# Doctor of Philosophy (Research) by Prior Publication Admission Assessment Panel Procedure

# Section 1 - Purpose of the Admissions Assessment Panel

(1) The purpose of the Admissions Assessment Panel (the "Panel") is to determine the academic standing and/or professional standing of the applicant and viability of the thesis plan for admission to the University's Doctoral Degree (Research) by Prior Publication.

(2) The Panel will review the application documents, including the thesis proposal and academic referee report, as well as the prior publications. The Panel will provide an opportunity for applicants to present their body of work and thesis proposal. Following that, the Panel will make a recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Research as to whether the applicant will be admitted to Doctoral Degree (Research) by Prior Publication program.

# Section 2 - Audience

(3) This Procedure should be read and understood by:

a. applicants seeking admission into the Doctoral Degree (Research) by Prior Publication program; and
b. University staff responsible for the administration, management, and supervision of the Doctoral Degree (Research)(Research) by Prior Publication program and applicants.

# Section 3 - Scope

(4) This Procedure applies to the admissions assessment panel process for the Doctoral Degree (Research) by Prior Publication program. It should be read in conjunction with the Doctoral Degree (Research) by Prior Publication - Awards and Programs Schedule, and the Higher Degree by Research Procedure.

# Section 4 - Admissions Assessment Principles

(5) The following principles underpin the assessment of applicants for the PhD by Prior Publication:

a. Fairness and Transparency: The assessment process will be clear, impartial, and based on well-defined criteria.
b. Academic Rigour: The evaluation will be conducted with the highest academic standards to ensure that applicants meet the required scholarly expectations for a PhD.
c. Expert Feedback: The panel will provide expert feedback to applicants, particularly where additional work or clarification may be required before admission.
d. Respect for Research Ethics, Integrity and Safety: The Panel will assess whether applicant's prior publications conform with the University's Responsible Conduct of Research Policy, noting that it is the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate that all research that informed the prior publications and involved

humans or animals was approved by the relevant Ethics Committee (or other authorised approval authority) prior to commencement of the research activities. (Note, the Collaborative Research Procedure provides details on how the University may recognise an ethical approval granted through an external process, and the circumstances under which ethical clearance through one of the University's authorised ethical review processes is not required.)

# Section 5 - Assessment Timeline Overview

(6) The overall timeline for the assessment is as follows:

a. Application Received: Graduate Research will confirm the documentation has been received in accordance with the Higher Degree by Research Procedure before providing it to the School for their consideration.
b. Pre-Assessment of Application: The Head of School or Deputy Head of School will confirm that the applicant meets the eligibility requirements for admission to the program as specified in the Admission and Selection Criteria of the Doctoral Degree (Research) by Prior Publication - Awards and Programs Schedule.
c. Panel Convened: The School's HDR Convenor will convene a Panel within 2 weeks of receipt and notify the applicant of the timings and venue for the oral presentation.
d. Panel Review: The Panel will review the submitted thesis proposal and academic referee report within 6 weeks of the School receiving the application. As part of the review, the Panel is expected to read the prior publications intended for inclusion in the thesis.
e. Oral Presentation and Defence: The applicant will be invited to present their work in an oral presentation, typically scheduled within 8 weeks of the School receiving the application. The applicant is to arrange their attendance at their own cost.
f. Final Decision: Following the oral presentation, the Panel will make a recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Research within 2 weeks, including feedback to be communicated to the applicant.

# Section 6 - Pre Assessment Process

(7) Applicants must not have previously been awarded a doctoral level qualification. Prior to the Admissions Assessment Panel process, the Head of School or Deputy Head of School will determine whether an applicant meets the program standard admission and selection criteria, as outlined in the Doctoral Degree (Research) by Prior Publication - Awards and Programs Schedule.

# Section 7 - Convening the Panel

(8) The Panel will be convened by the relevant HDR Convenor after the submission of the following application documents by the applicant:

a. Thesis Proposal – a thesis proposal, which is a clear statement describing:
    i. a list of publications intended for inclusion in the thesis, along with a statement of authorship in accordance with the Research Authorship Procedure;
    ii. how the research work, as manifested in the publications has been developed;
    iii. the original and substantial contribution the works make to the area of research; and
    iv. a thematic overview of how the individual publications will be converted to a single, integrated thesis.
b. Academic Referee Report – A report from an academic referee who is familiar with the applicant's research and can speak to the quality and significance of the applicant's prior publications. This person may be either internal

or external to the University and may not be a member of the Panel.

