



Research Degrees Admission and Enrolment

Context and Purpose

The University seeks high quality students for research degree programs and ensures that research expertise and high quality research projects are available to enable applicants to progress their application and enrolment. This procedure outlines the processes for admitting and enrolling research degree students for their research degree program, including changes to enrolment.

This procedure must be read in conjunction with Policy AB-58: [Research Degrees](#) and its Definitions.

Responsibility

Research degree students, supervisors, and staff associated with the support, coordination and leadership of research degree programs are responsible for understanding and complying with Policy AB-58: [Research Degrees](#) and this procedure.

Applicants are responsible to ensure they follow the prescribed application process and provide all the required documentation within specified timeframes.

Student and Academic Services are responsible for maintaining the student record. Decisions and outcomes made in accordance with this procedure must be documented and a copy provided to Student and Academic Services to be retained on the student record.

All other procedural responsibilities are detailed in this procedure.

Confidentiality

Refer to [M-1 Privacy Policy](#).

Procedure

A. Application for admission: Doctor of Philosophy, Professional Doctorate and Master of Research

1. An application for admission to undertake research in a research project must be made through the research degree application portal and must meet the specified requirements for the research project that is the basis of the application.
2. All applications must include:
 - a. evidence of prior academic study, including the standard achieved (GPA, awards and/or rankings),
 - b. evidence of research capability, including research education, projects completed and patents and/or publications achieved,
 - c. [evidence of fluency in the language or languages](#) required for admission to a research degree,
 - d. a curriculum vitae and evidence of the applicant's skills, knowledge and abilities as required by the research project for which the application is made,
 - e. citizenship and/or [visa status](#),

- f. a clear statement of the research topic the applicant proposes to pursue and its relationship to the approved research project,
 - g. the names of two (2) referees, and
 - h. where creative works are to be included, an indication of the relative size and nature of the written and creative components (i.e. portfolio).
3. The Principal Supervisor will recommend admission to the research degree program taking into consideration the following factors:
- a. the qualifications and experience of the applicant,
 - b. the requirements of the research project,
 - c. results of formal and/or informal interviews of the applicant by the Selection Panel for the research project,
 - d. referees' reports,

In making offers for admissions, the University may also take into account relevant legislative or Government policy requirements.

4. The Dean of Research (or delegate) will approve or reject admission to the research degree program and may set conditions on an offer of admission.
5. An offer of admission will be provided in writing from the Registrar and Director: Student and Academic Services, together with instructions to the research degree student on how to accept the offer. Correspondence from other parties does not constitute an offer of admission.

B. Application for admission: Doctor of Philosophy by Portfolio of Publications

6. An application for admission must be made via the research degree application portal and include a research statement, prepared in negotiation with the proposed Principal Supervisor. The research statement should be prepared in accordance with Guideline AB-58 AD4: [Preparation of Research Statements for Doctor of Philosophy \(by Portfolio of Publications\)](#).
7. The applicant must provide evidence of their standing as an established researcher. Accordingly, the application will include the following:
- a. a copy of the applicant's curriculum vitae,
 - b. copies of the publications, in chronological order, which are intended for inclusion in the thesis together with appropriate proof of peer review, e.g. government requirements or internal UniSA publication guidelines. The published work intended to be included in the thesis will not normally be more than 10 years old at the time of application and must have been published in English, or if not, a certified translation must be supplied,
 - c. a statement that published works or their contents have not been included in any other work leading to an academic award,
 - d. a statement making clear the extent of the applicant's contribution to each jointly authored publication. All authors for each jointly authored publication must sign a declaration that demonstrates the percentage of their contribution for each publication,

