

Higher Degree by Research Admission Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Procedure outlines the requirements for admission to Higher Degree by Research (HDR) courses at the University of Canberra (University).

Section 2 - Scope

(2) The Procedure applies to HDR courses and candidates.

(3) This Procedure does not apply to undergraduate (including Honours) or postgraduate coursework courses covered by the [Admission Policy \(Coursework\)](#).

Section 3 - Policy

(4) Refer to [Higher Degree by Research Admission Policy](#).

Section 4 - Procedure

Application for Admission

(5) Applicants to the University must submit a valid application in the approved format, including all documentation required by the University to assess the applicant for admission to the relevant course.

(6) Documentation supporting the application must be verified as true.

(7) Applicants who provide qualification documentation that is not presented in English must also provide a certified translation of the documents. The qualification document and English translation must be either original or certified as a true copy of the original.

(8) Applications will be assessed against the relevant admission requirements detailed in the [Higher Degree by Research Admission Policy](#) and this Procedure.

(9) Incomplete applications will not be assessed.

Admission Requirements

(10) To demonstrate the skills and knowledge required for admission to an HDR course, applicants must provide evidence of completion of a relevant Award or be assessed for equivalent Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) (see clauses 15-17).

(11) For admission to a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) course, evidence of:

- a. completion of an Australian Bachelor degree with Honours First or Upper Second Class; or

- b. Australian Master by Research course; or
- c. Australian Master by Coursework course with a research component that equates to at least 25% of the degree;
or
- d. a qualification from a tertiary institution or RPL assessed as equivalent to the above.

(12) For admission to a Master by Research course, evidence of:

- a. completion of an Australian Bachelor degree with Honours (any grade); or
- b. an Australian Bachelor degree in the relevant discipline with above average performance; or
- c. a qualification from a tertiary institution or RPL assessed as equivalent to the above.

(13) In addition, applicants for HDR courses must provide:

- a. evidence of capacity and/or aptitude for research; and
- b. evidence of practical or work experience as specified for admission to the particular course published in the Courses and Units Database on the University's website.

(14) Applicants for Professional Doctorate courses or the PhD Clinical Psychology must also fulfill with the admission requirements detailed in the Courses and Units Database on the University's website.

Admission Based on Recognition of Prior Learning

(15) Applicants who do not meet the minimum academic requirements for admission as specified in this Procedure may qualify for admission on the basis of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

(16) RPL is the recognition of learning gained outside the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#). RPL-based admission refers specifically to learning from work or life experience and may include a combination of formal learning and professional experience.

(17) A case for admission based on RPL must be submitted by the Faculty to the Dean, Graduate Research School, and include supporting evidence and a written statement outlining how the applicant's experience is assessed as equivalent to the relevant minimum qualification (see [Guidelines for RPL-based Admission to HDR](#)).

International Applicants

(18) Applications from countries in which sanctions are in force will be assessed for compliance against the United Nations Security Council and [Australian Autonomous Sanctions regulations](#), before an offer of admission will be made.

(19) International applicants must also satisfy Genuine Student and [Genuine Temporary Entrant Requirement](#).

Proficiency in English

(20) There are three categories in which applicants can demonstrate English language proficiency to a level that meets the minimum requirements for admission to an HDR course, detailed below in clauses 23-28.

(21) The PhD Clinical Psychology has specific English language proficiency requirements which are detailed in the Courses and Units Database on the University's website.

(22) The University reserves the right to request that the applicant undertake an English language test in addition to any other evidence of English proficiency provided.

Category One

(23) Applicants are considered to have met the minimum requirements under Category One if they have achieved the requisite result from a recognised English language test.

(24) The University accepts the following English language tests:

- a. International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic
- b. Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet Based Test (TOEFL-iBT)
- c. Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic
- d. Cambridge English Scale: C1 Advanced or C2 Proficiency

Minimum test score required			
IELTS	TOEFL-iBT	PTE Academic	C1 or C2
Overall \geq 6.5 No band below 6.0	Overall \geq 79 Each band \geq 16	Overall \geq 58 Each band \geq 50	Overall \geq 176 Each band \geq 169

(25) Evidence of English proficiency is valid for a period of two years from the date of the test (to the date of application), except for TOEFL-iBT results which are valid for a period of 18 months from the date of the test (to the date of application).

Category Two

(26) Applicants meet the English language requirements under Category Two if they:

- a. were born in Australia, Botswana, Canada, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Samoa (American, Independent State), Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Tonga, Trinidad & Tobago, United Kingdom (including Northern Ireland), United States of America, Zambia or Zimbabwe; and
- b. have completed at least one tertiary qualification from one of the countries or territories listed above, where the language of instruction and assessment of the qualification was English.

