

QUT Higher Degree by Research Course Regulations

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1.0 Introduction

This document sets out the Course Regulations governing the award of Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) at Queensland University of Technology (QUT). The QUT HDR courses are as follows:

- IF80 Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- IF49 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- ED11 Doctor of Education (EdD)

These course regulations complement QUT’s Manual of Policies and Procedures ([MOPP](#)), which in turn comply with Commonwealth and State statutes and laws and the Education Services for Overseas Students Act (2000) regarding international student visa requirements.

Course Definition	Master of Philosophy	Doctor of Philosophy	Doctor of Education
QUT Course code	IF80	IF49	ED11
Award title	Master of Philosophy	Doctor of Philosophy	Doctor of Education
Abbreviated title	MPhil	PhD	EdD
Credit points (cp)	Up to 48cp plus thesis	Up to 48cp plus thesis	Up to 48cp plus thesis
Duration: Standard	12–24 months full time 24–48 months part time	36–48 months full time 72–96 months part time	36–48 months full time 72–96 months part time
Minimum	12 months full time 24 months part time	24 months full time 48 months part time	24 months full time 48 months part time
Maximum ¹	24 months full time 48 months part time	48 months full time 96 months part time	48 months full time 96 months part time
Entry	Entry open all year ²	Entry open all year ²	January commencement
Course Type	Masters by research (postgraduate)	Doctorate by research (postgraduate)	Professional doctorate by research (postgraduate)
Student type	Domestic or International	Domestic or International	Domestic or International
Faculties	All	All	Education

¹ In exceptional cases an extension may be granted by the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate (refer to [Time Limits for Completion of an Award Course policy](#)).

² Subject to restricted intake dates for some faculties. Check requirements with the host faculty.

The aim of Higher Degree by Research study is to encourage independent and original thinking in the quest for knowledge. Higher degrees at QUT are awarded in recognition of a student's substantial contribution to knowledge. The student's research must reveal high critical ability and synthesis.

A Master of Philosophy (MPhil) student's research may be in the form of new knowledge, or of significant or original adaptation, application and interpretation of existing knowledge.

QUT's Master of Philosophy (MPhil) course regulations meet all relevant regulatory requirements including the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 9 Qualification Specifications.

QUT's Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Education (EdD) research may be in the form of new knowledge, or of significant **and** original adaptation, application and interpretation of existing knowledge. These doctoral courses meet all relevant regulatory requirements including the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 10 Qualification Specifications.

The [AQF level summaries](#) state the typical achievement of graduates who have been awarded a qualification at AQF Level 9 and 10 level.

2.0 Award Details

QUT's Higher Degrees by Research will be awarded subject to:

- satisfactory completion of the student's approved course of study; and
- satisfactory completion of the student's mandatory milestones and research training; and
- the student's certification that they have not studied another tertiary award during the tenure of their research degree candidature without the permission of the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate; and
- a statement by the student indicating original authorship of their thesis; and
- satisfactory completion by the student of the examination process; and
- the final version of the thesis being submitted as per guidelines.

The higher research degree award titles offered by QUT are:

- Master of Philosophy or Master of Philosophy (major study area)
- Doctor of Philosophy
- Doctor of Education

3.0 Definitions

"Applicant" means any person who is applying for admission to a higher degree research.

"Candidate" means any person admitted to a planned course of research leading to a higher degree by research.

"Candidature" means the period of study towards the higher degree research being the period from the date of commencement until the end of enrolment based on successful completion of all coursework and mandatory training completed satisfactorily leading to lodgement for thesis examination (after which time the student holds the status of 'Under Examination') or until the candidature is terminated or the student withdraws.

"Confirmed candidature" means successful completion of the doctoral Confirmation of Candidature milestone.

"Doctor of Philosophy" (PhD) means a doctoral degree, which has a research component comprising 66.6 percent or more of the total course of study, and which involves significant and original research that contributes to knowledge, research and theory in a field of study.

