Welcome to the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney. The department has a diverse and dynamic postgraduate research community, including some of the most promising future scholars in Gender and Cultural Studies. This intellectual community is sustained through a range of activities to which this guide provides a basic orientation. We are particularly proud of our postgraduate research students and look forward to your participation in the life of the department!

This guide is divided into four sections providing information on the activities of the department and the resources available to postgraduate research students:

**Forums** outlines the main departmental activities, venues and requirements for research students

**People** outlines the main staff and student roles you will come into contact with

**Research Resources** outlines workspace availability, research funding, and other resources

**Thesis Planning and Completing** outlines key milestones and administrative requirements that you should know about

**Teaching** outlines teaching opportunities for research students interested in tutoring or teaching on Gender and Cultural Studies courses

**Other**: resources and links you may find useful

**Forums**

The Department of Gender and Cultural Studies hosts a number of different forums where members of the department meet, discuss and review each others’ work and develop ideas.

**Work-in-Progress Seminars**

Work-in-Progress seminars are held fortnightly on Friday afternoons during term time. The series is coordinated by an elected postgraduate representative and a member of the academic staff. At each seminar, two or three postgraduate research students present on some aspect of their current work. These seminars are intended to be useful for the scholars presenting – thus, you may present on any aspect of your current work where you would like feedback from your peers, from workshopping problems to draft chapters or papers. After the presentations there will be ample time for discussion. These are important opportunities for constructive and respectful support of your colleague’s research. Seminars are advertised on the departmental mailing list. After the seminar, students and staff usually socialize together on campus, which is a great chance to get to know your colleagues and discuss those ideas you didn’t get a chance to raise during the seminar discussion.

All postgraduate research students are required to present their work in this Work-in-Progress series. Ordinarily, a full time student will present every year and a part time student at least every second year. As a requirement of their candidature, PhD students must present a minimum of three times, MPhil students twice and MA Research students once. All postgraduate research students also required to attend all work-in-progress seminars. The seminars are regarded as a central part of the department’s research community – a primary point of contact with your peers and the basis of our postgraduate intellectual community. Attendance and participation is reviewed in your mandatory annual review.

**Departmental seminars**

On alternate Friday afternoons during the term, the department holds its research seminar series, featuring invited speakers from Australia and overseas as well members of the department. Postgraduate research students are also required to attend these seminars as part of their candidature. This series often features the work of leading international and national scholars in gender studies and cultural studies and represents an excellent opportunity for you to get to know your wider
disciplinary field. Details of upcoming seminars and speakers are announced on the departmental mailing list. After the seminar, students and staff usually socialize together on campus.

**Departmental Communications**

The main communication mechanism for the department is the departmental mailing list (GCS). Information on upcoming events and other announcements are frequently posted on this list. All new students are subscribed to this list but if you have a particular address you would prefer this list is addressed to for you then please let the Postgraduate Research Coordinator know. Please make sure your email contact details are kept up to date for this list, as it is the primary means of departmental communication. The Postgraduate Research Coordinator also maintains a GCS Postgraduate List for communications directed solely at current HDR students.

**University Communications**

Whichever email address you choose to use for the GCS and GCS_pgrad lists you should make sure that you either very regularly check your University generated email address (ending usyd.edu.au or uni.sydney.edu.au) or have it forwarded to your preferred address. The University and Faculty will only use that official address when sending you important information, such as your annual review forms and even your graduation invitation. The University regards any email sent to this address as having been received by you.

**Postgraduate Annual Reviews**

All postgraduate research students are required to attend a Postgraduate Annual Review once a year. The purpose of this review is to provide a venue to discuss your progress and your plans for the next year. It also reviews your supervision relationship and any difficulties that may be affecting your progress. While the university requires these reviews our priority is that they are constructive for students and a source of support.

The Annual Reviews are conducted by a committee comprised of academic staff members of the department, chaired by the Postgraduate Research Coordinator. Your primary/research supervisor may be in attendance, but there will also be a period during the review where you will have an opportunity to discuss your work and your supervisory relationships in their absence. Prior to the review, you must
complete a form which will be sent to your University email address by the Faculty. On the form, you are asked to review your progress over the past year and outline your plans for the next year. The form is then forwarded to your supervisor for them to complete a section, and then in turn to the Postgraduate Research Coordinator. Once the committee has met with you and commented on your progress, you will be given a copy of the form to review and sign before it is returned to the Faculty Office.

