



HDR MINIMUM RESOURCES POLICY

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Responsible Body/Person	Research Committee
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Superseded documents	None
Related documents	ACT Grants Policy English Language Policy Supervisors and Supervision Policy HDR Candidates and Supervisors Induction Policy Confirmation of Candidature Policy Grievance Resolution Policy – Students
Related HE Standards	4.2.1, 4.2.2
Student Lifecycle Stage/s	Admission, Learning

1. PURPOSE

To outline the expectation of the minimum resources and support to be provided for ACT HDR candidates.

2. DEFINITIONS

ACT is the *Australian College of Theology Limited*.

Affiliated College is an institution approved to offer an accredited higher education award of the **ACT**.

Annual Progress Report (APR) is an annual report required for all **HDR candidates**, unless they are in the coursework phase of a DMin, have been on two consecutive semesters of leave, or have submitted their thesis. It reviews progress and establishes an approach for the next phase of research.

Director of Research is the officer of the **ACT** who oversees all **research** studies. This is currently the Deputy Dean.

Endnote is software that enables the formatting of citations, footnotes and bibliographies to a chosen standard. The **ACT** provides this software for students.

English Language Proficiency is the ability to use the English language to make and communicate meaning in spoken and written contexts.

Full-time load is calculated as 48 credit points per semester for HDR candidates. Part-time load is generally 24 credit points per semester unless reasonable adjustments have been made for disability or other ongoing circumstance which affects the ability to complete research.



Graduate School of Research (GSR) is the division of **ACT** which oversees research and research training, managed by the **Director of Research** and overseen by the **Research Committee**.

HDR stands for Higher Degree by Research.

HDR candidate see **Higher Degree by Research candidate**.

Higher Degree by Research candidate is a candidate enrolled in the MTh, DMin and PhD degrees. Also known as an **HDR candidate**.

Maximum Degree Period for MTh candidates the maximum degree period is two and a half years; for all doctoral candidates the maximum degree period is six years.

Postgraduate Coordinator is the academic staff member in a candidate's **supervising college** who has responsibility for oversight of **research candidate** training in that college.

Principal Supervisor is the **supervisor** responsible for supervision of the **research** content and academic administration of an assigned **HDR candidate**.

Research Committee (RC) is the committee with oversight of **research** studies within the **ACT**.

Research candidate is a candidate enrolled in the one of the degrees of MTh, DMin, or PhD.

Research degree is a degree completed by means of a **research** project.

Supervising College is the **affiliated college** at which a **research candidate** is enrolled which has responsibility for the supervision of the candidate.

Supervisor is a person who supervises a **research candidate** enrolled in a research course of the ACT.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all ACT HDR candidates, supervisors, and supervising colleges.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The Australian College of Theology recognises that the provision of support to HDR candidates is crucial for enabling the satisfactory completion of HDR courses and for developing the research ability of candidates.

All HDR candidates should have equitable access to resources which also takes into account individual needs and circumstances. Support provided should be aimed at both research-specific needs and the whole person.

HDR candidates are members of the Graduate School of Research and the ACT research community and should be included in any applicable ACT research culture programs and initiatives.

5. PRINCIPLES

Admission

- 5.1.1 No candidate should be admitted to a Higher Degree by Research unless the affiliated college can provide adequate resources necessary to enable the applicant



to undertake the proposed research and complete candidature within the Maximum Degree Period for their degree. When the Postgraduate Coordinator recommends acceptance of a candidate into a HDR course, they confirm that they can provide the necessary resources to support the candidate's research project.

- 5.1.2 It must be demonstrated that appropriate supervision can be provided for the candidate in accordance with the *Supervisors and Supervision Policy*.
- 5.1.3 HDR Candidates should be provided with an induction program. Inductions should be conducted as soon as possible after commencement of candidature and must include information for candidates about the resources and facilities available to them.

Physical Facilities

- 5.2.1 It is the responsibility of the Postgraduate Coordinator to ensure that necessary facilities will be made available to candidates.
- 5.2.2 The minimum facilities able to be provided for each candidate if requested should include:
 - Personal desk space of no less than 0.5m², which may be shared dependent on student needs, loads and schedules. This desk space should be accessible to the candidate at all times, with disability access and support as required.
 - A suitable office chair for use at the desk space
 - Shelving sufficient for books under current use, up to at least ten (10) books
 - Access to lockable storage for valuables and sensitive material while away from desk
 - Access to a power point near the desk space
 - Internet and intranet access
 - Access to printing and photocopying facilities
 - Referencing software and training (Endnote is provided by the ACT)
 - A designated place for intra-college communication and physical post.
 - Access to tea/coffee making and toilet facilities
- 5.2.3 These facilities should be made available upon request regardless of the candidate's study load or own resources.
- 5.2.4 Candidates who have additional needs due to disability or other health conditions should discuss these needs with the affiliated college at application or when they arise, if not apparent at admission. The college should make all reasonable adjustments to accommodate these needs.
- 5.2.5 Candidates who live at a distance from the affiliated college campus should be offered assistance with locating affordable nearby accommodation when attending the campus.



- 5.2.6 Affiliated colleges may consider providing facilities beyond the minimum, such as desk lights, telephone access, filing storage, personal lockable drawers, email address, HDR candidate common room, useful software, IT support and designated parking.
- 5.2.7 When undertaking renovation or building works, the affiliated college should ensure HDR candidate needs are considered and included.

