

STAGE 2 PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

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OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

These guidelines are consistent with and are informed by the [MOPP D/5.3 HDR Candidates policy](#) and the [Doctor of Philosophy Course Regulations](#).

The Stage 2 admission milestone is intended to provide you with an opportunity to present a research proposal prepared with the guidance of your supervisory team. The process of creating the proposal provides you with a unique opportunity to demonstrate:

- The critiquing and research skills you have developed in the early months of candidature;
- The original and significant contribution to knowledge your project will make; and
- Your readiness to take increasing responsibility for your project.

As with all milestones the expectation is that this will be a living document that will evolve over the term of your candidature becoming part of your Confirmation document and final thesis.

QUT requires the submission of the Stage 2 proposal to the Faculty within 3 months of full-time research (from the date of preliminary admission) or within 6 months of part-time research (from the date of preliminary admission). The proposal must normally be no more than 3,600 words excluding the appendices and reference list. This length has been set to ensure:

- Consistency in student expectations about the submission requirements;
- That reviewers are able to read and provide feedback in a timely way (usually no more than 10 working days); and
- Student experiences academic writing (specific and restricted to a word limit) as expected in grant and publication writing.

In considering the Stage 2 submission, Faculties will recommend one of the following outcomes to the Research Degrees Committee (RDC):

- Recommend **approval** and admission to the PhD course and to candidature with no further discussion. This includes Stage 2's requiring changes to the satisfaction of faculty and supervisor only.
- Recommend **provisional approval** requiring changes approved by supervisor, faculty and RDC. The timeframe for changes would normally be no more than one month (fulltime equivalent) (FTE). Faculties can make a special case for additional time (up to two (2) months (FTE) with supporting tasks and timeline. Provisionally approved Stage 2s are resubmitted to RDC for a final recommendation.
- Recommend RDC discuss the submission as the candidate has failed to meet admission criteria (and mandatory training requirements may not have been completed). This may result in the refusal of admission (and cancellation of your enrolment).

Note that prior to submitting a successful Stage 2 proposal, you are usually not permitted to take Leave of Absence.

CONTENT OF THE PROPOSAL

Include a Table of Contents and page numbers and use the following headings, noting the suggested word limits for each part:

1. **PROPOSED THESIS TITLE AND TYPE (MAXIMUM 15 WORDS)**

Your title should be concise and contain the key words of your topic – it is not binding and should be considered as a working title. You can change the title at any time, subject to approval (by Supervisors, Faculty reviewer and QUT). While minor changes are swiftly approved, changes that imply a shift in topic and/or have resource implications may require detailed consideration. The final title of your thesis is usually confirmed at the time of your Final Seminar.

2. PROPOSED SUPERVISORY TEAM AND THEIR CREDENTIALS (MAXIMUM 50 WORDS PER SUPERVISOR)

Describe the knowledge and skills of each supervisory team member to explain how they will support:

- Your research candidature (i.e. their supervisory experience)
- Your research topic (i.e. their disciplinary knowledge and skills)

3. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW (MAXIMUM 2000 WORDS ensuring the overall document does not exceed 3,600 words)

3.1 Introductory Statement

A brief statement of the focus of the research to be conducted and the intended contribution to knowledge which will define the scope of the literature review that follows.

3.2 Literature Review

This preliminary review needs to:

- summarise and critically analyse the most relevant literature
- describe an existing gap in the knowledge derived from the analysis of the literature, and
- discuss how addressing this gap will make a significant and original contribution to knowledge.

The detail required varies between faculties and you should be guided by your supervisors – usually a range of sources, normally between 25-40 is required. You should ensure that at least some of the sources discussed are from the most current literature. The literature discussed must include any relevant prior research that you may have conducted either individually or as part of a group in academic or work based settings.

3.3 Research Problem (e.g., aims, questions and/or hypotheses)

A short paragraph is needed that clearly states your research problem and the key research question/s (and sub questions if appropriate) or hypothesis or key issue/s that you are going to test or address.