# Section 8 - Panel Structure

(9) The Panel will consist of the relevant Associate Dean (Research) or their nominee, the relevant HDR Convenor and no less than two senior academic staff members within the discipline who are not recognised as co-author's of the prior publication(s).

(10) Chair: The Associate Dean (Research) or their nominee, or the Head of School or Deputy Head of School (Research Training) will be appointed by the panel. The Chair oversees the process, ensures fairness, and provides guidance where necessary.

(11) Subject Matter Experts: Two or more academic staff members who are experts in the applicant's field of research but not members of the applicant's proposed supervisory team, authors of the prior publication(s), or the applicant's academic referee. These experts will evaluate the quality and originality of the applicant's publications and their potential to meet the requirements of the PhD program.

(12) External Assessor (Optional): In some cases, an assessor external to the University may be invited to provide an independent evaluation of the applicant's prior publications and academic/professional standing, if deemed necessary by the Chair. For instance, an appointment should be made in circumstances where it is not possible to appoint the required number of Subject Matter Experts due to an identified conflict of interest.

(13) Conflicts of interest must be managed in accordance with the University's Disclosure of Interest Policy and Disclosure of Interest Procedure.

# Section 9 - Panel Assessment Criteria

(14) Applicants must be established Researchers and possess a portfolio of published works to be included in the thesis. Published works that may be included must:

a. be able to be linked to present an original and coherent body of work that meets or exceeds the requirements of a Doctoral Degree (Research);
b. demonstrate the applicant was the lead, or sole, author in all publications, (the definition of which should be consistent with any applicable disciplinary norms);
c. have been published no more than 6 years prior to commencement of the degree. The Dean of Graduate Research may approve exceptions to this clause on the basis of career disruptions or other exceptional circumstances; and
d. not comprise any of the following types of work: unpublished work, newspaper articles, articles in non-refereed professional journals, work that has already been submitted (successfully or unsuccessfully) for the award of a degree at any university, or works where the applicant's role was that of editor.

(15) Any research conducted during the degree should relate only to the development of an accompanying exegesis. Where additional research work is required in order for the work to form an integrated theme, or publications in the thesis plan are not yet accepted for publication, the candidate will not be admitted.

# Section 10 - Admissions Assessment

(16) The admissions assessment process involves the following steps:

## Pre-Panel Review

(17) The Panel will receive and review the applicant's thesis proposal and academic referee report before the oral presentation.

(18) Members will assess the alignment of the applicant's prior publications with the proposed thesis, whether the publications demonstrate originality and contribution to the field.

## Oral Presentation

(19) The applicant will present a summary of their proposed thesis, including a discussion of their prior publications, the significance of the research, and how, with the addition of an exegesis, the work contributes to advancing knowledge in the field.

(20) The presentation will be in an open forum and should last no more than 30 minutes, followed by a 30-minute Q&A session (verbal defence). It is expected that the presentation will be conducted in person. In exceptional circumstances, alternative arrangements such as a Zoom conference may be arranged, noting that presentations are not able to be recorded without prior consultation with Graduate Research.

## Verbal Defence

(21) The verbal defence allows the applicant to engage in a deeper discussion with the Panel about their research.

(22) The applicant should be prepared to defend the quality and contribution of their prior publications and their ability to undertake the thesis proposal.

(23) Questions from the Panel will focus on the applicant's understanding of the research context, methodologies used, outcomes of the prior publications, and their ability to convert the work to a single, integrated thesis through the addition of an exegesis that meets the standards of a doctoral degree. They may be required to provide assurance that publications have been produced in accordance with the applicant's obligations in regards to research ethics and integrity.

## Panel Deliberation

(24) After the oral presentation and verbal defence, the Panel will deliberate in private to assess whether the applicant meets the criteria for admission to the PhD by Prior Publication program.

(25) The Panel will consider the originality, quality, and contribution of the applicant's prior research, as well as their potential to successfully meet the requirements of the PhD program.

(26) If the Panel requires additional clarification in order to determine the recommended outcome, the delivery of a recommended outcome by the Panel to Graduate Research may be delayed by no longer than one week.

