

Higher Degree by Research Students and Supervisors

Managing Your Thesis: a Quick Reference Guide

Incorporating

Process Management

and

Risk Management

Embarking on a Higher Degree thesis is a bit like joining the circus - it can be precarious, like walking a tightrope, just one slip-up and you are headed for a fall. It can be a juggling act – trying to keep several balls in the air at once. Not to mention taming a lion – the thesis can be a scary beast, difficult to control. While the circus performer may need years of training to get things right, fortunately for the HDR candidate, managing one’s thesis can be a lot less painful if you embark on it armed with the right knowledge and a project-management-style approach to getting started. Limited enrolment durations¹ for HDR degrees means that time management and careful planning is crucial – so the earlier you can get organized and on the right track the more time you will have to spend doing the really exciting stuff – your research!!

The purpose of this document is to provide a quick reference guide covering all of the major processes and risks associated with undertaking a higher degree by research. In essence it’s a one-stop-shop detailing who’s responsible for what and where to get more information. The document is divided into two tables, one titled “Process Management”, and the other “Risk Management”.

Spanning from admission to graduation, the **Process Management** table summarises all of the major tasks involved in doing a research degree (both administrative and research-related), the

¹ The duration for a Doctoral degree is 4 years full-time equivalent and the duration for a Master by Research degree is 2 years full-time equivalent.
CRICOS Provider Codes: 00301J & 02637B

person/area responsible for initiating the task, and the associated resource or website for accessing additional information.

The **Risk Management** table provides a comprehensive list of common risks, how to avoid them, or alternatively, how to recover if the risk has already become a reality! Where applicable, contact details have been provided to direct students and staff to further information.

This document is best viewed electronically for easy reference to web links.

For more information or clarification on any of the points contained in this guide, please contact the Graduate Studies area in the Office of Research and Development, 9266 7863.

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Glossary of responsible persons and contacts, by Enrolling Area, Faculty and Central/Other

Enrolling Area	Faculty	Central/Other
CTC	Chair, Thesis Committee (who will become Chair of the Thesis Examining Panel)	FGSC Faculty Graduate Studies Committee DGS Dean, Graduate Studies EO Ethics Officer, ORD HREC Human Research Ethics Committee
HOEA	Head of Enrolling Area	FGSO Faculty Graduate Studies Officer (refers also to "Research Student IBC Institutional

PGC	Postgraduate Coordinator	Coordinator”, Curtin Business School)		Biosafety Committee
SGSC	School Graduate Studies Committee		IO ORD	International Office Office of Research and Development
TC	Thesis Committee		CRC TLC CELC TEO UGSC	Corporate Risk and Compliance The Learning Centre, University Life Curtin English Language Centre Thesis Examinations Officer, ORD University Graduate Studies Committee

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Process Management

Task	Responsibility	Resource
<i>1 Application for Admission / Scholarship</i>		
1.1 Obtain "Application for Admission to a Higher Degree by Research", or if appropriate, combined Admission/scholarship form	- Student	- Application http://rese - Application http://sch
1.2 Identify research area	- Student, PGC, Potential Supervisor	- See prosp PGC
1.3 Identify potential Supervisors	- Student, PGC	- Register o http://rese
1.4 Identify coursework if required	- Student, PGC, Supervisor	- See Hand
1.5 Prepare research proposal (as per Faculty guidelines if available)	- Student, Supervisor	-
1.6 Submit application - Domestic students to HOEA; International students to the IO	- Student, PGC, HOEA, IO	-
1.7 Consider admission application	- IO, SGSC, FGSC	-
1.8 Accept/reject admission application	- SGSC, FGSC	-

Task	Responsibility	Resource
<i>2 Enrolment</i>		
2.1 Complete and submit “Enrolment/Change of Enrolment” form as appropriate (see Handbook)	- Student, Supervisor	- http://rese - http://han
2.2 Process enrolment in thesis and coursework units	- FGSO	-

