

Higher Degree Research Admissions Policy

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1. PURPOSE

The Australian National Institute of Management and Commerce (IMC) is committed to upholding high educational standards. A key element of maintaining the integrity of academic courses and qualifications is the standards applied to admission of students.

This policy provides information on the specific standards that apply to the admission of Higher Degree Research Students. It is supplementary to IMC's *Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedures* and *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy*.

2. SCOPE

This policy document applies to general admission requirements for domestic and international applicants to IMC's Higher Degree Research programs.

3. DEFINITIONS

Admission includes procedures and processes involved in the application and approval to undertake a course of study.

ESOS is the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 and supporting legislation.

Higher Degree Research (HDR) include Masters' Degree (Research) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

Higher Degree, Research and Scholarships Committee (HDRSC) is a managerial body responsible for IMC's higher degree research programs oversight and other research and scholarly activities.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Principles

- Admission decisions are made according to the likelihood of the candidate achieving the outcomes of the program. Students are admitted to HDR programs when the HDRSC judges that there is a reasonable expectation of success based upon a consideration of demonstrated ability and commitment.
- Students are only admitted to programs when IMC is able to provide the supervision and resources required for prospective research projects. Admission decisions take into account the suitability of research areas to the general research activities and areas of inquiry conducted at IMC and the potential contribution of projects to the achievement of strategic objectives.
- Assessment of applications is fair, equitable and conducted according to relevant policies and procedures. An applicant has a right to make an appeal as per the procedures outlined in *Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedure*.

4.2 Admission Requirements – Academic Qualifications

For admission to Higher Degree Research programs an applicant must provide evidence that the applicant is a graduate of an Australian university or higher education institute or an equivalent standard international university. It is expected that prior learning will have occurred within the previous ten years and be in the same or a related discipline area as the proposed research.

Required academic qualifications are as follows.

Masters' Degree (Research)

- A Bachelor's degree majoring in a relevant discipline related to the intended research and in which the applicant has achieved a Distinction grade average in the final year of their study; or
- A Bachelor's degree majoring in a relevant discipline related to the intended research and in which the applicant has achieved a Credit grade average in the final year of their study may qualify for entry to the Graduate Certificate in Business Research with subsequent progression to the Master's degree if successful; or
- A Bachelor Honours degree (first or second class) in a relevant discipline related to the intended research; or
- A Graduate Diploma degree or a Masters' degree of at least 2 semester's full time duration in a relevant discipline related to the intended research.
- In exceptional circumstances evidence of possessing other academic or professional qualifications and or experience may be approved by the Chair of the HDRSC on the recommendation of the Dean of the relevant School.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

- Master of Business Research from IMC or equivalent; or
- The equivalent of a three-year undergraduate degree plus an equivalent postgraduate degree in a relevant discipline with an overall average grade of at least 75 in the final year of their study; or
- The equivalent of multiple undergraduate degrees (e.g. a dual degree) with at least one in a relevant discipline or degree and an overall average grade of at least 75 in the final year of their study (Distinction)
- The equivalent of a four-year degree of Bachelor with first or upper second-class Honours in a relevant discipline; or
- Enrolled in the IMC Master of Business Research program and shown exceptional ability in the conduct of a research project which is clearly capable of being extended to a doctoral level as demonstrated in a formal PhD proposal defence.

Note that prior qualifications which meet the above standards will need to have been completed within the past five calendar years. In addition, demonstration of research experience by publication, previous work experience or related coursework may also be taken into consideration.

4.3 Alternative Admissions

IMC recognises that some applicants may have qualifications and/or experience that do not guarantee them entry to Higher Degree Research programs under the normal admission requirements. In such instances, after examining the provision of a strong, clear and substantiated case in writing from the applicant outlining research experience including outputs such as refereed publications, commissioned reports, and other substantial professional or government publications an applicant may be admitted.

The case submitted for consideration must demonstrate that qualifications, research experience and outputs equate to the equivalent of academic requirements as per AQF specifications. To establish equivalence, there must be evidence of comparable learning outcomes including specialised knowledge and skills for research, and/or professional practice and/or further learning.

IMC will provide flexibility in their HDR training pathways to support students from a diversity of backgrounds to receive adequate preparation for HDR training. IMC will also endeavour to engage in greater business-research collaboration and increase the levels of HDR student engagement with industry.

4.4 Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

Prior Higher Degree Research may be recognised towards the HDR program so long as it has not been previously recognised for another award and it has been completed at the same AQF level. Consideration and decisions of recognition of prior research will be made by the HDRSC on a case by case basis.

Advanced Standing of up to 24 credit points may be awarded for the coursework components of a Higher Degree Research to students who have, at other approved institutions of higher education, completed relevant subjects at an appropriate standard as assessed by the HDRSC. Refer to the *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy* for general information regarding the application of RPL at IMC.

4.5 Other Admission Requirements

4.5.1 Applicants must submit an outline research proposal in which they present a summary of their proposed area of research, identify research questions, and outline why they are interested in this area and how they might undertake the research. This outline proposal will be used by the HDRSC to determine if IMC has appropriate staff to supervise in the proposed area of research and to allocate appropriate supervisors to successful candidates.

4.5.2 Applicants are required to demonstrate competency in English by providing evidence of one or more of the following:

- a) completion of one or more degrees with English as the language of instruction and assessment, and undertaken in a predominantly English-speaking context, or
- b) have an overall band score of not less than 6.5 in an International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) test with no individual band score below 6.0, or other equivalent English language proficiency testing system.

4.6 Admission Conditions

- Supervision and Facilities - Admission to candidature will only be approved when the necessary facilities are available to support the applicant's research, and when a principal supervisor and co-supervisors have been allocated to the candidate.
- Duration of Candidature – There must be confirmation that applicants are capable of completing candidature within the specified maximum duration. The normal period for candidature for a Masters' Degree is two years full-time or equivalent part time. The normal period for candidature for a PhD Degree is a minimum of three years full-time or equivalent part time. Under ESOS legislation an International student must complete within the expected duration of their Confirmation of Enrolment.
- The HDRSC may refuse admission even if an applicant meets admission requirements. Refusal may be based upon factors such as: the quality of the student submission; availability of adequate supervision and resources; and suitability of the proposed research topic. The HDRSC is also authorised to prescribe additional requirements and to give conditional approval with the completion of specified requirements.
- All candidates admitted to HDR programs are subject to the confirmation of candidature and progress reviews policies and procedures.

4.7 Application and Admission Processes

Potential applicants should in the first instance contact the Dean to express their interest in applying for a HDR program. Any particular requirements to the application process will be specified and guidance provided prior to the application being completed. Other than these requirements, relevant information on processes for application is provided in the *Student Selection and Admissions Policy and procedure*. Processes described in that policy that are relevant to HDR program applications include: applying for admission; acceptance of offers; and appeals. Information regarding selection processes that are particular to HDR applications is outlined previously in this policy.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- i. Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedure*
- ii. Recognition of Prior Learning Policy*
- iii. Higher Degree Research Confirmation of Candidature and Progression Review Policy and Procedure*
- iv. Higher Degree, Research and Scholarships Committee Terms of Reference*
- v. Guidelines on Minimum Resources for Higher Degree Research Students*

6. VERSION CONTROL

Historical Version	Approved by	Approval Date
2013.12	Academic Board	19 December 2013