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HDR Course Rules, Policy, and Procedure Update

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May 2024



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HDR Course Rules

- ❖ UNE previously relied on variable Course Rules to govern Confirmation, course duration, and examination.
- ❖ All candidates have the choice to follow the course rules under which they enrolled, **or** transition to the new course rules.
- ❖ All candidates and supervisors must follow the new policies and procedures.
- ❖ Old policies have been rescinded.
- ❖ The new course rules link to updated policies and procedures.



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HDR Course Rules

- Revisions link to/align with new policies:
 - **Course Duration** – now standardised
 - **Confirmation** – now annual Milestones
 - **Examination Outcomes** – now less risky.
- **Course duration:**
- Two years for all master by research courses (FTE).
- 2024 HDR Course Rules standardise the duration of course and candidature at 4 years (FTE) for all doctoral cohorts.
 - PhD course duration at UNE was 3 years for most domestic students (except PhD Clinical Psychology) and 4 years for internationals.
- Standard course duration is more equitable and aligns with Australian Government guidelines.



RTP Scholarships: Increase in Value and Duration of Stipend

- ❖ **2024 RTP base rate = \$32,192** (with indexation for continuing RTP students).
- ❖ **2024 UNE RTP rate = \$35,411 p/a** (for new HDRs)
 - ⇒ 10% above the base RTP stipend rate to attract competitive candidates to UNE.
- ❖ Increase the *new* RTP and IPRA PhD scholarship duration from 3 yrs to 3.5 yrs.
- ❖ **Six-month DVCR completion scholarship** for *continuing* RTP and IPRA scholarship holders at 2024 RTP base rate.
- ❖ Master by Research candidature and scholarship duration = 2 years.





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Changes to Research Operating Account Support Funds

- ❖ To ensure consistency and equity across the Faculties and align with sector practices, High-Cost/Low-Cost Fields of Education projects will receive consistent research support based on their FoR.
- ❖ **Low-Cost \$2000 p.a.**
- ❖ **High-cost \$3,500 p.a.**
- ❖ High-cost and low-cost programs are determined by the classification of the field of education in the [Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#) (section 1.7).



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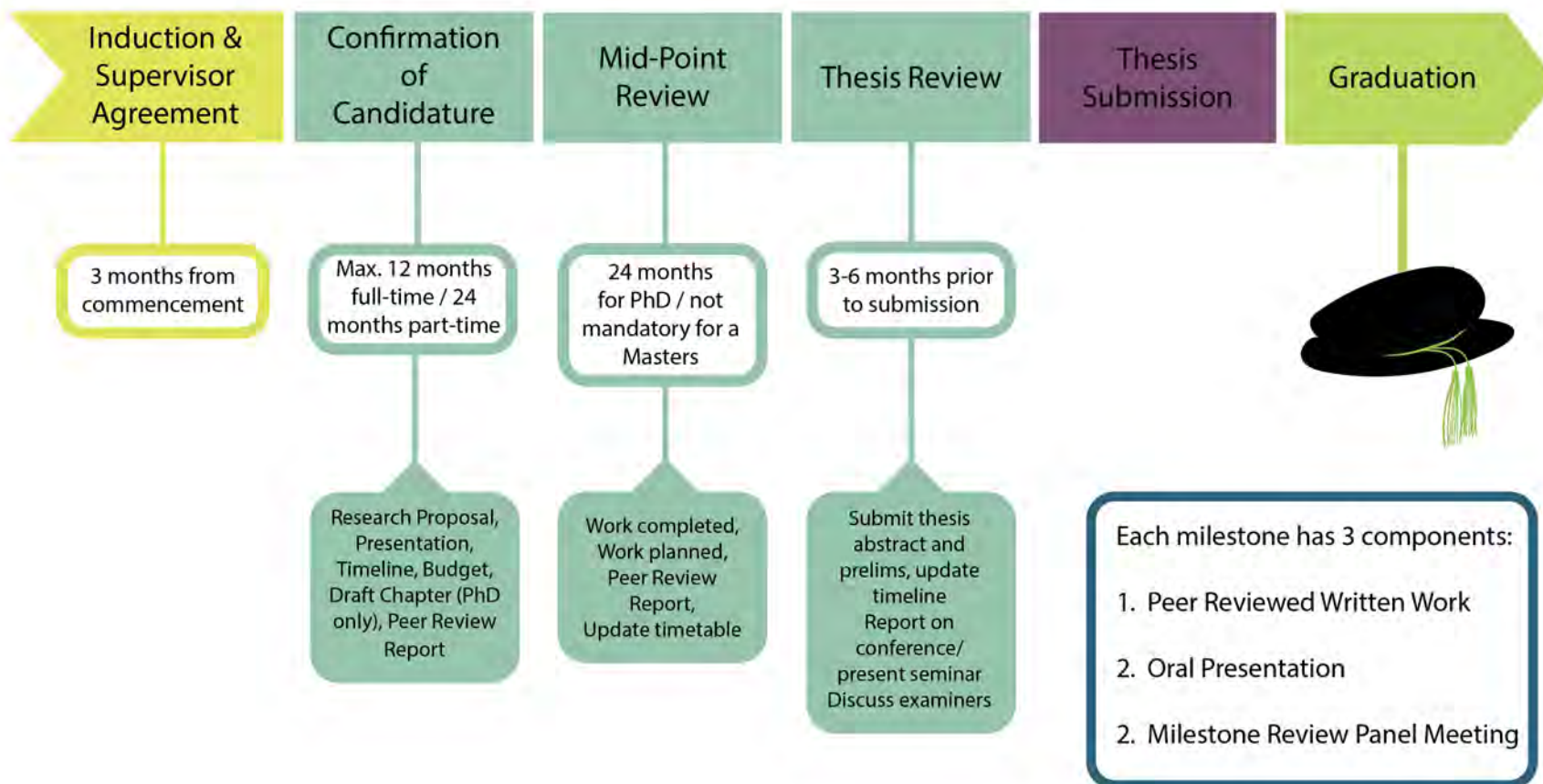
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HDR Milestones Policy