(27) Previous study under this category does not expire as evidence of English proficiency.

Category Three

(28) Applicants meet the English language requirements under Category Three if they have completed two years (full time equivalent) study at Bachelor level or a postgraduate qualification assessed as equivalent to an Australian Masters course, in one of the countries or territories listed at Category Two, where the language of instruction and assessment was English.

(29) Previous study under this category is valid as evidence of English proficiency for a period of two years from the date of completion of the qualification (to the date of application).

Making a Case for English Language Equivalency

(30) If an applicant does not meet the English proficiency requirements listed above and is able to provide alternate evidence of English language proficiency, a case for English language equivalency may be made by the host Faculty.

(31) A case for equivalency must be submitted by the Faculty to the Dean, Graduate Research School, and include a written statement of support and supporting evidence (see [Guidelines for English Proficiency Equivalency for HDR Admission](#)).

Offshore Candidature

(32) Applicants who wish to undertake their course partially or completely offshore (outside of Australia) are subject to the admissions requirements in the [Higher Degree by Research Admission Policy](#) and this Procedure, including English language requirements.

(33) The Faculty must assess whether the candidates' proposed project can be successfully undertaken offshore, and the applicant and Faculty must complete an Offshore Candidature Management Plan as part of the admission process, which will consider:

- a. whether the candidate will be able to meet the minimum attendance requirements outlined in the [Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Changes to Candidature Policy](#) or is required to request an exemption;
- b. the availability of appropriate remote supervisor arrangements with an experienced supervisory panel willing to support the remote candidature;
- c. the availability of adequate resources, equipment and facilities to support the proposed research, including reliable internet access, and access to alternate University support services;
- d. the requirement for a contingency plan for completion of the project entirely offshore should the candidate be unable to travel to the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Australia, for the duration of the course or is not approved for a Student Visa.

(34) Detailed guidance on considerations is outlined in the [Guidelines for Managing Offshore or Off-Campus Candidature](#).

Off-Campus Candidature

(35) Domestic candidates are permitted to undertake part of their research away from the University's Bruce Campus, ACT without explicit approval if they comply with the minimum attendance requirements for their course (see [Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Changes to Candidature Policy](#)).

(36) Domestic candidates who request to undertake their entire candidature off-campus (remotely) will be required to request an exemption to the minimum attendance requirements (see [Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Changes to Candidature Policy](#)) and the Faculty must assess whether the candidates' proposed project can be successfully completed off-campus, and consider the provisions detailed in the [Guidelines for Managing Offshore or Off-Campus Candidature](#).

(37) International candidates on a Student Visa are required to remain enrolled on campus at the University's Bruce Campus, ACT for the duration of their course, unless their research requires them to reside away from campus, or unless they have been given approval to study offshore.

Applicants Transferring from Another Institution

(38) Candidates who have commenced an HDR course at another Australian institution and apply to transfer their research to the University are subject to the admissions requirements detailed in the [Higher Degree by Research Admission Policy](#) and this Procedure.

(39) In addition, the candidate must provide:

- a. evidence of satisfactory progress at their current institution (via provision of referees' reports, copies of progress reports and evidence of milestone completion, including confirmation of candidature if applicable);
- b. a full research proposal, including an outline of expected resources and conditions required to complete the research (e.g. field trips, specialised computer software etc.) and a timeline for completion in consultation with their proposed supervisor;

- c. work completed to date towards the research/thesis (e.g. draft chapters);
- d. an estimated submission date for the thesis; and
- e. an academic transcript or letter from their previous institution detailing their HDR enrolment load (EFTSL) at the date of application (full-time equivalent) or [Research Training Program](#) funding consumed to date.

(40) Candidature undertaken at another Australian institution towards an HDR course within a three-year period prior to the commencement of the University course will reduce the total period of candidature of the course to which they are admitted.

(41) For domestic candidates, prior candidature undertaken at an Australian institution within the prior three-year period is used to calculate the remaining [Research Training Program](#) funding available for their course. Information on [Research Training Program](#) eligibility and entitlements is available on the [Research Training Program](#) website.

Offers of Admission

(42) The Faculty Executive Dean, on advice from Associate Dean, Research and/or HDR Convener, is responsible for recommending admission to an HDR course to an Admissions Officer.

