

## DOCTORAL CONFIRMATION OF REGISTRATION PROCESS

### Purpose

1. For a confirmation panel to confirm that the candidate has made sufficient progress in the provisional year to warrant being moved to full registration and that he/she demonstrates capability to carry out independent research and respond to academic critique. Evidence of this includes:
  - Satisfactory completion of any required coursework with at least a B+ and any other requirements laid out in the Statement of Expectations
  - Effective knowledge of the literature in the field and other fields that may be relevant to the topic
  - Ability to successfully plan, design and implement research and related tasks
  - Ability to successfully interpret data and findings
  - Ability to successfully communicate and present research; in writing, orally, and by other means as necessary
2. To ensure the project is academically robust, feasible within the time frame and potential risks identified and mitigated where possible.

### Expectations of the Candidate

#### Part 1

To produce a substantial confirmation report (3,000-10,000 words). The length should be agreed with the supervisors as preferences vary between disciplines. The report should be submitted to the Chair of the committee **at least 3 weeks** before the confirmation event and include the following:

- An concise abstract
- An introduction giving the rationale and importance behind the research with clearly stated objectives and/or research hypothesis
- A critical relevant literature with summary outlining the 'research gaps'
- A clear summary of the research methodology including research techniques and an experimental plan with a timetable for conducting both the research and the thesis write up through to completion
- A simple risk analysis (risks to successful and timely completion not safety etc.) that identifies any factors that might impact on a successful and timely completion and what has been done to minimise/mitigate these. Examples may include budgetary constraints, ethics approval, access to materials or equipment etc.
- A summary of research findings achieved including preliminary data and resources/techniques developed
- A bibliography of all cited literature

#### Part 2

To present for 20-30 min on progress to date as outlined above followed by questions and discussion. This should be a public event with an audience of academic peers including academic staff and postgraduate students. Panel members may wish to ask generic questions at this point along with other members of the public audience but more specific questioning would normally be reserved for Part 3.

## Part 3

Participate in a formal discussion with supervisors, panel and chair to discuss the confirmation report, progress to date, and candidate needs/support etc. This is primarily to assess the candidate's potential to successfully complete the degree in a timely manner, as well as ensure they will be well supported throughout the remainder of their candidacy.

Initially this will involve questions from the independent panellists to the candidate with limited input by supervisors if agreed by the convenor.

After the chair deems that an adequate degree of questioning by the independent panellists has been undertaken, the supervisors will be invited into a broader discussion and finally the needs and requirements in the confirmation committee chair section of the confirmation paperwork (DRC 13) will be completed.

## The Panel and their Roles

### The Chair

The Chair is normally the Head of Department or his/her appointee (Postgraduate Director/Coordinator). All nominees should meet the following criteria:

- PhD qualified
- Experience both as a primary supervisor (with completions) and as an examiner
- Be independent of the PhD project - supervisors cannot convene their own candidates confirmation events
- Follow appropriate protocols around organising and running the event

#### Role of the Chair:

1. Selecting the panel:  
Work with the supervisor to ensure appropriate independent panellists are selected
2. Organising the event:
  - Contact the panel members and candidate with an agreed dated, time and venue for both Part 2 and 3 of the confirmation. This may be done in conjunction with the supervisor and with administrative support.
  - Ensure the report is sent to the panel members **3 weeks** prior to the event. (Heads of Department/PG Directors should also be advised **at least 3 weeks in advance** of the details of the confirmation event and any background issues in the case where the Chair is not the PG Director).
  - Communicate with the candidate before the event to answer any queries/concerns.
3. Facilitating the event:
  - Facilitate the presentation and question session (Part 2).
  - Chair the panel meeting with the candidate (Part 3) and make sure all parts of the paperwork (DRC 13) are covered including the support structures etc. Ensure the candidate has the opportunity to speak independently of supervisors (supervisors can be asked to leave the room). Ask the candidate to leave while an agreed outcome is discussed with supervisors and all panellists. Ensure the outcome is communicated clearly to the candidate on his/her return and that any requirements are detailed clearly, agreed by everyone and given in writing to the candidate (in the meeting or afterwards).
4. Follow up:  
Ensure paperwork is complete and everyone has seen and signed it then submit this to [doctoral.office@massey.ac.nz](mailto:doctoral.office@massey.ac.nz) as soon as possible after the event. The Graduate Research School should be advised of any delays.

## Supervisors

The role of the supervisor is to:

- Assist the candidate to prepare for the confirmation: providing guidance and reviewing the confirmation report and providing coaching on the presentation
- Assist the convenor in organising the event including recommendations for independent panellists and completing relevant paperwork
- Advise the convenor in advance of any concerns about the candidate's ability to succeed at confirmation
- Be part of the confirmation committee

## Other independent panel members

At **least one other** independent panel member should be appointed, preferably two. Their role is primarily to assess the candidate and the viability of the project as well as provide guidance/suggestions on future directions. They should:

- Be PhD qualified or have substantial experience and recognition in the field and at least one should have a supervision track record.
- Have no conflicts of interest, these would include:
  - Personal relationships with the candidate or supervisors
  - Supervisory or advisory relationship with the candidate in the provisional year

## Insufficient progress in the candidacy

If the candidate has made insufficient progress in the provisional year and/or is clearly unlikely to complete in the expected time frame (4 years full-time for completion of all requirements of the degree and 6 years part-time) then this should be an exit point. The panel must make one of the following recommendations to the Doctoral Research Committee:

- **Full Registration**
- **Extension of provisional registration** (this may vary from requiring minor changes to the confirmation report to the satisfaction of the panel within a few weeks to a major rewrite of the report and reconvening of panel for reassessment. However if this were to require more than 6 months further work then the outcome should be withdrawal or termination)
- **Withdrawal** (with a view to looking at other qualifications) for example when the research has taken a completely different direction or another qualification is more appropriate to the candidate's interests/career plans
- **Termination of candidacy** the University does not recommend the candidate for doctoral study

## Other points to note

- If the confirmation event is postponed only 1 extension of up to a maximum of 6 months from the original confirmation date will be allowed
- The Doctoral Research Committee reserves the right to overturn the Confirmation Panel's decision as to the outcome of the event
- If anyone participating in the confirmation event has concerns and would like to seek independent advice please contact [doctoral.office@massey.ac.nz](mailto:doctoral.office@massey.ac.nz)
- For further information on the confirmation event, or other candidacy matters and relevant paperwork please consult the [web book](#)



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