



Faculty of Arts

First Year Research Proposal Review – Faculty Guidelines

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the University of Wollongong **Higher Degree Research (HDR) Students First Year Research Proposal Review Guidelines** PDF document.

The First Year Proposal Review is the Faculty's and University's formal process for monitoring the progress of the research being undertaken by all Higher Degree Research (HDR) students. Continuation of enrolment in your research degree is subject to the satisfactory completion of a Proposal Review. The Review process also provides an opportunity for you to develop a coherent research plan and methodology, receive constructive academic criticism, and for the Faculty to ensure that it can provide adequate resources and appropriate supervision for your project.

Definitions

For the purposes of these guidelines, the following terms and definitions will be used:

- **Proposal Review:** the overall process of reviewing each HDR student's research proposal and progress.
- **Research Plan:** the formal documentation submitted by each HDR student, the contents of which are outlined in these guidelines.
- **Proposal Review Presentation:** the oral presentation you make to a panel, the format of which is outlined in these guidelines.

Preparing for your Proposal Review

You will be informed by the Research Support Team via email 6-8 weeks prior to your Review that your Review is due. There is some flexibility with scheduling, however your Review needs to be completed within your first full year of study, and the Faculty needs to factor in the availability of staff including your supervisors and the Faculty Head of Postgraduate Studies.

Reviews should ideally be completed within the timeframes listed below to allow candidates the opportunity to address any problems with their proposal. Part-time students are also obliged to complete their Review within their first year of enrolment.

- **MA Research students:** will complete the Review within the first 4-6 months, dating from when they commence the thesis component of their degree.
- **PhD students:** will complete the Review within the first 6-8 months.

The Proposal Review has two components. There is an oral Proposal Review Presentation to a panel consisting of:

- the Faculty Head of Postgraduate Studies (HPS), or, in their absence, an appropriate alternative such as the Chair of the Faculty Research Committee (FRC); this person will chair the Review.
- your supervisors or supervisory team.
- an additional academic staff member, with some knowledge of your research area.

Also present (but not part of the panel) will be:

- a postgraduate student representative, who plays the role of observer to ensure due process is followed and to provide 'moral support'.
- a member of the Faculty's general staff, who will be responsible for administering the Review.

This Proposal Review Presentation follows the submission of a Research Plan and written material which is distributed to all panel members in the week prior to your Proposal Review Presentation. The Faculty schedules at least one hour for your Review.

You must consult with at least your primary supervisor in preparing for your Proposal Review Presentation. They will be able to give you feedback on your Research Plan written material and issues you should raise during your Proposal Review Presentation. Your Research Plan paperwork is to be submitted to your primary supervisor at least two weeks before your Proposal Review Presentation. Once your supervisor is satisfied with your paperwork, it can be submitted to the Research Support Team.

It is also strongly recommended that you consult with the postgraduate student representative for your Unit before your Proposal Review. They play a supportive role, providing moral support and advice on your presentation, however they are not part of the panel.

Research Plan paperwork

All HDR students need to submit a document to the Research Support Team, at least one week prior to their Review – this should be emailed as a Microsoft Word document. This document will be distributed to all panel members in the week prior to the Review, giving them time to become familiar with your research and topic. Please note that your Review can be postponed if the Research Plan paperwork is not received.

This written material needs to include:

- **title page** – with your name, current thesis title, names of your supervisors, and the date of your review
- **research plan and written material from your thesis** – including your proposal, aims, significance and methodology.
- **literature review and preliminary bibliography**
- **chapter outline and timeline** – factoring in planned fieldwork and conferences (if relevant), up to the submission of your thesis; this can be represented session by session, quarter by quarter, or month by month, depending on your preference. Please note that conference presentations should be in line with the thesis topic.

- **statement of required resources** – including any planned fieldwork or presentation of a paper at a conference, or any training you will need to undertake; for any fieldwork or presenting at conferences, you need to submit an itemised budget, including airfares, accommodation, conference registration, any additional necessary expenses, etc.; this section will be reviewed if you make a submission for funding to the Faculty's FRC in a competitive funding round. All resources must be essential to the completion of your research project.

HDR Students need to be aware that they can apply for Faculty support up to a limit of approximately \$3000 over the period of their candidature, and that the funding process is competitive, hence the need for the Faculty to be informed well in advance about funding requests to help with the future planning of Faculty resources.

Faculty of Arts First Year Proposal Review Summary Form

When you are informed about your Review, you will be sent these guidelines as a reminder of what is required, as well as the University of Wollongong HDR Student First Year Proposal Review guidelines, and a Proposal Review Summary Form.

You need to submit the Summary Form with your written material to the Research Support Team, one week prior to your Review. The Summary Form is a one-page document which asks you for a 100-word summary of your topic and your statement of required resources. While this document repeats information in your main document, it provides the Faculty with information about your research at a glance, and will be used by the Faculty Research Committee (FRC) during conference and research support funding rounds.

Review Presentation

- At your Proposal Review presentation, you will speak for no longer than 20 minutes about your topic, proposal and research, linking your presentation to the written material you have submitted.
- You may, if you wish, prepare a PowerPoint presentation, use overhead transparencies, or prepare additional handouts for the Review, although this is not compulsory.
- The Chair will then call for questions from the panel members, who may also engage in discussion with you about your proposal, with suggestions and constructive criticism.
- You and the postgraduate student representative will then be asked to leave the room while the panel discuss the outcome and your progress.
- You and the postgraduate student representative will then return to the room, when you will be informed of the outcome.

Outcome of the Review

The final outcome of your Proposal Review can be:

- **Acceptable** – progress is deemed to be satisfactory, with comments and feedback from the panel members
- **Unacceptable** – progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory, and the student will be given a second chance to present within 3 months of the initial Review. If this second Review is also deemed unsatisfactory, the panel can recommend termination of candidature.

Upgrade Review – from MA Research to PhD

If you wish to upgrade from an MA Research to PhD degree, you need to inform the Research Support Team immediately when you are contacted about scheduling your Review. The process is similar to a normal Proposal Review, except for the following:

- in your written material, you need to include a substantial sample of written work (eg. 1-2 chapters) of your thesis as it stands at the time of the Review.
- the panel will also include a member of the University's Thesis Examination Committee (TEC), who will help determine if the proposal is worthy of an upgrade from an MA Research degree to a PhD degree.

While the process is to determine whether a student should be upgraded, the Review is still also an assessment of the student's progress in their research degree, and, as such, determines your continuation in your degree.

An HDR student should have completed at least 9 months of their degree before applying to upgrade.

Internal Review and Probation

HDR students can be placed on internal review or probation at any point during their candidature, including after the submission of Annual Progress Reports (APR).

- **Internal Review** - the student will be placed on an internal review, and given a series of tasks with a deadline to complete them. Progress will be re-reviewed after this set period of time.
- **Probation** - the DVC (Research) is the only person who can impose a period of Probation on a student, based on a recommendation from the Dean of the Faculty after consulting with the Head of Postgraduate Studies. A senior academic staff member will be appointed as a probationary supervisor, and will set a series of tasks with a deadline to complete them, with the probation period lasting 3-12 months. The probationary supervisor will report on the student's progress at the end of this period.

Students can appeal being placed on Probation or having their candidature terminated. This appeals process is outlined in "Higher Degree Research (HDR) Students: Progress Review and Probation Guidelines."

<http://www.uow.edu.au/content/groups/public/@web/@raid/documents/doc/uow030442.pdf>

