

Confirmation of Candidature Information for Students

Overview

The University of New England requires all doctoral candidates who commenced candidature from 1 January 2007 onwards to undertake a Confirmation of Candidature process. The Confirmation phase, common to most Australian universities, represents the formal completion of the probationary period of a doctoral student's candidature. The Confirmation of Candidature Procedure has been approved by Academic Board. The Procedure can be accessed from the UNE [Policies](#) website.

For doctoral programs of 3 years duration student progress will be assessed at 6 months after enrolment for full-time students and at the 12 month period for part-time students. For students in professional doctorates assessment would normally be carried out 6 months after work on the thesis or portfolio has begun for full-time students and at 12 months after work on the thesis or portfolio has begun for part-time students.

Confirmation of Candidature at UNE is a developmental strategy aimed at providing support for doctoral students in the formative stage of their research, particularly helping them to attain the academic preparedness necessary to progress to the next stage of their degree.

The Confirmation process assesses formally to what extent students are 'on track' during the early period of their candidature and their readiness to attempt the next phase of their research. In this sense, Confirmation of Candidature comprises both an educational component, as well as being an integral part of the University's quality assurance processes.

The specific aims of Confirmation of Candidature are to:

1. Identify early in students' candidature any support and guidance necessary for their proceeding successfully to the next major stage of their research;
2. assess progress to date and the academic preparedness of the candidate to complete their degree (or course);
3. provide an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate written and other necessary research skills appropriate to the doctoral level of study; and
4. achieve more timely and successful completions.

Confirmation of Candidature Information at Induction

The Confirmation process will need to be explained to all new doctoral students early in their candidature, including those who upgrade from masters to doctoral level, and the timetabling of the process discussed and documented in the Supervisor Agreement. At these sessions, students will need to receive information about the support available to them during their candidature as indicated in relevant documents (eg. [HDR Portal - HDR RAP](#)). Importantly, they will need to know about the Confirmation process, the tasks to be completed in the given timeframe, the composition of the Confirmation Panel and how it will conduct its business. The necessary criteria for successful completion of Confirmation of Candidature are outlined in Section 3 (9) of the Confirmation of Candidature Procedures. The student needs to understand the role of Confirmation of Candidature as a major milestone in their research project. At the time of confirmation, Confirmation Panel members will be required to sign off when the student has undergone this induction process.

Confirmation of Candidature Panel

School Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each School to organise suitable times for the conduct of each HDR students Confirmation of Candidature Panel.

Student Responsibilities

Two weeks before meeting with the Panel, the student will need to submit to its Chair:

- the Confirmation of Candidature Proforma which requires the student to complete the first part of the document; the proforma can be found on the Research Services webpage under the [My Study](#) tab.
- a copy of their approved research proposal; and
- any other documentation relevant to the Panel (e.g. presentations given on the research, signed off induction course(s), evidence of having met any of the required milestones, as outlined in the Supervisor Agreement or other documentation.

Panel Responsibilities

The Confirmation of Candidature Panel membership is outlined in Section 3 (11) of the Confirmation of Candidature Procedures.

Instructions for the conduct of the Confirmation of Candidature Panel are outlined in Section 3 (12) of the Confirmation of Candidature Procedures.

The decision making process of the Confirmation of Candidature Panel is outlined in Section 3 (13) of the Confirmation of Candidature Procedures. The Confirmation of Candidature Proforma, to be completed by the Panel, can be found on the Research Services website under the [My Study](#) tab.

How to communicate the outcome of the Confirmation of Candidature Panel is outlined in Section 3 (19) of the Confirmation of Candidature Procedures.

Non-Confirmation and Appeal

In cases where the Panel decides not to confirm candidature, Panel members should refer to Section 3 (21). Students wishing to appeal non-confirmation of candidature will find the Appeal procedures in the same section.

TIPS FOR CANDIDATES COMING UP FOR CONFIRMATION

The written submission, not counting the annotated bibliography, should be at least 3-5 pages long. It might be helpful to many candidates to note the structure of an ARC research grant application. The thesis statement; or research question, is the core of this submission.

The research proposal should be written as far as possible in non-specialist language that could be understood by an intelligent and educated reader who is not familiar with the research area.

Candidates should normally include in their proposals information about the following aspects of their

work:

- **Aims of the project**

What does the project hope to demonstrate or argue or prove or illuminate by studying a particular topic? What new knowledge or understanding will it provide? Can the overall aims of the project be captured in a single-sentence thesis statement or research question?

- **Significance**

Why are the aims of the project important? What difference will the new knowledge or understanding make?

- **Originality**

Can the candidate claim with confidence that some important aspect of the work has never been achieved before?

- **Feasibility of the project**

Candidates should provide an indication that they have carefully considered the practical implications of what will be required for the project to be completed, and demonstrate that the necessary work can be accomplished within three years.

- **Methodology**

An outline of how the aims of the project are to be achieved.

- **Thesis outline**

An indication of the overall structure of the proposed thesis with a chapter-by-chapter overview of the content.

- **Timetable**

A detailed three-year timetable (or part-time equivalent) with deadlines for all major milestones and research tasks, including details about when each chapter will be drafted, submitted, revised and finalised.

- **IP management**

A statement which demonstrates that IP issues involving all likely potential collaborators have been resolved.

- **Resources**

Are all resources needed to complete the project available?

- **Data Retention and Management**

Is the School able and willing to provide the necessary resources to store the data in an appropriate manner?

- **Appropriate Ethics and Safety Clearances**

- **Critical Review of Recent Work in the Field**

Candidates should provide an appropriate overview of what has already been achieved by other scholars in the field. The format will vary according to the norms of the discipline and the award , but it should indicate that the candidate knows the proposed project does not duplicate, in whole or in significant part, work that has already been published, and that the candidate is aware of those methodological and theoretical issues that are accepted as standard for the discipline.

Any bibliography that is presented should be clearly divided into those works which the candidate has already read, with notes indicating the relevance of the material to the proposed project, and those works which the candidate has identified as potentially relevant but which have not yet been consulted.

The timing of the interviews might be:

Preliminary discussion:	15 minutes
Interview:	30 minutes
Discussion:	10-15 minutes