Instructions for Higher Degree by Research Applicants

This form should be completed by people wishing to apply for:

- Admission to Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidature; and/or
- Postgraduate Research Scholarships at USC
- For further information, please refer to the [Higher Degrees by Research Candidature – Procedures](#) and the [Higher Degrees by Research Admission and Enrolment – Guidelines](#) which include admission pathways into specific higher degree by research programs.
- Applications that do not include the required information as described in these instructions will be deemed ineligible and will not be progressed.

1. Preparing your application:
   - Please complete the form electronically, DO NOT hand write or print your application.
   - You must complete questions 1-9, and appendices A-D (Academic Background, Research Alignment, Research Publications and Relevant Research Experience)
   - For assistance to set up a digital signature, follow the on screen prompts or visit this [YouTube link on Creating a digital Signature for PDF documents](#)
   - Gather your supporting documentation. In most cases this will include academic transcripts and may also include evidence of research publications. Applicants from a Non-English speaking background must attach original* evidence of proficiency in English.
   - Submit the completed electronic form with your digital signature, including scanned copies supporting documents to researchtraining@usc.edu.au. You must also submit (in person or by post) original or [certified copies](#) of your supporting documents to:

   Research Training Administrator
   Office of Research – ML 26
   University of the Sunshine Coast
   Maroochydore DC QLD 4558 Australia

   * Where original documents are not provided by the test provider, applicants must be able to verify results online.

2. Which program?
   See our web site for a [full list of HDR programs](#) available at USC.

3. Which School and Supervisor?
   You can leave this question blank if you’re not sure which School you should be enrolled in, or who your Supervisors might be. Candidates are usually enrolled in the same School that their Principal Supervisor belongs to.

   You can look for a potential supervisor in your area of research through the [Research Supervisor Search](#) tool. For assistance locating a suitable supervisor please contact your faculty:
   FABinfo@usc.edu.au or SHEinfo@usc.edu.au

4. Which mode of study?
   Full-time candidates should be prepared to spend at least 40 hours per week working on their higher degree by research. To maintain full-time study mode, candidates should not spend more than 18 hours in paid employment. A doctoral degree will take between 3-4 years to complete full-time, and a Master by Research degree will take 1.5-2 years.
Part-time HDR candidates should be prepared to spend at least 20 hours per week working on their higher degree by research. Part-time study mode is appropriate for candidates who are also working full-time, or have other commitments that prevent them from committing to full-time study. A doctoral degree will take between 6-8 years to complete full-time, and a Master by Research degree will take 3-4 years.

5. Transferring candidature from another Australian university to USC?
If you are transferring your HDR candidature from another Australian institution to USC, you must include a statement from your current institution detailing the:
- HDR candidature consumed to date
- Tuition fee type
- Probationary or confirmed candidature status

6. Research Scholarships
Visit the USC website to review the available postgraduate research scholarships
- Candidates must indicate which scholarship(s) they wish to apply for in order to be considered.
- Only applications received during an advertised scholarship round can be considered for scholarship.
- If you are transferring an incomplete higher degree by research to USC and you have previously received a research scholarship, you must provide details of this scholarship.

7. Required Information
Respond to each question as appropriate.

8. English Proficiency (Applicants from a non-English speaking background only)
Visit the website to review USC’s English language requirements. Some disciplines may require a higher level of English language proficiency, as provided in the Higher Degree by Research Admission and Enrolment – Guidelines.
- Applicants must attach original* supporting documentation demonstrating their English proficiency to their application, e.g. IELTS or TOEFL test results. Test results must not be more than two years old at the time of application submission. Certified copies of IELTS are not accepted.

* Where original documents are not provided by the test provider, applicants must be able to verify results online.

