

# RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREE CANDIDATURE

SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND REHABILITATION SCIENCES

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**Professor Jenny Strong**  
**Postgraduate Coordinators**

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## Important Processes



### Who's involved in these processes?

- You and your advisors
- Kathleen Reinhardt & Glynnis Shenfield – School Research Administrative Officers
- Prof Linda Worrall & Prof Jenny Strong – School Postgraduate Coordinators
- Research and Research Training Division (RRTD)/Graduate School

### What is Confirmation?

All candidates begin as provisional. At confirmation, we review the candidate's academic development and the school's support of the student. The candidate presents his or her work so far and the committee decides if the candidature is likely to lead to an examinable thesis in the "normal" amount of time for which the student, school and University are funded.

### What is the 'normal' amount of time?

3 to 4 years FTE for a PhD (Max = 4 years full-time or 8 years part-time)

1 to 2 years FTE for a MPhil (Max = 2 years full-time or 4 years part-time)

### What are the Ideal Outcomes of the Confirmation Process?

The candidate receives formative advice about the direction, scope, planning, and feasibility of the project. Alongside this, resources needed to sustain the candidature (the advisory team, technical support, physical and financial resources) are identified and secured. Potential difficulties are noted and resolved before they become actual difficulties.

**When does it happen?** • Confirmation is due at these standard periods – 6 months FTE for MPhil candidates – 12 months FTE for PhD candidates • Candidates and advisors need to work together to prepare for this process

## School Process

4 steps lead to a recommendation regarding confirmation

1. A formal written document
2. A formal oral presentation to the School (at the SHRS Postgraduate Research day or other School forum)
3. Interview with the candidate and advisor/s
4. Written feedback to the candidate and the advisory team

## Process is undertaken by the Candidate's Confirmation Committee

- A communal, corporate, collegial decision to continue to support candidature
- Confirmation Committee
  - **Chair** – Postgraduate Coordinator
  - **Independent Panel Member** - UQ staff member who is not on the advisory team but has expertise in the general area of the thesis project

## Confirmation

*(12 months FTE after admission)*

- Document
  - Lit review including rationale and aims of study
  - Research Plan
  - Thesis outline
  - Timetable to completion
  - Resources required
  - Career aspirations
  - Status of ethical clearance
  - Details of oral presentation
  - Risk assessment
  - Milestone checklist
- Interview
  - Chair (Prof Linda Worrall/Prof Jenny Strong)
  - Independent Panel Member, Advisory Team, Candidate
- Presentation
  - At SHRS Postgraduate conference or seminar prior to interview

## **Mid-candidature**

*(12 months FTE after admission)*

- Document
  - Lit review including rationale and aims of study
  - Research Plan
  - Thesis outline
  - Timetable to completion
  - Resources required
  - Career aspirations
  - Status of ethical clearance
  - Details of oral presentation
- Interview
  - Chair (Prof Linda Worrall, Prof Jenny Strong)
  - Independent Panel Member, Advisory Team, Candidate
- Presentation
  - At SHRS Postgraduate conference or seminar prior to interview

## **Mid-candidature**

*(12 months FTE after confirmation)*

- Document
  - Lit review including rationale and aims of study
  - Research Plan
  - Thesis outline
  - Timetable to completion
  - Resources required
  - Career aspirations
  - Status of ethical clearance
  - Details of oral presentation
- Interview
  - Chair (Prof Linda Worrall , Prof Jenny Strong)
  - Independent Panel Member, Advisory Team, Candidate
- Presentation
  - At SHRS Postgraduate conference or seminar prior to interview

## **Mid-candidature**

*(12 months FTE after confirmation)*

- Document
  - one, preferably two papers or chapters (one paper for MPhil)
  - Research Plan
  - Thesis outline

- Timetable to completion
- Resources required
- Career aspirations
- Status of ethical clearance
- Details of oral presentation
- Interview
  - Chair (Prof Linda Worrall, Prof Jenny Strong)
  - Independent Panel Member, Advisory Team, Candidate
- Presentation
  - At SHRS Postgraduate conference or seminar prior to interview

