions to pass probation.
 - (b) At mid-candidature evaluations, the panel will evaluate:
 - (i) progress made since the last meeting; and
 - (ii) planned work in the context of progress towards submission of a thesis.
 - (c) At pre-submission evaluations, the panel will evaluate the progress of the work done in the context of preparing a thesis for examination;
 - (d) At overdue thesis evaluations, the panel will evaluate the planned activities needed to produce an examinable thesis as soon as practicable.

- (3) Progress evaluation panel meetings can be held in person, through video-conferencing or by telephone as agreed by members.
- (4) Students may be accompanied at the progress evaluation meeting by a support person, such as a colleague, friend, family member or student representative.
 - (a) A support person may discuss or consult with the student during the meeting;
 - (b) A support person has no right to be heard or contribute to progress evaluation discussions, except with consent of the panel chair.
- (5) Progress evaluation meetings will be conducted by the progress evaluation panel.
- (6) Progress evaluation meetings must include discussions with the student without any of the supervisors present, unless the student fails to present at the meeting.

Note: see subclause 16(4)

- (7) The progress evaluation panel has the option to invite any of the student's supervisors to attend part of the meeting for:
 - (a) discussions with both student and supervisor(s) present; and
 - (b) discussions with the supervisor(s) only.
- (8) The progress evaluation panel must :
 - (a) discuss achievements since the last plan;
 - (b) discuss any scheduled activities prior to thesis submission; and
 - (c) establish if variations to the progress plan are needed. If variations are required, the student and supervisor must document these changes in RECS.
- (9) Subject to any legal requirement for disclosure, the following are confidential and not to be disclosed outside the progress evaluation meetings:
 - (a) information contained in student's reports or supervisors' reports;
 - (b) the content of discussions with students and supervisors.

Note: See the [Privacy Policy](#) and the [Privacy Procedures](#).

16 Progress evaluation outcomes

- (1) The student's progress will be measured against:
 - (a) University, faculty, school and student milestones, goals and activities that are within the student's control;
 - (b) action items identified in the student's previous progress evaluations; and
 - (c) compliance with student responsibilities set out in relevant University policies and procedures.
- (2) The progress evaluation ratings are:
 - (a) satisfactory or excellent progress;
 - (b) marginal progress;
 - (c) unsatisfactory progress.
- (3) The progress evaluation panel must submit a written report in RECS for the postgraduate coordinator:



- (a) giving its assessment of the feasibility of the progress plan;
 - (b) setting out any required variations to the progress plan;
 - (c) identifying any actions to be taken as a result of the progress evaluation, and who will be responsible for them;
 - (d) recommending:
 - (i) whether a supplementary progress evaluation is required;
 - (ii) the nature of required activities to be completed before any supplementary evaluation; and
 - (iii) when any supplementary progress evaluation should occur;
 - (e) indicating, where relevant, whether the student's scholarship is at risk, and the time frame for any potential termination of scholarship; and
 - (f) recommending a progress evaluation rating based upon its assessment of the student's progress.
- (4) The progress evaluation panel may prepare a report and recommend a progress evaluation rating in the student's absence, if:
- (a) the student fails to attend the progress evaluation meeting without notice or sufficient justification; or
 - (b) the student is unable to attend, and the progress evaluation panel forms the reasonable view that the progress evaluation meeting can properly be conducted in the student's absence.
- (5) The student will have an opportunity to:
- (a) consider the progress evaluation panel's report; and
 - (b) document responses to the progress evaluation panel report in RECS.
- (6) The postgraduate coordinator must:
- (a) determine a progress evaluation rating, taking into account:
 - (i) the recommendation of the progress evaluation panel;
 - (ii) the student's response; and
 - (iii) any exceptional circumstances related to the candidature that are beyond the reasonable control of the student;
 - (b) specify any actions to be taken as a result of the progress evaluation, including who will be responsible for them and timeframes for their completion;
 - (c) state whether the proposed supervision arrangements are satisfactory;
 - (d) determine:
 - (i) whether a supplementary progress evaluation is required;
 - (ii) the nature of required activities to be completed before any supplementary evaluation and
 - (iii) when any supplementary progress evaluation should occur.
 - (e) monitor the implementation of any action items for the school, faculty or University identified by the progress evaluation panel. Such items should be completed within three months of the date of the progress evaluation.