“Examination” means the formal assessment of the candidate’s thesis to critically evaluate whether the conditions for the award of the higher degree research have been met.

“Examiners” means the appropriately academically qualified specialists appointed to undertake examination of the candidate’s thesis.

“External student” means a student who will undertake most of their research and study away from QUT research facilities or campuses.

“Final Seminar” means the final milestone where the thesis is evaluated by an internal panel who confirm it is acceptable for examination.

“HDR Skills Assessment Tool” is available to students to determine their skills and skill gaps, and to assist in determining a student’s training and coursework needs.

“Higher Degree Research” (HDR) means any postgraduate masters or doctoral degree with a research component comprising 66.6 percent or more of the total course of study. Higher degree research is also referred to as postgraduate research.

“Internal student” means a student who will complete their study while physically attending a QUT campus or research facility.

“Master of Philosophy” (MPhil) means a centrally managed masters degree, which has a research component comprising 66.6 percent or more of the total course of study.

“Milestone” means a mandatory candidature event that is an internal review of a student’s progress or a dissemination of research.

“Professional Doctorate (Research)” means a doctoral degree, which has a research component comprising 66.6 percent or more of the total course of study, and which involves applied research to solve problems or improve practices in a professional field.

“Recognised institution” means any tertiary education institution accepted by the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate for the purposes of these Course Regulations.

“Research” comprises information gathering and knowledge creation, analysis, critical investigation and communication in a manner acceptable in the field of endeavour. Knowledge creation would encompass creative and professional practice and reflection on this practice.

“Research Degrees Committee” is a QUT Council committee established in accordance with [Council Procedure 1 - Committee Operations](#).

“Thesis” means a document or collection of materials, which for thesis by creative works includes an exegesis that provides an argued case for a significant and original contribution to knowledge. The thesis presents the student’s research and findings and is presented for examination. In the award course, the thesis component is deemed equivalent to the research component.

“Under Examination” is a status assigned to candidates once they have submitted their thesis for examination and prior to lodgement of the final thesis. During this time candidates are not considered to be enrolled students but remain admitted to the course for the purposes of final submission.

Also refer to the **Glossary of Terms** on QUT’s website: <http://www.qut.edu.au/about/glossary>.

4.0 Entry Requirements

4.1 Entry Criteria

To be eligible for entry into a Higher Degree by Research, applicants normally must have:

Degree	Minimum Requirements
Master of Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a proposed research project that the faculty has the resources to supervise and support; <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a bachelor degree (AQF Level 7) or equivalent in a relevant discipline, with a minimum grade point average of 5 (on a 7 point scale) and relevant professional and/or research experience as determined by the faculty; or • a bachelor honours degree (AQF Level 8) in a relevant discipline.
Doctor of Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a proposed research project that the faculty has the resources to supervise and support; <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an Australian or comparable AQF first class or second class division A bachelor honours degree (AQF Level 8); or • an Australian or comparable AQF master’s degree (by research or coursework) (AQF Level 9); or • a doctorate (by research or coursework) (AQF Level 10). <p>Applicants who hold a coursework masters and/or doctorate must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have completed a significant research component, normally 25% or more of the credit point value; • have a minimum grade point average of 5 (on a 7 point scale) in that course; and • present evidence of research experience and potential for approval.
Doctor of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a proposed research project that the faculty has the resources to supervise and support; <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an Australian or comparable AQF first class or second class division A bachelor honours degree in education (AQF Level 8); or • an Australian or comparable AQF master’s degree in education or in a field relevant to the professional doctorate in education (by research or coursework) (AQF Level 9); or • a doctorate (by research or coursework) (AQF Level 10) <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two years’ practice in a position of professional responsibility in education or a closely related field. <p>Applicants who hold a coursework masters and/or doctorate must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a minimum grade point average of 5 (on a 7 point scale) in that course.

4.2 English Language Requirements

QUT requires that all students demonstrate a specified level of English proficiency, which will be assessed at all stages of candidature including at each milestone and as part of the thesis examination process. Refer to the [Admission of Students policy](#) and course entry requirements.