(43) Conditional offers of admission can only be made under the following circumstances:

- a. the applicant's demonstrated English language proficiency fails to meet the minimum standards to a specified level (see clause 46);
- b. the applicant is awaiting qualification results or course completion (e.g. Honours result); or
- c. the applicant is yet to provide verified documents (e.g. transcripts, passport), provided that unverified copies have been submitted in the interim.

(44) Applicants must meet all conditions outlined in their Letter of Offer before the University will accept them into the course.

(45) An offer of admission will lapse if not accepted by the acceptance date specified in the Letter of Offer.

Offers Conditional on English Language

(46) Applicants who have met the academic requirements for a course but have not met the minimum English proficiency requirements, are eligible to receive a conditional or packaged offer, as outlined below:

Test score provided	Packaged Offer/Condition
IELTS 5.5 overall and no less than 5.0 in any band (or equivalent)	Package: 20-week Academic English program + HDR course Condition: Completion of 20-week Academic English program
IELTS 6.0 overall and no less than 5.5 in any band (or equivalent)	Package: 10-week Academic English program + HDR course Condition: Completion of 10-week Academic English program
IELTS 5.5 overall and no less than 5.0 in any band (or equivalent)	Condition: Must provide English language test that meets the minimum requirements for entry, within six months from the date of offer.

(47) Applicants who provide an English language test with results lower than IELTS 5.5 overall or 5.0 in any band (or an equivalent result in a recognised English language test) will not be considered for admission to an HDR course.

Deferrals

(48) Offers of admission may be deferred for a minimum of six months and a maximum of twelve months from the course commencement date in the Letter of Offer, subject to Faculty approval. The applicant must advise the

University that they wish to defer prior to the acceptance deadline detailed in the Letter of Offer.

(49) International applicants with a deferred status are guaranteed admission subject to the following conditions:

- a. the applicant's eligibility for admission does not change;
- b. the deferment period is no longer than twelve months from the course commencement date on the original Letter of Offer;
- c. the University still offers the course to which the applicant was originally admitted. Where the University no longer offers the course in the original area of research, the applicant may be offered a place in another comparable course provided they would have been eligible for admission to the course when the initial offer of place was made;
- d. the fee type status of the applicant remains unchanged;
- e. the Faculty has appropriate supervision available; a different supervisory panel may be assigned to the student depending on available resources when the student commences their HDR course following a period of deferment, and the applicant may be required to revise their research proposal at the time of commencing their HDR course, as directed by the appointed supervisory panel.

(50) A person who has a deferred offer but who wishes to obtain admission to a different course must complete a new application for admission to the alternative course.

Section 5 - Roles and Responsibilities

Exercise of Delegations

(51) Where the approving authority is unavailable to make an academic or administrative decision as required by this Procedure, or it is not appropriate to do so (e.g. conflict of interest), authority may only be exercised by a person appointed to the position on a temporary basis (acting) or a delegate with management responsibility for the functions of the position.

(52) Exceptions to this Procedure may be approved by Dean, Graduate Research School.

Who	Responsibilities
Dean, Graduate Research School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve an application for RPL-based admission to an HDR course.• Approve a case for English proficiency equivalency for admission to an HDR course.• Approve an exemption to the minimum attendance requirements to allow for offshore/off-campus candidature.
Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommend RPL-based admission to an HDR course to the Dean, Graduate Research School.• Recommend a case for English proficiency equivalency for admission to an HDR course to the Dean, Graduate Research School.• Approve a request for deferral.
Faculty Executive Dean	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommend admission to an HDR course to an Admissions Officer.

Section 6 - Implementation and Reporting

(53) Graduate Research School will monitor the admission of applicants to HDR courses and report to Graduate Research Committee and University Research Committee each semester.

(54) Exceptions to this Procedure will be reported to Academic Board biannually.

Section 7 - Definitions

Term	Definition
Award	See legislation including University of Canberra (Admission) Rules 2022
Higher Degree by Research (HDR)	Means a degree of master by research or a degree of doctor by research, see University of Canberra Courses and Awards (Courses of Study) Rules 2023
Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidate or student	A student enrolled in a University of Canberra Courses and Awards (Courses of Study) Rules 2023
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Learning acquired through means other than formal study.
Australian Qualifications Framework	National policy for regulated qualifications in the Australian education and training system.
Admissions Officer	Means a University officer appointed by Academic Board, under the University of Canberra (Admission) Rules 2022 , to receive applications for admission and admit applicants to a course who have met all requirements for admission.
Research Training Program	As described in the Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2017
University	University of Canberra ABN 81 633 873 13

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Michelle Lincoln Deputy Vice-Chancellor
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