

RESEARCH TASKS IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE DOCTORAL DEGREES PROCEDURE



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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This procedure outlines the requirements for completing research tasks in CQUniversity's Doctor of Education and Doctor of Professional Studies degrees.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure applies to candidates enrolled in the Doctor of Education or Doctor of Professional Studies program at CQUniversity.

3 PROCEDURE

- 3.1 The Doctor of Education and the Doctor of Professional Studies are doctoral degrees that require a candidate to make:
- “A significant and original contribution to knowledge in the context of professional practice. The emphasis in the learning outcomes and research may differ between the different forms of Doctoral Degree qualifications but all graduates will demonstrate knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills at AQF level 10” ([Australian Qualifications Framework](#)).
- 3.2 The Doctor of Education and the Doctor of Professional Studies consist of supervised research and research tasks designed for practitioners and, at minimum, comprise:
- four research tasks
 - the confirmation of candidature milestone, and
 - the thesis component.
- 3.3 These degrees are governed by the [Research Higher Degree Course Rules](#) which provides further details regarding all aspects of admission, progression, submission and examination.

- 3.4 Candidates may be required to undertake the prescribed unit RSCH20001 Prepare for Confirmation prior to the completion of their Confirmation of Candidature milestone. Candidates who successfully complete this unit will automatically be credited for one of the four required research tasks.
- 3.5 At completion of the four research tasks, candidates should have an understanding of the role and functions of educational research or research as relevant to the professional context; relevant technical knowledge and appropriate research skills, including an understanding of the way to access and process information at a doctoral level.

The research tasks

- 3.6 The four supervised research tasks are the first component of the professional practice degrees and are negotiated directly between the candidate and their supervisory panel. The supervisory panel must guide the selection of research tasks such that the candidate can demonstrate a wide range of knowledge and skills. The tasks can consist of, but are not limited to:
- literature reviews
 - formulation and description of the research methodology
 - position papers
 - critical reflective writing
 - a pilot study
 - refereed writing – for example, journal article, book chapter or refereed conference paper
 - non-traditional research output (e.g. creative work, exhibition, performance, event)
 - units in research methods or other research training, approved via the School of Graduate Research. Enrolment in the RSCH20001 unit does not require prior approval and candidates who successfully complete this unit will automatically be credited for one of the four research tasks. Enrolment in other units or training courses may be undertaken via special approval. It is essential that this approval is given prior to commencing the unit, as participation in non-approved courses may be ineligible for credit as a research task.
- 3.7 Each task will contribute to a portfolio of work for the degree, and should be approximately 5,000 words per task (but may be up to 10,000 words depending on the nature of the task) as a final draft might be expected. Each task may require several drafting iterations before it meets the expected standard.

Assessment of research tasks

- 3.8 All tasks will be individually and formally assessed, consistent with the expectations of the [AQF Level 10 Doctoral Degree](#) descriptors. Each task must be assessed as acceptable, prior to a candidate submitting their next task. The portfolio of tasks will be retained in the candidate's file.
- 3.9 The assessor of each task shall be external to the supervisory panel and appointed by the Deputy Dean Research of the relevant School (or their nominee). The School of Graduate Research will administer the task assessment process.
- 3.10 As each of the tasks has a defined focus, and this focus is established in consultation between the candidate and the supervisory panel, a cover sheet must be submitted alongside each task lodgement. (Template cover sheets are available from Research Moodle).
- 3.11 Task assessors must hold an appropriate AQF Level 10 qualification (or agreed equivalent) and have demonstrated research expertise relevant to the topic area.
- 3.12 The same task assessor may be used for more than one assessment item for a given candidate, but a maximum of two tasks applies per reviewer, per candidate. Furthermore, where a reviewer has undertaken multiple assessments for the same candidate, they shall not be eligible to be appointed as the internal reviewer for the Confirmation of Candidature milestone.

- 3.13 Research tasks are interim assessment milestones, and work contained therein will be subject to further, independent assessment via the Confirmation of Candidature milestone and thesis examination. As such, some flexibility can be applied in appointing task assessors, when having regard to possible conflicts of interest. A task assessor may remain eligible for appointment if interests relate only to research collaborations unrelated to the thesis topic (for example, being a co-author or co-investigator with one of the supervisors, on a separate project). However, an assessor will be ineligible if an interest exists that is of other professional or personal nature (e.g. line management roles or familial connections), with either the candidate or any member of the supervision team.
- 3.14 The assessor will be invited to make comment on the following criteria with reference to the AQF framework:
- a well-structured paper, which signals its organisation to the reader and is a coherent document that follows a logical sequence
 - clearly addresses the task title/topic
 - the content of the paper is appropriate and within scope of the task title/topic
 - the problem definition is appropriate and/or the proposed topic is of particular value
 - there is clear development of an argument/position by the writer, that draws critically upon appropriate literature and the candidate's professional practice experience
 - appropriate links are drawn between theory and practice, where relevant
 - a technically sound paper, i.e. references are accurate and use a consistent and recognised format, spelling and grammar are correct, proper sentence structure is used, and good use of word length
 - demonstrated appropriate understanding of the knowledge required by the discipline area, in order to inform subsequent tasks, research execution and/or thesis development general comments and recommendations – the assessor is invited to make recommendations to the candidate and supervisory panel about future directions of the research, and
 - required changes.
- 3.15 The grading categories for the tasks are Satisfactory, Revisions Required or Unsatisfactory. Where revisions are warranted, these will be undertaken with guidance from the supervisory panel, and to the satisfaction of the Deputy Dean Research in the appropriate School. If the work is not assessed as being at AQF Level 10, the candidate will be required to revise and resubmit before attempting subsequent tasks. Such revisions should be completed within four weeks.
- 3.16 For writing tasks submitted as research tasks (book chapter or journal paper, refereed conference paper or non-traditional work), the peer-review process replaces the assessment process. The following criteria will be applied to the accreditation of papers/works as a peer-reviewed task:
- meets [Higher Education Research Data Collection](#) (HERDC) requirements for research
 - meets HERDC requirements for a book chapter, journal article, refereed conference paper or non-traditional work
 - is not published through a predatory publisher¹
 - must be related to the proposed research topic
 - can be co-authored, however the co-author must be a member of the supervisory panel, and
 - co-authored paper, where a supervisor is not the co-author, will only accumulate percentage points. For example, a paper co-authored by three other authors will represent a 25 per cent point allocation. The candidate will be required to accumulate the total of 100 points to equal one refereed writing task.
- 3.17 A peer-reviewed writing task should be lodged together with an appropriate cover sheet, which is provided in Research Moodle.