17 'Satisfactory or excellent progress'

- (1) A rating of 'satisfactory or excellent progress' means that:
 - (a) the student's progress since the last progress evaluation, or since commencement of candidature, has been satisfactory or exceeded expectations; and
 - (b) all parties are confident that the student will submit the thesis for examination on time, or in a timely manner, allowing for previous delays.
- (2) To achieve a rating of 'satisfactory or excellent progress' the student must ordinarily have satisfactorily met all requirements since the last progress evaluation.

18 'Marginal progress'

- (1) A rating of 'marginal progress' means that:
 - (a) the student has not satisfactorily met some of the requirements since the last progress evaluation;
 - (b) there is some risk that the student's thesis will not be submitted for examination on time, or in a timely manner, allowing for any previous delays; or
 - (c) there has been a finding of inappropriate academic practice, academic dishonesty, research misconduct or a breach of the [Research Code of Conduct](#) or [Research Data Management Policy](#) and which has subsequently been resolved.

Note: See [Academic Integrity Policy](#); [Research Code of Conduct](#); [Research Data Management Policy](#) and [Academic Integrity Procedures](#).
- (2) If a student receives a rating of 'marginal progress', the postgraduate coordinator:
 - (a) must specify a set of required actions and due dates for completion; and
 - (b) must set a date for a supplementary progress evaluation; and
 - (c) may:
 - (i) refer the progress evaluation panel's report to the Associate Dean; and
 - (ii) take such other action as they consider appropriate, consistent with the [Rule](#) and this policy.
- (3) A rating of 'marginal progress' will be considered satisfactory for the purposes of the continuation of student's research scholarship, where the terms and conditions of the scholarship are under the University's control.
- (4) A rating of 'marginal progress' cannot be used as a trigger for requiring that a student show good cause why they should be permitted to continue the candidature.
- (5) The lead supervisor is responsible for overseeing the student's completion of required actions by due dates.

19 'Unsatisfactory progress'

- (1) A rating of 'unsatisfactory progress' means that:
 - (a) the student has not satisfactorily met most or all of the requirements since the last progress evaluation; or
 - (b) there is a significant risk that the thesis:
 - (i) will not be submitted for examination on time, or in a timely manner, allowing for any previous delays; or
 - (ii) will not be completed at all; or
 - (c) there has been a finding of inappropriate academic practice, academic dishonesty, research misconduct or a breach of the [Research Code of Conduct](#) or [Research Data Management Policy](#) which places the candidature at risk of not being completed.

Note: See [Academic Integrity Policy](#); [Research Code of Conduct](#); [Research Data Management Policy](#) and [Academic Integrity Procedures](#).
- (2) If a student receives a rating of 'unsatisfactory progress', the postgraduate coordinator:
 - (a) must, except where the student is asked to show good cause:
 - (i) specify a set of required actions and due dates for their completion;
 - (ii) set a date for a supplementary progress evaluation;
 - (iii) refer the progress evaluation panel's report to the Associate Dean; and
 - (iv) take such other action as they consider appropriate, consistent with the [Rule](#) and this policy; and
 - (b) may:
 - (i) where relevant, recommend to the University that the student's research scholarship be terminated;
 - (ii) recommend to the Associate Dean that the student be asked to show good cause why they should be permitted to continue the candidature.
- (3) If a student receives a rating of 'unsatisfactory progress' at two consecutive progress evaluations, including supplementary progress evaluations, the postgraduate coordinator must recommend to the Associate Dean that the student be asked to show good cause why they should be permitted to continue the candidature.
- (4) The lead supervisor is responsible for overseeing the student's completion of required actions by due dates.