- e. a statement and evidence to enable assessment of ethical considerations, and
 - f. a commitment by the applicant to work regularly on the approved program of study and to maintain regular contact with the supervisors and Research Degree Coordinator.
8. An application for admission will be assessed by the Research Degree Examinations and Quality Panel (the Panel) of Research Degrees Committee. The following factors will be taken into consideration when assessing the application:
- a. the qualifications and experience of the applicant,
 - b. the detailed research statement submitted by the applicant which may include any additional research required (refer to Guideline AB-58 AD4: [Preparation of Research Statements for Doctor of Philosophy \(by Portfolio of Publications\)](#)). Any additional research should only be directed towards the development of the integrating theme,
 - c. a statement from the Supervisory Panel agreeing to supervise the research degree student in the proposed program,
 - d. the suitability of the proposed program of study and the research project for a PhD degree,
 - e. whether the proposed program of study conforms to the University's research profile and mission,
 - f. whether adequate supervision and physical and financial resources are available,
 - g. the assessment of ethical considerations, and
 - h. the assessment of intellectual property considerations.
9. The Panel will consider the submission and where, in the opinion of the Panel the applicant:
- a. satisfies the entry requirements, and
 - b. has a substantial record of ongoing research and publications, and
 - c. has submitted a portfolio that is prima facie worthy of examination for a PhD by Portfolio, notwithstanding the requirement for a substantive written component as described in Procedure AB-58 P6: [Research Degrees Thesis Preparation and Examination](#),
- the Dean of Graduate Studies, as chair of the Panel will make a recommendation for admission, and may set conditions on an offer of admission.
10. An offer of admission will be provided in writing from the Registrar and Director: Student and Academic Services, together with instructions to the applicant on how to accept the offer. Correspondence from other parties does not constitute an offer of admission.
11. The University reserves the right to seek referee reports.

C. Initial enrolment/enrolment deferral

12. An applicant who accepts an offer of admission to a research degree program must commence within the time specified in the letter of offer unless a written request for a deferral of enrolment is approved by the Principal Supervisor, and such additional approvals as set out in the letter of offer or terms and conditions of scholarships, if any.
13. Any written request for a deferral must be made by the applicant no later than one (1) week prior to the expected date of commencement. Research degree applicants who do not submit a written request to the Principal Supervisor at least one (1) week prior to their approved start date are ineligible for enrolment deferral.
14. The Principal Supervisor may approve the deferral of initial enrolment for a period not exceeding six (6) months, after consultation with the Dean of Research (or delegate). A request for deferral of enrolment exceeding six (6) months must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.
15. Failure to enrol within the specified time may result in the applicant forfeiting their offer.
16. A research degree commences from the date of the research degree student's initial enrolment.
17. Orientation is a compulsory requirement for all research degree students and includes an on campus Orientation Session or the completion of the online Orientation Program, and completion of the online Research Integrity training within six (6) weeks of commencing the degree.
18. Research degree students enrolled in the PhD by Portfolio of Publications will complete the Statement of Agreement within two (2) weeks of commencing the degree.

D. Provisional enrolment

19. Research degree students are enrolled provisionally until the requirements for Confirmation of Candidature are met (refer to Procedure AB-58 P3: Research Degrees Student Progression).
20. Professional Doctorate by Research students are required to have successfully completed 27 units of the coursework component, approved by the Program Director.
21. Research Degrees Committee may require a research degree student to enrol in courses or activities at this University which support the research degree. Coursework requirements in each Academic Unit will be planned between the Principal Supervisor and student and included in the Research Induction Plan and Statement of Agreement.

E. Conditions of enrolment

22. Conditions of enrolment will be in accordance with Policy A-48: [Enrolment](#) and subject to additional requirements as outlined in clauses B.9. and C.12.
23. Subject to clauses B and C, an enrolled research degree student will remain enrolled in each calendar year following initial enrolment until:
 - a. all components of the research degree program have been completed, the final thesis is submitted, and the student is conferred with the degree, or
 - b. withdrawal, suspension or termination of the enrolment.

24. Continued enrolment is subject to the research degree student's satisfactory progress (refer to Procedure AB-58 P3: [Research Degrees Student Progression](#)). Where coursework is included in a research program the student must also make satisfactory progress in that component of the program.
25. Research degree students who do not pay their fees and charges by the due date may have their enrolment in future study periods cancelled. Students will not be permitted to re-enrol in the following academic year, be issued with a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE), obtain an academic transcript, or graduate until all outstanding fees and charges are repaid in accordance with Policy A-47: [Student Fees and Loans](#).
26. A research degree student required to undertake major revision of the thesis after examination may be required to pay fees for the period required to undertake corrections where the 4-year allocation of time for the completion of the PhD has lapsed and no exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated.
27. Where progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory, the Supervisory Panel and Research Degree Coordinator may recommend suspension of the enrolment of a research degree student in accordance with Procedure AB-58 P3: [Research Degrees Student Progression](#), clause E.