The Annual Reviews are generally scheduled in April and November of each year based on the semester in which you enrolled but also affected by any leave you have taken. At the review your progress is deemed satisfactory, marginal or unsatisfactory. If your progress is deemed marginal or unsatisfactory, you may be put on probation or required to meet particular goals in a set period of time. When completing this review form it is important to detail any circumstances which have affected your progress, including periods of illness or other relevant circumstances. If an extension is required towards the end of your candidature the record provided by these forms may be used to support a claim for special consideration.

**Probation and Research Needs Training Analysis (RNTA)**
The Annual Review at the end of your first (full time) year’s candidature will also review your progress in order to confirm your candidature. Your supervisor/s will advise you in preparing for the probation review but as a rule you will need to provide a detailed thesis proposal and evidence of substantial work towards that thesis (for example a draft chapter and a literature review). Most new postgraduate students will complete the WMST6902 Arguing the Point unit during their first year and successfully completing the assignments for that unit will mean completing most work required for probation confirmation.

From 2012, preparing for your probation review will also involve completing, in consultation with your supervisor, the RNTA form sent to you by the Faculty. This form inquires about what training and facilities you need in order to be properly equipped to complete your thesis (your own particular thesis, which means not every question is equally relevant to you).

**People**
The Department of Gender and Cultural Studies currently has more than 15 academic staff members and over 40 postgraduate research students. Here are
some of the key roles associated with postgraduate research:

**Supervision**
As a postgraduate student, your main contact in the department is your primary (or “research”) supervisor. All students are also assigned an associate (or “auxiliary”) supervisor, who provides an additional source of advice and support and may stand in for the primary/research supervisor if they go on leave. Some students have, instead, a supervisory “team” consisting of two or more supervisors with designated roles relative to their project. You will always have very clear descriptions of your supervisory team's roles in your letter of offer. If you're in any doubt you should discuss this with the Postgraduate Research Coordinator as soon as possible.

You should meet with your primary/research supervisor regularly (at least once a month) about your progress and the work you are doing. A general guideline, but not a rule, is that you might see your supervisor for approximately one hour a month on average (although this may be divided into multiple meetings and include meetings with associate or team supervisors). Your supervisor should provide feedback that is timely, constructive and positive; providing advice on the content, style, presentation and production of your thesis, including guidance on the resources available for your research. You should regularly discuss with your supervisors how your progress will be monitored (written work, seminars, annual progress reviews, etc.) and work with them to develop a program for your entire candidature and for each specific year.

Your supervisor is there to help. If you are having problems, the sooner they know about it the sooner they can help you overcome them. Further information on the supervisory relationship can be found in the SUPRA handbook.

**Postgraduate Research Coordinator**
This person coordinates the administrative and internal aspects of postgraduate research in the department. This is who you need to see, in addition to your supervisor, to sign off on forms requesting alterations to your candidature, intention to submit, etc. Please remember to keep them informed of any changes to your enrolment or contact details. It's important for the department to be able to contact you over the course of your candidature.

The postgraduate research coordinator also plays a “pastoral” role for postgraduate students, and provides another source of information and academic support in
addition to your supervisor. You are welcome to contact the coordinator to discuss any aspects of your progress or candidature. Sometimes it is useful to discuss how things are going with a staff member who is not your supervisor, especially if you are having any difficulties. A thesis is a long project, and even the best supervision relationship encounters obstacles. It is often helpful to discuss such problems with another member of the department, and the postgraduate coordinator can help you find ways to address them problems professionally and confidentially. If the postgraduate coordinator is your supervisor, you should speak with the Chair of Department or even, if the issue remains unresolved, with the Head of School.

**Postgraduate Research Student Representative**

Each year, postgraduate research students elect two HDR representatives, at least one of whom is usually an international student. These two postgraduate research representatives advocate on behalf of students’ interests and concerns at departmental committee meetings and may raise related issues with the Postgraduate Research Coordinator and/or the Chair of Department. These representatives should be informed of any issues or ideas that you would like to see advanced at a departmental level.

