Australian

Confirmation of Candidature Policy

Policy Document Administrator	Edwina Murphy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Policy Document Approver	Research Committee
Responsible Body/Person	Research Committee
Next Review date	February 2026
Superseded documents	Confirmation of Candidature Procedure
Related documents	*Confirmation of Candidature Portfolio Form* HDR Minimum Resources Policy Grievance Resolution Policy – Students *Annual Progress Report*
Related HE Standards	4.2.1
Related National Code Standards	N/A
Glossary	Definitions for any words in **Bold** in this document can be found in the [Policy Glossary](#)

1. PURPOSE

To establish the formal process by which candidature in Higher Degree by Research (HDR) courses will be confirmed.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to commencing provisional candidates in AUT HDR courses – MTh (Res), DMin, and PhD – and to Master of Professional Ministry (MPM) candidates who intend to articulate to an Higher Degree by Research course.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

The Australian University of Theology states that Confirmation of Candidature must be successfully achieved by candidates to progress from provisional to full candidature status. Normally, only candidates with full candidature status may enrol in semesters beyond the maximum period of provisional candidature. Candidates who are articulating directly from the MPM will generally complete Confirmation of Candidature as part of their admission to the course, and in such cases will have full candidature status on admission.

4. PRINCIPLES

Confirmation of Candidature (CoC)

5.1 Confirmation of Candidature is a formal and comprehensive process designed to encourage diligence early in the candidature, to review the progress and to plan the progress of the candidature from commencement to completion. The process aims to endorse work already accomplished and to provide support for the development of the candidate's plan for successful completion of the degree. The process provides the opportunity for positive feedback to be given on progress and emphasises formative evaluation by way of identification of improvements that might be made. Successful completion of the confirmation of candidature process will move a candidate from 'provisional candidature' to 'full candidature' status.

5.2 In order to confirm their candidature, commencing candidates in the

MTh (Res), DMin, or PhD are required to satisfactorily submit to Research Committee a CoC Portfolio which has been reviewed and approved by a college Advisory Panel. The Portfolio includes a Research Plan, Dissemination of Outcomes Plan, revised Research Proposal, Advisory Panel report, statement responding to the Advisory Panel and, if required, an Ethics Protocol (for theses including Human Participant Research). The Portfolio must be submitted according to the following time frames:

5.2.1   Candidates articulating directly from the MPM (usually to the DMin)

The CoC Portfolio is submitted to the Research Committee as part of the admission requirements for the award.

5.2.2   MTh (Res) candidates

The CoC Portfolio is submitted to the Research Committee no later than the end of the candidate's first full time semester (or part time equivalent). Note that MTh (Res) candidates will have provided a draft Research Proposal as part of their application process.

5.2.3   Doctoral candidates

The CoC Portfolio is submitted to the Research Committee no later than the end of the candidate's second full time semester (or part time equivalent).

5.3   As part of Confirmation of Candidature, the affiliated college affirms that the resources required to complete the project will be provided to the candidate in accordance with the HDR Minimum Resources policy.

5.4   Completion of Confirmation of candidature is required for all candidates to progress their candidature.

5.5   Failure to successfully confirm candidature may result in termination of candidature. The Research Committee will determine confirmation and continuation or termination of candidature.

5.6   Candidates whose candidature has been terminated may appeal under the Grievance Resolution Policy – Students.

Research Plan

5.7   All HDR candidates should, in conjunction with their supervisors, complete a Research Plan in the first semester of their candidature, outlining the goals for the first twelve months and a timeline to completion.

5.8   The goals for achievement during the first twelve months of candidature may include such items as:

5.7.1   attending relevant coursework units supportive of the proposed research.

5.7.2   undertaking language study (e.g., Latin, French, German).

5.7.3   producing written reports—e.g. an annotated bibliography, a "map" of the thesis context.

5.7.4   preparing a literature survey with discussion.

5.7.5   drafting portions of the Research Proposal.

5.9 The timeline to completion will be subject to adjustment as the research progresses. Nevertheless, this timeline should identify major and perhaps minor tasks and indicate expected points on the timeline for their completion. This timeline provides the basis for review of progress by candidate and principal supervisor to be reported on in the candidate's Annual Progress Report. An updated Research Plan will be included in the CoC Portfolio.