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Task	Responsibility	Resource
2.3 Activate OASIS account (student portal – includes Official Communications Channel; student email accounts; learning support systems; and student record (i.e. eStudent) and access at least once a week to receive official communications from the University)	- Student – checking required (ONGOING/WEEKLY)	- https://oa
2.4 Request workspace (if needed)	- Student	-
2.5 Allocate workspace	- FGSO (where applicable) , PGC or Supervisor	-
2.6 Identify facilities/resources needed to get started	- Student, PGC, Supervisor	-
<i>3 Orientation & Registration for Professional Development Activities</i>		
3.1 Attend University/Faculty Orientation sessions, and relevant seminars such as those offered through the “Enriching Postgraduate Teaching and Learning” series and “Surviving IT” series	- Student	- http://rese - http://rese
3.2 Clarify roles and responsibilities of students/staff (See Guidelines on ORD website)	- Student, Enrolling Area, Faculty, University	- Guideline http://rese - See Guid http://rese
3.3 Familiarise with Curtin Rules	- Student	- http://rese

Task	Responsibility	Resource
3.4 Familiarise with the document outlining Essential Facilities (including Consumables and Fieldwork funding)	- Student	- See "Essential Facilities" http://research.library.utoronto.ca/essential-facilities/
3.5 Contact Faculty Librarian for Information Searching advice. Register for the Library's "Mastering Research Resources" seminars	- Student	- http://library.utoronto.ca/ - http://library.utoronto.ca/duates/#seminars
3.6 Register for ATN modules if desired	- Student	- http://research.library.utoronto.ca/atn/ - http://research.library.utoronto.ca/atn/registration/
3.7 Register for other seminars additional to the above professional development programs as appropriate	- Student	- http://research.library.utoronto.ca/seminars/ - http://research.library.utoronto.ca/seminars/registration/ - http://research.library.utoronto.ca/seminars/registration/
<i>4 Provisional Candidature and Application for Candidacy</i>		
4.1 Meet Supervisor as agreed. Go through the "Guidelines for Establishing the Supervisory Relationship"	- Student, Supervisor	- http://research.library.utoronto.ca/guidelines/ "Guidelines for Establishing the Supervisory Relationship"
4.2 Determine Thesis Committee	- Student, Supervisor, SGSC	-
4.3 Obtain Application for Candidacy form	- Student	- http://research.library.utoronto.ca/candidacy/

Task	Responsibility	Resource
4.4 Attend seminar on preparing candidacy View "Preparing Your Application for Candidacy" (an online guide)	- Student, Supervisor	- http://rese - http://rese m
4.5 Review literature	- Student	-
4.6 Develop agreed program timeframe	- Student, Supervisor	-
4.7 Develop budget/resources for conduct of study	- Student, Supervisor, HOEA	-
4.8 Consider human, animal and/or other ethical issues	- Student, Supervisor	- http://rese animals) - http://www Hazardou
4.9 Consider copyright, ownership of intellectual property and authorship issues	- Student, Supervisor	- http://rese - http://rese - http://rese
4.10 Submit Application for Candidacy for Enrolling Area review/present and revise application as required	- Student, Supervisor, PGC, SGSC	-
4.11 Check with Supervisor for any additional Candidacy requirements such as a seminar presentation.	- Student, Supervisor	-
4.12 Submit Application for Candidacy to FGSC	- Enrolling Area	-
4.13 Obtain ethics application forms, if necessary	- Student, Supervisor	- http://rese animal) - http://www Hazardou

Task	Responsibility	Resource
4.14 Application for Candidacy considered/approved	- FGSC	-
4.15 Submit ethics application to appropriate Ethics Committee Check with FGSO re timing of submission – some Faculty's may prefer ethics submission prior to submission of Application for Candidacy	- Student, Ethics Officer – ORD, Ethics Officer/s - Edusave	- http://rese animals) - http://www Hazardou
4.16 Submit application to appropriate external ethics committee (as necessary)	- Student	-
<i>5 Confirmed Candidature</i>		
5.1 Develop a time line/schedule	- Student, Supervisor	-
5.2 Collect data/process data. (Data entry assistance available from the ORD.) Register for seminars/modules related to Information Management	- Student, Supervisor	- http://rese - http://rese
5.3 Analyse and interpret data. Contact the ORD for Specific Statistical Software support and seminars in SPSS; and relevant seminars in NVivo	- Student, Supervisor	- http://rese - http://rese
5.4 Begin writing draft chapters, develop skeleton framework. Register for seminars that give advice on thesis writing and document management.	- Student	- http://rese