The postgraduate representatives also help arrange regular forums for discussion of issues of concern to HDR students in the department and help arrange social events and other forms of group support. These representatives are re-elected each year between semester one and semester two. In addition, at the same time, postgraduate students elect the student convenor of the W-i-P series.

**Faculty of Arts Office – Postgraduate Section**

Questions of an administrative nature – i.e. those to do with your enrolment and Faculty policy – should be directed to the Postgraduate Manager in the Faculty Office. The Postgraduate Coordinator can supply their details. You are also likely to find answers to many questions on the various university web-pages for postgraduate researchers. In particular you should keep a record of the Faculty’s page of forms for postgraduate students

Resources

A range of resources for postgraduate research are available from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Workspace

Desk space for postgraduate students is available through the Postgraduate Arts Research Centres (PGARC). For more detail about the available spaces and information on how to apply please see http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/postgraduate_research/research_facilities.html

Research funds

Postgraduate Research Support Scheme

The main source of research funds for postgraduate students is the Postgraduate Research Support Scheme, which is administered by the School. The funding round is announced via an email to your official university address (although we will attempt to let you know on the gcs_pgrad list you shouldn’t rely on that happening in time to develop an application). Funding can usually be awarded for future costs, or retrospectively for that year (upon the provision of receipts). Postgraduate research students can apply for funding each year – up to a maximum of three successful applications in a candidature for PhD students and one successful application for MPhil students.

This scheme is competitive, and success depends on satisfactory progress, track record, and the category of funds being applied for. Your application should therefore be supported by a statement of how the expenses relate to the aims of your research, as well as details of any publications or achievements over your candidature. Unless funding rules change between updates to this document, applications may be made in relation to the following categories:

1. Conference expenses, national or international, including travel, where the applicant is presenting a paper.
2. Use of specialist services or facilities essential to research
3. Field expenses
4. Purchase of specialist books, journals, or software which are not carried or able to be ordered from the library.
5. Thesis production/binding expenses (not available to scholarship
6. Computers or other equipment essential to the student's research and not otherwise funded by the university.

Awards are presently for a minimum of $200 and a maximum of $1200 (but up to $3000 for conferences in Europe, Africa, North and South America; and up to $2000 for other overseas conferences). For up-to-date guidelines and eligibility criteria see http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/scholarships.shtml.

Please note that since PRSS funding is competitive. It is worth taking the time to work with your supervisor to make sure that requests are fully justified on the application in relation to the aims of your research and that the form is properly filled in. The awarding committee considers your publications and papers when ranking applications, so if you have these (either published, in press, or in preparation), make sure they appear on the application. Finally, it is worth remembering that the amount received from the scheme will sometimes be less than the amount requested.

**PhD Research Travel Grant Scheme**
This scheme is for full time PhD candidates only and covers expenses incurred for research undertaken outside Sydney. Applicants must be undertaking essential research during the specified period that cannot be completed without significant travel outside Sydney. Applications usually close in early September and will be announced over the Faculty mail list. For more information see http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/current_students/scholarships.shtml.

**GCS Bursaries**
Depending on the availability of funding, Honours, Masters and PhD students may be invited to apply for a GCS bursary. These may award bursaries (worth up to $500 each) for travel to conferences or other costs towards improving your research experience. While this might seem very modest amount of money this scheme aims to make some further activities available to our students as well as training you in the art of grant application. When available these bursaries may be used to supplement another grant, but only if you can demonstrate that any other funds obtained were inadequate to your expenses. The Department usually gives preference, in order, to Honours or Masters by coursework students (because they do not have access to other grants to aid their research), to international students (who have more limited access to local support networks), and to Masters by
research students (who are often disadvantaged in local competitive research grants). You may apply if you have been successful before, but we may consider that in reaching a decision. You will be advised by email if these bursaries are available in any year.

The Library
The university has a number of research libraries which students have access to, and departments are allocated a certain amount each year to make suggestions for book, journal, and audiovisual purchases. The library relies on you to keep our disciplinary resources exciting and up to date. If there is anything missing from the catalogue, let us know and we can arrange for it to be ordered for the library. This includes audio-visual material. The department has a library officer who is happy to hear your suggestions and who will regularly encourage you to suggest purchases and provide you with instructions for doing so.

