



Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education

GUIDELINE

Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Qualifying

Date of approval	6 August 2014	Approved by	Head of Higher Education and Research
Date of effect	August 2014	Current to	August 2017
Relates to Policy	Higher Degree by Research Program Rules	Version	2014 v1.1
Policy Owner	Higher Education and Research Division		
Contact Officer	Higher Degree by Research Coordinator		

1. Outline

1.1 There are a number of steps and requirements associated with the HDR qualifying process. These steps and requirements are outlined in this guideline to support Candidate's engaged in this process and to ensure Institute compliance with the Rules of the Masters Degree of Indigenous Perspectives by Research and the PhD of Indigenous Perspectives. The Higher Education and Research Division will coordinate the HDR qualifying process.

2. Summary

2.1. This guideline is intended to provide procedural details to support Candidates with the qualifying process and ensure Institute compliance with the Masters Degree of Indigenous Perspectives by Research Rules and the PhD of Indigenous Perspectives Rules. The Rules state that on acceptance of an offer of admission to a HDR program, candidates are required to enrol in a Qualifying Unit. Only on satisfactory completion of the Qualifying Unit can Candidates enrol in the Thesis Units.

2.2. This guideline applies to HDR Candidates at Batchelor Institute, in line with the Masters Degree of Indigenous Perspectives by Research Rules and PhD of Indigenous Perspectives Rules. It outlines requirements and timeframes to complete the *Individual Candidature Research Plan (ICRP)*, *Supervision Agreement*, and *Research Proposal Presentation to a Qualifying Panel* within the period stated in the rules for HDR programs and outlines the steps required for commencing HDR Candidates to qualify

Qualifying Period – there is no minimum time to complete the Qualifying Unit requirements however the following time period is suggested.

Standard timeframes for completion of the Qualifying unit are:

Research Program	Full-time enrolment	Part-time enrolment
Masters by Research	6 months (one Semester)	12 months (2 Semesters)
PhD	12 months (2 Semesters)	24 months (4 Semesters)

For Doctor of Philosophy degrees the Qualifying Unit should be completed within the first 12 months of full time enrolment. For Masters by Research degrees the Qualifying Unit should be completed within the first 6 months of full time enrolment.

3. Guideline details

3.1 Formation of the Supervisory Panel and Supervision Agreement

The Supervision Agreement provides a mechanism to assist Candidates and their Supervisors to define the boundaries of their working relationship. The steps include formation of a Supervisory Panel, and outline the roles and responsibilities of the Candidate, the Primary Supervisor and the Supervisory Panel Members.

The commencing HDR Candidate and their Primary Supervisor discuss their respective roles and responsibilities. An *HDR05-Primary Supervisor/Candidate Agreement* provides a template for doing this and should be completed in the first 3 months for a full-time Candidate's commencement of the qualifying process (or a part-time equivalent).

Together the Primary Supervisor and Candidate identify potential Panel Members to participate in the delivery of the Candidate's HDR supervision and research training. The primary responsibility for approaching Panel Members lies with the Primary Supervisor in consultation with the Candidate. While it is encouraged that Panel Members are identified in the early periods of candidature, Panel Members may be included at any stage of candidature, with new appointments possible throughout candidature.

Candidates should have a Primary Supervisor who has previously supervised a HDR Candidate to successful completion. It is recommended that the Supervisory Panel includes two academics with appropriate discipline specific knowledge and at least one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander member.

To be formally appointed to a Candidates Supervisory team Panel Members must complete, in consultation with the Candidate the *HDR06-Panel Supervisor Agreement* and be approved by the Research Committee for inclusion on the Institute Register of Supervisors. This appointment and Registration process is managed by the HDR Coordinator.

The Research Committee considers and approves the *HDR05-Primary Supervisor/Candidate Agreement* and the *HDR06-Panel Supervisor Agreement* as appropriate. Such consideration may include the expertise, tenure and other time

commitments or the proposed makeup and existing membership of the Supervisory Panel, as well as the overall capacity of the Institute to ensure the satisfactory completion of the HDR training.

In the event the Research Committee does not approve, a *HDR05-Primary Supervisor/Candidate Agreement* or a *HDR06-Panel Supervisor/Candidate Agreement* reason/s for the non-approval must be provided to the Candidate and Primary Supervisor with an indication of what modifications are necessary for approval.

The HDR Coordinator notifies the Candidate and Primary Supervisor of the outcome, updates internal records and forwards paperwork for recording on the Institute's student system and inclusion on the Candidate's file.