## **Mid-candidature**

- Document
  - One, preferably two papers or chapters (one paper for MPhil)
  - Revised Thesis outline
  - Revised Timetable to completion
  - Revised Resources required
  - Revised Career aspirations
  - Status of ethical clearance
  - Details of oral presentation
- Interview
  - Chair (Prof Linda Worrall, Prof Jenny Strong)
  - Independent Panel Member, Advisory Team, Candidate
- Presentation
  - At SHRS Postgraduate conference or seminar prior to interview

## **Mid-candidature**

- Document
  - One, preferably two papers or chapters (one paper for MPhil)
  - Revised Thesis outline
  - Revised Timetable to completion
  - Revised Resources required
  - Revised Career aspirations
  - Details of oral presentation (including PPT's + feedback)
- Interview
  - Chair (Prof Linda Worrall, Prof Jenny Strong)
  - Independent Panel Member, Advisory Team, Candidate
- Presentation
  - At SHRS Postgraduate conference or seminar prior to interview

## **Mid-candidature**

- Document
  - One, preferably two papers or chapters (one paper for MPhil)
  - Revised Thesis outline
  - Revised Timetable to completion
  - Revised Resources required
  - Revised Career aspirations
  - Details of oral presentation (including PPT's + feedback)
- Interview (only if requested)
  - Chair (Prof Linda Worrall , Prof Jenny Strong)
  - Same Independent Panel Member, Advisory Team, Candidate
- Presentation
  - At SHRS Postgraduate conference or seminar prior to interview

## **Mid-candidature**

- Document
  - One, preferably two papers or chapters (one paper for MPhil)
  - Revised Thesis outline
  - Revised Timetable to completion
  - Revised Resources required
  - Revised Career aspirations
  - Details of oral presentation (including PPT's + feedback)
- Interview (only if requested)
  - Chair (Prof Linda Worrall , Prof Jenny Strong)
  - Same Independent Panel Member, Advisory Team, Candidate
- Presentation
  - At SHRS Postgraduate conference or seminar prior to interview or national or international conference presentation

## **Thesis review**

*(12 months FTE after confirmation)*

- Document
  - One, preferably two papers or chapters (one paper for MPhil)
  - Revised Thesis outline
  - Revised Timetable to completion
  - Revised Resources required
  - Revised Career aspirations
  - Details of oral presentation (including PPT's + feedback)
- Interview (only if requested)
  - Chair (Prof Linda Worrall , Prof Jenny Strong)
  - Same Independent Panel Member, Advisory Team, Candidate
- Presentation

- At SHRS Postgraduate conference or seminar prior to interview or national or international conference presentation

## **Thesis Review**

*(3 months FTE before submission)*

- Document
  - One, preferably two papers or chapters (one paper for MPhil)
  - Revised Thesis outline
  - Revised Timetable to completion
  - Revised Resources required
  - Revised Career aspirations
  - Details of oral presentation (including PPT's + feedback)
- Interview (only if requested)
  - Chair (Prof Linda Worrall , Prof Jenny Strong)
  - Same Independent Panel Member, Advisory Team, Candidate
- Presentation
  - At SHRS Postgraduate conference or seminar prior to interview or national or international conference presentation

## **Thesis Review**

- Document
  - Front matter to thesis, including abstract
  - One, preferably two papers or chapters (one paper for MPhil)
  - Revised Thesis outline
  - Revised Timetable to completion
  - Revised Resources required
  - Revised Career aspirations
  - Details of oral presentation (including PPT's + feedback)
- Interview (only if requested)
  - Chair (Prof Linda Worrall , Prof Jenny Strong)
  - Same Independent Panel Member, Advisory Team, Candidate
- Presentation
  - At SHRS Postgraduate conference or seminar prior to interview or national or international conference presentation

## **Thesis Review**

- Document
  - Front matter to thesis, including abstract
  - At least two papers or chapters
  - Revised Thesis outline
  - Revised Timetable to completion