Dissemination of Outcomes Plan

5.10 All HDR candidates should, in conjunction with their supervisors, complete a Dissemination of Outcomes Plan in the first semester of their candidature. A list of conferences and journals in which a paper based on the research the candidate is undertaking may be presented, and identification of possible academic monograph publishers. Presentation of at least one seminar or conference paper of no less than 20 minutes' duration prior to submission of the thesis is required, as per the course rules.

Research Proposal

5.11 Candidates must produce a draft Research Proposal which addresses the criteria listed in the Guidelines in the Confirmation of Candidature Portfolio Form. For candidates undertaking Human Participant Research, this will be accompanied by a draft Ethics Protocol on which the Advisory Panel may also comment.

5.12 The Research Proposal will be presented to the Advisory Panel, usually at a research seminar in the candidate's supervising college. The presentation will be a formative evaluation of the Research Proposal, attracting diagnostic feedback to improve the content of the various sections of the proposal. The presentation provides candidates an opportunity to crystallise their ideas and to receive feedback from peers and experienced researchers at an early stage of the work.

5.13 Normally, the Advisory Panel (comprising the supervising college Postgraduate Coordinator, the candidate's principal supervisor, and two experts in the research field, at least one of whom is external to the supervising college) attend the presentation of the Research Proposal. [Avoid having potential examiners on the Advisory Panel.] The candidate (via the Postgraduate Coordinator) will provide the Advisory Panel with the text of the Research Proposal five working days prior to the presentation. Within five working days of hearing the presentation, the Advisory Panel should provide a written report to the candidate and supervisor for their consideration.

5.14 After receiving the Advisory Panel's report, the candidate, in collaboration with their supervisors, will update the Research Proposal based on the report and any other useful feedback from the seminar.

5.15 The candidate (via the principal supervisor) will provide the Postgraduate Coordinator with a revised version of the Research Proposal, the Advisory Panel report and a statement indicating the responses made to the advice of the Advisory Panel and along with any other changes.

5.16 The Postgraduate Coordinator will circulate the revised version to the

Advisory Panel who will confirm that the changes have been made to their satisfaction. If further changes are required, the process will be repeated until the Advisory Panel is prepared to sign off on the revised Research Proposal.

5.17 This revised Research Proposal, along with the Advisory Panel report, the candidate's statement of response, the Research Plan, the Dissemination of Outcomes Plan and the Ethics Protocol (if required), which together constitute the Confirmation of Candidature portfolio, are then to be submitted by the Postgraduate Coordinator to the next meeting of the Research Committee.

Confirmation of Candidature Approval Process

5.18 The Research Committee will assess the Confirmation of Candidature Portfolio and either approve or not approve confirmation of candidature.

5.19 Once confirmation of candidature has been approved, candidates undertaking Human Participant Research must submit their Ethics Protocol to the AUT Ethics Committee via their Postgraduate Coordinator.

5.20 If the Research Committee does not approve confirmation of candidature, it will send a report of the required actions to the candidate, principal supervisor, and Postgraduate Coordinator.

5.21 If the revised Research Proposal requires further modification, the Research Committee will provide a detailed report of the required changes. The candidate must submit a revised Confirmation of Candidature Portfolio, including an updated version of the Research Proposal and a statement of response to Research Committee's report, to the Research Committee via their Postgraduate Coordinator.

5.22 The revised Portfolio must be submitted no later than the submission date for agenda items for the next Research Committee meeting, according to the Graduate School of Research website, but may be submitted earlier for review via email.

5.23 The Research Committee will assess the re-submission of the Confirmation of Candidature Portfolio, make a decision to either confirm candidature or to terminate candidature, and inform the candidate, principal supervisor, and Postgraduate Coordinator of the outcome within five working days of the relevant Research Committee meeting or the date of submission, whichever is later.

5.24 If candidature is terminated, the candidate will be advised of their right to appeal under the grievance resolution policy – students.

5   RELATED LEGISLATION

6   REFERENCES

7   VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1	RAB	4/11/2007	4/11/2007	

2	Academic Board	May 2010	May 2010	
3	R&RSC	May 2013	May 2013	
4	R&RSC	May 2015	May 2015	
5	R&RSC	October 2016	October 2016	
6	R&RSC	April 2020	April 2020	
7	R&RSC	01 October 2021	01 October 2021	New template. Separated from procedure.
8	RC	9 February 2024	9 February 2024	Procedure incorporated back into policy; addition of MPM; change to research plan requirements; edited for clarity.

Any hard copy of this electronic document may not be current as the AUT regularly reviews its policies. The latest version can be found online at aut.edu.au/documents