4. PROGRAM AND DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH INVESTIGATION (MAXIMUM 2000 WORDS ensuring the overall document does not exceed 3,600 words)

4.1 Objectives, Methodology and Research Plan

This section takes the form of a proposed methodology and research plan, as appropriate to your discipline. The descriptions here:

- Should clearly identify the tasks to be undertaken and how these address the research questions/hypothesis/aims;
- May be organised in relation to each of the individual aims or questions, and identify specific methods of experimentation for those conducting laboratory based work; and
- Should include a clear statement of the theoretical/experimental framework underpinning how you are going to carry out the design / plan.

Where possible it is appreciated if the research plan can set out clearly your data collection methods and your approach to data analysis. You may list the specific tasks you will be completing when you undertake the research and how you intend to do the tasks and complete your projects. This would normally take the form of a Design of the Study or Strategy statement. The details of the plan will develop as your candidature progresses, but it is critical here that you have a clearly articulated idea of what you are attempting to do. Where the research plan and data collection methods are still being developed it is important to provide an indication of the theoretical frameworks being used to inform consideration of the plan. This research plan may include:

- some methodological options and/or theoretical frameworks to be considered;
- strategies being followed in order to determine the plan;
- a clear statement of how the development of the research plan is to be progressed.

4.2 Resources and Funding Required

Includes a statement on how the method/plan is going to be resourced/funded including the technical support to be provided; and the key equipment required. Examples of requirements to be considered may include, but are not limited to, funding and/or access to:

- laboratory equipment and/or specialist facilities
- overseas data collection or experimentation
- data sets
- specialist software or equipment
- specialist services (e.g., transcription or translation, analytical services).

For Engineering and laboratory based researchers this is an essential section.

4.3 Individual Contribution to the Research Team

If your investigation is related to or dependent upon the work of a research team or a larger research project being carried out in your research centre or school, you need to indicate clearly your individual contribution. You would need to provide a statement explaining what your individual research activities and responsibilities are, the extent to which your work is to be carried out in collaboration with others, and if you are reliant on materials from external organisations or people. If your study is part of or related to an externally funded project (e.g. Industry or ARC) include the name of the project using its registered project title.

4.4 Timeline for Completion

Your schedule for completing the various aspects of your program needs to be illustrated by a timeline so that you, your supervisors and the Research Degrees Committee can see your expected rate of progress. The timeline includes each of the tasks identified in Section 4.1 and should normally include 3 or 6 monthly targets. As well as your significant milestones including your scheduled Annual Progress Report dates and planned Confirmation Seminar and Final Seminar dates, it should include your coursework requirements, and proposed conference attendance and field trip travel. Research Degrees Committee will expect to see a proposed three year full time equivalent completion timeline.

Your proposed timeline is to support you in maintaining progress as well as ensuring that your project is realistically scoped. Approaches to creating a timeline are many and varied but this is an important section of your application.

For a simple and generic example that includes details that you should be incorporating into your own timeline download the [sample candidature milestone timeline](#).

5. REFERENCE LIST (WORD COUNT NOT INCLUDED FOR PROPOSAL)

Include a substantial reference list which is up-to-date and presented in a style appropriate for your discipline. For further assistance please visit [Citewrite](#).

6. APPENDIX (WORD COUNT NOT INCLUDED FOR PROPOSAL)

Include appendices addressing the following issues relevant to your project and candidature.

6.1 Research Integrity Online (RIO)

All research students who commenced after 1 January 2017 are required to complete this mandatory unit. This training resource is designed to explore and understand important policies, requirements and codes of conduct related to the modern research environment. All researchers are required to be aware of and follow these guidelines, so this resource provides research students with important information and training. Completion of this quiz with a score of 80%, is a requirement of your continued enrolment. The RIO quiz must be satisfactorily completed within 3 months of commencing candidature. Your certificate of completion must be attached to your Stage 2 submission. Your Stage 2 cannot be approved unless this Quiz has been completed.