9. Statement by applicant
Read the statement thoroughly and tick the boxes to indicate that you have read and understand the statement. Sign your application using digital signature.
- For assistance to set up a digital signature, follow the on screen prompts or visit this YouTube link on Creating a digital Signature for PDF documents
Appendix A – Academic Background

You must attach to Appendix A original or certified copies of academic transcripts as evidence of your academic background. **Applications will not be considered if certified copies are not provided.**

- Detail your achievement in your undergraduate study, and any postgraduate qualifications (e.g. Bachelor Honours, Graduate Certificate/Diploma, Master by coursework, or Master by Research degree). Include details such as:
  - Grade Point Average (GPA) or equivalent (e.g. 6.4/7 to demonstrate the GPA is expressed on a seven point scale);
  - Other achievements such as awards or scholarships you received

Appendix B – Research Focus

Areas of research:

Please insert the appropriate codes for this section. Failure to do so will result in your application being deemed ineligible. Your supervisor is the best person to guide you if are unsure of which codes are relevant to your proposed research.

- Visit the Australian Bureau of Statistics webpage for available Field of Education codes
- Drill down to a six digit code (narrow field)
- If your research is aligned to one of USC’s Research Centres, Groups or Clusters, please indicate in the section provided.

Research Outline:

- This is an early outline of your research project. It is expected to be brief (maximum 3 pages) and to be open to some change. It should, however, demonstrate that you know what you want to research, why, and how.
- Producing this Research Outline should enable you and your supervisor to be specific about your research project and to convince the Research Degrees Committee that you have clear and realistic ideas about the project, and that the Faculty has sufficient expertise to provide you with appropriate supervision and adequate resources to support your work.

The following areas should be addressed within your outline of intended research:

**PROPOSED TITLE**

Provide a short descriptive title. Avoid the use of acronyms, quotation marks and upper case characters (up to 20 words)

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED RESEARCH**

Using plain language, summarise aims, significance and expected outcomes (up to 400 words)

**THE RELEVANT RESEARCH LITERATURE**

Brief discussion of some of the main ideas in this literature relevant to the proposed research (up to 600 words)
THE METHODOLOGIES AND METHODS TO BE USED IN THE RESEARCH

Provide the recognised approach to research (i.e. methodology, such as ethnography, experimental research, grounded theory, action research). Provide a summary of the research design that will be used to address the stated research questions. Include a brief description of the methods, including statistical analysis where appropriate. Consider attaching your own Gant chart to map out the timelines for your proposed research (up to 500 words).

RESOURCES REQUIRED TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH

Provide a brief description of the resources required to conduct the research (e.g. computing requirements, lab space, consumables, survey instruments, field trips and other equipment as indicated in the research proposal).

Appendix C – Research Publications

In this section, provide details of publications you have authored or co-authored (i.e. abstract in English, details of publication and copy of the front page).

- Where publications are co-authored, candidates must include a statement of contribution to the work (e.g. 20%). In cases where the applicant is not the primary author, a statement of contribution signed by the primary author must also be provided via email.
- A publication must be accepted by the journal for publication prior to the application closing date (to be considered for the purpose of scholarship application assessment). Publications submitted but not yet accepted cannot be considered.
- If sufficient evidence of a publication is not provided (abstract or first page or publication, and a statement of contribution signed by the primary author where applicable), the publication will not be considered for assessment of your application.

Appendix D – Relevant Research Experience (if relevant)

- Briefly summarise the research projects you have undertaken (include when, and the name of the organisation where the research was conducted).
- Briefly summarise your experience working in the field relevant to your proposed research project.
- Briefly summarise the outputs achieved from these projects (publications should appear in Appendix C, but here you might include the impact of your research to relevant stakeholders).
- Scholarship applicants should include a research or technical report/s, a portfolio of publications or a creative arts folio from a major research project undertaken during relevant employment.

Appendix D – Research Experience Verification Form (scholarship applicants only)

- If you are applying for a postgraduate research scholarship, evidence of your research experience must be demonstrated by a Research Experience Verification Form (REVF).
- You must send the REVF to your nominated supervisor/colleague, ask them to complete and return it directly to the Office of Research.
- It is up to the applicant to follow up with their nominated REVF providers to ensure that their forms are submitted to the Office of Research by the closing date for the relevant scholarship.