4.3 QUT's Capacity to Support Research

The university will assess, and must confirm its capacity to support, the applicant's field of research and research project, including supervisory capacity, before admission is approved.

4.4 Application Process

4.4.1 An application for admission will be made as prescribed by QUT.

4.4.2 The Research Degrees Committee or its delegate may set conditions regarding the offer of admission.

4.4.3 An applicant who is not admitted to the course may re-apply for admission at a later date.

4.4.4 Admission to the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is a two-stage process:

- 1) Stage 1 is the application for admission, which must be approved by the faculty and by the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate; and
- 2) Successful completion of the Stage 2 milestone, which finalises the admission process.

4.5 Admission Date

Approved applicants must commence by the course start date stated on their offer of admission. Where a student fails to commence by the course start date, QUT has the right to withdraw the admission offer. Applicants may request to defer commencement, normally prior to admission, and subject to QUT approval.

4.6 Advanced Standing

4.6.1 QUT will assess an applicant's relevant previous studies and professional experience (if appropriate) in consultation with the faculty at the point of admission and may approve advanced standing.

4.6.2 A research student enrolled at another institution and seeking to transfer their enrolment to a QUT Higher Degree by Research course must apply for admission and provide the required supporting documents. QUT will determine whether to apply advanced standing and/or prior load based on evidence that the student has completed equivalent milestones and/or coursework.

4.6.3 Normally, all students must undergo mandatory milestone and coursework unless they provide evidence of successfully completing equivalent assessment of their academic and research capability and progress.

4.6.4 Normally, where applicants or students transfer or articulate from a Master of Philosophy or Professional Doctorate (Research) to a Doctor of Philosophy, then prior load will be applied to the Doctor of Philosophy course, where appropriate.

4.6.5 Prior load will not be applied if an applicant has completed a higher degree by research, or if an applicant withdrew from a higher degree by research more than three years ago and are applying for (re)admission with a new research project.

4.7 Collaborative Higher Degree by Research Programs

4.7.1 There is provision, as detailed in the Collaborative Higher Degree by Research Program Guidelines, for students to undertake a joint or split higher degree by research with QUT and a recognised partner institution.

4.7.2 All relevant QUT rules, policies and guidelines apply to students enrolled in a collaborative higher degree by research program.

4.7.3 A student undertaking a collaborative higher degree by research program must spend a minimum period at both QUT and the partner institution as specified in the relevant agreement.

4.8 Readmission

4.8.1 Applicants may be considered for readmission in accordance with the [Higher Degree Research Candidates policy](#) (section 4).

4.8.2 Readmission will be subject to the approval of both the faculty and the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate.

5.0 Attendance Requirements

5.1 Study Mode

5.1.1 An admitted higher degree by research student may be enrolled as a full time or part time internal student, or as a full time or part time external student. Restrictions may apply to international students and scholarship recipients.

5.1.2 Students conducting their research internally may do so at any QUT campus, distributed site or research facility subject to the availability of resources and approval of the supervisory team, school, faculty, distributed site and/or research facility.

5.1.3 QUT may permit students to conduct their research externally in Australia or overseas. Normally, students must spend a minimum of three months at QUT during their candidature.

5.1.4 Changes to study mode or location must be approved by QUT.

5.1.5 Applications to study externally must include sufficient evidence to satisfy the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate that:

- the research will be undertaken at a suitable location (which may be a recognised research institution or place of professional employment) and that the student has access to resources required to undertake the research;
- the student has the opportunity to participate in scholarly activities;
- academic standards in the conduct of the research can be assured;
- the student and supervisory team will maintain regular contact including via online/remote supervision using digital technologies;
- if the student is based at an external institution and/or requires additional local supervision support, a suitable external supervisor will be available and responsible for regular supervision;
- if the student is based at an external institution, that the external institution has committed the resources required for the student to conduct their research for the duration of candidature;
- appropriate arrangements are in place regarding the student's health and safety and insurance cover.