The Research Ethics Integrity and Safety (REIS) resource can be accessed via Blackboard. https://blackboard.qut.edu.au/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id=132156_1&content_id=6523996_1

6.2 Research Ethics Integrity and Safety (REIS)

All research students who commenced after 1 January 2015 are required to complete this mandatory unit. This training resource is designed to explore and understand important policies, requirements and codes of conduct related to the modern research environment. All researchers are required to be aware of and follow these guidelines, so this resource provides research students with important information and training. Completion of two quizzes (Quiz 1 (Module 1) and Quiz 2 (Modules 2-5)), each with a score of 100%, is a requirement of your continued enrolment. Quiz 1 must be satisfactorily completed within 3 months of commencing candidature. Quiz 2 must be satisfactorily completed within (by) 6 months of commencing candidature. Your certificate of completion must be attached to your Stage 2 submission. Your Stage 2 cannot be approved unless Quiz 1 has been completed.

The Research Ethics Integrity and Safety (REIS) resource can be accessed via Blackboard. https://blackboard.qut.edu.au/webapps/blackboard/content/listContentEditable.jsp?content_id=5506689_1&course_id=116289_1

6.3 Coursework

Coursework can be conducted in a number of ways:

- as advanced lecture units;
- as the AIRS unit (IFN001);
- as seminars in which you present critical studies of selected problems within the subject field;
- as independent study or reading courses under Faculty supervision;
- as research projects conducted under Faculty supervision.

In all cases, your required coursework needs to be based upon a written plan briefly setting out the educational outcomes expected from the course, a list of topics to be covered, the prescribed reading material and the method of assessment of progress through and at the end of the course. This coursework is planned together with your Supervisors to contribute and provide structure to your overall program of research.

AIRS unit – IFN001

You will automatically be enrolled in IFN001 as part of your first year enrolment unless advice to the contrary is provided by the Faculty. This is intended to ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate in the AIRS unit at the commencement of their candidature. The six week course (also offered on-line) will enhance skills in the use of Endnote and a range of library databases to ensure that the development of the literature review is completed taking full advantage of the resources available to research students. For further advice go to: <https://www.library.qut.edu.au/research/help/airs.jsp>

FORMAT OF THE PROPOSAL

How long should the proposal be?

The proposal may be up to a maximum of 3,600 words in length. The word count excludes appendices and references. A maximum word count for sections of the proposal is provided in this document. The length of each section will vary depending on disciplinary requirements. If you use the maximum word length in one section (i.e. 2,000 words) you must reduce the length of other sections to comply with the maximum word length stipulated for the overall document.

When should I start?

Begin work on your proposal in consultation with your supervisors as soon as reasonable.

How is it submitted?

- Your Stage 2 due date is found on PORTIA on QUT Virtual. (See the PORTIA user guide for further assistance: <https://www.ithelpdesk.qut.edu.au/pages/guides/displayguide.jsp?ID=79>).

- When your Principal Supervisor has approved the final version of the Stage 2, then ideally at the latest **by the PORTIA deadline** you should be providing a copy to the faculty in the format they require for review.
- If you have any queries about the online form process, please initially refer to your Faculty Research Administration Officer (FRAO).

STAGE 2 SUBMISSION

THE FORM

Your proposal must be appended to the online Stage 2 application form. This form provides prompts requesting you to confirm a range of details including:

THESIS TYPE

You will be asked to note the type of thesis that you intend to submit. While your choice of thesis type may change during candidature, you are encouraged to discuss optional thesis types with your supervisors and to plan the structure of your thesis with this type in mind. The options are:

- Traditional Thesis by Monograph (Chapters)
- Thesis by Published Papers
- Thesis by Creative Works

For further information on these options please consult the guidelines for the [thesis type](#) for more specific advice

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Your application needs to indicate whether or not your research involves humans, animals, genetically modified organisms or biosafety and if the appropriate paperwork is attached or in progress. Your first point of contact for ethics advice should be your Supervisors and the designated [Faculty Research Ethics Advisor](#) who can assist and advise you with research ethics issues and how to successfully negotiate the University's research ethics arrangements. For more information regarding ethical clearance and application forms refer to the [Research Ethics](#) home page. Most research which involves the active participation of human subjects (e.g. everything from questionnaires to clinical trials), the scientific use of animals in research, dealings with genetically modified organisms or biosafety materials will require some level of ethical review.