3.2 Individual Candidate Research Plan (ICRP)

The Individual Candidate Research Plan (ICRP) is a template designed to facilitate a shared understanding between the Candidate and their Supervisory Panel regarding the research journey, research milestones and expectations associated with completing a Higher Degree by Research Award. It is a living document that Candidates and Supervisors can return to as a reminder of shared goals. During six monthly progress reviews involving the Candidate and their Supervisory Panel the ICRP can be revised to reflect the individual Candidate's research journey.

The ICRP along with 6 monthly Candidate and Supervisor Progress Reports operate as a monitoring tool used by the Research Committee to track candidate progress, identify if extra support or encouragement is required and to ensure that progress towards the completion of the Award reflects Research Training Scheme funding allocation structures (refer to Guidelines for Higher Degree by Research Candidate Progress).

3.2.1 On admission and enrolment into the program a Candidate must complete through collaboration with their Supervision Panel an ICRP in the first two months of full-time candidature (or part-time equivalent) (*HDR07- Masters ICRP form; HDR08- PhD ICRP form*). It is advised that the Candidate and Primary Supervisor keep a copy of this document for reference and future progress review processes.

3.2.2 This initial plan must be signed by the Candidate and endorsed by their Primary Supervisor and lodged with the HDR Coordinator who ensures it is securely stored on the Institutes Candidate file.

3.2.3 When the Candidate and Supervision Panel meet for their first required 6 monthly progress review, progress must be mapped against the initial ICRP. If milestones identified in the ICRP have not been met as first planned the Candidate and Primary Supervisor through their Progress Reports must identify reasons for the delay and re-submit a revised ICRP as part of the six monthly review processes. This activity continues through-out the Candidate's candidature with the HDR Coordinator ensuring that revised ICRPs submitted are securely stored on the Institutes Candidate file.

3.3 Submission and Presentation of Research Proposal to Qualifying Panel

3.3.1 Purpose

The development of a Research Proposal serves the following purpose:

- Assists HDR Candidates to refine and structure their ideas and to ensure that their chosen research project is feasible within the stated time and funding limits of the training program.
- Provides a method for the Institute to evaluate the feasibility and resource implications of a HDR candidature.
- Identifies students who may have difficulty coping with a HDR program.

The Research Proposal involves two components:

- (1) A written proposal
- (2) An oral, and/or performance based, and/or visual and/or multimedia presentation

The Research Proposal (both written and oral) is assessed by a Qualifying Panel. The Qualifying Panel process provides a mechanism for Candidates to receive useful insights and feedback on their progress and research direction from a panel of relevant and experienced individuals.

The Qualifying Panel will determine whether the Candidate has demonstrated their capacity to complete a Research Award through the development of a clearly defined, coherent and feasible research project proposal.

3.3.2 Composition of the Qualifying Panel

The Qualifying Panel will be made up of at least 4 members.

All members shall have experience in the candidate's field of research and qualifications (or experience) at least equivalent to that of the degree program being assessed. The Qualifying Panel should include two Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait members, only in exceptional circumstances and where reasonable effort has been made to secure relevant Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Panel members can non-Indigenous members be nominated and appointed. The Qualifying Panel must include:

- At least one representative from the Candidates Supervision Panel
- An (independent and non-Institute based) accomplished academic from an appropriate discipline area
- A relevant community and/or industry representative
- The HDR Coordinator who will fill the role of secretariat

If the Candidate's Primary Supervisor is a member of the Qualifying Panel they cannot function as the Chair of the Qualifying Panel.

The Primary Supervisor in collaboration with the Candidate will complete the *HDR09 – Qualifying Panel Nomination/Notification form* one month prior to the planned submission of proposal. The Primary Supervisor will forward to the HDR Coordinator who will seek approval from the Research Committee.

The Research Committee has the final authority regarding the composition of the Qualifying Panel. If the Research Committee does not approve the nominated Qualifying Panel reason/s for the non-approval must be provided to the Candidate and Primary Supervisor with an indication of what modifications are necessary for approval.

On Research Committee approval the HDR Coordinator will coordinate the qualifying process through:

- Contacting and confirming Panel member interest and availability
- Distributing the Candidate's final Written Proposal document and the *HDR10-Qualifying Panel Report form* (including assessment criteria) to Qualifying Panel members
- Scheduling Oral Presentation, securing appropriate space/technologies and advertising the event to relevant parties
- Arranging Qualifying Panel Recommendation meeting and operating as secretariat.