20 Supplementary progress evaluations

- (1) If the postgraduate coordinator requires a student to undertake a supplementary progress evaluation, that supplementary progress evaluation:
 - (a) should take place in one of the scheduled evaluation cycles;
 - (b) should be completed before the next required enrolment date;

- (c) must take place no sooner than two months and no later than six months from the date of the previous evaluation; and
 - (d) must be conducted in accordance with this policy.
- (2) If a student receives a rating of 'marginal progress' at a supplementary progress evaluation, clause 18 of this policy will apply.
- (3) If after two consecutive supplementary progress evaluations the student fails to achieve a rating of 'satisfactory or excellent progress', the student must receive a rating of 'unsatisfactory progress' for the second supplementary progress evaluation, and clause 19(3) of this policy will apply.

PART 4 MILESTONES, GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

21 Milestones

- (1) There are two types of milestones:
- (a) University;
 - (b) faculty and school;
- (2) University milestones describe activities that are:
- (a) set out in Schedule 1 of this policy;
 - (b) mandatory (including the items listed in bullet-points); and
 - (c) common for all candidates.
- (3) Faculty and school milestones describe activities that:
- (a) are additional to University milestones;
 - (b) are mandatory specialist requirements specific to the faculty or school;
 - (c) are common for specified degrees or degree pathways delivered through the faculty or school;
 - (d) may include school specific activities required to achieve University milestones; and
 - (e) must be approved by the University Executive Research Committee.
- (4) Student goals are activities that:
- (a) are specific to the student's candidature;
 - (b) are set by the student and supervisor as part of effective supervision; and
 - (c) delineate the planned progress of the specific candidature; and
 - (d) help the student and supervisor assess candidature progress objectively.
- Note:** See subclause 15(9) of the [Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy](#)
- (5) Progress plans must include at least one faculty or school milestone between the University milestones 'confirmation' and 'intent to submit'.
- (6) Achievement of a milestone will be noted in RECS by:
- (a) the activity being completed in RECS; or

- (b) the student providing evidence of completion and the lead supervisor endorsing satisfactory completion.
- (7) Achievement of a goal will be recorded by the student or supervisor as necessary.

22 Rescissions and replacements

This document replaces the *Progress Review of Higher Degree by Research Students Guidelines*, which commenced on 21 August 2014, which is rescinded as from the date of commencement of this document.

23 Transitional provisions

- (1) Students who were due to complete an Annual Progress Review or Supplementary Progress Review in 2020 but were unable to do so by 30 June 2021 should continue under the previous provisions of this policy and complete their outstanding Annual Progress Review.
- (2) This transitional arrangement ends on the 31 August 2021.

SCHEDULE 1: UNIVERSITY MILESTONES AND ACTIVITIES

Timeframes expressed as full time equivalent will be applied to part time students on a pro rata basis. For example, where a full time student would have three months to complete a milestone activity, a part time student would have six months. If the time-frame is not qualified, then the time limit for achieving that milestone applies independently of the mode of attendance.

Milestone	Time frame (Master's by Research)	Time frame (Doctorates)	Description of Activity	Completion of milestone to be certified/approved by
University induction	1 month	1 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial meeting with supervisor (HDR Supervision Policy 2020) • Attend or complete any university level induction/orientation activities, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attendance at HDR orientation events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Supervisor • RECS completion from timetabling
Completion of mandatory modules – Responsible Research Practice and WHS training	6 weeks	6 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Responsible Research Practice module • Complete WHS training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Supervisor
Declaration of Interests	In May following the student's date of enrolment and each May thereafter	In May following the student's date of enrolment and each May thereafter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a Declaration of Interests form for HDR students, reporting any external interests which may result in conflict of interests (potential, perceived or actual), including documenting how any identified conflicts may be managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Supervisor
Completion of mandatory modules – Consent matters and Research Data Management Training	3 months	3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Consent Matters module • Research Data Management Training module 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead supervisor
Commencement activities	3 months (full-time equivalent)	3 months (full-time equivalent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As detailed in supervision policy Note: Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student