NOTE: PhD students are advised to submit their applications for ethical clearance **following confirmation, unless data collection is to commence prior to this time.**

The Stage 2 online form will provide you with the following options:

- I have discussed ethics clearance with my supervisory team and we have determined that it is not required
- I need and have obtained ethical clearance prior to Confirmation for pilot studies
- I am preparing an ethics application or request for variation to existing ethics clearance for submission after Confirmation
- I am still discussing ethical clearance with my supervisory team

Comments on Ethical Clearance:

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP)

In this section reiterate whether QUT owns the intellectual property arising from your project, whether you have signed an Assignment Deed and whether the appropriate paperwork is attached or in progress.

If your research and investigation is carried out jointly in QUT and in an industrial, commercial, professional or research establishment, an outline of the interrelationship of the work to be undertaken at each of the sites in relation to the whole project must be provided as part of your Stage 2 proposal. For further information on the University's IP Policy go to <https://www.student.qut.edu.au/research/intellectual-property>

The Stage 2 online form will provide you with the following options:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> I do not need to sign an IP Assignment Agreement <input type="radio"/> I need and have signed an IP Assignment Agreement <input type="radio"/> I need but have not yet signed an IP Assignment Agreement <input type="radio"/> I am still discussing my IP Assignment Agreement with my supervisory team 	<p>Comments on Intellectual Property Agreement:</p>
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HEALTH AND SAFETY

If your research involves the use of biological, microbiological, biomedical and biochemical material we need to be assured that you are aware of your obligations to ensure your safety and others. In this section indicate whether you're working with high risk materials and whether there are health and safety implications arising from your project and, if so, that you have completed the appropriate training or induction that complies with QUT's health and safety requirements (<https://www.student.qut.edu.au/services-and-facilities/all-services/health-and-safety-training?ref=35728>).

The Stage 2 online form will provide you with the following options:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> I do not need to complete Health & Safety training <input type="radio"/> I have completed Health & Safety training <input type="radio"/> I need to but have not yet completed Health & Safety training <input type="radio"/> I am still discussing Health & Safety training with my supervisory team 	<p>Comments on Health and Safety Training:</p>
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COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENT

This is an explanatory statement on any collaborative arrangements with Hospital, Industry, public sector departments, QIMR, etc.

The Stage 2 online form will provide you with the following options:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> I do not require a Collaborative Agreement <input type="radio"/> I have a Collaborative Agreement <input type="radio"/> I need but do not yet have a Collaborative Agreement <input type="radio"/> I am still discussing my Collaborative Agreement with my supervisory team 	<p>Comments on Collaborative Agreement:</p>
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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR EXTERNAL SUPERVISORS

Where appropriate, more than one Associate Supervisor may be appointed and additional associate supervisors may be from either QUT or another appropriate industrial, professional, commercial or research establishment. A Memorandum of Understanding is required for each external supervisor.

The Stage 2 online form will provide you with the following options:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> I do not require a Memo of Understanding as I have no external supervisors <input type="radio"/> I have a Memo of Understanding <input type="radio"/> I need but do not yet have a Memo of Understanding 	<p>Comments on Memorandum of Understanding:</p>
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DATA MANAGEMENT

As a researcher you need to be confident about the data you are collecting, ensuring that you store it in a way that complies with the requirements of your project, confidentiality considerations and potential future access requirements. You are encouraged to discuss the Data Management Checklist with your supervisors and review information about the Responsible Conduct of Research as part of your training to become a researcher.