Thesis: Planning and Completing
A postgraduate thesis is a significant and substantial piece of work, and it is important to set milestones in order to make the task more manageable. Under current funding schemes, the government expects PhD students to complete a thesis of 70 000 – 100 000 words in a maximum of 4 full-time years and M Phil students to complete a thesis of 40 000 – 60 000 words in a maximum of 2 full-time years.

There are a number of useful resources available for thinking about how to manage your thesis, including SUPRA’s Thesis Guide, which is available from the publications section of the SUPRA website: http://www.usyd.edu.au/supra/. The Learning Centre also offers guides to many aspects of research conceptualization and writing, from the proposal stage to completion: http://www.usyd.edu.au/stuserv/learning_centre/resour.shtml. Rather than providing a full guide to completing a thesis, this section outlines a number of administrative processes you should know about.

Variations to candidature
In certain instances you may wish to vary your candidature or enrolment status. You should always talk your situation over with your supervisor and/or the Postgraduate Coordinator but forms for suspension, extensions and other requested changes to
status are available on the Faculty website’s page for postgraduate forms and procedures: http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/postgraduate_forms.shtml.

Notice of Intention to Submit
Three months prior to the submission of your thesis, you must complete a Notice of Thesis Submission form, which can be downloaded from: http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/postgraduate_forms.shtml. This enables the Faculty to appoint examiners and schedule the examination process.

Appointment of Examiners
Your supervisor will approach experts in your field to examine the thesis. While students can make suggestions as to who might be appropriate examiners, you should not know the names of the examiners appointed. This process is outlined on the Notice of Thesis Submission form.

Thesis Preparation and Binding
Temporary binding is most appropriate for thesis submission as you may subsequently be required to make revisions. You should see the Notice of Intention to Submit form (above) for the most recent guidelines on thesis submission which now usually require an electronic version of the thesis be submitted. Reimbursement of binding costs may be provided by your scholarship, or else can be applied for through the PRSS (see Research Resources).

Thesis Milestones
“7 Steps to Completion”
The Faculty of Arts offers the following rough guide to milestones that may help you to structure your work:

PhD (over 7 semesters) – 70,000 – 100,000 word thesis
MPhil (over 3.5 semesters) – 40,000 – 60,000 word thesis

For a 3.5 year PhD candidature who produces 70-100K word thesis (this model excludes fieldwork/archival research/ extensive interviews – PTO for another model)

1. 3 months
   • review of topic and methodology
   • review of supervision relationship
2. 6 months
• submission of full chapter or equivalent (15k words or as agreed with Supervisor and Associate Dean)

3. 12 months
• completion of required coursework
• Annual Review including presentation of research to date
• probationary status reviewed and permission to continue must be approved by Associate Dean

4. 24 months
• submission of 50% of final thesis
• Annual Review including presentation of research to date

5. 36 months
• complete full draft
• all data has been collected,
• all field work completed, etc.
• all but introduction and conclusion in draft
• Annual Review including presentation of research to date

6. 39 months
• completion of full draft
• supervisor reviews the draft and makes final recommendations.
• Notice of Thesis Submission

7. 42 months
• submission

Recognising that not all disciplines involve the same type of research or progression, the steps proposed above should be seen as flexible in terms of clear milestones to be attained. A fieldwork/archival-based degree will clearly require a different implementation of these steps.

Alternative 7 Step Model
Steps of progression for a fieldwork/archival degree:

1. 3 months
• review of topic and methodology
• review of supervision relationship

2. 6 months
• completion of all bureaucratic tasks such as finding field site/locating archival material, securing visas, equipment etc
• literature review
• proposal of specific research questions
• begin fieldwork/archive research

3. 12 months
• completion of required coursework
• Annual Review including presentation of research to date
• probationary status is reviewed and permission to continue must be approved by Associate Dean.

4. 18 months
• most field recordings/transcriptions/archival data collection done
• submission of chapter(s) or equivalent of 20K+ words
• presentation of research project.

5. 30 months
• 50% of thesis should be completed.