Milestone	Time frame (Master's by Research)	Time frame (Doctorates)	Description of Activity	Completion of milestone to be certified/approved by
3 rd month progress evaluation (conditional)	4.5 months	4.5 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is no evidence in RECS that the student and supervisor have completed the initial activities, the faculty will organise a commencement Progress Evaluation Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress Evaluation panel chair
Preliminary appraisal	6 months (full-time equivalent)	6 months (full-time equivalent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review research idea. Draft research plan. Draft data management plan. Schedule relevant training activities. Review communication skills (especially writing). Identify subsequent actions in progress plan. Complete induction(s). Identify any need for ethics approval. Conduct intellectual property review and consider need for IP agreements. Consider potential for restricted information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead supervisor
Confirmation progress evaluation	8 to 11 months	8 to 11 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise research proposal/plan. Finalise data management plan. Conduct resources review, including information technology, hardware, software, space, funding, supervision. Ensure student has adequate written English to write thesis, or that measures are in place to assist the student to meet this requirement within a specified timeframe. Submit a substantial piece of written work (e.g. proposal or literature review) for similarity checking, and discuss outcome with supervisor Confirm ethics plan and commence ethics application process (where relevant). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Chair/members at the 10 month Progress Evaluation.
Mid-candidature progress evaluation	12 months after confirmation progress evaluation (part-time students only)	12 months after confirmation progress evaluation (full time equivalent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate performance against progress plan Consider planned activities in the context of the research plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Chair/members at the Mid-Candidature Progress Evaluation meeting

Milestone	Time frame (Master's by Research)	Time frame (Doctorates)	Description of Activity	Completion of milestone to be certified/approved by
Subsequent Mid-candidature progress evaluation meetings	N/A	Every 12 months after mid-candidature progress evaluation (part-time students only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate performance against progress plan Consider planned activities in the context of the research plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Chair/members at the Progress Evaluation meeting
Pre-submission progress evaluation	6 to 9 months before submission date	6 to 9 months before submission date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate performance against progress plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Chair/members at the Pre-submission Progress Evaluation meeting
Intent to submit	3 months from projected submission (full-time equivalent)	3 months from projected submission (full-time equivalent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check thesis draft. Student to nominate preferred examination type Student to provide input on potential examiners. Check compliance with ethics approvals, data management plan, IP agreements. Consider whether the thesis contains restricted information <p>Note: Thesis and Examination for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon receipt of submission of notice of intent to submit from RECS
Submit for examination	Submission date	Submission date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit thesis. <p>Note: Thesis and Examination for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon receipt of submission of thesis from RECS
Overdue thesis progress evaluation	First progress evaluation round after the student's latest submission date, or as determined by the postgraduate coordinator	First progress evaluation round after the student's latest submission date, or as determined by the postgraduate coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only if no thesis has been submitted for examination Present a thesis preparation plan and schedule for delivery of an examinable thesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Chair/members at the Progress Evaluation meeting
Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete requirements for award, including corrections. Comply with data management plan. Comply with any ethics approval and protocol Lodge final version of thesis. Request thesis embargo during final lodgement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion letter sent to student from RECS

See University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule, for details of part-time candidature

SCHEDULE 2: RESCINDED

SCHEDULE 3: RESCINDED

NOTES

Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2016

Date adopted: 2 December 2015

Date commenced: 1 January 2016

Date amended: 17 August 2016, commencing 19 September 2016
27 October 2016 (administrative amendment only)
1 May 2017, commencing 23 May 2017
28 November 2017, commencing 1 January 2018
1 October 2019 (administrative amendment only)
15 September 2020, commencing 1 January 2021
25 February 2021 (administrative amendment)
13 April 2021
16 November 2021 (commencing 22 November 2021)
15 November 2022 (commencing 1 March 2023)
12 May 2023 (administrative amendments)
5 September 2023 (commencing 19 September 2023)
9 November 2023 (administrative amendments)
17 April 2024 (administrative amendments)

Original Administrator: Director, Graduate Research

Current policy owner: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Review date: 1 January 2021

Rescinded documents:

Progress Review of Higher Degree by Research Students Guidelines

Related documents:

[University of Sydney \(Higher Degree by Research\) Rule](#)

[Research Data Management Policy](#)

[Research Data Management Procedures](#)

[Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy](#)