3.3.3 Written Research Proposal

The written Research Proposal provides the Candidate with the opportunity to both clarify their project and develop research skills as well as to gain critical feedback from a panel of relevant and experienced individuals. The written proposal should include a full literature review of an appropriate length to the discipline and research topic and provide sufficient detail to allow for evaluation of the potential contribution of the research to the existing body of knowledge, the validity of the planned methodology, the project feasibility and any resource implications. For students undertaking creative practice, the literature review may focus on positioning their work within existing practice.

The length of the Research Proposal will vary according to the discipline, however as a general guide for most discipline areas and research topics the research proposal will not exceed 10,000 words for a PhD and 5,000-7,000 words for a Masters by Research.

The Research Proposal should be submitted within 12 months of commencing full time enrolment for Doctor of Philosophy degrees and within 6 months of commencing full time enrolment for Masters by Research degrees.

In close consultation with the Primary and Panel Supervisors, the HDR candidate drafts the detailed research proposal.

Non-compliance – if a Candidate's progress towards completing the written proposal research milestone is deemed unsatisfactory by the Candidate's Supervisory Panel and identified as such by the Primary Supervisor in a Progress Report, the Candidate will be sent an 'at risk' letter by the Head of Division and will be placed under review for a three month period. The three month review period will require the Candidate to meet certain conditions as identified in the 'at risk' letter. On failure to meet these conditions a Candidate will be requested to 'show cause' as to why their candidature should not be terminated (refer to BI Academic Rules 8. Progression and exclusion).

When the Candidate is satisfied with the research proposal, the Candidate in collaboration with Supervisors completes the *HDR09 – Qualifying Panel Nomination/Notification* form and submits this along with the completed proposal to the HDR Coordinator.

The HDR Coordinator will seek the approval of the Research Committee for the nominated Qualifying panel members. The HDR Coordinator will distribute *HDR10-Qualifying Panel Report form* (which includes assessment criteria) and the Candidate's proposal document to the approved Qualifying Panel members.

3.3.4 Oral Presentation

The Oral Presentation of the research proposal usually takes place in the form of an open seminar within 2-4 weeks post submission of the written Research Proposal. The Oral Presentation of the research proposal provides the Candidate with an opportunity to present and discuss the merit of the research proposal with interested parties including their Qualifying Panel.

The open seminar is flexible in operation and can include face-to-face, online or a mixed format of delivery and participation. The HDR Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that Candidates, Qualifying Panel Members, and members of the public have appropriate access to the event.

Candidates not located in the Darwin Region and wishing to deliver their Oral Presentation while physically at a Batchelor Institute Campus should consider their student travel allocation. Candidates are eligible for two return-trips to a Batchelor Institute Campus per year. Either aligning their Oral Presentation with one of two face-to-face HDR Master Classes per year or participating in one of these two HDR Master Classes through a distance mode will ensure that the costs associated with the Candidate's travel for the presentation can be covered by the Institute. Only in exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Research Committee, will a Candidate be travelled to an Institute campus more than their twice per year allocation. The Institute will not consider provision of financial support to Qualifying Panel members to physically attend an Oral Presentation unless in circumstances deemed exceptional by the Research Committee.

The HDR Coordinator, in consultation with the Qualifying Panel, Candidate and Primary Supervisor sets the date and format for the Oral Presentation of the research proposal (within 4 weeks of the submission of the research proposal).

The HDR coordinator circulates the research proposal to members of the approved Qualifying Panel at least 2 weeks prior to the Oral Presentation.

The Research Proposal and Oral Presentation are assessed by the Qualifying Panel and feedback on the content and appropriateness of the research proposal for the degree being undertaken is provided to the Research Committee. The Research Committee then advises the Candidate and Primary Supervisor of the outcome.

3.3.5 Assessment and Recommendation

The Qualifying Panel will assess the candidate's (written and oral) proposal using the following criteria:

- Ability to express ideas clearly and logically in both written and oral formats

- Ability to select, analyse, synthesise and critically evaluate relevant material and literature pertaining to the field of study and demonstrate understanding of key concepts and issues
- Ability to provide a rationale for the significance of the project. How it will contribute to the relevant field(s) of study and provide original insight or new knowledge.
- Demonstrated awareness of ethical issues and a clear understanding of suitable research methods.
- Articulation of a suitable theoretical or conceptual framework for the proposed study
- The capacity of the candidate for independent work, planned milestone completion and thesis submission in timeframes relevant to the award.