- ❖ HDR Course Rules link to new Milestones of Candidature Policy.
- ❖ Previously UNE had Confirmation and progress reports every six months.
- The new policy has annual milestones to improve the HDR journey, enhance quality assurance, improve completion rates, and identify and resolve risks during candidature.
- The policy covers induction, supervision agreement, **Confirmation of Candidature**, and introduces the **Mid-Point Milestone** and **Thesis Review Milestone**.
- See Graduate Research School website → Current Students → [Milestones](#)

Candidature timeline/ journey

Annual Milestones: Doctoral Candidates must undertake three milestones and Master by Research Candidates must undertake two. Recommended timings of the milestones for full-time HDR Candidates are outlined in the below table





Transition Plan

- ❖ **Commencing PhD candidates have three milestones; Master by Research have two.**
- ❖ Continuing candidates following the Course Rules under which they enrolled must do Confirmation and annual progress reports.
- ❖ Continuing candidates who transition to the new Course Rules have annual milestones for the remaining duration of candidature.
 - ⇒ Confirmed PhD candidates who are about half-way through candidature will do Mid-Point Review Milestone.
 - ⇒ Confirmed candidates (Masters and PhD) who are approaching submission will do Thesis Review Milestone.
- ❖ Part-time candidates complete an annual progress report in the years when no milestone meeting is scheduled.



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HDR Supervision Policy

- ❖ Two UNE supervisors for commencing candidates.
- ❖ Principal Supervisor to coordinate meetings and feedback.
- ❖ Annual review of supervision at milestone meeting (timeliness and frequency of meetings and feedback, check whether change of supervision team or weighting is needed).
- ❖ HoS and ADR to review and approve supervision teams at admission:
 - ⇒ check supervisory workload, and
 - ⇒ advise Grad School of supervisor development needs or restrictions.
- ❖ Training requirements for accreditation and supervision register. Grad School to review annually and inform HoS to manage supervisor performance.



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HDR Thesis Submission and Examination Policy

- UNE previously relied on Course Rules for year of enrolment to govern examination. It is advantageous to transition to 2024 Course Rules, which link to the new Thesis Examination Policy.
- **New primary examination outcomes:**
 1. Award (no changes or minor textual)
 2. Award with Amendments (revisions to the satisfaction of Principal Supervisor and Chair)
 - No more Minor Changes vs Major Changes
 3. Revise and Resubmit for Re-Examination (revisions to satisfaction of Examiners)
 - No longer possible to Fail first examination.



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Second Examination

- ❖ Re-Examination Outcome (after Revise and Resubmit):
 - ⇒ Award (no changes or minor typographical amendments)
 - ⇒ Award with Amendments (to satisfaction of Supervisor and Chair of Examiners)
 - ⇒ Award Master by Research (available for PhD only)
 - ⇒ Fail: Non-award.



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New Role: Chair of Examiners

- ❖ New discipline-based academic role replacing function of Graduate Research Examination Board.
- ❖ The Chair of Examiners acts as the delegate of the Head of School/enrolling unit's HDR Coordinator for academic matters regarding the candidate's thesis examination:
 - ⇒ Review and Endorse Recommendation of Examiners Form
 - ⇒ Review Confidential Examiners' Reports and Recommend Outcome to GRC
 - ⇒ Check Thesis Amendments.

Chair of Examiners: Responsibilities

Thesis Review

Nomination of Chair of Examiners by Principal Supervisor and HDR Coordinator.

Trigger: Intent to Submit Form (current) or Thesis Review Milestone.

Eligibility: UNE academic not on supervision team, with PhD in same or cognate discipline as thesis being examined.

Recommend Examiners

Chair of Examiners reviews and endorses Recommendation of Examiners Form.

Check suitability of qualifications and research expertise.

Check for Conflicts of Interest.

Endorse and send recommendation to Graduate Research Committee.

Recommend Exam Outcome

Chair of Examiners reviews Examiners' Reports.

Consult Decision Matrix.

Confer with HDR Coordinator when reports diverge or identify research integrity concerns.

Recommend exam outcome to Graduate Research Committee for approval or review.

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Questions?

- ❖ All Higher Degree Research (HDR) related forms can be found on the [Graduate Research Current Students webpage](#) and all HDR related policies can be found on the [UNE policies webpage](#) under 'H'.
- ❖ Please let the Graduate Research School know if we can assist you with matters specific to your candidature or your discipline through the AskUNE portal.
- ❖ Contact the Graduate Research School team at: graduate-school@une.edu.au
- ❖ Call HDR General Inquiries on:
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