SCHEDULE A: CONFIRMATION OF CANDIDATURE GUIDELINES

HDR confirmation

1. Deakin University higher degree by research (HDR) candidates are admitted on a provisional candidature basis and must undergo a confirmation process before being allowed to progress to full candidature. The purpose of the confirmation process is to assess progress and support candidates in the early stages and to determine whether or not their work to date indicates a strong likelihood of a quality thesis being completed in the required time. The process will allow candidates to receive objective confirmation that their research direction is sound, the methodologies appropriate and the standard of writing satisfactory. Any difficulties that might impede successful completion can be identified and remedied. The process encourages candidates to start writing early in their candidature to overcome some of the barriers to preparing the thesis in a timely fashion. It also provides an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate oral presentation skills appropriate to the masters and doctoral levels of study. The process should be fair, equitable and supportive.

2. HDR candidates are required to undertake a confirmation process within 12 months of commencement of full-time candidature (or 18 months if part-time) for a doctoral candidate and 6 months full-time for a masters candidate (or 12 months if part-time). Doctoral candidates should be aiming to submit their thesis within three years (including the period of provisional candidature leading up to confirmation) if enrolled full-time, or six years if part-time. Masters theses should be submitted within two years if enrolled full-time (four years if part-time).

3. The confirmation process described in the rest of this document relates only to PhD and masters candidates. The Doctor of Psychology program has a specific confirmation process – further information is available from the School of Psychology.

Confirmation requirements

4. Candidates must satisfy the following requirements:

    a) present to a confirmation panel (see composition below) a written document containing at least:

        i) a critical review of recent work in the field

        ii) an updated research proposal and/or research question

        iii) a statement about the status of any relevant ethics approvals and/or intellectual property agreements, including ownership, location and storage of data

        iv) if the project involves human research, a statement about compliance with Victorian and Commonwealth privacy law, including management of identifiable information

        v) an updated plan of research, including progress made to date

        vi) an updated timetable for completion of the thesis

        vii) a statement of the resources and facilities required to complete the project within the appropriate candidature period

        viii) a plan setting out the publications expected to be produced during candidature.

    b) deliver an oral presentation and verbal defence of the research proposal to the Confirmation Panel.

    c) completion of compulsory training in research integrity, either by attending a research integrity workshop conducted by Deakin Research or by completing the research integrity training module provided in Deakin Studies Online.

5. In the case of creative arts disciplines, the candidate should present to the panel for endorsement a proposal on an integrated format appropriate for a thesis of this nature. In the confirmation process a

weighting will be given to the written dissertation/exegesis and the creative work unless an alternative weighting is deemed appropriate as relevant to the discipline. The Faculty or Academic Unit will provide specific details to candidates on requirements.

6. Faculties and Academic units shall determine the specific requirements of oral presentations and written submissions. Oral presentations will typically be 20–30 minutes in length, but this time may vary between Schools. Written submissions are usually 10,000–15,000 words in length but may vary according to discipline-specific requirements. Written submissions should be provided to the panel members prior to the oral presentation (normally 2–3 weeks).

Panel composition

7. The panel shall typically be composed of the Head of School or Associate Head of School Research or nominee, School HDR coordinator, principal supervisor, associate supervisor[s], one or two senior researchers and an active researcher from outside the School. The panel will appoint a chair, normally the Head of School or Associate Head of School Research or nominee. Faculties and Academic Units may have other specific requirements and may modify the composition to suit discipline-specific requirements. However, it is important that candidates feel able to complete the confirmation process successfully. The panel composition and size should be carefully selected with due consideration of fairness and equity for the candidate.

Responsibilities of Faculties and Academic Units

8. This document presents a guideline of minimum expectations. Faculties and Academic units may have additional discipline-specific requirements which candidates will be expected to fulfill. Faculties and Academic units should ensure that staff and candidates adhere to University guidelines and minimum requirements and clearly communicate any specific requirements to them. The candidates should be clear on the objectives, the timelines, the process of confirmation and the consequences and procedures if not confirmed (see below). Candidates should be advised to discuss and prepare for confirmation in consultation with their supervisor(s). The process of confirmation is:

    a) the Chair of the Confirmation Panel will advise candidates of the membership of the panel, the date of the presentation and the details of the format of the presentation

    b) the panel will determine an outcome following the presentation and consideration of the written submission (and advise the Head of School of the recommendation if they were not a member of the panel)

    c) the chair will write to the candidate and inform them of the outcome. They will include a copy of the panel report and the candidate is required to acknowledge receipt to the Faculty or Academic Unit office. The Faculty or Academic Unit will keep a copy of the documentation and candidate's acknowledgement in the candidate's file

    d) the chair will also provide a copy of the report including the recommendation in relation to confirmation of candidature to Deakin Research, whether favorable or unfavorable. Deakin Research shall update the candidate’s file once the report and recommendation are received

    e) Faculties and Academic Units will advise internal School and Faculty committees, Associate Deans Research, HDR coordinators and research administration staff as is deemed relevant and appropriate.

Possible outcomes of the confirmation process

9. There are three possible outcomes of the initial confirmation process:

    a) candidature is confirmed and the candidate’s enrolment is converted to full candidature. Candidature may be confirmed ‘on the day’ or, if a small amount of additional work is required such as minor changes to the written document, the candidate would need to complete this to the satisfaction of the panel before candidature could be confirmed. In the latter case, there would be no need for a second meeting with the panel

b) candidature is not confirmed but candidates are given an opportunity to revise their work and submit to a second confirmation process. The panel will document any aspects that it considers were inadequate, and the updated confirmation document should address these aspects. The chair of the panel will determine details of the second-chance confirmation procedure and the candidate will be advised in writing. The candidate will normally be required to undergo the confirmation process again within three months. The panel may appoint an adviser to assist the candidate with preparation for the final submission to the confirmation panel

c) the confirmation panel deems that confirmation has not been completed satisfactorily.

10. At the conclusion of a second-chance confirmation process following outcome (b) on the first confirmation, outcomes (a) or (c) would be the only options available.

11. For candidates who do not satisfactorily complete the confirmation process (outcome c), possible options include:

    a) for provisional doctoral candidates, a transfer to masters by research candidature

    b) withdrawal from HDR candidature (possibly accompanied by enrolment in another course such as a coursework masters or graduate diploma)

    c) exclusion from candidature.

12. If the recommendation is that candidature should not be confirmed, the panel will discuss with the candidate the options available to them. If exclusion from candidature is recommended, the panel will make that recommendation to the Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor/Institute Director (or nominee), providing copies of earlier documentation and all correspondence relating to the candidate's confirmation. The candidate will be advised in writing and may show cause as why the proposed decision should not be implemented. The exclusion and appeals processes are outlined in the *Higher Degrees by Research Academic Progress Procedure*.

13. It is important that candidates are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the *Higher Degrees by Research Policy* and the associated procedures, and that the process for confirmation is conducted in a fair and equitable manner. Candidates can find relevant information on the web: *www.deakin.edu.au/research/admin/hdradmin/*

Overdue confirmation of candidature

14. Faculties and Academic Units are expected to ensure that the confirmation of candidature is completed by the candidate's deadline, and that Deakin Research is notified. Deakin Research must also be notified if there is expected to be any delay.