



# PROGRESS PLANNING AND REVIEW FOR HIGHER DEGREE BY RESEARCH STUDENTS PROCEDURES 2020

Issued by: Director, Graduate Research

Dated: 15 September 2020 (commencing 1 January 2021)

Last amended: 24 April 2023 (administrative amendments)

12 May 2023 (administrative amendments)

17 April 2024 (administrative amendments)

Signature:

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Current Policy Approver: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Researcher Training)

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## 1 Purpose and application

- (1) These procedures are to give effect to the *Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy* ("the policy").
- (2) These procedures apply to higher degree by research students, staff and affiliates.

## 2 Commencement

These procedures commence on 1 January 2021.

## 3 Interpretation

- (1) Words and phrases used in these procedures and not otherwise defined in this document have the meanings they have in the policy.

**Note:** See clause 6 of the policy

- (2) In these procedures:

**panel chair** means the member of the progress evaluation panel responsible for leading progress evaluation meetings and uploading the panel's report into RECS following the meeting.

## 4 Progress plan management

- (1) All students must submit their approved progress plan through RECS:
  - (a) within three months from the date of commencement of their candidature; and
  - (b) within one month from the date of re-enrolment, when re-enrolling as a result of a requirement to revise and resubmit from a previous thesis examination.
- (2) Students must submit any material variations to their approved progress plan within one month from the date of the variation.
- (3) Progress plans will be maintained within the student's profile in RECS.

## 5 Planning progress

- (1) Students, supervisors and faculty decision makers will record progress evaluation activities in RECS.
- (2) Students must maintain their research data management plan and update RECS regularly.

**Note:** See [Research Data Management Policy](#), [Research Data Management Procedures](#), and any faculty local provisions relating to research data management.

- (3) Before each progress evaluation meeting:
  - (a) students must:
    - (i) complete all relevant milestone activities for that stage of candidature;
    - (ii) record all completed goals and milestones in RECS; and
    - (iii) complete all work health and safety and research integrity requirements;
  - (b) supervisors must endorse all milestones and goals as completed where applicable
- (4) Students must complete their sections of the progress evaluation activity in RECS no less than ten working days before the progress evaluation meeting.
- (5) Lead supervisors must comment on the progress evaluation form no less than five working days before the progress evaluation meeting.
- (6) The progress evaluation activity field in RECS will be pre-populated with data on milestones and goals for the rest of the candidature.
- (7) Students must provide a reflective summary on progress made and planned activities. This summary should:
  - (a) assess the effectiveness of their supervisory arrangements;
  - (b) identify any additional training or development that they require;
  - (c) outline any challenges to progress, including any technical, academic, infrastructure, resourcing or personal difficulties; and
  - (d) detail any other issues that have adversely impacted on progress.

## 6 Progress evaluation meetings

- (1) Progress evaluation interview discussions should be constructive and aimed at identifying pathways to successful completion of candidature.
- (2) During the progress evaluation meeting, panel members, students and supervisors will consider:
  - (a) the student's current and, where relevant, previous progress evaluations and previous annual progress reviews; and
  - (b) any other relevant information provided by the student and the supervisory team.
- (3) Progress evaluation meetings will be scheduled as required by Schedule 1 of the policy and structured according to the student's stage in candidature.
  - (a) Confirmation progress evaluation meetings:
    - (i) must be completed by the tenth month of candidature; and
    - (ii) will address the necessary activities needed to demonstrate that the student has achieved the University and faculty's milestones for passing probation.
  - (b) Mid-candidature evaluation meetings will consider:
    - (i) the achievement of planned goals and milestones;
    - (ii) the extent of engagement with supervision; and
    - (iii) the scope of planned goals for the remainder of candidature.
  - (c) Pre-submission evaluation meetings will consider:
    - (i) the preparation of the thesis for submission; and
    - (ii) the readiness of the thesis for examination.
  - (d) Overdue thesis evaluation meetings will consider:
    - (i) the progress towards a finalised examinable thesis; and
    - (ii) the activities required to achieve this.
- (4) Students enrolled in part-time candidature may have extra mid-candidature progress evaluation meetings before the pre-submission evaluation meeting.
- (5) Supervisors and panel members must read the supporting guidelines before taking part in progress evaluation meetings.

