Introduction
Candidature Milestones
College Performance Reports

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Overview

• People and Structures
• Important aspects of research candidature
• Candidature Milestones
• College Performance Reports
• Graduate capabilities
People and Structures

WITHIN the COLLEGE OF SCIENCE ENGINEERING AND HEALTH

Academic aspects

• Higher Degrees by Research SubCommittee (School HDR Coordinators)
• Associate Dean (Research and Innovation) SEH
  – Professor Felicity Roddick
• Deputy ProVice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) SEH
  – Professor Matthew Cuthbertson

Administrative aspects

• SEH HDR Administrators
• Sandra Pereira
• Helen Young
• Julie Barnett (Bundoora)
People and Structures

• AT RMIT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

• Academic aspects

• School of Graduate Research Advisory Board

• Representatives from the 3 Colleges, plus the Associate Deans (R&I) from each college, plus representatives from SGR….

• Dean of SGR: Prof Denise Cuthbert

• Administrative aspects

• School of Graduate Research (SGR)

• Oversight of the procedures and policy re HDR candidature for RMIT University

• Manages thesis examination process
The Timetable and Process

Year 1
- Enrolment
- Progress Report
- Confirmation of Candidature 12 mo

Year 2
- Progress Report
- Progress Report

Year 3
- Progress Report
- Progress Report

Year 4 (max. time)
- Progress Report
- Panel of Examiners
- Submit thesis

Reports, Papers, Chapters

Master or Doctor

Receive Examiners Comments
First tasks....

Decide on project in discussion with supervisor(s)

• Complete Needs Analysis

• Needs analysis must be completed within 2 months of commencement of candidature

Research Methods

• Compulsory

• Required before examination of thesis
Progress of Candidature

Length
Masters: maximum of 2 years full time study
PhDs: maximum of 4 years FT study

Three major steps:
• Confirmation of candidature
• Mid-candidature review
• Completion seminar

Timing depends on whether Master or Doctoral degree
### Progress: Candidature Milestone Reviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Timing of Confirmation of Candidature</th>
<th>Timing of Mid Candidature review</th>
<th>Timing of Completion seminar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All doctorates</td>
<td>Between 9 and 12 months after the research commencement date or P/T</td>
<td>Between 21 and 24 months after the research commencement date or P/T equivalent</td>
<td>Between 33 and 36 months after the research commencement date or P/T equivalent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Between 3 and 4 months after the research commencement date or P/T</td>
<td>Between 9 and 12 months after the research commencement date or P/T equivalent</td>
<td>Between two and four months before the maximum duration of candidature for the Masters or P/T equivalent</td>
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Milestone Reviews

All compulsory, can formally request postponement of up to 8 weeks if necessary….if not, placed at risk (!)

All comprise:

- Written component
- Presentation to panel
- Summary of progress, and progress since last Milestone Review
- Answering questions from panel and audience

Panel comprises:

- Chair: School HDR Coordinator or nominee
- Up to 2 supervisors
- Independent member
- Industrial partner (if applicable)
Confirmation of Candidature

Candidate must satisfy panel that progress justifies continuation, i.e., conversion from probationary to full candidature

Possible outcomes:

• Candidature confirmed

• Candidature confirmed subject to minor amendments…provide amended written material within 4 weeks

• Candidature not confirmed, major amendments needed, placed “at risk”….need to work closely with school and supervisors to remediate situation and redo milestone
Confirmation of Candidature: Criteria

Demonstration (at appropriate level) of:

• Planning of research program
• Critical review of relevant literature
  – Fully referenced literature review
• Practical conduct of the research
  – Research achievements to date
• Presentation and defence of program and its progress as an oral presentation
  – Content and delivery of presentation and responses to resultant questions
Mid-Candidature Review

Comprises:

- Written component which demonstrates progress: e.g., papers arising from your work, chapters of thesis
- Presentation to panel
- Summary of progress, and progress since Confirmation of Candidature
- Answering questions from panel and audience
Completion Seminar

Approx. 3 months before submission of thesis

- Hurdle for thesis submission
- Assist you in writing up your thesis
- Mechanism for reflection on work and contributions to knowledge
- Key points of thesis
- Bouncing it off peer audience….

COMPRISES:

- advanced draft of at least four chapters of the thesis or the equivalent in draft or published papers comprising data analysis and findings
- overview of what the research has achieved and the major outcomes
- title page, abstract and table of contents to the thesis
- list of any issues on which you seek advice
College Performance Reports: Proposed

• Every 6 months (semester)

• Doctoral candidates

• Collection and summary of comments for each month, reflection on progress over preceding months

• Both student and supervisors see the comments

• Extremely important!

• Vital that both supervisor and student accurately reflect the situation!

• Tool for reflection and improvement
Supervisor Meetings

- Must be regular
- At least fortnightly
- Keep records…
- Contribute to the College Performance Report
Can I convert from Master to PhD?

- Yes, usually before Mid-candidature Review
- Master candidature time elapsed counted as PhD time
- Need to demonstrate that you are capable, project is suitable and progress is satisfactory

- Reverse is also possible, generally if not have exceeded 2 years.
Student Relationship With Supervisor

• **Keep regular contact** with supervisor (e.g., weekly meetings)

• Maintain the progress of work in accordance with the stages as discussed and agreed with supervisor

• **Take the initiative** in raising problems or difficulties encountered in research and in proposing and discussing solutions to these with supervisor

• Discuss any plans to take leave with supervisor and obtain approval in advance

• Manage up the Supervisor!!
Employment, Leave etc

Time commitment:

• **At LEAST** 4 days/week FT and 2 days/week PT
• Employment for up to 1 day/week allowable…tutoring, demonstrating etc
• **Must discuss** with supervisor

Holidays

• Entitled to 4 weeks recreational leave/year….discuss with supervisors

Leave of Absence

• If major issues, e.g., health, family issues
• Up to 12 months total for candidature
• Must be discussed with supervisors and formally requested
Graduate Capabilities

- Able to learn from new situations
- Knowledge and capability to deal with new situations in working life
- Able to behave appropriately in different social and professional situations
- Enhanced communication skills: verbal and written
- Able to work with others
- Able to undertake independent research
- Have problem-solving ability
- Give critical evaluation, and be critically evaluated
- Have a global, environmentally aware perspective
Don’t sit back and expect the world to come to you

• Higher Degrees are about moving from undergraduate studies to ‘you’ leading and determining what and where you are going

• But with great power comes great responsibility............

• That means that **YOU** are responsible for the direction, achievements, milestones

• Go to conferences but think about the quality and which will give the most benefit…discuss with supervisor

• Think about resources, plan ahead – **YOU** are the researcher and you have the best insight

• Use the opportunity as training for **YOUR** future
Good luck 😊

...... But you make your own luck!