

## WHO TO APPROACH WITH A PROBLEM OR CONCERN CONCERNING YOUR ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

HDR candidates who have a question or concern about a decision, act or omission of a member of staff of a Faculty that affects their academic experience should follow the steps set out below. HDR Candidates should take careful note of the deadlines for following up their grievance at each step.

### Stage 1 – Informal discussion with person(s) directly involved

The HDR candidate should first approach the person(s) directly involved as soon as possible to discuss any question or concern. For example, the HDR candidate might approach their:

- marker for an explanation of a mark awarded for an assessment task (Coursework students only);
- Subject Coordinator to discuss a mark awarded by an external marker, or a final mark or grade;
- Supervisor(s) where there is an issue or concern about supervision;
- Head of Postgraduate Studies where they are unhappy about facilities, funding arrangements, leave requests, etc

The HDR candidate might then seek advice informally from other appropriate persons in the Faculty (e.g. Head of Unit).

**Note 1:** Grievances by HDR students who have been advised, following their HDR Research Proposal Review or HDR Student Progress Review, that a recommendation has been proposed to transfer their candidature from PhD or Doctoral to Masters by Research, or that they be placed on a period of probation, or that their candidature be terminated, **must be addressed formally, starting from Stage 2** – refer section 7.

**Note 2:** Grievances or appeals relating to recommendations affecting candidature status **must be addressed formally, starting from Stage 3** – refer section 8.

### Stage 2 – Formal grievance resolution by Faculty

Where an issue or concern is not resolved informally by directly approaching appropriate Faculty staff under Stage 1, the HDR candidate may take the following steps to have the matter formally resolved by the Faculty.

#### Step 1

The HDR candidate may refer the matter in writing to the person designated in the Faculty as being responsible for handling grievances. The application must:

1. include the HDR candidate's name, supervisor(s), identification number and contact details;
2. set out the nature of the grievance, any specific issues involved and the form of resolution that the HDR candidate is seeking;
3. be lodged with the relevant staff member within 20 working days of the unsuccessful resolution of the grievance at Stage 1.

If a person specified in one of these steps is involved in the grievance, the matter will be referred directly to the next specified person identified within the Faculty Grievance procedures.

### **Stage 3 – Referral to Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)**

If the matter is not resolved by the Faculty under Stage 2, the HDR candidate may refer the matter, in writing to the Director, RSC for consideration by the PVC(R) within 20 working days of receiving a final response from the Faculty. The PVC(R) may:

1. refuse to take the matter further if there are insufficient grounds for the grievance; or
2. decide whether there has been a failure by the Faculty to observe due process and take appropriate action; or
3. make any other decision as deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

**“Due process” means the HDR candidate’s procedural rights under this or other policies, their right to be given a fair hearing and their right to have their case decided by someone who is not biased.**

Where the PVC(R) decides that the Faculty has not followed due process, he/she may:

1. conciliate the matter;
2. refer the matter, in writing, back to the Faculty for reconsideration of the matter in accordance with due process; or
3. refer the matter to the Higher Degree Research (HDR) Appeals Committee.

↓(if unresolved)

### **Stage 4 – Appeal to HDR Appeal Committee**

After you have exhausted all of the processes outlined in Stages 1 to 3, HDR candidates may appeal to the HDR Appeal Committee if they believe that there has been a failure to follow due process in Stage 3.

HDR candidates must lodge your appeal in writing with the Committee (through the Director of the Research Student Centre) within 10 working days of receiving written notification of the decision of the PVC(R).

Where the HDR Appeal Committee hears the matter and decides that the PVC(R) has not followed due process, it will generally refer the matter back to the PVC(R) for reconsideration. Except in exceptional circumstances, the Committee will not normally reconsider the matter itself.

↓(if unresolved)

### **Stage 5 – Appeal to Council Committee of Appeal (Student Matters)**

Where you believe that there has been lack of due process in the proceedings of the HDR Appeal Committee, you can apply, in writing, to the Vice-Principal (Administration) to refer the matter to the Council Committee of Appeal (Student Matters). The application must be lodged within 10 working days of being notified of the decision of the Higher Degree Research (HDR) Appeals Committee.