**Note:** See [Higher Degree by Research Guidelines for Progress Evaluation Panel Members](#)

- (6) Progress evaluation meetings will be scheduled by the administrative unit using the tool in RECS except where the faculty has decided not to use the scheduling tool.
  - (a) In this case the faculty will schedule each progress evaluation meeting using its own approaches and tools.
- (7) Where a student is unable to attend a meeting, the faculty may reschedule the meeting to a date:
  - (a) within 10 working days of the original date for the meeting; or
  - (b) within such reasonable extended time as the panel chair approves, in their absolute discretion.

- (8) The progress evaluation panel will submit its written report to the Associate Dean or postgraduate coordinator, through RECS within:
- five working days from the date of the meeting; or
  - where the student is unable to attend the meeting, five working days from the revised date for the meeting; or
  - a time approved by the Associate Dean or postgraduate coordinator.
- Note:** The progress evaluation panel may prepare a report and recommend a progress evaluation rating in the student's absence, in certain circumstances. See clause 13(5) of the policy.
- (9) The panel chair may suspend a progress evaluation meeting where they form the view that:
- an issue or concern raised during the meeting should be referred to another University process; and
  - it would be inappropriate to evaluate the student's progress until the issue or concern has been addressed.
- Note:** Students are encouraged to take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties and seeking solutions to them as soon as possible. Problems may be raised during the progress evaluation process or at any other time. See subclause 16(7) of the [Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy](#).
- (10) If a progress evaluation meeting is suspended under subclause 6(9), the panel chair must set a date for the conclusion of the progress evaluation consistent with Schedule 1 of the Policy.

## 7 Progress evaluation outcomes

- Students will have ten working days from receipt of the evaluation panel's report to:
  - respond to the report; and
  - raise any issues concerning the conduct of the progress evaluation meeting.
- Taking into account the progress evaluation panel's report and any response from the student, the postgraduate coordinator will prepare a written record of the outcome of a progress evaluation:
  - stating the progress evaluation rating;
  - specifying any actions to be taken as a result of the progress evaluation, including who will be responsible for them and timeframes for their completion;
  - stating whether the proposed supervision arrangements are satisfactory and, where appropriate, advising the student on any recommended changes;
  - stating whether a supplementary evaluation is required and, if so, the date of the supplementary progress evaluation; and
  - listing any action items for the school, faculty, University school or University, to be completed within three months of the date of the supplementary progress evaluation.
- The final progress evaluation report must be:
  - made available to the student and the supervisors; and

- (b) maintained within the student's profile in RECS.

**Note:** See [Recordkeeping Policy](#) and [Recordkeeping Manual](#)

## **8 Suspension of candidature**

- (1) Students may, but are not required to, maintain and vary their progress plan during periods of suspension.
- (2) Students returning from a suspension of candidature must evaluate their progress plan within one month of return.
- (3) Students returning from a period of suspension greater than one research period must complete a progress evaluation meeting within one month of the date of return from suspension. This meeting will address
  - (a) a revised schedule for the research candidature,
  - (b) any changes to planned activities as a result of the suspension; and,
  - (c) any additional support the student may need to ensure success.

## **9 Rescissions and replacements**

This document replaces the *Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degrees by Research Students Procedures 2015*, which are rescinded as from the date of commencement of this document.

## **NOTES**

### **Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Procedures 2020**

Date adopted: 15 September 2020

Date commenced: 1 January 2021

Date amended: 24 April 2023

12 May 2023 (administrative amendments)

17 April 2024 (administrative amendments)

Current Policy Owner: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Researcher Training)

Review date: 1 January 2026

Rescinded documents: Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degrees by Research Students Procedures 2015

Related documents: *University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule*

*Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy*

*Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy*

*Thesis and Examination of Higher Degree by Research Policy*

*Thesis and Examination of Higher Degree by Research  
Procedures*

*Higher Degree by Research Guidelines for Progress Evaluation  
Panel Members*

*Higher Degree by Research Supervision Procedures*

## AMENDMENT HISTORY

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
page 1 and Notes	Amended Determining Authority from Director, Graduate Research to Current Policy Approver: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Researcher Training). Amended Policy Administrator from Director, Graduate Research to Current Policy Owner: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Researcher Training)	24 April 2023
6(9)(b)note	amending incorrect internal policy reference	12 May 2023
Throughout	Administrative amendments to remove the year in policy references.	17 April 2024