



WELCOME TO
HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Master of Philosophy (MPhil)



**AVONDALE
RESEARCHERS**

here for good

HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH AT AVONDALE

Congratulations on being accepted into Higher Degree Research (HDR) at Avondale. We hope the next few years will be both rewarding and challenging as you work towards your thesis submission.

This guide will provide you with information on what to expect, and helpful hints and tips to succeed in your research.

Research Services Office

The Research Services Office provides support and assistance to students completing research degrees and is located on the top floor of Bethel Hall.

☎ +61 4980 2121 | ✉ researchoffice@avondale.edu.au

Supervisors

Your team of supervisors will be crucial to completing your research degree. It is recommended that you meet with them regularly, either in person, via Skype (or similar), by email or by telephone. Establish good habits early on and be sure to talk to your supervisors about your expectations and goals relating to your research. Keep in mind that many supervisors take holidays over the year-end. They will inform you of their availability, and most are contactable again as of February.

Email

Upon acceptance into your degree, you will be provided with an Avondale email account. While the Research Services Office will send emails to your private account, other correspondence from Avondale would usually be sent to this account so be sure to check it regularly.

Enrolment

You will also be issued with a username and password for Student Connect. Each semester you will need to enrol in the appropriate unit for your course before the deadline. Enrolment deadlines are listed on the Academic Calendar and are best avoided as late fees may apply. The Research Services Office can assist with details on which unit you should enrol in.

HDR Student Support Site

You will be enrolled in the Researcher's Little Helper site in Moodle ([Avondale Online Learning](#)). This site will provide you with access to relevant forms, policies, resources and other important information. Please ensure you are familiar with it.

Library

Information can be found under [Library](#) on the website.

Scholar Centre

The [Scholar Center](#) is located in the Lake Macquarie Campus Library. This 24/7 access area is designed for HDR students and visiting scholars.

Research Training Support Framework

The [Research Training Support Framework](#) is a helpful web page that will provide links to policies, procedures and guidelines relating to your research degree.

CASTL

The Centre for Advancement of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) holds and facilitates useful seminars, workshops and other events for HDR students. You will receive emails about these events.

Tuition Fee-Waiver Scholarships

A limited number of tuition fee-waiver scholarships are available to domestic students.

Allocation of these scholarships is subject to the following:

- Availability of funding
- Ability of the student to complete the degree within stated timeframes
- Satisfactory progress as demonstrated in the Progress Reports

Students wishing to be considered for a tuition fee-waiver scholarship should email the Research Services Office.

Note: Fee-waiver scholarships do not cover non-tuition costs such as parking and SSAF fees.

Progress Reports

Every six months (full-time students) or twelve months (part-time students) you will be required to submit a Progress Report indicating how you are progressing with your research and whether you require assistance. They are separated into three parts:

Part A – student completes and submits

Part B – supervisor completes and submits

Part C – student completes with supervisor and then submits

Forms are completed online, and the Research Services Office will email a link to you. Submission dates are 30 April and 30 September each year.

You are NOT required to submit a report if:

- you are in the first semester of your research degree
- you are on intermission
- you have submitted your thesis and are waiting on examiner reports

Allowable Time & Intermission

The allowable time for your research degree is listed in the table below:

Course	Full time study		Part time study	
MPhil	Min 2 semesters	Max 6 semesters	Min 4 semesters	Max 12 semesters
PhD	Min 6 semesters	Max 12 semesters	Min 12 semesters	Max 16 semesters

If you upgrade from an MPhil to a PhD, your allowable time begins at the start of your MPhil.

Should you need a break from your study, you can complete an [Intermission/Withdrawal From Course Form](#) and submit it to the Research Services Office (instructions are on the form). You can take a maximum of 12 months leave. This will pause your allowable time duration for the period of intermission.

Further details can be found in the relevant policy:

[A 43 Course Intermission Policy v1 30 July 2014.pdf](#)

Ethics

Human Research

If your research involves human participants, it must be reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and must not be undertaken until approval has been granted.