Task	Responsibility	Resource
5.5 Review formatting requirements for Digital Thesis submission (to ease digital lodgment)	- Student	- http://rese - contact A
<i>6 Review Progress</i>		
6.1 Review progress regularly	- Student, Supervisor (ongoing)	-
6.2 Complete "Annual Progress Report" (submitted online in August each year) If you are a sponsored international student, you will also complete "International Sponsored Student Report (ISSR)" (submitted online in March each year)	- Student, Supervisor, Enrolling Area, Faculty	- http://rese - http://rese
6.3 Complete the "Curtin Annual Student Satisfaction (CASS) Survey" (submitted online in August each year)	- Student, University	- http://plan
<i>7 Research Dissemination</i>		
7.1 Present Enrolling Area/Faculty seminars	- Student	-
7.2 Present conference papers/posters	- Student	-
7.3 Submit papers to journals	- Student, Supervisor	- "Informati Higher De via http:///

Task	Responsibility	Resource
<i>8 Thesis Finalisation</i>		
8.1 Format thesis according to the Rules and conventions in field of study. (See Section 11, 'Thesis Submission for Examination' of Rule 10: Degree of Doctor by Research and Rule 11: Degree of Master by Research).	- Student, Supervisor	- http://rese
8.2 Edit/review thesis See "Guidelines for the Editing of Research Theses by Professional Editors"	- Student, Supervisor	- http://rese
<i>9 Examination</i>		
9.1 Nominate examiners and change Thesis Title (if necessary) using "Variation to Candidacy Details/Nomination of Examiners"	- Supervisor, HOEA, SGSC, FGSC	- See "Vari via http://
9.2 Obtain approval for Title Page	- Student, TEO - ORD	- See "The http://rese
9.3 Arrange 3 temporary bound copies and pre-pay the permanent binding of 4 copies.	- Student, Guild Copy & Design Centre	- See "The http://rese

Task	Responsibility	Resource
9.4	Submit thesis to TEO - ORD together with "Copyright and Release of Thesis for Examination" form and copy of binding receipt.	- Student, TEO - ORD - See "The Release of Thesis for Examination" form and copy of binding receipt. http://rese
9.5	Thesis Examination (thesis sent to examiners who are asked to complete report within 6 weeks)	- TEO – ORD, Examiners - See "Adv..." http://rese
9.6	Review examiners' reports and provide instructions to HDR student	- CTC - See "Exa..." "Thesis E..." http://rese
9.7	Make amendments to thesis	- Student, Supervisor -
9.8	Prepare response to examiners' reports and submit to CTC	- Student -
9.9	Submit recommendation to SGSC/FGSC/UGSC	- CTC -
9.10	Submit final thesis copies to ORD	- Student - See "The..." http://rese

Task	Responsibility	Resource
<i>10 Digital Thesis Submission</i>		
10.1 Lodge electronic copy of thesis to Library for adding to the Australasian Digital Thesis Program	- Student / Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See "How http://libraude.html - "Guideline Degree by http://rese
10.2 Complete and submit the "Verification Form for the Submission of Digital Theses of Higher Degree by Research Students" form, and, if necessary, the "Permanent Embargo Application Form for the Submission of Digital Theses of Higher Degree by Research Students" form.	- Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See the " of Higher Embargo of Higher http://rese - Contact A
<i>11 Graduation</i>		
11.1 Graduation View Graduations website	- Student	- http://grad
11.2 Complete the "Course Experience Questionnaire" (CEQ) when received	- Student	- http://plan
11.3 Complete the "Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire" (PREQ) when received	- Student	- http://plan

