Introduction to Postgraduate Candidature in the College of Science, Engineering and Health

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Overview

• People and Structures
• Important aspects of research candidature
  – Progress Reports
  – Confirmation of Candidature
• Graduate capabilities
People and Structures

WITHIN YOUR SCHOOL

Academic aspects

• Senior supervisor

• Second supervisor (or Supervisorial team)

• Discipline level - Higher Degree by Research (HDR) coordinator

• School level – School HDR Coordinator or Deputy Head (R&I) or Director of Graduate Research.

Administrative aspects

• Research Administration Coordinator

• Discipline or School (Postgraduate) Research Committee
  – Manages Confirmation of candidature (CoC) seminars and approves documentation.
  – Manages completion seminars
  – Approves recommended panels of examiners
People and Structures

WITHIN the COLLEGE OF SCIENCE ENGINEERING AND HEALTH

Academic aspects

• Higher Degrees by Research Sub-committee
• Associate Dean (Research and Innovation) SEH
  – Professor Gary Bryant
• Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) SEH
  – Professor Felicity Roddick

Administrative aspects

• SEH HDR Administrators
  – Sandra Pereira (City)
  – Helen Young (City)
  – 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 the School of Graduate Research (SGR).
  – Dean of SGR: Professor Denise Cuthbert

Administrative aspects

• School of Graduate Research (SGR)
  – Oversight of the procedures and policy regarding HDR candidature for RMIT University
  – Manages thesis examination process
The Timetable and Process

Year 1: Progress Report, Confirmation of Candidature
Year 2: Progress Report, Progress Report, Panel of examiners & submit thesis
Year 3: Progress Report, Progress Report, Panel of examiners
Year 4: Progress Report, Panel of examiners, PhD Completion Seminar, Submit thesis, Receive Examiners Comments

Reports, Papers, Chapters

Master or PhD
SOME Important Aspects of Candidature

• YOU have responsibility for ensuring that both research/academic aspects and administrative aspects of your candidature are dealt with.

Research aspects

• Develop a schedule of work and maintain it!
• Keep accurate and complete durable records of results
• Keep back-up copies of everything!
• COMMUNICATE often with your supervisor

Administrative aspects

• Initiate progress reports
• Re-enrol annually (if you are late you must pay a fee).
• Advise of any changes to contact details
Managing your supervisor....

• **Keep regular contact** with supervisor (eg, 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
  – Most supervisors are very busy, and may not notice the problems unless you raise them – don’t be afraid!

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

• **Manage your Supervisor !!**
Don’t sit back and expect the world to come to you........

- Higher Degrees are about the transition from you following others (undergraduate studies) to YOU leading and determining where you are going. It may not happen overnight, but...

- But with great power comes great responsibility............

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

- Attend conferences but think about the quality - which conferences will give the most benefit

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

- Use the opportunity as training for YOUR future
PROGRESS – Important Aspects of Research Candidature

Research Program
- agree on a topic that truly interests you
- agree the context of your project - stand alone, academic or collaborative
- understand the resources available and any commitments needed
- read sufficient literature to define where your proposed project will make a contribution to new knowledge
- make a realistic but challenging plan

Research Project & Progress Reporting
- divide work into manageable and reportable sections
- establish the real priorities, particularly where there is external reliance
- read the literature and write reports, papers; write in a way that emulates the best publications
- participate in meaningful Progress Reviews, if there is a problem – identify it early!

Thesis Writing & Submission
- plan your thesis early on (chapter plan) - write literature review and experimental section early & modify later as needed
- provide whole sections to supervisors, and agree turn-around time. **Listen to advice!!**
- get some independent people (friends etc.) to read as an outsider
- ensure that text is error free, check logic & the proposed hypothesis.
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
• Ability to problem-solve
• Give critical evaluation of other work, and be critically evaluated yourself
• Have a global, environmentally aware perspective
Good luck 😊