A case for exemption from the above requirements can be made to the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate.

6.0 Enrolment and Progression

Refer to the [Higher Degree Research Candidates policy](#) for more information.

6.1 Faculty Affiliation

6.1.1 Students will be affiliated with a faculty appropriate to the planned research degree.

6.1.2 Faculty affiliation may change in accordance with the transdisciplinary nature of the project.

6.2 Course Requirements

6.2.1 The planned course structure normally includes:

- completion of the HDR Skills Assessment Tool (refer to section 6.3) to identify training needs;
- attendance at HDR orientation
- completion of mandatory and recommended coursework units;
- completion of mandatory research integrity and health and safety training;
- participation in university scholarly activities such as graduate research education & development courses, research seminars, teaching and/or publication;
- regular interaction with the supervisory team;
- public dissemination of research findings; and
- completion and examination of a higher degree by research thesis.

The total coursework normally will not exceed 48 credit points.

6.2.2 There are also mandatory training requirements that students must complete as follows:

- [Advanced Information Research Skills \(AIRS\) unit IFN006](#) - students cannot be enrolled in IFN006 more than three times. If a student fails the unit three times, they will be asked to [Show Cause](#) as to why their candidature should not be terminated.
- [Research Integrity Online \(RIO\) course](#)

6.2.3 QUT must be satisfied that students can access faculty or faculty approved resources consistent with the [infrastructure provision statement for Higher Degree Research candidates](#) and that the research project aligns with [QUT's Research Training Framework](#).

6.2.4 Students must comply with all relevant health and safety, research ethics, intellectual property, data management, authorship and other policies consistent with the [QUT Code for Responsible Conduct of Research](#).

6.2.5 Students and supervisors must comply with QUT policy on [Intellectual Property](#) which provides direction on the management and protection of intellectual property, commercialisation of intellectual property and the sharing of net revenues from commercialisation with creators.

6.2.6 Where the student's research project forms part of the work of a research team or a larger research project, the supervisory team must indicate clearly the individual contribution expected to be made by the student, their individual research activities and responsibilities and the extent to which the work is to be carried out in collaboration with others. An intellectual property agreement may also need to be completed as prescribed by QUT.

6.2.7 Where the student's research project is carried out jointly in QUT and in an industrial, commercial, professional or research establishment, an outline of the work to be undertaken at each site in relation to the whole project must be provided as part of the Research Proposal/confirmation document, or similar for Professional Doctorates. An intellectual property agreement may also need to be completed as prescribed by QUT.

6.3 HDR Skills Assessment Tool

6.3.1 The HDR Skills Assessment Tool should be completed by the student early in their candidature and then revisited throughout candidature to guide determination of any coursework or support to be included in the program of study.

6.4 End-user Engagement and Overseas Experience

6.4.1 Opportunities for end-user internships and engagement and/or overseas experience may be available during candidature.

6.4.2 Such opportunities are not mandatory and should not impact on the maximum candidature time.

6.4.3 Undertaking end-user engagement and/or overseas experience activities will not be deemed a sufficient reason to extend a student's maximum candidature time. The student and faculty must ensure that adequate support and resources are available to facilitate the completion of the activities within the maximum candidature time.

6.5 Milestones

Candidature milestones assess a student's academic progress and capacity to conduct research at the required level.

Students must maintain satisfactory progress throughout candidature as outlined in the [Higher Degree Research Candidates policy](#) (section 7). Unsatisfactory progress may result in a student being placed "Under Review" or being asked to "Show Cause" why their candidature should not be terminated ([Higher Degree Research Candidates policy](#) section 6).

6.5.1 Master of Philosophy Milestones

6.5.1.1 Research Proposal

Timing

6.5.1.1.1 The milestone requirements are outlined in the [Research Proposal guidelines](#).

6.5.1.1.2 Upon application, an extension to the milestone due date may be approved by QUT.

6.5.1.1.3 Failure to submit a Research Proposal document within nine months of commencement (full time equivalent) will result in the student's candidature being terminated.