Risk Management

Risk Area	Preventative Measures	Recovery Measures	More Info
1. Research Design			- Code http://
1.1 <i>Sampling Problems – sample unavailable or insufficient</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure sample of sufficient size and accessible before finalising research questions and design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify alternative sample - Revise research questions/change project aims/objectives - Increase the number of variables to broaden sample parameters - Look at alternative analyses/interpretations - Lobby interest/ownership 	- Super
1.2 <i>Equipment Failure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure regular maintenance is undertaken - Allow for sufficient funding for repairs - Identify alternative sources/type of equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use alternative sources/type of equipment as appropriate 	- Super
1.3 <i>Data lost</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Back-up data regularly 	-	- IT offi

Risk Area	Preventative Measures	Recovery Measures	More Im
1.4 Publication of similar research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regularly search electronic publications databases - Continue literature review throughout candidature - Ensure timely submission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modify project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Super - Facult http://.html
1.5 Rejection of grant application that leads to lack of funding	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revise proposal and resubmit - Identify alternative sources of funding - Take leave of absence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Super - ORD http://

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Risk Area	Preventative Measures	Recovery Measures	More Information
2 Safety and Insurance Cover			
2.1 Contravention of Occupational Health and Safety policies:	- Know and comply with relevant policies	-	- Contact http://... - See the http://... links to: Anim Biolo Disp Em Field Incid Occu Pers Safe Work See also - Biosa http://... - Mana http://... - Radia http://...
2.2 Identify and control risks specific to research	- Complete the "Biological Agents Risk Assessment"	-	- See the form http://... http://... http://...
2.3 Insufficient insurance cover	-	-	- See the http://... http://... http://...

Risk Area	Preventative Measures	Recovery Measures	More Info
3 Ethics			
3.1 Ethics review takes too long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read ethics guidelines/ contact EO - ORD - Find out Ethics Committee deadlines and processes - Review ethical issues carefully at candidacy and revise methods/data collection appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modify scope/design of project if ethics committee identifies contentious issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact http:// - See C http:// - See C http:// - Attend http:// - Need http://
3.2 Application rejected –unethical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify all ethics requirements - Ensure ethics requirements can be met (see guidelines) - Implement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modify project if ethical issues expose participants, University or HDR student to significant risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Super
3.3 Application rejected – objectives not achievable/ inappropriate for course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set goals appropriate for a Masters/PhD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modify scope/design of project if it is inappropriate for degree level or student's skill level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Super
4 IP and Copyright			
4.1 Disputes -Intellectual Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clearly identify the aspect/section of a larger research grant you are working on - Clarify/get prior agreement on intellectual property issues especially where there are industry partners/external sponsorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalise agreements/settle disputes during application for candidacy process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See C http:// - See IP http:// - Contact http:// - Super

Risk Area	Preventative Measures	Recovery Measures	More Info
4.2 Disputes – authorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify/get agreement on authorship issues <u>prior</u> to writing papers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Super - “Infor - High - Super http://
4.3 Disputes – funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify/get <u>prior</u> agreement on funding issues for Essential Facilities; experimental/design costs; conference attendance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See d http:// - Super
4.4 Infringement of Copyright	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtain information on Copyright Act requirements 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See C http:// - See C - See S mater http:// - Conta http://
5 Student Issues			
5.1 Personal issues interfere with progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take leave of absence (not international onshore students, unless for sickness or bereavement, in line with visa requirements) - Take annual leave (if available) - Take sick leave (if available) - Communicate with Supervisor/PGC/FGSO/Scholarships Officer if appropriate - Seek assistance from University Counselling Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-apply for admission when able to commit - Document in Annual Progress Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Super - Unive http://

Risk Area	Preventative Measures	Recovery Measures	More Info
5.2 Language Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure language requirements met in selection process - Enrol in bridging program through CELC - Enrol in TLC's "StudyPlus Language Support" program - Access resources via UniEnglish website - Understand roles in relation to thesis editing - Work with other students - Take part in poster/paper/proposal presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consult TLC and CELC regarding English language courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For E http:// - See T http:// - UniE http:// - See C http:// Profes http://
5.3 Inadequate student research capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SGSC/FGSC ensure rigorous selection process, ensure eligibility criteria met - Supervisor/TC monitor progress closely - Enrolling Area counsels student re coursework units/ professional development programs to improve research skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervisor to counsel student on suitable alternate course e.g. convert from Doctoral to Masters degree - HOEA make decision to terminate enrolment as last resort - University analyse reasons for limited skills and adapt support processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See H http:// - See P http://