[Thesis and Examination of Higher Degree by Research Policy](#)

[Thesis and Examination of Higher Degree by Research Procedures](#)

[Academic Integrity Policy](#)

[Academic Integrity Procedures](#)

[Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Procedures](#)

[Higher Degree by Research Guidelines for Progress Evaluation Panel Members 2020](#)

[Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedures](#)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
15(1)(c), 16(1)(c)	Subclause and note added	19 September 2016
15(2)(c)(ii), 16(2)(a)(iv)	Minor amendment	19 September 2016
Notes	Change to Administrator of document	19 September 2016
Notes	<i>Research Data Management Policy 2014, Research Data Management Procedures 2015, and Academic Honesty Procedures 2016</i> added to related documents	19 September 2016
9(5)(b)(2) and related Note	Addition of other relevant clause references (administrative amendment)	19 September 2016
18(3)(e)	References to Senior Executive Group Research Training Committee changed to University Executive Research Education Committee	27 October 2016
Various	Hyperlinks to policy documents added	27 October 2016
4(3)	New clause referencing health, safety and wellbeing	23 May 2017
5(3)	Definitions updated (administrative amendments)	23 May 2017
7(2)	Note deleted	23 May 2017
8(2)	Insertion of new clause at (c) referencing disability action plan	23 May 2017

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
9(4)	Wording changed to reference disability and health	23 May 2017
9(6)	Terminology change (administrative amendment)	23 May 2017
14(2)	New clause added at (b) specifying similarity checking of an item of student written work	23 May 2017
20	Rescinded	23 May 2017
Schedule 1	Insertion of new requirement for confirmation by 12 months of candidature	23 May 2017
4(3); 6 ; 8(2)(b); 9(5); 9(6)(b); 10(4); 11(1); 11(3); 12(1); 13(4); 13(7); 15(2); 15(2)(c)(i); 16(2); 16(2)(a)(iii) 16(3); 16(4); 17(1)	Amendments to align with <i>University of Sydney (Delegations of Authority – Academic Functions) Rule 2016</i>	1 January 2018
6; 9(5)(a); 13(10(a); 13(7)(e); 18(1); 18(3); 18(3)(b)- (d); 13(5)	Amendments to align with organisational design changes	1 January 2018
10;11;12	New Part 2A added, comprising new clauses 10-12. ; consequential renumbering of following clauses	1 January 2019
10	Formatting changes	1 January 2020
11(2), (3)	Note added	1 January 2020
12(1)	Subclause replaced	1 January 2020
12 (2)	Subclause replaced	1 January 2020
Schedule 1	Addition of required coursework modules	1 January 2020
Schedule 2	New schedule added - Table R	1 January 2020
Schedule 3	New Schedule added – awards impacted by new part 2A.	1 January 2020

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
Schedule 4	New schedule added – course requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy	1 January 2020
Throughout	'review' replaced with 'evaluation'	1 January 2021
4(1) – (4)	Amended for clarity; previously 4(1) – (2)	1 January 2021
4(5)	Previously 4(3); new subclauses (a) – (d) separate referenced policy documents	1 January 2021
4(5)(b)	University of Sydney (Delegations of Authority – Academic Functions) Rule 2016 amended to University of Sydney (Delegations of Authority) Rule 2020	1 January 2021
4(5)(c); Notes	Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Procedures 2015 amended to Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Procedures 2020	1 January 2021
4(5)(d); 6; 9(1) note; 13(8); 21(4)(d); Notes	Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2013 amended to read Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy 2020	1 January 2021
5(1)	Subclause amended	1 January 2021
5(1) Note	Deleted	1 January 2021
5(2); 9(6)(c) note; 13(3)(a); 18(4); 19(2)(b)(ii)	Replace 'his or her' with 'their'	1 January 2021
6(1)	Definitions of 'coordinating supervisor'; 'progress review'; and 'review panel' deleted	1 January 2021
6(1)	Definitions of 'goal'; 'lead supervisor'; 'progress evaluation'; 'progress evaluation panel'; and 'Research Education Candidature System (RECS)' added	1 January 2021
6(1)	Definitions of 'Dean'; disability support academic plan'; 'faculty'; 'milestone'; postgraduate coordinator'; 'school'; and 'supervisor' amended	1 January 2021
7(2)	New subclause; subsequent renumbering	1 January 2021
7(3)	'have a progress plan' replaced with 'start building a plan for progress throughout candidature'; six months' replaced with 'pro rata'	1 January 2021
7(3)	Previous 7(3) deleted	1 January 2021