6.5.1.1.4 Students whose candidature is terminated following QUT's assessment of the Research Proposal cannot re-apply for admission to any QUT Higher Degree by Research course for at least 12 months.

6.5.1.2 Annual Progress Reports

The principal supervisor and student are required to report to the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate on the student's progress and research plans consistent with Annual Progress Report guidelines. Refer to the [Higher Degree Research Candidates policy](#) (section 7)

6.5.1.3 Research Seminar

The student must present their research findings in accordance with the [Research Seminar guidelines](#).

The milestone is complete once the student has presented at the MPhil Symposium, or another forum approved by QUT.

6.5.2 Doctor of Philosophy Milestones

6.5.2.1 Stage 2

Timing

- 6.5.2.1.1 The Stage 2 milestone must be completed in accordance with [Stage 2 guidelines](#).
- 6.5.2.1.2 Upon application, an extension to the milestone due date may be approved by QUT.
- 6.5.2.1.3 Formal admission to candidature is conditional upon successful completion of Stage 2.
- 6.5.2.1.4 Students who are not admitted to candidature following Stage 2 assessment cannot re-apply for admission to any QUT Higher Degree Research course for at least 12 months.
- 6.5.2.1.5 Failure to submit a Stage 2 document for consideration within four months of commencement (full time equivalent) will result in the applicant not being admitted and their enrolment will be cancelled.

6.5.2.2 Confirmation of Candidature

Timing

- 6.5.2.2.1 The milestone must be completed in accordance with the [Confirmation of Candidature guidelines](#).

Outcome

6.5.2.2.2 The faculty will review the student's progress and planned research project and submit their recommendations for approval by the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate. Successful completion of this milestone will lead to Confirmation of Candidature. The faculty's recommendation to the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate will include:

- An appraisal of the research capacity of the student;
- An appraisal of the student's progress and suitability for continuation in the degree;
- A statement that the documents prepared by the student are consistent with guidelines;
- A statement that the research project is of the standard required for a doctoral degree;
- Statements of whether the studies continue to be within the aims, objectives and resources of the faculty; and
- A report on the student's seminar.

6.5.2.2.3 Following failure to submit the Confirmation of Candidature document and on the advice of the faculty, the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate may place the student Under Review or ask the student to Show Cause why the candidature should not be terminated.

6.5.2.3 Annual Progress Reports

The principal supervisor and student are required to report to the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate on the student's progress and research plans consistent with Annual Progress Report guidelines. Refer to the [Higher Degree Research Candidates policy](#) (section 7).

6.5.2.4 Final Seminar

- 6.5.2.4.1 The milestone must be completed in accordance with [Final Seminar guidelines](#).
- 6.5.2.4.2 At Final Seminar, the principal supervisor should nominate the examiners to the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate.

6.5.2.4.3 The Final Seminar panel will prepare a report and make a recommendation to the faculty and the Research Degrees Committee or its delegate.

6.5.3 Doctor of Education

The Doctor of Education milestones are established by the enrolling faculty and communicated to the student upon admission to the degree.

6.6 HDR Student and Supervisory Team Expectations

It is important to share understandings about supervision and reach agreement over fundamental expectations and responsibilities early in candidature to lay the foundations for an effective working relationship. Students and supervisors can use the [student and supervisory team expectations online document](#) to formally record these discussions. Completion of the document is mandatory, and students should attach a copy of the document to their relevant milestone as follows:

- MPhil (IF80) students can attach a copy of the document as part of their Research Proposal milestone documents.
- PhD (IF49) students can attach a copy of the document as part of their Stage 2 milestone documents.
- EdD (ED11) students can submit a copy of the document as part of submission for EUN703. This unit is mandatory for EdD students to complete in the first semester of enrolment.