F. Change of load between full-time and part-time enrolment

28. A research degree student may apply to the Research Degree Coordinator to change their enrolment load from full-time to part-time, or vice versa.
29. Requests for change of load must be considered by the Principal Supervisor and approved by the Research Degree Coordinator, and if approved will be confirmed in writing. Research degree students must not assume that their request has been approved unless they have been notified in writing by Student and Academic Services.
30. For international student visa holders, a change of load from full-time to part-time can only be approved if it is part of an intervention strategy following a Review of Progress in accordance with Procedure AB-58 P3: [Research Degrees Student Progression \(clause 21.d.\)](#), or if they return permanently to their home country and wish to continue their enrolment as an external student. This will result in the cancellation of any active CoE which may affect their student visa.
31. Research degree students receiving a stipend are usually enrolled full-time. A change of load from full-time to part-time may be considered by the relevant Dean of Research (or delegate), where the research project can be accommodated part-time (refer to Policy AB-59: [Research Degrees and Research Training Program \(RTP\) Scholarships](#) and Procedure AB-59 P1: [Research Degrees Scholarship and Research Training Program \(RTP\) Scholarships](#), clause C).

G. Change of mode between internal and external enrolment

32. Subject to any relevant visa requirements, a research degree student may apply to change their mode of enrolment from internal to external, or vice versa, by application to the relevant Research Degree Coordinator.
33. Requests for change of mode of enrolment will be considered by the Principal Supervisor and Research Degree Coordinator, and if approved will be confirmed in writing. Research degree students must not assume that their request has been approved unless they have been notified in writing by Student and Academic Services.

34. International student visa holders must be enrolled internally. If an international student permanently remains in their home country and wishes to continue their enrolment they must apply for a change of mode. This will result in cancellation of any active CoE which may affect their student visa.
35. University research degree scholarship conditions normally require research degree students to reside in South Australia, therefore students on a scholarship who apply for a change of mode from internal to external must seek approval from the relevant Dean of Research (or delegate).

H. Studying away from the University

36. A research degree student may apply to study interstate or overseas for up to six (6) months, in support of their research degree program. This may include undertaking field work or research, conducting interviews, visiting a member of the Supervisory Panel, consulting with experts in the field of research, accessing equipment and other resources which cannot be found on campus, and where students are jointly supervised or enrolled in collaborative PhD programs completing research at the partner institution.
37. Research degree students travelling to attend an international conference must also complete a study away from the University and Business Travel Request form.
38. The application form to study away from the University and Business Travel Request must be submitted in a reasonable time frame prior to the date of intended departure.
39. The Principal Supervisor and Research Degree Coordinator will approve or decline the application to study away from the University within ten (10) working days. Student and Academic Services will notify the applicant and Supervisory Panel of the outcome. A request to study away from the University will generally not be considered or approved during the provisional enrolment period.
40. Any application for Recreation Leave while overseas should be completed in accordance with Procedure AB-58 P4: [Research Degrees Leave](#), and submitted with the application for studying away from the University.
41. For international students, approval to study away from the University is subject to student visa requirements.
42. Enrolment will be maintained during the approved period of time that the research degree student is undertaking study away from the University.
43. A research degree student cannot use the length of time spent undertaking study away from the University as a reason for either an extension of time allocated to complete the research degree or scholarship.
44. Any research degree student approved to study away from the University must:
 - a. complete any agreement required with the overseas institution;
 - b. comply with the requirements of the overseas institution;
 - c. undertake appropriate health and vaccination advice;
 - d. consult regularly the Australian Government's [travel advisory](#);
 - e. ensure appropriate insurance cover is held; and
 - f. adhere to the University's [travel guidelines](#).

I. Concurrent enrolment

45. A research degree student may not enrol in a program leading to the award of another degree at this or another institution while enrolled in a research degree program at this University, except when it is unlikely to delay program completion and where the second program complements their current program.
46. For international student visa holders, enrolling in a second program is dependent upon whether the student will remain able to complete their research degree program within the duration of their CoE and maintain satisfactory progress, in accordance with Procedure AB-58 P3: [Research Degrees Student Progression](#), clause B.
47. The research degree student must apply for approval from relevant Dean of Research (or delegate) for permission to enrol in a second program, with evidence of academic achievement that indicates that the studies to be undertaken complement the student's research program and will not impact adversely on the progress of the research degree. The Supervisory Panel and Research Degree Coordinator must provide statements of support for the proposed concurrent arrangement.
48. Approval, if granted or declined, is conveyed in writing to the research degree student within ten days, and to the Supervisory Panel, Research Degree Coordinator, and is noted on the student record. Approval for concurrent enrolment may include additional conditions on enrolment, including limitations on paid employment.
49. In each Review of Progress, the supervisors will be required to advise if the concurrent enrolment has impacted adversely on the research degree student's progress in the program. If progress is not satisfactory, approval for concurrent enrolment will be rescinded.