The Stage 2 online form will provide you with the following options:

- I have not yet considered data management issues but will do so before confirmation
- I have read the data management planning information and discussed the need to complete the Data Management Plan (online) with my supervisor
- I have read the data management planning information, discussed it with my supervisor, and have completed the Data Management Plan (online)

MANDATORY TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Research Integrity Online (RIO) is a training resource designed for HDR candidates to explore and understand important policies, requirements and codes of conduct relating to the modern research environment.

The successful completion of this quiz will demonstrate that you understand the basic principles of research integrity and acceptable research practices and are aware of QUT's expectations with respect to your conduct and obligations as a higher degree research student.

The RIO quiz must be completed within the first 3 months of your course. Refer to [MOPP D/5.3.7](#).

The Research Integrity Online modules can be accessed in QUT Blackboard at https://blackboard.qut.edu.au/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id=132156_1&content_id=6523996_1 (alternatively go to Community Finder and type in RIO into the search facility). It is recommended that you use Firefox as the web browser for Blackboard.

Students who commenced their HDR course prior to 1 January 2017, must complete the Research Ethics, Integrity and Safety at QUT(REIS) quizzes. Quiz 1 must be completed within the first 3 months of your course. Quiz 2 must be completed within the first 6 months of your course. It is strongly recommended that all HDR candidates complete both quizzes within the first three month of commencement. Refer to [MOPP D/5.3.7](#).

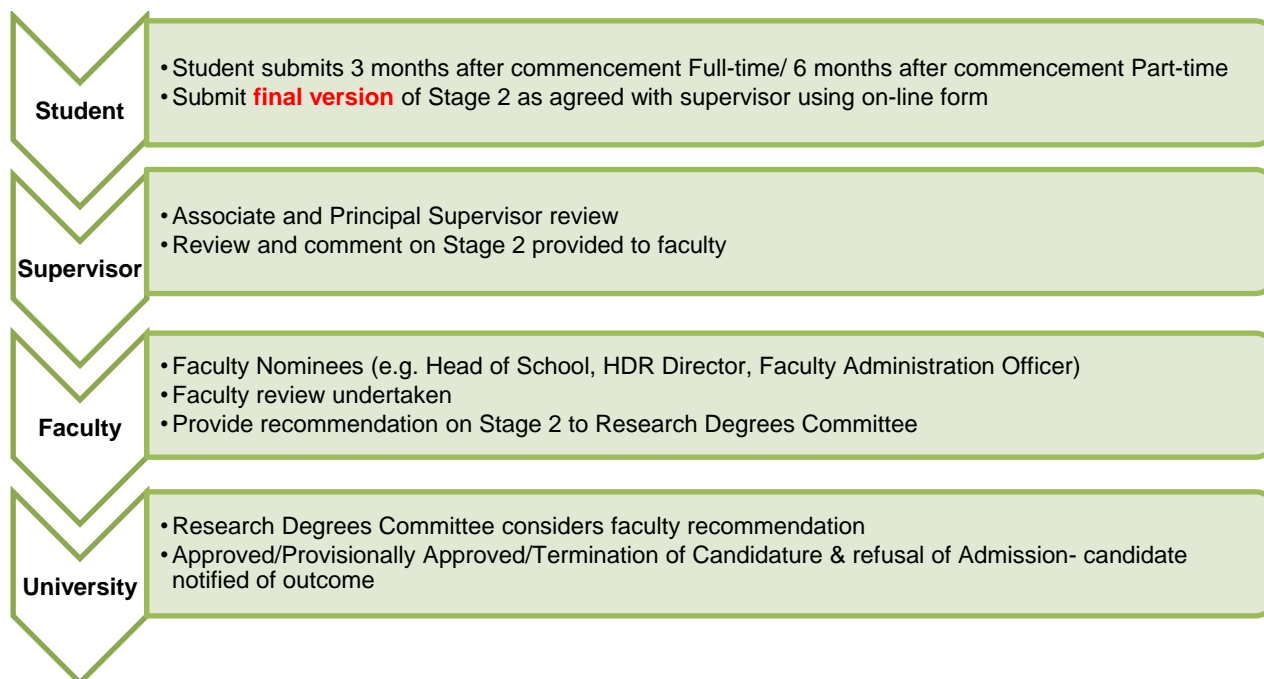
The Research Ethics, Integrity and Safety modules can be accessed in QUT Blackboard at https://blackboard.qut.edu.au/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id=116289_1&content_id=5506689_1 (alternatively go to Community Finder and type in REIS into the search facility). It is recommended that you use Firefox as the web browser for Blackboard.

