Research Degrees Quality Assurance Framework

This appendix is to be read in conjunction with Policy AB-63: Quality Assurance and Improvement in Research Degrees.

The Research Degrees Quality Assurance Framework (Framework) covers four major areas that are monitored annually to evaluate the quality of research degree programs:

1. The **research degree program** in which the research degree student is enrolled, including the:

    a. process of independent research which leads to a thesis or exegesis; and

    b. provision of adequate physical and financial resources to enable timely completion of research degrees.

2. The **supervision process,** supervisor professional development activities, and Register of Current Research Degree Supervisors to ensure quality supervision of research degree students.

3. The **research culture** supporting the research degree student to completion, which includes the full range of support services and research and transferrable skills development activities provided throughout the University to promote wellbeing and academic success.

4. The **policy environment** encompassing research policies and procedures, guidelines, the program approval process, and the administrative support structures and processes to implement the policies and procedures.

A. Research degree program

Component	Standard(s):	Quality Indicator(s):
Allocation of resources and facilities	Resources provided to research degree students, in line with University guidelines.	Resources provided to research degree students in accordance with Appendix AB-58 AD1: Minimum Resources for Research Degree Students.
Research Proposal confirmed (Confirmation of Candidature)	Research Proposal submitted within the first six (6) months of full-time equivalent candidacy. Research degree students transferred from provisional enrolment after approval of the Research Proposal.	Number of research degree students having candidacy confirmed within nine (9) months of full-time equivalent candidacy.
Reviews of Progress	At least two (2) documented Reviews of Progress to be undertaken annually between the research degree student and supervisor.	Number of Reviews of Progress received by Student and Academic Services. Number of research degree students re-enrolled.
Completions	Research degree students complete within the allocated time for the degree. Research degree students complete an oral defence. Research degree students complete with a favourable examination outcome.	Number of research degree students completing within candidature. Number of research degree students completing an oral defence. Number of research degree students completing with an examination outcome of 1, 2, 3a.

B. Supervision process

Component	Standard(s):	Quality Indicator(s):
Supervision	Workload allocation to Supervisors in line with University guidelines. Principal Supervisors and Co-Supervisors to be members of the Register of Current Higher Degree by Research Supervisors (Register).	Number of research degree students per Supervisor as reflected by the Register. Benchmarking with other universities, in particular ATN partners. Student satisfaction with Supervisors as indicated in PREQ and other research degree student surveys.
Supervisor Professional Development	Supervisors (including Adjuncts) are provided with opportunities to develop skills and attributes to support their research degree students. Deans of Research (or delegates) to monitor annual participation at supervisor professional development activities every three (3) years. Supervisors attend ongoing professional development.	Program of supervisor development activities available each year. Access to online resources available to support face-to-face program. Evaluation of University-run supervisor professional development activities. Supervisor professional development is recorded every three (3) years and monitored by Academic Units.
Research Degree Coordination	Workload allocation to Research Degree Coordinators in line with approved Position Description. Provision of professional development activities to Research Degree Coordinators. Research Degree Coordinators attend professional development activities.	Timely completion of research degree students annual reports by Academic Unit. Evaluation of professional development activities.

C. Research culture

Component	Standard(s):	Quality Indicator(s):
Research Degree Student Experience	University and Academic Unit-specific opportunities are available for research degree students to provide feedback throughout candidature. Research degree student experience is monitored throughout candidature.	Student feedback provided in Reviews of Progress. Student experience and satisfaction as indicated in candidature surveys.
Research and transferrable skills development activities (UniSA*EDGE*)	University and Academic Unit-specific research and transferrable skills development activities to be provided for research degree students through UniSA*EDGE.* Research and transferrable skills development activities to be provided across all four (4) UniSA*EDGE* domains: research enterprise, enterprising futures, skills in practice, and careers in focus. Supervisors and research degree students to negotiate specific activities tailored to the requirements of the research degree and research project. Research degree students are provided opportunities to present their research in fora appropriate to their discipline. Research degree students produce research outputs appropriate to their discipline.	Number of research degree students participating in UniSA*EDGE*. Evaluation of research and transferrable skills development activities. Number of research outputs by research degree students. Number of internships completed by research degree students.
Support Services	Support services are available to all research degree students to support wellbeing and academic success. - Student and Academic Services - Research and Innovation Services - Information Strategy and Technology Services - Teaching Innovation Unit - The Library - Student Engagement Unit – Access and Inclusion, Counselling - USASA	All service providers contribute to Orientation and the research and transferrable skills development program. Resources available to research degree students in accordance with Appendix AB-58 AD1: Minimum Resources for Research Degree Students.

D. Policy Environment

Component	Standard(s):	Quality Indicator(s):
Policies	Policies and associated procedures, and guidelines are in place to support management of research degree programs.	Scheduled, regular review of all research degree policies, procedures and guidelines are conducted as follows: • Policies reviewed every five (5) years. • Procedures and guidelines reviewed every three (3) years.
Structures and Roles	Structures and roles are in place across the University to support management of research degree programs. Structures: • Academic Board • Research Leadership Committee • Research Degrees Committee • Academic Unit research committees (chaired by Deans of Research or delegates) Roles: • Dean of Graduate Studies • Professorial Leads (Research Education) • Research Degree Coordinators • Supervisory Panels	Clear and transparent responsibilities of each structure and role in the management of research degree programs.
Program Approval Process	Program approval documentation and processes are consistent across all contexts and modes of delivery. Approval trail: • Academic Unit Board • Academic Unit/Institute research committee • Research Degrees Committee • Research Leadership Committee • Academic Board	Clear and transparent process required for program approval.

Program Review	Research Degrees Committee selects aspects of research degree programs for focus of review in any one year, for example participation rates in targeted equity groups, examination processes, scholarships, admissions criteria, thesis presentation, coursework component of professional doctorates, assessment criteria. Reviews are to include international and Australian benchmarks for good practice. Research Degrees Committee may also select particular programs for review, for example Master of Research, Professional Doctorates, Doctor of Philosophy, PhD by Portfolio of Publications.	Trends in enrolments and by funding source. Student satisfaction as indicated in PREQ, and other surveys. Participation rates of research degree students in targeted equity groups, in particular Aboriginal research degree students and the number of women in STEM disciplines.
Essential Information	Clear and consistent Letters of Offer provided to research degree students. Clear and consistent candidature and scholarship information provided to research degree students. Clear and consistent information on the Research Degree Graduate Qualities, and Statements of Agreement available to research degree students and those involved in research degree management. Responsibilities of research degree students under *Guideline AB-58 AD10: Key Responsibilities in Research Degrees Management and Supervision* made available to research degree students. University-wide Orientation and local area inductions arranged and advised to new research degree students. Academic Unit research degree information kept up-to-date and provided to new research candidates. Up-to-date Student and Academic Services Research Degrees websites.	Research degree students receive essential information early in candidature. Evaluation of University-wide Orientation sessions. Signed Statement of Agreement recorded on research degree student's record. Review of Progress meetings documented in accordance with Research Degree Graduate Qualities.