¹ For information on how to identify a predatory publisher visit the Library guide at: <https://libguides.library.cqu.edu.au/scholarlypublishing/choosingapublisher>

Advanced standing credit

- 3.18 Advanced standing credit may be applicable for up to a maximum of two of the four research tasks; however this will be subject to the determination of the Deputy Dean Research of the principal supervisor's School in consultation with the supervisors (principal and associate/s) and must be approved by the Dean School of Graduate Research.

Confirmation of candidature

- 3.19 Following successful completion of the four research tasks, the candidate will complete the confirmation of candidature, as per the [Confirmation of Candidature Policy and Procedure](#).

Suggested study plan

Full time (internal or external)

Year	First 6 months	Second 6 months
1	Research Task 1 completed and approved Research Task 2 completed and approved	Research Task 3 completed and approved Research Task 4 completed and approved (Note that RSCH20001 Prepare for Confirmation is generally one of these tasks).
2	Confirmation of Candidature (CoC) Research and Thesis commences (post-CoC)	Research and Thesis
3	Research and Thesis	Research and Thesis Submission of Thesis for examination.

Part time (internal or external)

Year	First 6 months	Second 6 months
1	Research Task 1 completed and approved	Research Task 2 completed and approved
2	Research Task 3 completed and approved (Note that RSCH20001 Prepare for Confirmation is generally task 3 or 4).	Research Task 4 completed and approved (Note that RSCH20001 Prepare for Confirmation is generally task 3 or 4).
3	Confirmation of Candidature (CoC) (T1 or T2)	Confirmation of Candidature (CoC) Research and Thesis commences (post-CoC)
4	Research and Thesis	Research and Thesis
5	Research and Thesis	Research and Thesis
6	Research and Thesis	Submission of Thesis for examination

Appeals

- 3.20 A candidate, supervisor or examiner who has reasonable grounds for dissatisfaction with any formal decision made under this procedure may lodge an appeal by written request to the Dean School of Graduate Research, within 28 days of date of issue of the decision. If the candidate or supervisor can demonstrate that the process was not followed or that new evidence is available, they may lodge a further internal appeal with the Vice-President (Research).
- 3.21 With regard to matters relating to academic assessment, a candidate who has reasonable grounds for dissatisfaction with any formal decision may appeal, in writing, to the Academic Appeals Committee. An appeal shall be received by that Committee within 28 days of formal notification of the decision.

- 3.22 The University recognises the importance of providing prompt and fair complaint resolution procedures for candidates, without victimisation for initiating or participating in the settlement. The candidate's enrolment will be maintained (without additional tuition liability) while the complaint and appeals process is ongoing. For further information, please refer to the [Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#).
- 3.23 Candidates who believe the outcome of an internal appeal is incorrect or unreasonable and/or that their application has not been dealt with fairly, has the right to access external complaint processes at minimal or no costs. Candidates may lodge a complaint with the [Queensland Ombudsman](#) or other [external complaint agency](#). Complaint submissions should include any new information that should be considered in reviewing the matter, copies of any relevant letters or other documents, and the outcome being sought.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 4.1 The Dean School of Graduate Research is responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing and ensuring compliance with this procedure.

Reporting

- 4.2 No additional reporting is required.

Records management

- 4.3 Employees must manage records in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping information system.
- 4.4 University records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the relevant [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#). Before disposing of any records, approval must be sought from the Records and Privacy Team (email records@cqu.edu.au).

5 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Application for Research Task Accreditation – Peer-Reviewed Writing Task

[Confirmation of Candidature Policy and Procedure](#)

[Research Higher Degree Course Rules](#)

[Research Higher Degree Theses Policy and Procedure](#)

Research Task Cover Sheet

Research Task Assessor's Report

[AQF Level 10 Doctoral Degree](#)

7 FEEDBACK

- 7.1 Feedback about this document can be emailed to policy@cqu.edu.au.

8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Delegated Approval Authority	Research Committee
Advisory Committee	N/A
Required Consultation	N/A
Administrator	Dean School of Graduate Research
Next Review Date	22/07/2024

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	Academic Board 30/09/2015
Amendment Authority and Date	Research Higher Degrees Committee 23/08/2017; Research Higher Degrees Committee 29/11/2018; Editorial amendment 10/12/2020; Research Committee 22/07/2021.
Notes	This document was formerly known as the Professional Practice Doctoral Degrees (CQ16 Doctor of Education, CU56 Doctor of Professional Studies) Procedure (23/08/2017).