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
7(4)(c)	New subclause	1 January 2021
7(4)(e)	Replace 'research training' with 'research development and training'	1 January 2021
7(4)(g)	Insert 'other' at beginning of subclause; add 'required by the research' at the end of subclause	1 January 2021
7(4)(g) note	'goals' inserted between 'activities' and 'milestones'	1 January 2021
7(5)	New subclause inserted	1 January 2021
8	Title amended to 'Planning progress'	1 January 2021
8(1) – (2)	Deleted and replaced with new subclauses 8(1) – (5)	1 January 2021
9(1); 9(7)(a); 9(8); 12(2)(b); 12(3)(b); 12(4)(b); 12(5)	'coordinating supervisor' replaced with 'lead supervisor'	1 January 2021
9(1)	Minor amendment with reference to keeping progress plan up to date	1 January 2021
9(1) note	New	1 January 2021
9(2)	Deleted and replaced with new subclause	1 January 2021
9(3)(a)(iii)	'course or program' replaced with 'supervisor'	1 January 2021
9(4)	'require different' replaced with 'may require a variation to'	1 January 2021
9(6)(a)(ii)	New subclause	1 January 2021
9(6)(c) note	'in that clause' deleted	1 January 2021
10	'in 2021' replaced with 'from 1 January 2021'	1 January 2021
10(b); 11(3); 11(6); 12(1)(a)	'Doctorates by Research' replaced by 'doctorates by research'	1 January 2021
10(c); 11(1)(a); 11(4); 11(7); 12(1)(b)	'Master's by Research' replaced with 'masters by research' to align with AQF terminology.	1 January 2021
11(1)	Administrative amendment	1 January 2021

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
11(2); 11(3); 11(4)	'Schedule 2' replaced with 'Interdisciplinary Studies Handbook'	1 January 2021
11(2) note	Deleted	1 January 2021
11(3) note	Deleted	1 January 2021
11(5)	'Schedule 4' replaced with 'Schedule 3'	1 January 2021
11(6)(a)	New subclause	1 January 2021
11(8); 12(5); 12(6)	'Annual Progress Review' replaced with 'progress evaluation'	1 January 2021
12(1); 12(2); 12(2)(c); 12(3); 12(3)(c); 12(4); 12(4)(c)	Term 'relevant' in front of 'Associate Dean' deleted; covered in definitions	1 January 2021
12(1)(a); 12(2); 12(3)	'full time equivalent' inserted between 'two years of' and 'doctoral research'	1 January 2021
12(2)(a)(ii); 12(3)(a)(ii); 12(4)(a)(ii)	Reworded to clarify what is meant by 'distinction level'	1 January 2021
12(2)(a); 12(3)(a); 12(4)(a)	'topic' added after 'thesis'	1 January 2021
12(2)(b)	'the completion of the thesis' deleted	1 January 2021
12(2)(d); 12(3)(d); 12(4)(d)	'commencement of candidature' replaced with 'date of first enrolment in current research degree'	1 January 2021
12(3)(b)	'to support the completion of the thesis' deleted	1 January 2021
13(1) note	New note referencing Higher Degree by Research Guidelines for Progress Evaluation Panel Members 2020	1 January 2021
13(1)(a)	New subclause	1 January 2021
13(2)	New subclause; subsequent renumbering	1 January 2021
13(3)	'evaluate' inserted at end of subclause	1 January 2021
13(3)(a)	'assess' deleted; 'complete' replaced with 'achieved'; 'candidature development goals' inserted between 'project' and 'and thesis'	1 January 2021