6. 36 months
• all data has been collected,
• all field work/archival work completed, etc.
• all but introduction and conclusion in draft
• submission of complete draft
• Annual Review including presentation of research to date

7. 39 months
• Notice of Thesis submission
• supervisor reviews draft and makes final recommendations

8. 42 months

**Teaching**

The Department of Gender and Cultural Studies tries to offer tutoring/teaching to postgraduate research students after the completion of their first year. Teaching is a rewarding experience as well as an important skill for academics to develop, and the department encourages you to take advantage of this opportunity. The Gender & Cultural Studies Department is recognized for its excellence in teaching as well as for being a friendly and engaged department to teach in. To apply for tutoring within the department contact the Chair of Department, or respond to the annual email sent out via the GCS list at the end of every year – usually October/November – announcing tutoring available in the coming year.
**Tutoring skills**

The Department runs an introduction to tutoring at the commencement of each year. A range of staff and experienced tutors attend to offer support and advise on the tasks, roles and requirements for tutoring undergraduate students.

SOPHI also offers a teaching induction and tutors program, the Teaching Development Program. The program is jointly designed and run by the Faculty of Teaching and Learning Committee and the University's Institute for Teaching and Learning. Your participation will be recognized with a certificate that can be added to your CV. Modules offered in the course often include:

- Peer Observation of Teaching
- Group Work
- Assessment

For more information and to register for the Teaching Development Program, please go to [http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/tutors_development_program/](http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/tutors_development_program/).

**Basic information for tutoring:**

Once allocated a course by the department you should:

- Contact the Unit Convenor (if they haven’t already contacted you) a couple of weeks prior to the course commencement.
- Check the **course timetable** – lectures and tutorials (when these are made available by the coordinator). You are expected to go to lectures as well as tutorials (this is calculated in your contract hours – not as a separate hourly rate but overall).
- **Convenors will organize a teaching meeting** for tutors in their course a few weeks prior the commencement of the unit to discuss course information, content, assessment, tutoring requirements for assessments, and marking requirements. You should also receive your class lists, room information for classes and unit outlines at this time.
- **Photocopying** for teaching is available either in the department or the SOPHI office facilities room
- **Student consultation**: You may book a room in SOPHI to consult with students.
- **A Casual Tutors room** is available for all SOPHI tutors. It has limited desk space and so works on a rotating desk system whereby you occupy a desk only for the time that you are in the room. You must keep in mind that this is
a tutors room not a PG research room and is to be shared with all SOPHI tutors. You cannot establish a permanent desk there and you can report any issues with others doing this to your PG rep. Sharing this room is also a way to get to know other tutors in other departments as well as your own.

- **Staff cards** are available to casual tutors. These give you a few more borrowing privileges than the student card does – for example, the library provides a little more access to audio visual material etc.

- **Teaching Contracts** – the SOPHI school finance staff arrange the casual teaching contracts. They will contact you via email when your contract has been drawn up and you need to go into their offices to sign it before you such the teaching session.

- **Blackboard.** Many undergraduate courses have a Blackboard component administered by the course convenor and training for Blackboard is provided by the elearning centre ([http://www.usyd.edu.au/elearning/](http://www.usyd.edu.au/elearning/)).

General enquiries related to teaching administration, such as contracts, should be directed to the Chair of Department or an appropriate School administrator. For the SOPHI staff directory see [http://sydney.edu.au/arts/sophi/about/contact.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/sophi/about/contact.shtml).

**Other resources**

**The Learning Centre**
The Learning Centre runs a range of workshops and courses on research skills, oral communication, and academic reading and writing. Details can be found here: [http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/teaching_learning/](http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/teaching_learning/).

In addition, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences offers a Postgraduate Academic Writing Adviser, Dr Bronwen Dyson, who can work with you one on one on a piece of academic writing, to improve expression, structure and style. All postgraduate research students i are encouraged to make use of this service and an effort is made to fit in all students who request assistance.

Dr Dyson may be consulted by appointment:

**T:** +61 2 9351 7514  
**F:** +61 2 9351 2434  
**E:** bronwen.dyson@sydney.edu.au  
Room S352, John Woolley Building A20, University of Sydney NSW 2006
The Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association
SUPRA provides assistance to postgraduate students for any issues that may confront them over the course of their candidature, and is run by postgraduate students, for postgraduate students. As indicated above their website provides a range of useful resources, including a Survival Manual and a Thesis Guide.

University services and information for students
The University provides a range of services for students, including counseling, health and welfare, and accommodation advice. See http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/student_support.shtml. The Faculty of Arts website also provides important information for postgraduate research students, including enrolment dates, links to scholarship information, assistance with university email, and links to the Faculty handbook (see http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/).