



## Review and Appeal of HDR Decisions Policy Policy UP18/4 (F18/3011)

Approver	Academic Board
Sponsor	Chair of the Academic Board
Owner	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training)
Secretary	Academic Secretary
Policy Type	Academic
Policy Category	Academic Governance

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy outlines the principles for review and appeal of HDR (Higher Degree by Research) decisions managed by the Graduate Research School.

### 2 Definitions

In this policy and any associated procedures,

**Head of School** includes any person acting in the capacity of head of school or authorised by the head of school to deal with a particular matter.

**HDR academic decision** means a decision made with respect to management or administration of the candidate's HDR course, normally under the University's statutes, regulations, rules or policy.

**HDRCC** means the Higher Degree by Research Candidature Committee, a standing committee of the Board of the Graduate Research School with delegated authority to make decisions in regards to candidature

**HDR candidate** means a person enrolled in a HDR course of the University, that is managed by the Graduate Research School, including candidates who are undertaking a PhD jointly with another institution or in conjunction with a course for another award.

**the Board** refers to the Board of the Graduate Research School.

**the University** refers to The University of Western Australia, and any and all subsidiary or associated entities

**University working day** means a weekday other than one that is specified as a University holiday.

### 3 Scope

- 3.1 The scope of this policy applies to all HDR candidates and units managing reviews and appeals.  
3.2 This policy applies where a candidate is seeking a review of an academic decision unless another review process as set out in the Regulations for Student Conduct takes precedence.

### 4 General principles

- 4.1 The University is committed to conducting reviews and appeals of decisions in a fair, transparent and respectful manner that remains consistent with University rules, policies and procedures.  
4.2 Candidates remain bound by the effect of the original decision while a review or appeal is being undertaken.  
4.3 A request for a review of any decision specified in this policy must be initiated by the candidate in accordance with the time limits and requirements outlined in **Schedule A**.  
4.4 The demonstrable grounds underpinning a review or an appeal of a decision is evidence-based.  
4.5 A candidate has the right to be accompanied by a support person to any meetings requested as part of the review/appeal process.  
4.6 A review/appeal of a decision may lead to no change or to either a less favorable or more favorable outcome for the candidate.  
4.7 The following circumstances are not grounds for review/appeal of HDR decisions:  
(a) A candidate's disagreement with academic judgement;  
(b) A candidate's disagreement with a University rule, policy or procedure.  
4.8 A completed review must precede a request for an appeal to the University Appeals Committee, which is a committee of the Academic Board.  
4.9 A request for a review may be declined by the Graduate Research School in the following circumstances:  
(a) where the review request is not submitted within the stated period as prescribed in Schedule A;  
(b) where the review request is made on grounds other than those specified in Schedule A.  
4.10 A decision to decline the request for a review/appeal in circumstances referred to in 4.9 is final.

## 5 Specific principles – Management of HDR Candidature

- 5.1 A candidate may request a review of their candidature relating to:
- management of enrolment and candidature status;
  - a decision to not Confirm Candidature;
  - a determination of unsatisfactory progress.
- 5.2 For a progress status to be amended following a review, the Board or the University Appeals Committee must be satisfied that:
- the relevant rule, policy or process was not followed; or
  - the decision reached was unfair; or
  - additional information has become available that merits a different decision; and
  - the request by the candidate can be accommodated, including, for example, that appropriate supervision and resources are available.

## 6 Specific principles – Thesis classification and examination

- 6.1 A candidate whose thesis and/or other research output has been classified by the HDRCC may request a review of their classification if they are of the view that the examination and classification were conducted other than according to the relevant rules, policies and procedures or were otherwise unfair.
- 6.2 The following circumstances are not considered grounds for review for thesis classification and examination:
- perceived shortcomings in supervision or support, or any other matters not directly related to the examination and classification process;
  - matters of academic judgement of examiners, the HDRCC or the Board, including the candidate's view that the classification unfairly reflects the merit of their work or demonstrated ability.

## 7 Specific Principles - Award and management of scholarships

- 7.1 An applicant may only request a review of or appeal against a decision by the Higher Degree by Research Scholarships Committee to not award a scholarship on the grounds that the Committee's procedures for the assessment of the application have not been observed. A review/appeal based on any other grounds, including the quality of the application or the academic record of the applicant, is not considered.
- 7.2 A candidate may only request a review of or appeal against a decision by the Graduate Research School to suspend or terminate a scholarship on the grounds that the decision to suspend or terminate was not consistent with the Conditions of the scholarship.
- 7.3 The review and appeal process referred to in this policy do not apply to scholarships that are not controlled by the University.

## 8 Right of Appeal

- 8.1 A review of an academic decision precedes a candidate's right to appeal.
- 8.2 Subject to 8.1, an appeal on any academic decision specified in this policy is considered by the University Appeals Committee of the Academic Board and is administered in accordance with **Schedule B**.
- 8.3 The Chair of the Appeals Committee has delegated authority to:
- progress an appeal to the University Appeals Committee for a hearing at which the appellant, who may be accompanied by a support person, is asked to present their case;
  - summarily dismiss an appeal if the:
    - appeal is made on grounds other than those specified in **Schedule B**;
    - review process specified in this policy and in the schedule has not taken place; or
    - appeal is considered to be frivolous or vexatious;
  - explore other means of resolution in cases where an agreeable negotiated solution is regarded as likely and/or a hearing by the Committee is regarded as disproportionate in time and cost.
- 8.4 The decision of the University Appeals Committee is final within the University, noting that:
- the candidate does not have any further recourse relating to the outcome of the appeal to any authority within the University; and
  - the University does not engage in any further communication with the candidate or supporters on matters germane to the appeal unless required by any subsequent external process.
- 8.5 A candidate who is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal may refer their case for consideration by an external body (such as the [Ombudsman Western Australia](#)).

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