Consumable resources and running costs

- 5.3.1 Provision of consumable resources and other running costs, such as photocopying, printing, outside mail, college stationery, communication needs (for instance, video conferencing facilities e.g. Zoom), should be commensurate with the requirements of the candidate's research project.
- 5.3.2 Reasonable limits will vary from candidate to candidate depending on the nature of the research project and will also vary over the course of the candidature.

Library resources

- 5.4.1 HDR candidates are entitled to access full library services equivalent to faculty access.
- 5.4.2 Library access should include a general loan period of at least a month, Australian and overseas interlibrary loans, and online access to academic journals and research databases.
- 5.4.3 Libraries are encouraged to consider the needs of specific HDR candidates when making purchases.
- 5.4.3 HDR candidates may apply for reciprocal borrowing rights at other ACT libraries by using the form on the GSR website.

Project-specific Support

- 5.5.1 The Principal Supervisor should discuss upon admission and then annually afterwards with each candidate an agreed amount of support for the year ahead for their specific project. A budget should be set for each year in discussion with the Postgraduate Coordinator. The candidate should prepare a budget proposal before meeting with the Postgraduate Coordinator. This budget should be regarded as indicative and is not intended to be an automatic entitlement to spend up to the budgeted amount irrespective of the needs of the project.
- 5.5.2 An HDR candidate is entitled to receive up to \$600 from their college over the course of their candidature towards necessary project-specific resources, as approved by their supervisor and postgraduate coordinator. Before submitting an application to Research Committee for an HDR candidate, the college should ensure that these funds will be sufficient for the proposed project and, if not, modify the project accordingly or commit to the higher amount of support. Project support will be affirmed by the college as part of the Confirmation of Candidature process.
- 5.5.3 Research related expenses might include: fieldwork, consumables, specialist



software for data analysis, additional library services, off-site photocopying, thesis preparation (including printing and binding) or any other expense that may be substantiated as a legitimate cost.

Other support

5.6 Affiliated colleges, where necessary and practical, will provide access to a range of services and support for HDR candidates including but not limited to:

- copy editing;
- counselling;
- career and employment advice;
- assistance with respect to equity and disability support;
- social support; and
- English Language Proficiency support.

Academic Development

5.7.1 The ACT and affiliated colleges commit to including HDR candidates in any relevant activities directed towards research culture, development and training.

5.7.2 Candidates must attend, and participate in, a minimum of 4 college research seminars (or other research conferences approved by the Graduate School of Research) during each year of full-time candidature (minimum of 2 for each year of part-time candidature) as per HDR course rules.

5.7.3 Supervisors should encourage candidates to attend and engage in local research seminars, colloquia, conferences and other academic or professional development opportunities in addition to those of their supervising college.

5.7.4 Supervisors should annually discuss paper presentation and publication opportunities with candidates, providing reasonable support in accessing these opportunities.

5.7.5 All currently enrolled HDR candidates are entitled to apply for conference participation funding under the ACT Grants scheme. Affiliated colleges should inform candidates about this scheme and other such opportunities available to them.

5.7.6 Affiliated colleges should consider providing HDR candidates with opportunities to develop academic experience wherever possible, whether through fellowships, tutor positions or similar. Appropriate remuneration should be provided, and expectations should be clearly communicated.

Student representation and advocacy

5.8.1 HDR Candidate issues and interests are represented on the Research Committee by a member elected from among current HDR candidates. Candidates should be informed of this provision by affiliated colleges.



- 5.8.2 Affiliated colleges should also have structured opportunities for HDR candidate representation and advocacy for any matters relevant to them, whether by participation in committees or forums.

Communication

- 5.9.1 A meeting between the HDR candidate and the candidate’s supervisors and/or Postgraduate Coordinator, should be held at the earliest convenient time for all parties after admission to discuss expectations and inform the candidate of the support and resources available. A copy of, or link to, this policy should be given to the candidate, as well as any affiliated college policies that detail HDR support.
- 5.9.2 Any changes within the ACT or affiliated college that would affect a candidate’s research and support should be communicated as soon as possible with the candidate and the ACT Director of Research.

Ongoing Review

- 5.10.1 Postgraduate Coordinators should monitor the implementation of this policy in their affiliated college. Candidate satisfaction with the resources provided is monitored via the Annual Progress Report.
- 5.10.2 HDR candidates should discuss resource needs at least annually with their supervisors in the light of this policy. Complaints and suggestions should be reported to their Postgraduate Coordinator, following the Grievance Resolution Policy – Students if necessary.

6. RELATED LEGISLATION

None

7. REFERENCES

8. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1	R&RSC	20 October 2017	1 January 2018	New policy
2	R&RSC	02 October 2020	1 January 2021	Linked to HESF 4.2.2 Addition of links to Grievance Resolution Policies Minor changes to wording.
3	RC	8 April 2022	8 April 2022	Minimum amount of \$600 over the course of the candidature; to be confirmed at CoC.
4	RC	19 April 2024	19 April 2024	Changed to initial approval and effective dates; updates on GSR; alignment with changes in related policies.

Any hard copy of this electronic document may not be current as the ACT regularly reviews its policies. The latest version can be found online at <http://www.actheology.edu.au/documents>.



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