

Guidelines for the Review Process for Research Higher Degree Students

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the SGS PhD Handbook <http://www.gradstudies.unimelb.edu.au/phd/enrolcandid/phdhubk/>

These guidelines include the process for review of students' progress throughout their research higher degree (PhD and MD).

The aim of the Review Process is to monitor students' progress and detect problems early. The Department of Paediatrics Research Higher Degrees (RHD) Committee has developed these Review Process Guidelines in accordance with University policy. These guidelines include all the University's requirements with some additional Departmental requirements. Students should therefore follow **these Departmental guidelines**.

The RHD Committee invites and welcomes feedback on its guidelines and policies.

Summary of Review Process

- Start of Candidature:** Initial formal meeting with supervisor(s) to discuss checklist of issues, including facilities available, supervisory arrangements, IP, authorship etc.
- After 3–6 months:** Early formal progress meeting with all supervisors to discuss progress and composition of Review Panel.
- After 9–12 months:** Presentation to Review Panel and discussions regarding Confirmation of student.
- After 2 years:** Progress Report due; Review Panel progress meeting is recommended.
- After 3 years:** Completion Report due; Review Panel progress meeting is optional.
- On 2nd extension:** (if a student requests a further extension after 3.5 years equivalent full time study): Review Panel reconvenes to discuss progress and timeline for completion.
- 3–6 months prior to submission:** Completion seminar: presentation by student, feedback and recommendations made by Review Panel.

Further review meetings are optional, but can be requested by:

- Student's Review Panel after the first meeting
- RHD Committee
- Student
- Supervisors

Initial Formal Meeting with Supervisor

Before or at the start of their probationary candidature, a formal meeting should be held with the primary supervisor (and other supervisors if available), to discuss the checklist of issues provided by the Department of Paediatrics. This checklist is also available at <http://www.paediatrics.unimelb.edu.au/rhd/committee.html#template>

Early Formal Progress Meeting

Three to six months after enrolment, a formal meeting should be convened between the student and all supervisors. At this meeting the student's progress to date should be discussed as well as a range of other issues including:

- progress in terms of continuation, or the possibility of discontinuation or transfer to an alternative degree.
- composition of the student's Review Panel (see page 5)
- the student's completed draft literature review.
- whether supervision arrangements are working satisfactorily.
- the possibility of finding a Mentor within the University or affiliated Institutions.
- which courses/conferences etc the student might attend.
- the University's code of conduct for research: www.unimelb.edu.au/Statutes/r171r8.html[†]
- potential intellectual property (IP) issues relating to the project.
- principles of authorship and how these will be addressed in relation to the project.
- ensuring all the possible ethical implications of the project have been considered.
- responsibilities for keeping research data and records.
- any significant changes since starting that may affect the feasibility of the project (for example changes in supervisors' other roles and commitments affecting their time availability, changes within the research group, changes in availability of critical resources, recently published work that affects the direction of the project, etc).

† A checklist from the SGS that details some of the issues of 'Research Integrity and the Responsible Conduct of Research' may also be useful for discussion:

See <http://www.gradstudies.unimelb.edu.au/unistaff/publication/>.

A brief written summary of the meeting, (bullet points are acceptable), including the proposed composition of the student's Review Panel, needs to be emailed or sent to Jo Buckle, Postgraduate Administrator in the University Department of Paediatrics (jo.buckle@rch.org.au). If the supervisor or student have any concerns, and in particular if the supervisor believes there is any possibility that the student may not reach the standard required for Confirmation, these should be discussed between the supervisor and student, and highlighted to the University Department of Paediatrics.

Although it is the student's responsibility to set up their Review Panel and arrange its meetings, this should preferably be undertaken with the advice and guidance of their principal supervisor and co-supervisors. Guidelines on the composition of the Review Panel are on page 5 of this document.

Confirmation

At least one week prior to the meeting, the student should submit a written report to the Review Panel members. This report should generally be between 2,000 and 3,000 words and should include the following:

- summary of the project and concise statement of the research question(s),
- summary of experimental methods and equipment requirements and/or an explanation of the conceptual framework to be used,
- summary of progress to date: preliminary data, methods and resources developed etc
- brief argument for the relevance and importance of the study,
- proposed schedule and timeline for the study, based on date of submission,
- brief summary of supervisory arrangements in place and the procedure used for documenting formal supervision meetings.
- list of training and professional development courses attended and skills attained during probationary candidature,
- list of any publications and/or presentations made during probationary candidature,
- list of meetings attended during probationary candidature,
- summary of involvement in community service events,
- any problems encountered.

The draft literature review that all students are required to complete in the first 3 to 6 months of their candidature should be available at the confirmation meeting. Note that together, the written report and draft literature review are intended to fulfil the University confirmation requirement for a 'written proposal of at least 3,000 and possibly up to 10,000 words' that includes a 'critical summary and analysis of relevant literature'.