## Recommendations

(27) After deliberation, the Panel will issue one of the following recommendations:

a. Admission Recommended: The applicant has met all requirements and is recommended to be admitted to the PhD by Prior Publication program.
b. Admission Not Recommended – Second Attempt Required: The applicant is not yet ready for admission and is required to resubmit their application after additional work or clarification. The Panel will invite the applicant to resubmit their application and attend a second oral presentation and verbal defence within a set time period to be agreed upon with the Dean of Graduate Research, but would not normally be longer than 3 months.

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c. Admission Refused: The applicant does not meet the criteria for admission on the basis that a significant amount of additional work would be required to raise the standards of the research to an acceptable standard.

(28) An outcome will be determined by the Dean of Graduate Research based on the panel's recommendation and communicated to the applicant accompanied by feedback from the Panel.

(29) If an applicant is refused admission they may re-apply for admission in accordance with the Higher Degree by Research Procedure, but would be required to address the feedback from the Panel. This will be assessed by the Head of School / Deputy Head of School at the Pre-Assessment of Application stage.

# Section 11 - Roles and Expectations

### Chair

(30) The Chair will:

a. ensure the panel adheres to the process and timelines;
b. facilitate the oral presentation and verbal defence in an orderly and respectful manner;
c. ensure the final recommendation is documented so it may be clearly communicated to the applicant by the Dean of Graduate Research.

### Panel Members

(31) Panel members are expected to:

a. conduct a thorough and objective assessment of the applicant's publications and proposed research;
b. ask insightful, respectful questions during the verbal defence;
c. provide constructive feedback and ensure the panel's decision is based on the approved criteria;
d. maintain confidentiality and discretion, especially in regards to the applicant's intellectual property.

### Applicant

(32) The applicant is expected to:

a. prepare and present a clear, concise summary of their thesis proposal and prior publications;
b. engage thoughtfully and professionally in the verbal defence;
c. if required, provide evidence that all research that involved humans or animals was approved by the relevant Ethics Committee (or other authorised approval authority) prior to commencement of the research activities;
d. take note of feedback and use it constructively for any future revisions or applications.

### Nominated Supervisors

(33) The agreed nominated supervisors are expected to provide appropriate support to the applicant so they have the best opportunity to be admitted to the program. This includes:

a. engaging with the applicant about the admission criteria and documentation required by the Panel;
b. liaising with Head of School/Deputy Head of School to suggest possible members for the Panel;
c. attending the oral presentation and verbal defence, noting that supervisors do not participate in either process.

### HDR Convenor

(34) The HDR Convenor is responsible for ensuring that the process is coordinated in such a way that:

a. the panel meeting and oral presentation are scheduled to the appropriate timings;
b. all documents are properly filed and accessible to panel members; and
c. communication with Graduate Research is conducted promptly following the process so the applicant is provided with their outcome and feedback in a timely manner.

# Section 12 - References

(35) Doctoral Degree (Research) by Prior Publication - Awards and Programs Schedule

(36) Higher Degree by Research Policy

(37) Higher Degree by Research Procedure

(38) Disclosure of Interest Policy

(39) Disclosure of Interest Procedure.

## Status and Details

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| **Responsible Executive** | Craig Simmons<br>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) |
| **Enquiries Contact** | Graduate Research |

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"University"** - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

**"Academic staff"** - A person employed as an academic staff member or appointed as an academic honorary appointee (including adjunct, clinical conjoint, visiting, honorary and conjoint appointments), but does not include persons who are employed solely as teachers or professional staff.

**"Applicant"** - Where referring to a student, an applicant is an individual seeking entry to a program or course offered by the University or its partner organisation/s.  For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Award"** - When referring to a University qualification, this term means an academic qualification approved by Academic Senate that is conferred when a student has met the relevant program requirements. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Candidate"** - With regard to Higher Degree by Research it has the same meaning as student. For all other instances it is a person considered for appointment to a position.

**"Intellectual property"** - Intellectual property (IP), as defined by the World Intellectual Property Organisation, refers to creations of the mind:  inventions; literary and artistic works; and symbols, names and images used in commerce. Intellectual property is divided into two categories: Industrial property includes patents for inventions, trademarks, industrial designs and geographical indications; and Copyright covers literary works (such as novels, poems and plays), films, music, artistic works (e.g. drawings, paintings, photographs and sculptures) and architectural design. Rights related to copyright include those of performing artists in their performances, producers of phonograms in their recordings, and broadcasters in their radio and television programs.

**"Program"** - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Research"** - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

**"School"** - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

**"Staff"** - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

**"Thesis"** - A dissertation involving research by a candidate for the award of a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) qualification.