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
13(3)(b); 13(3)(c)	'assess' deleted at beginning of subclause	1 January 2021
13(3)(d)	'assess and rate' deleted at beginning of subclause; 'towards a successful examination of a thesis' added at end of subclause	1 January 2021
13(4)	New subclause (replaces previous 13(3))	1 January 2021
13(5)	Amended for clarity	1 January 2021
13(6)	'six months' replaced with 'one research period'	1 January 2021
13(7)	New subclause	1 January 2021
13(8)	Amended to reference requirements under Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy 2020	1 January 2021
14(2)	New subclause; previously 14(3); subsequent renumbering	1 January 2021
14(3)	Amended to define required qualifications of progress evaluation panel members	1 January 2021
14(4)	New subclause	1 January 2021
15(1)	'and at least once per year' deleted	1 January 2021
15(2); 15(3);	New subclauses and consequent renumbering	1 January 2021
15(4)(a);	New subclause	1 January 2021
15(6); 15(7); 15(8); 15(9)	New subclauses	1 January 2021
16(2)	Subclause deleted; subsequent renumbering	1 January 2021
16(2); 17; 17(1); 17(2); 20(3)	'meets or exceeds objectives' replaced with 'satisfactory or excellent progress'	1 January 2021
16(3)	'prepare a written report' replaced with 'submit a written report in RECS'	1 January 2021
16(3)(d)(iii)	New subclause	1 January 2021
16(5)(a)	'respond' replaced with 'consider'	1 January 2021
16(5)(b); 16(6)(d)(ii)	New subclauses	1 January 2021
17(1)(b)	New subclause	1 January 2021
17(2)	Amended to include previous 17(2)(a)	1 January 2021

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
17(2)(a) – (c)	Subclauses deleted	1 January 2021
18(1); 19(1)	'indicates' replaced by 'means'	1 January 2021
18(1)(b); 19(1)(b)	'timely fashion' replaced with 'timely manner'	1 January 2021
18(1)(c); 18(1)(c) note; 19(1)(c); 19(1)9c) note	Research Code of Conduct 2013 amended to read Research Code of Conduct 2019	1 January 2021
18(1)(a); 19(10(a)	'as specified in subclause 16(1)' deleted	1 January 2021
18(1)(c)	'and which has subsequently been resolved' added at end of subclause	1 January 2021
18(2)(a)	'for completion' added after 'dates'	1 January 2021
18(3)	Amended for clarification about research scholarship continuation	1 January 2021
18(4)	'the requirement for' replaced with 'requiring that'	1 January 2021
18(5); 19(4)	Reworded for clarity and to define lead supervisor's role	1 January 2021
19(1)(a)	'all requirements' replaced with 'most or all of the requirements'	1 January 2021
19(1)(c)	'which places the candidature at risk of not being completed' at end of subclause	1 January 2021
19(2)(a)(i)	'for their completion' added at end of subclause	1 January 2021
19(3)	Subclause deleted; subsequent renumbering	1 January 2021
19(3)	'including supplementary progress evaluations' between 'evaluations' and 'the postgraduate coordinator'	1 January 2021
20(1)(b)	New subclause	1 January 2021
Part 4	Title amended to read 'Milestones, goals and activities'	1 January 2021
21	'and activities' deleted	1 January 2021
21(1)	'three' replaced with 'two'; 'and activities' deleted	1 January 2021
21(1)(c)	deleted	1 January 2021
21(2); 21(3)	'milestones that' replaced with 'milestones describe activities that are'	1 January 2021