There are two types of ethics proposals:

- **Low-Risk applications**
These applications can be approved by the HREC Chair, the HREC Secretary, and one other member of the committee
- **High-Risk applications**
These applications must be approved by the entire HREC

More information regarding ethics and the Human Research Ethics Committee can be found on the website under [Ethics Approval](#).

Please note that it is important to discuss the ethics of your study with your supervisor.

Animal Research

Avondale is accredited by the NSW Department of Primary Industries as an animal research establishment. The Animal Research Ethics function is administered under an auspice arrangement with the University of Newcastle.

YOUR DEGREE MILSTONES

Confirmation

Confirmation should take place between nine and twelve months after you begin your degree. Your supervisors will assist with the preparation of your final proposal and will notify the Research Services Office when you are ready for confirmation so that a Confirmation Panel can be organised (six weeks' notice is required). A copy of your final proposal must be uploaded to Turnitin before being submitted (with the Turnitin report) to the Research Services Office in pdf format a week before the Confirmation Panel.

You will present your final written proposal to the Confirmation Panel. This presentation will be followed by questions from the panel regarding your proposal. The purpose of this process is to support students in the early stage of candidature, ensuring the direction of their research is sound and the standard of academic writing is at the appropriate level. Any difficulties that may impede successful completion are identified at this point, along with recommendations for their remedy. The policy below offers further details.

[Doctor of Philosophy and Research Masters Degrees: Guidelines for Confirmation of Candidature \[AR.13\]](#)

After confirmation, you will move from provisional candidature to full candidature.

Upgrading from MPhil to PhD

The decision to upgrade must be made in consultation with your supervisors, and may be achieved in one of the following ways:

1. Combined confirmation upgrade at the time of your confirmation – writing and research must be at PhD level
2. Post-confirmation – you would go through a similar process to confirmation in order to show your work is at an appropriate standard

Thesis Submission

Thesis style guide

A thesis style guide and template are available on Researcher's Little Helper to ensure your thesis is written in the correct format.

Intention to Submit

When you are ready to submit your thesis for marking, you will need to complete an *Intention to Submit* form with your supervisor. The form

should be emailed to the Research Services Office at least three months prior to the expected submission date of your thesis.

Copy-editing

At the completion of your thesis, and with the approval of your supervisor, the Research Services Office will arrange for your thesis to be sent to a copy-editor (allow for two weeks' notice prior to submission).

The thesis will be returned to you (usually within a two-week timeframe) in order for appropriate changes to be made in consultation with your supervisor/s.

Turnitin Check

Your thesis must be submitted through Turnitin (found in Researcher's Little Helper). This provides a report regarding potential plagiarism.

Submission

The thesis should also be submitted to the Research Services Office in pdf format.

Examination

Your thesis will be examined by three external examiners who are experts in your area of study. At least one of these examiners will be international. The examiners will take up to two months to mark your thesis. There are several grades that the examiners can award. Refer to the policy for more details.

[Thesis Examination Guidelines \[AR.15\]](#)

Responding to examiners

You will be required to complete the response section of the *Examiner Summary & Student Response* document in collaboration with your supervisor, and edit your thesis appropriately.

Submission to the Library

After your thesis is finalised and the *Examiner Summary & Student Response* document signed off, it will go to the Research Committee for recommendation and Academic Board for approval. If approval is granted, your thesis must then be submitted to the library. This is the final step and makes you eligible for graduation.

[Thesis Deposit and Access Policy \[AR.03\]](#)

Graduation

Graduation occurs in December every year. Details are sent from the Academic Office to student email accounts.

HELPFUL PEOPLE TO KNOW

Research Services Office

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Dr Steve Currow

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Library Services

02 4980 2257 Lake Macquarie

02 9480 3636 Sydney

Student Services

[Chaplains](#)

[Counselling](#)

[Equity & Disability](#)

[Indigenous Student Support](#)