The weighting of these two components for assessment (written and oral formats) will be determined by the Qualifying Panel in relation to the Candidates discipline area and their proposed research expression, presentation and dissemination.

All Qualifying Panel Members will be required to participate in a Qualifying Panel Recommendation Meeting following the Candidates Oral Presentation. At this meeting the Qualifying Panel Members will discuss the key critical feedback to be provided to the Candidate and come to a recommendation that can be endorsed by all Panel members.

The Chair of the Qualifying Panel is required to complete the *HDR10 -Qualifying Panel Report* form which involves a summary of the Panels key points to the Candidate and identifies the recommendation endorsed by all members of the Panel.

The Qualifying Panel may recommend:

- **Satisfactory** completion of the Qualifying Unit and continuation of candidature
- **Revision** of the Research Proposal and its re-presentation
- **Unsatisfactory** completion of the Qualifying Unit

The Chair of the Qualifying Panel will submit the completed *HDR10-Qualifying Panel Report* form to the HDR Coordinator.

3.4 Formal Notification of Outcome

The HDR Coordinator will present the Qualifying Panel's recommendation to the Research Committee for endorsement. The endorsement process must be completed in a reasonable timeframe. Where the Research Committee has endorsed the Qualifying Panel recommendation of:

- **Satisfactory** – the Research Committee will advise the Candidate of their successful completion of the Qualifying milestone and their eligibility to enrol in the Thesis unit. The HDR Coordinator will apply an 'S-satisfactory' grade to the relevant research program Qualifying Unit.
- **Revision** - the Research Committee will inform the Candidate of the requirement to respond to the Qualifying Panel's feedback and re-present

their proposal no later than 4 months full-time equivalent after the date of the initial Oral Presentation. The HDR Coordinator must ensure that if re-enrolment is required during this period the Candidate is enrolled (or remains enrolled) in the relevant research program Qualifying Unit.

- **Unsatisfactory** - the Research Committee will inform the Candidate that they have not satisfactorily completed the Qualifying milestone and are ineligible to enrol in the Thesis unit and continue with their candidature. The HDR Coordinator will apply a 'U-unsatisfactory' grade to the relevant research program Qualifying Unit. If the Candidate wishes to remain enrolled in the program they will be required to 'show cause' as to why their candidature should not be terminated (refer to BI Academic Rules 8. Progression and exclusion).

If the Research committee does not endorse the Qualifying panel recommendation any conditions placed on the individual's candidature and/or resourcing implications that might arise from such a decision must be considered and addressed by the Research Committee and fully justified to the Candidate and Primary Supervisor.

4. Responsibilities

Section	Description	Task	Responsible Officer, Committee
3.1	Formation of Supervisory Panel and Supervisor Agreement	<i>HDR05-Primary Supervisor/Candidate Agreement</i> <i>HDR06- Panel Supervisor Agreement Form</i>	HDR Coordinator & Research Committee
3.2	Individual Candidature Research Plan	<i>HDR07 Masters by Research ICRP form</i> <i>HDR08 PhD ICRP form</i>	HDR Coordinator
3.3	Submission and Presentation of Research Proposal to Qualifying Panel	<i>HDR09-Qualifying Panel Nomination/Notification Form</i> <i>HDR10-Qualifying Panel Report Form</i>	HDR Coordinator & Research Committee
3.4	Formal Notification of Outcome	HDR Coordinator present Qualifying Panel's recommendation to the Research Committee for endorsement Research Committee to inform candidate of outcome	HDR Coordinator & Research Committee

5. Acronyms & Terms

Acronym/Term	Definition/Description
HDR	Higher Degree by Research
ICRP	Individual Candidate Research Plan

6. Supporting Documents

Academic Rules

Assessment Rules

Batchelor Institute Research Plan (2012-2015)

Masters by Research Indigenous Perspectives Rules

Doctor of Philosophy Indigenous Perspectives Rules

7. Related documents

Guidelines: Research Training

Guidelines: Higher Degree by Research (HDR) application for admission and enrolment

Guidelines: Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Supervision and Mentoring

Guidelines: Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Candidate Progress

8. Modification history

Date	Version	Sections modified	Authority	Details
6/8/2014	1	New guideline	H, HE&R	Approved

9. Feedback

If you have any comments or feedback about this Guideline, please contact the Higher Degree by Research Coordinator, hdr@batchelor.edu.au (08) 8939 7260