The Stage 2 online form will provide you with the following options:

- I have completed and attached the completion certificate for the RIO Quiz (only for students commencing on or after 1 January 2017) as an appendix to my Stage 2 Report
- I have completed and attached the completion certificate for both REIS Quizzes (only for students who commenced before 1 January 2017) as an appendix to my Stage 2 Report
- I have completed the first REIS quiz (only for students who commenced before 1 January 2017) and attached the certificate of completion as an appendix to my Stage 2 report and will complete the second shortly, at least within 3 months
- I am aware of the implications on my course should I not complete the mandatory quizzes. Please contact me if there are any.

OVERVIEW OF THE STAGE 2 ONLINE APPROVAL PROCESS

You need to submit your application via QUT Virtual using an online Stage 2 form. For your information below is an outline of where the form goes and the approval process after you have submitted it:



RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Research Degrees Committee is a university level committee which has overarching responsibility for HDR management. Refer to [MOPP D/5.2](#) for Terms of Reference.

Students must monitor their student email in order to receive email from the Research Degrees Committee regarding the outcome of their deliberations. All staff who reviewed your Stage 2 online form will also be notified of the RDC outcome.

FACULTY RESEARCH ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

Your first point of call for research higher degree administration queries is your [Faculty Research Administrative Officer](#).

FEEDBACK ON THE STAGE 2 PROCESS

The Research Degrees Committee welcomes feedback on how the administrative process for the Stage 2 submission can be further improved. Email us (research.candcoord@qut.edu.au) at the Research Students Centre with your suggestions or for additional information for inclusion in the Guidelines.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Manual of Policies and Procedures (MOPP): <http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/>
- [PhD Course Regulations](#)
- Good Practice guidelines for HDR studies and supervision:
<https://www.student.qut.edu.au/research/policies-and-procedures>
- Code of Conduct for Research: http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/D/D_02_06.jsp
- Handling Student Grievances : http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/E/E_09_02.jsp
- Management of conflicts of interest http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/B/B_08_07.jsp

To see your milestones and candidature details go to PORTIA.

PORTIA can be accessed via QUT Virtual and you will need your QUT access username and password. Log in as a student and use the first 10 digits of your current QUT student password.

Approval & modification history

DATE	AUTHORITY	DETAILS
13 December 2016	QUT Research Degrees Committee	Inclusion of additional information about Research Integrity Online Quiz
1 August 2016	QUT Research Degrees Committee	Clarification of Stage 2 as the second stage of admission added into Overview.
06 June 2016	QUT Research Degrees Committee	Deletion of reference to Code of Conduct Quiz, AIRS exemption, RDC meetings and updated links
2 September 2015	QUT Research Degrees Committee – Executive Approval	Inclusion of additional information on possible outcomes of the Stage 2 submission
2 May 2015	QUT Research Degrees Committee	Regular review. Changes to conform with new online form.
2014	QUT Research Degrees Committee	Inclusion of details of mandatory training (REIS) requirements.
2012	QUT Research Degrees Committee	Working Party recommendations adopted by RDC.

Responsible Officer: Secretary, Research Degrees Committee