



Confirmation of PhD Candidature/ Masters Review of Candidature

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Purpose of the confirmation/review process

- Postgraduate researchers are admitted to probationary candidature at Monash and undergo a confirmation or review of candidature process after a determined period of candidature
- Similar to an employment probationary period, this provides an opportunity for all parties to ensure a 'good fit'
- The process works to ensure a candidate has formulated a viable research question/project to enable them to make sound progress in the remainder of candidature
- It is more than an administrative process – it has substantial value for the candidate

Purpose of the confirmation/review process

The objective of the process is to confirm that:

- the research questions and direction are sound
- the methodologies are appropriate
- the project is viable within the given timeframe
- the necessary resources are available
- the supervisor/s are appropriate for the project as framed
- the candidate has the requisite skills to undertake the project
- the standard of writing is satisfactory
- the research will make a contribution to knowledge in the field

Benefits of the process

- a platform on which candidates can receive useful insights, feedback and direction from a panel of experienced academics
- opportunity to demonstrate achievements to date as well as the potential of both the project and candidate
- a supportive environment to enhance presentation skills (great practice for future conference participation)
- opportunity to identify and remedy any difficulties that may impede successful completion of the research project
- elimination of an uncertainty from the early months of candidature...

...validation that you have developed a worthwhile project that will contribute to knowledge in your field!!!

Timing of confirmation: PhD

- Confirmation process should have been undertaken following 12 months full-time, or 24 months part-time candidature for doctoral students
- For students who have made excellent progress, earlier confirmation of candidature may be considered. A candidate should be enrolled for a minimum period of 6 months full-time, or 12 months part-time candidature

Timing of review: Masters by 100% Research

- Review of candidature should be undertaken following 6 months full-time/ 12 months part-time candidature
- If intending to upgrade to a PhD, the school may request an extension to the review due-date so that it occurs following 9 - 12 months full-time equivalent candidature
(the upgrade process is essentially the same as the PhD confirmation process)

Timing of review: Masters by 66% Research

Full-time candidate

- Review point: 6 months after commencement of research component
- 1st semester: coursework
- 2nd semester: research (review at the end of semester)

Part-time candidate

- Review point: 12 months after commencement of research component
- 1st & 2nd semester: coursework
- 3rd semester: research
- 4th semester: research (review at end of semester)

General overview of the process

1. Notification of confirmation/review due date (from MRGS/ARGS –usually 3 months in advance)
2. Composition of a review panel and scheduling of presentation/seminar
3. Submission of a written and detailed research proposal (distributed to panel members)
4. Oral presentation (to panel members +)
5. Panel convene to make recommendation
6. Panel provide feedback to candidate
7. Formal documentation is completed and submitted to ARGS/MRGS

Requirements: PhD confirmation

- Confirmation of candidature form
<http://www.mrgs.monash.edu.au/research/students/confirmation.html>
- Oral presentation of at least 20 minutes
- Detailed research proposal
(7,000 – 10,000 words)

Requirements: 100% research masters

- Masters review form
<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/research/graduate-research/current-students/forms/index.php>
- Oral presentation
- Detailed research proposal
(5,000 – 6,000 words)

Requirements: 66% research masters

- Masters review form
<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/research/graduate-research/current-students/forms/index.php>
- Oral presentation
- Detailed research proposal
(4,500 – 5,000 words)

Oral presentation

- The oral presentation should explore the research undertaken to date and the anticipated directions of the research program
- The candidate will be expected to field questions following the presentation

Be familiar with the requirements of your school – some conduct the presentation as part of an open seminar where a wider audience of peers and academic can attend

Written submission

- Title of thesis
- Statement of the research problem:
 - Introduction
 - Research question or hypothesis
 - Subsidiary questions
 - Review of relevant research and theory
- The procedure:
 - Theoretical and conceptual framework
 - Analytical technique and research design, if appropriate
- Timeline for completion of the thesis
- Bibliography
- List of publications produced during candidature (if appropriate)

Review panel composition and role

- Convenor: School Graduate Coordinator
- Supervisor/s
- Independent panel member

The review panel undertakes assessment of the written submission and oral presentation and makes a recommendation for the candidature.

Possible outcomes

- Confirmation of candidature
- Confirmation of candidate subject to minor amendments to the research proposal
- Confirmation of candidature to be reviewed in 10 weeks
- Non-confirmation of candidature

Tips for candidates

- Start conceiving your project and writing early
- Consult your supervisor/s and Graduate Coordinator about the process early – be aware of specific school requirements
- Attend other confirmation seminars in your school
- Meet your supervisor regularly and produce written work for review regularly

Tips for candidates

- Anticipate and prepare for likely questions and be prepared to engage with counterarguments
- Be open-minded about the project and prepared to re-orient your perspective or objectives on the advice of the review panel
- Understand the value of the process and maximise the opportunity to focus and refine your research project

Finally...

The process is usually a positive one!

Academics are genuinely excited by the research undertaken by HDR candidates in their field and like the opportunity to engage in stimulating discussion about the proposed project.