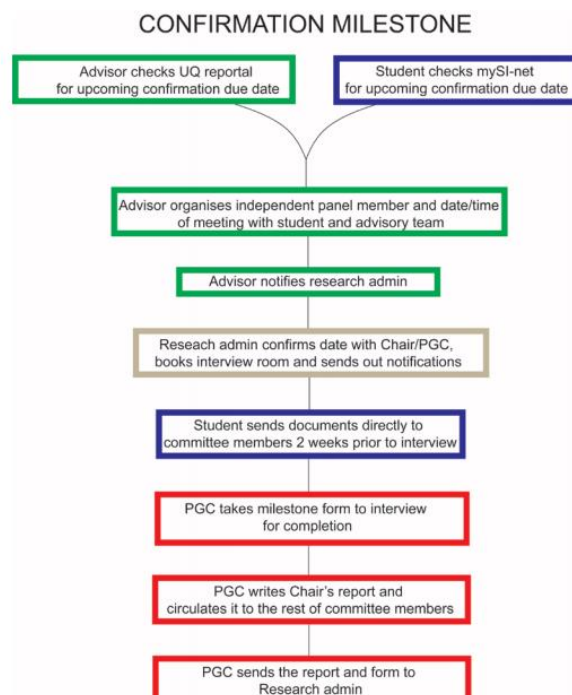


- Revised Resources required
- Revised Career aspirations
- Details of oral presentation (including PPT's + feedback)
- Interview (only if requested)
  - Chair (Prof Linda Worrall, Prof Jenny Strong)
  - Same Independent Panel Member, Advisory Team, Candidate
- Presentation
  - At SHRS Postgraduate conference or seminar prior to interview or national or international conference presentation

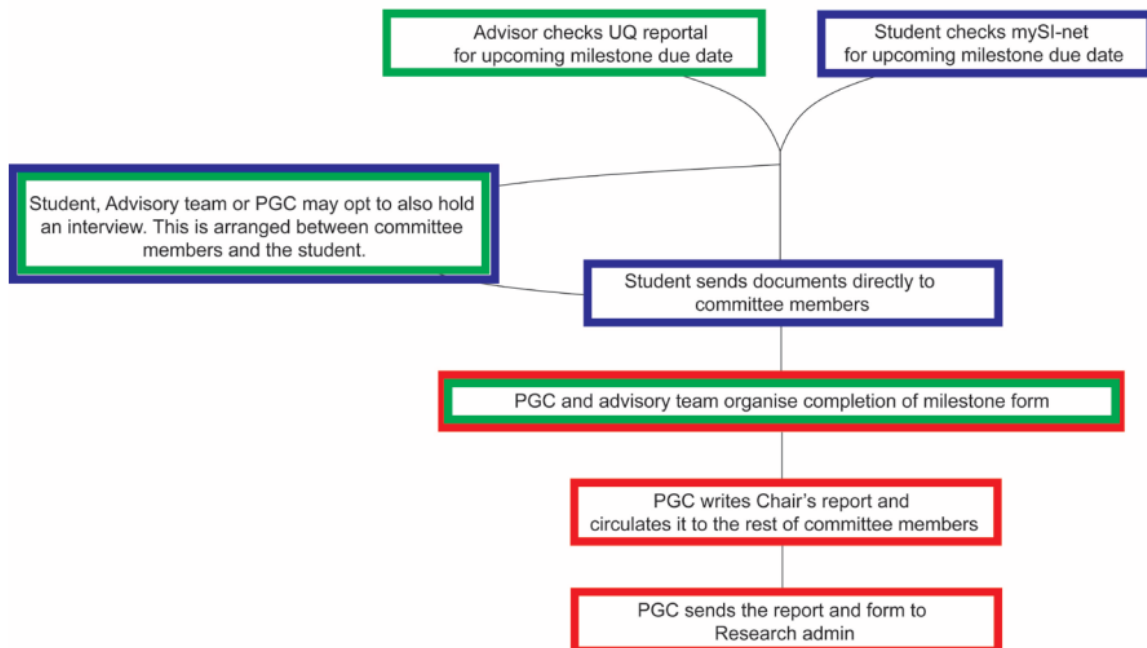
## Thesis Review

- Document
  - Front matter to thesis, including abstract
  - At least two papers or chapters
  - Revised and expanded Thesis outline
  - Revised Timetable to completion
  - Revised Resources required
  - Revised Career aspirations
  - Details of oral presentation (including PPT's + feedback)
- Interview (only if requested)
  - Chair (Prof Linda Worrall, Prof Jenny Strong)
  - Same Independent Panel Member, Advisory Team, Candidate
- Presentation
  - At SHRS Postgraduate conference or seminar prior to interview or national or international conference presentation