J. Time allocated for research degree completion

50. Research degree students and their supervisors are expected to develop a research project which will enable the student to submit the thesis for examination within the maximum time allocated for completion of the award, from initial enrolment.
 - a. Research doctoral programs are structured for thesis submission in three (3) years and allocated a maximum of four (4) years to complete their award.
 - b. Master of Research students are allocated a maximum of two (2) years to complete their award.
51. The periods of maximum time allocated to complete the research degree program includes provisional enrolment, any periods of enrolment for any previous research degree programs prior to transfer, time taken to complete an internship related to their research project and exclude periods of approved deferment and approved leave of absence.
52. Subject to clause 54, in exceptional circumstances, in order to complete the degree requirements and/or thesis submission, the Dean of Research (or delegate) may approve extra time in addition to the maximum duration of enrolment stated in clause 50. Extra time will be subject to the payment of any applicable tuition fees, availability of supervision and subject to progress being planned and monitored on a prescribed basis by the Dean of Research (or delegate).
53. Research degree students may apply to the Dean of Research (or delegate) by using the request form. The Dean of Research (or delegate) will approve or decline the request. Students must not assume that their request for additional time has been resolved until they have been notified in writing by Student and Academic Services.

54. For international student visa holders:
- a. International student visa holders must complete their degree within the expected duration of their program, as specified in their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE).
 - b. Extra time will only be considered on the grounds of:
 - i. demonstrable evidence of compassionate and compelling circumstances as defined in the [National Code](#).
 - ii. an intervention strategy following a Review of Progress; or
 - iii. an approved leave of absence.
 - c. Where extra time has been granted under clause 52, a record of the variation and the reasons for the variation will be recorded on the student record.
 - d. Where extra time has been granted, Student and Academic Services will issue a new CoE and notify the Australian Government of the approved variation.
 - e. Where a research degree student does not complete within the maximum time allocated for completion of their program as specified on the CoE, and extra time has not been approved, the University will not issue a new COE.
 - f. Where a research degree student transferring from another Australian Higher Education Provider has prior enrolment, this prior enrolment will be deducted from the total program length and remaining time to complete the program. If prior enrolment reduces the length of the program and CoE, this will be included in the letter of offer.
 - g. Despite any other circumstances, the University may cancel a research degree student's CoE or refuse to issue a new CoE if the student is refused a student visa or their visa is cancelled.
55. The minimum period of enrolment which may be approved by the Research Degrees Committee for a research degree will normally be not less than:
- a. 18 months full-time equivalent load for a Doctoral candidate [excluding PhD (by Portfolio of Publications)] or
 - b. 12 months full-time equivalent load for a Master of Research candidate, or
 - c. 12 months full-time equivalent load for a Doctoral candidate (by Portfolio of Publications).

In exceptional circumstances, the period of minimum enrolment may be reduced by the Research Degrees Committee, on a recommendation from the Dean of Research (or delegate).

Definitions

Academic Unit is a major organisational unit with responsibility for academic programs. At UniSA, there are seven Academic Units: UniSA: Allied Health & Human Performance; UniSA: Business; UniSA: Clinical & Health Sciences; UniSA: Creative; UniSA: Education Futures; UniSA: Justice & Society; and UniSA: STEM.

Confirmation of Candidature is a structured review of the initial progress of a research degree student's research activity, including the Statement of Agreement and Research Proposal, that confirms the period of provisional enrolment has been successfully completed. Following Confirmation of Candidature the research degree student will continue in their program on an ongoing basis for the remainder of the research degree.

Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) is a form issued by the University to international students studying in Australia on a student visa, for student visa purposes.

Creative work(s) is a product of human creative skill or its application, for example a painting, performance, novel, or multi-media presentation.

Curriculum vitae is a document that provides an overview of education, qualifications and past positions held.