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
21(3)(c)	'all candidates' replaced with 'specified degrees or degree pathways delivered through'	1 January 2021
21(3)(e)	'UE' replaced with "University Executive"	1 January 2021
21(4)	'milestones that' replaced with 'goals are activities that'	1 January 2021
21(4)(b)	Reworded for clarity	1 January 2021
21(4)(c) – (d) and note	New subclauses and note	1 January 2021
21(6); 21(7)	New subclauses	1 January 2021
Schedule 1	Replaced with new Schedule 1	1 January 2021
Schedule 2	Deleted; subsequent renumbering of Schedules	1 January 2021
Schedule 3	Now Schedule 2	1 January 2021
Schedule 2(2)	'full time equivalent' inserted between 'years' and 'of candidature'	1 January 2021
Schedule 2(2)(i) – (l)	Deleted; subsequent renumbering	1 January 2021
Schedule 2(3) (a) – (c)	Deleted; subsequent renumbering	1 January 2021
Schedule 2(3)(e) and note	'Doctor of Philosophy (Cotutelle)' replaced with "Joint Doctor of Philosophy"	1 January 2021
Schedule 2(3) (e) note	New note referencing Dual and Joint Degree Policy 2019	1 January 2021
Notes	Thesis and Examination of Higher Degrees by Research Procedures 2015 replaced with Thesis and Examination of Higher Degrees by Research Procedures 2020	1 January 2021
Notes	Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Procedures 2020; Higher Degree by Research Guidelines for Progress Evaluation Panel Members 2020; and Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedures 2020 added to list of related documents.	1 January 2021
Schedule 1	Insertion of provisions relating to 'Declaration of interest'.	25 February 2021
23(1)	'31 December 2020' replaced with '30 June 2021'	13 April 2021
23(2)	'28 February 2021' replaced with 31 August 2021	13 April 2021

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
Schedule 1	'completion of HDR Essentials online module' deleted from requirements for Induction	13 April 2021
Schedule 1	Timing for completion of conditional PEM changed to 4.5 months	13 April 2021
Schedule 1	Amendments to the milestone timeframes for the mandatory modules, declaration of interests, and the progress evaluation meetings (confirmation, mid-candidature, pre-submission, and overdue).	16 November 2021
Schedule 1	Added subsequent mid-candidature progress evaluation milestone.	16 November 2021
9(2)note	Replace Code of Conduct – Staff and Affiliates with Staff and Affiliates Code of Conduct 2021	1 March 2023
12(2)(a)(ii); 12(3)(a)(ii); 12(4)(a)(ii)	Replace Coursework Policy 2014 with Coursework Policy 2021	1 March 2023
15(9) note	Replace Privacy Policy 2018 with Privacy Policy 2017	1 March 2023
18(1)(c) note; 19(1)(c) note;	Replace Academic Honesty in Coursework Policy 2015 with Academic Integrity Policy 2022	1 March 2023
18(1)(c) note; 19(1)(c) note; Related documents	Replace Academic Honesty Procedures 2016 with Academic Integrity Procedures 2022	1 March 2023
Related documents	Add Academic Integrity Policy 2022	1 March 2023
Schedule 1	Add 'Research Data Management Training and module to milestones at 3 months	1 March 2023
Notes	Owner of policy changed to DVC (Research)	1 March 2023
Schedule 1	amend internal policy references	12 May 2023
<i>The following amendments were approved by Academic Board on 5 September 2023 for effect on 19 September 2023 Resolution AB 2023/05-14</i>		
7(4)(f)	Point f coursework requirements removed. Approved by Academic Board	19 September 2023
11(1)	Amended to remove compulsory coursework requirements.	19 September 2023
11(1)(a)	Removal of reference to Schedule 2	19 September 2023

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
11(2), (3), (4), and (5)	Provisions deleted	19 September 2023
11(2) new	New provision 11(2) relating to Progress Evaluation Panel	19 September 2023
11(6) and 11(7)	Renumbered to 11(3) and 11(4) respectively	19 September 2023
11(8)	Provision deleted	19 September 2023
12	Section 12 "Recognition of Prior Learning" rescinded	19 September 2023
Schedule 1	Removal of row 3 "Choosing coursework units (linked to Table R)"	19 September 2023
Schedule 2	Schedule 2: Higher Degrees by Research with Coursework Requirements rescinded	19 September 2023
Schedule 3	Schedule 3: Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy rescinded	19 September 2023
7(4)(c); 9(2) note; 18(1)(c); 18(1)(c) note; 19(1)(c); 19(1)(c) note	<i>Research Code of Conduct 2019</i> replaced with <i>Research Code of Conduct 2023</i>	9 November 2023
Throughout	Administrative amendments to remove the year in policy references.	17 April 2024