## Confirmation milestone



## Mid-candidature/Thesis review milestone



## What's good about the confirmation process?

- Formative feedback from academics other than your advisors
- Process is developmental and not punitive
- A chance for candidates to obtain assistance from others outside the advisory team
- A chance for advisor/s to seek assistance from other academics

## Examples of suggestions from committees:

- To seek statistical advice early on, prior to collecting all data
- to develop a more detailed plan for writing the thesis chapters
- undertake writing courses offered by the Graduate School in Graduate Week
- Attend discipline specific seminars therapy to practice oral presentations
- Scope of the project is too large and the proposed third stage is not necessary
- Consider applying for a Graduate School travel grant for international study
- Develop a comprehensive outline for thesis and regularly update it by including sections of work already written-up in journal articles
- Review more theoretical articles related to your area

## Money Matters

### *Research and conference costs*

The budget will be discussed at Confirmation interview and then, after interview, the agreed budget is emailed to PGC for approval using the Excel template. The agreed budget amount is left waiting for you to claim it for the items your requested.

### *How much?*

- Research costs and travel budgets will be combined and capped at \$3000 in total for PhD students & \$1,500 for MPhil students. Hence there will be just one budget called the RHD budget
- The RHD budget (including costs and travel) will need approval by one of the Postgraduate Coordinators before Finance Unit staff will approve any expenditure. This will typically occur as part of the milestone process. An Excel file is provided for you online
- Candidates who have scholarships or grants that include equivalent funding for research costs or travel for the project will not be eligible for the School's RHD budget allocation. Candidates who are working on a funded project will also be ineligible for research costs. Only funding requests not already covered (e.g. travel costs) but essential to the completion of the RHD degree will be considered.

## Thesis examination

### Who's involved?

- 2 examiners external to UQ
- A Chair of Examiners internal to UQ and/or
- The School Postgraduate Coordinator
- The Dean of Postgraduate Studies

## What is the process for Thesis submission?

- Advisory team send suggestion of potential assessors to Postgraduate Coordinator
- Advisory Team send standard Assessor Invitation email to potential assessors
- Advisory Team send Thesis Submission and Nomination of Assessor's form to SHRS RAO (Kathleen Reinhardt)
- Candidate uploads thesis (see Graduate School website)

## What Happens?

- Examiners are asked to return recommendations within 8 weeks for a PhD and 4 weeks for an MPhil

- Recommendations
  - Pass – no changes/minor changes/substantial changes / substantial changes that assessor wants to review/revisions and resubmission for re-assessment
  - Pass as MPhil instead of PhD
  - Fail

## What happens when results come in?

- If thesis accepted by both examiners with only non/minor changes, the Dean of PGS may make positive recommendation straight away
- If changes (more than minor) required, letter sent to candidate explaining what is required.
- Revisions are made and thesis uploaded again with list of corrections.
- These are approved by everyone

And that's it...A PhD or MPhil is yours!

But...you need to start early to get ready for the next step

## What Options are there?

- Post-doc
- Academic appointment
- Industry position
- Clinical position/management

### *Post-doc*

What can you do to get ready?

- Optimise chances for funding
  - Publish papers
  - Apply for grants
  - Present at meetings (International)
  - Consider selection criteria early
- Think about who you might want to work with
  - Academic “stalking”
    - Visit labs
    - Meet at conferences

### *Academic Appointment*

- Consider involvement in teaching
  - Supervision of honours students
  - Lectures/tutorials
- Discuss with advisor what options may be available

### *Always...*

- Develop leadership potential
- SHRS Postgraduate conference organisation
- Membership on Research Committee
- Student representative

### *And finally...*

Enjoy the process

One of the last times that you can focus on a single research project

- Make the most of it
  - Go to conferences
  - Go to talks
  - Meet people
  - Help out with other experiments
- Challenge yourself
- Think

## **Contacts**

**For all milestone forms and administration matters:**

[rhadmin.shrs@uq.edu.au](mailto:rhadmin.shrs@uq.edu.au)

**For procedure, policy administration**

[rhadmin.shrs@uq.edu.au](mailto:rhadmin.shrs@uq.edu.au)

**For policy and troubleshooting Linda Worrall or Jenny Strong**

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[j.strong@uq.edu.au](mailto:j.strong@uq.edu.au)

**Graduate School website:** <http://www.uq.edu.au/grad-school>