Dean of Research is the research leadership role in each Academic Unit who enacts the University's research strategy and is responsible for the oversight of research degree programs in their Academic Unit. The Dean of Research may delegate the leadership and management of research education and related activities to a Professorial Lead with portfolio responsibility for the research degrees in the Academic Unit.

Enrolment is the process by which persons who have been admitted to a University program are formally registered to undertake one or more courses within their program as either commencing or continuing students.

Enterprise Agreement / Collective Agreement is the current University of South Australia Enterprise Agreement and the University of South Australia Senior Staff Collective Agreement.

Exceptional circumstances are unexpected and beyond the control of the student. These circumstances have a significant impact on the progress of the student's research project and/or the student's well-being. Exceptional circumstances may include: medical (serious illness or injury), family, personal, employment or program-related circumstances, and major political upheaval or natural disaster in an international students home country requiring emergency travel.

Form refers to all online and paper-based forms and applications.

Principal Supervisor is a university academic staff member or adjunct who has primary responsibility for guiding the postgraduate research undertaken by a designated research degree student and for overseeing the progress of that student towards completion of their research degree. The Principal Supervisor is normally responsible for decisions and processes as detailed in relevant procedures, including convening the Supervisory Panel for reviews of research degree student progress, and consultation on the research project.

Publications are academic articles and papers, normally prepared for quality peer-reviewed journals, or book chapters, or, where appropriate, exhibitions and/or creative works.

Research Degrees Committee is a sub-committee of Research Leadership Committee and has delegated authority in matters relating to the research education and training strategy and the management and administration of research degrees. This includes responsibility for making decisions on each candidate's completion of all requirements for the award of a research degree and for recommending to the University Council that the degree be awarded.

Research Degree Coordinator is a member of academic staff, appointed by the Dean of Research in an Academic Unit, who has responsibility for pastoral care of research degree students. The Research Degree Coordinator convenes Confirmation and Reviews of Progress, and acts in accordance with Policy AB-58 Research Degrees and associated procedures.

Research Degree Examinations and Quality Panel is the panel convened by the University's Research Degrees Committee to assess and determine complex academic matters with regard to research degree students.

Research degree student is an individual enrolled in a research degree.

Research degrees include Master of Research, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), PhD by Portfolio of Publications, and Professional Doctorates. Honours degree and other postgraduate coursework degrees are not research degrees.

Research project is a peer-reviewed and University approved statement of a research program, including designated resources, and an appropriate team of research supervisors.

Selection Panel is appointed by the Dean of Research in the Academic Unit to select students for a research project. The Selection Panel normally includes supervisors and the Research Degree Coordinator.

Staff member is an individual employed by the University under its Enterprise Agreement or Collective Agreement, and also includes adjuncts, visiting academics and guest lecturers, and volunteers, whether they are paid or unpaid.

Supervisors are members of the University Community who have oversight and/or direction of the work of staff or students.

Supervisory Panel is a team, usually comprising three (3) to five (5) members, who are responsible for providing supervision to a research degree student. The Panel must include a minimum of two (2) UniSA supervisors, one (1) of whom will be the Principal Supervisor. Supervisory Panels can also include experts from other disciplines and advisors, where appropriate for the research project.

University Community refers to all students and staff members of the University including honorary title holders, adjuncts, visiting academics, guest lecturers and volunteers who are contributing to the work of the University but who are not staff members.

Further Assistance:

[Student and Academic Services](#)

Related Documentation:

Policy AB-58: [Research Degrees](#)

Policy AB-59: [Research Degrees and Research Training Program \(RTP\) Scholarships](#)

Policy A-47: [Student Fees and Loans](#)

Policy A-48: [Enrolment](#)

Procedure AB-58 P3: [Research Degrees Student Progression](#)

Procedure AB-58 P4: [Research Degrees Leave](#)

Procedure AB-58 P6: [Research Degrees Thesis Preparation and Examination](#)

Procedure AB-59 P1: [Research Degrees and Research Training Program \(RTP\) Scholarships](#)

Appendix AB-58 AD1: [Minimum Resources for Research Degree Students](#)

Guideline AB-58 AD4: [Preparation of Research Statements for Doctor of Philosophy \(by Portfolio of Publications\)](#).

Officer Responsible for Update and Review: Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research and Enterprise

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Academic Board, 25 February 2022

Academic Board, 26 November 2022

Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Enterprise, 11 August 2023 (minor amendments)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Enterprise, 26 October 2023 (minor amendments)

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