At the meeting, the student should present their progress to date. The appropriate duration for the presentation is flexible, but as a guide, it might be around 20 minutes to allow sufficient time for discussion that should follow.

The Review Panel should discuss the written report, the literature review and the student's presentation.

The student and supervisors should then leave in turn so that the each has the opportunity to talk with the Review Panel in the absence of the other.

At the end of the meeting, the student and all Review Panel members should sign the Confirmation Report Form after having agreed on its contents. The Chair of the Review Panel should summarise the meeting outcomes and any recommendations made (a template is available on <http://www.paediatrics.unimelb.edu.au/rhd/committee.html#template>) and send this to the Postgraduate Administrator for the RHD Committee's consideration.

Subsequent Review Meetings

At least one week prior to the meeting, the student should submit a written report to the Review Panel members. This report should include the following:

- summary of the project and concise statement of the research question(s)
- summary of progress to date: preliminary data, methods and resources developed etc
- proposed schedule and timeline for the study, based on date of submission
- brief summary of supervisory arrangements in place and the procedure used for documenting formal supervision meetings
- list of training and professional development courses attended and skills attained
- list of any publications and/or presentations made
- list of meetings attended
- any problems encountered.

At the meeting, the student should present their progress to date. The appropriate duration for the presentation is flexible, but as a guide, it might be around 20 minutes to allow sufficient time for discussion that should follow.

The Review Panel should discuss the written report and the student's presentation.

The student and supervisors should then leave in turn so that each has the opportunity to talk with the Review Panel in the absence of the other.

At the end of the meeting, the student and all Review Panel members should sign the Completion Report Form, after having agreed on its contents. The Chair of the Review Panel should summarise the meeting outcomes and any recommendations made and email this to the Postgraduate Administrator for the RHD Committee's consideration.

Completion Seminar

This seminar is **compulsory for all students** to fulfil University requirements and should take place 3 to 6 months prior to thesis submission. It should be held at an appropriate venue such as the MCRI seminar series, or at another forum by approval of the RHD Committee, and should be around one hour in duration, including time for questions.

A Review Panel should attend the seminar to give constructive feedback to the student which will enable them to refine their thesis, if necessary, before submission.

The Panel may be extended to include additional individuals who are broadly knowledgeable in the field of study, who may be able to identify how the student may enhance particular aspects of their thesis.

The student should submit a short thesis summary (<200 words) to the Panel prior to the seminar, outlining the aims and scope of the thesis, and the main results. Following the seminar, the Panel chair should submit a short report which notes any strengths and weaknesses of the work as presented.

Review Panel Composition

To ensure gender equity there should be at least one member on the Review Panel of the same gender as the student. The Panel should include at least the following:

- **the student's principal (primary) supervisor and all co-supervisor(s)**
- **another senior research staff member** from the student's research group, student's department, the University Department of Paediatrics, the MCRI or other affiliated Institute, or another University of Melbourne department who is independent of the student's project
- **a representative of the University of Melbourne Department of Paediatrics RHD Committee, who should chair the review panel.** This should be an appropriate individual from either the *RHD Committee* or the *Committee's Advisory Group*. The Advisory Group of the RHD Committee comprises senior members of staff from the Department of Paediatrics, MCRI and RCH who have been approved to represent the RHD Committee on students' Review Panels. A complete current list of the Advisory Group is available upon request from Jo Buckle, Postgraduate Administrator, Department of Paediatrics.

The following are optional but may also be invited to be members of the Review Panel:

- **a post doc or 2nd/3rd year PhD student**
- **an outside advisor or mentor**

The RHD Committee may also request additional members.

Useful links

University Guidelines for Postgraduate Supervisors

<http://www.gradstudies.unimelb.edu.au/unistaff/policy/>

University Resources for Supervisors

<http://www.gradstudies.unimelb.edu.au/unistaff/publication/>

PhD Handbook

<http://www.gradstudies.unimelb.edu.au/phd/enrolcandid/phdhubk/>

SGS "In Detail" information sheet on Confirmation

<http://www.sgs.unimelb.edu.au/phd/managecandidature/guideline/pdf/ProbStatConfirmCandid.pdf>

SGS "In Detail" information sheet on Completion Seminars

http://www.gradstudies.unimelb.edu.au/phd/examination/flyer/pdf/PhD_Completion_Seminar.pdf

Please also refer to the other Department of Paediatrics Guideline documents:

- **Guidelines for the Supervision of Postgraduate Students**
- **Role of the Research Higher Degrees Committee**

which can be found at <http://www.paediatrics.unimelb.edu.au/rhd/committee.html>

A/Prof Nigel Curtis on behalf of the
Department of Paediatrics Research Higher Degrees Committee