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Risk Area	Preventative Measures	Recovery Measures	More Info
5.4 Student leaves for employment/ fails to complete on time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply for completion scholarship/other scholarship extensions - Convert to part-time/reschedule timeline - Take Leave of Absence (LOA) when progress too slow - Submit Extension of Time to Submit Thesis form - Eliminate time consuming/ low priority tasks if possible - Withdraw from the course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-apply for admission when able to commit time to thesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See a http:// - Consu http:// - See L http:// - See E http://
5.5 Student unable to pay International fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek other non-Enrolling Area sources of funding - Seek advice from International Office - WD from the course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-apply for admission when able to pay fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PGC - IO via
5.6 Student loses interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Select motivating topic at the start - Enrolling Area ensures a dynamic research culture - Improve communication between student/supervisor - Look for warning signs e.g. procrastination - Register for support programs/seminars – especially via theTLC - Talk to fellow students in research area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek counselling from University Counselling Service - Seek advice from CUPSA - Take LOA to re-focus and prioritise (not international onshore students, unless for sickness or bereavement, in line with visa requirements) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unive http:// - Conta http:// - s/cups

Risk Area	Preventative Measures	Recovery Measures	More Info
6 Supervision			
6.1 Dispute between student and supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand each other's roles and expectations - Agree on dispute resolution process when initiating relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek timely involvement of Thesis Committee and/or Postgraduate Coordinator - Follow Complaint Mechanism procedures and Grievance Resolution Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See "Relati http:// - See c http:// - For st http:// - s/cups
6.2 Supervisor resigns from University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure have co/ associate supervisors who play active role in supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CTC, HOS appoint suitable replacement - Student take LOA if delay in finding replacement Supervisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CTH,
6.3 Supervisor goes on Study Leave (or absent from Uni > 3 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure have co/associate supervisor/s who play active role in supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appoint absent Supervisor as an Associate Supervisor to assist by electronic means 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See " http://
6.4 Poor supervisory practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student use complaints mechanism - Supervisor attend training for Supervisors, consult guidelines for Supervisors - HOEA to monitor supervisors e.g. via Annual Progress Report - Limit number of students according to supervisor load 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student seek a replacement Supervisor via CTC/PGC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PGC, - DGS - - See in Comm http:// - See "C Relati http://

Risk Area	Preventative Measures	Recovery Measures	More Info
7 Thesis Preparation			
7.1 Supervisor takes excessive time to check final drafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervisor to plan out workload - Student to plan ahead to ensure supervisor will be available - Student/Supervisor to review chapters/sections at regular intervals - Student approach CTC with any concerns 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Super - See S 10: De Maste http://
7.2 Student wants to submit thesis without supervisor approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student to be counselled regarding implications – a recommendation of fail or major revision from examiners likely if thesis below standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student has to sign declaration - Review of thesis by alternative person within University recommended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CTC - DGS

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Risk Area	Preventative Measures	Recovery Measures	More Information
<p>8</p> <p>Examination</p>			
<p>8.1 Delays in receiving back examiner reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Select examiners carefully - Forewarn examiners of expected submission date – notify if submission delayed - TEO - ORD sends reminder at set time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appoint replacement examiner if necessary (as per Rules) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See S “Thesis Research” http://www.51lunwen.org
<p>8.2 One Or both examiner(s) request(s) amendments, or revise and submit for reexamination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thesis prepared to high standard of writing and presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proceed with amendments/revision and resubmission if requested within time limit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See R http://www.51lunwen.org
<p>8.3 One or both examiner(s) recommend(s) thesis be classified as fail</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thesis prepared to high standard of writing and presentation 	<p>CTC consults with DGS-ORD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See R http://www.51lunwen.org - For “Appendix A” [Section 1.1] http://www.51lunwen.org

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