



HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Governing Policy

[Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#)

Purpose

This procedure outlines the responsibilities, guidelines, and process for Higher Degrees by Research Courses, in addition to the Master of Management (MMgt) and Graduate Certificate in Research Methodologies (GCRM) as Research pathway Courses, for AIB Staff, Supervisors, applicants and Candidates. To provide best practice supervision and research management, MMgt Candidates are supported by AIB HDR processes.

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Definitions

Unless otherwise defined in this document, all capitalised terms are defined in the [glossary](#).

Procedure

1. Becoming a Candidate

- 1.1. Applicants interested in applying to a AIB Higher Degrees by Research Course or a Research Pathway Course will be subject to the admission process conducted in accordance with the AIB Admission Policy and Procedure.
- 1.2. Continuation of the Candidature is subject to satisfactory annual review as outlined in section 9 of this HDR Procedure.
- 1.3. Candidates who receive a scholarship must meet all the course milestone requirements and their annual reports must demonstrate timely progression in line with sections 8 and 9 of this HDR Procedure.

2. Research Leadership and Supervisory Panel Responsibilities

- 2.1. Research leadership is undertaken by the following defined roles:
 - (a) Associate Dean, Research
 - (b) Research Coordinator
 - (c) Principal and Associate Supervisors.
- 2.2. The Associate Dean, Research's key responsibilities include but are not limited to:
 - maintenance of a register of Supervisors, their Research activity and continued eligibility to supervise.
 - ensuring appropriate appointments in each Research Supervisory Panel and reporting them to the Research & Higher Degrees Committee.
 - identifying strategies to support Candidates and/or Supervisors to support academic progression.
 - receiving and managing confidential feedback from Candidates and/or Supervisors to identify and address potential issues or problems as early as possible.
- 2.3. The Research Coordinator's key responsibilities include but are not limited to:
 - responding to enquiries from potential Candidates.
 - identifying and recommending appropriate Supervisors for Candidates.
 - being the designated official point of contact for the Candidate.
 - addressing student enquiries, supported by the Research Administration Officer.
 - managing processes through the Candidate life-cycle.
- 2.4. Research Supervisory Panels are responsible for supervising the Candidate in line with AIB Supervisor Guidelines; key duties include but are not limited to:
 - guiding, providing feedback, and developing Research excellence and professionalism in the Candidate towards the successful completion of the Research Degree.

- regular communication between the Supervisors and the Candidate throughout their entire Candidature including any periods of absence.
- designing a sound Research proposal, a comprehensive Research plan and monitoring Candidate performance in the conduct of the Research relative to meeting the agreed thesis milestones and timely completion of progression reports.
- monitoring the standard of work required for the HDR Course.
- ensuring the Research progresses at a pace that is achievable within the allowed timeframes and that it makes a substantial contribution to new knowledge within the discipline.
- developing a publication and conference plan for dissemination of Research findings.
- providing advice on the acquisition of a range of Research and other skills as appropriate to the discipline and the background of the Candidate.
- ensuring that the Candidate has a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities and the expectations of the Research Supervisory Panel.
- identifying strategies to support the Candidate if at risk of not making satisfactory academic progress (i.e. not meeting the required course milestones as per the Research Candidate Handbook).
- notification of Research related opportunities and events run by AIB.
- advising the Candidate on wellbeing and safety support services available at AIB.
- adhering to the AIB's policies and procedures supporting Research, supervision and Research Training.

Specifically, and in addition to the above:

- (a) The Principal Supervisor is primarily responsible for the supervisory duties outlined above and in particular:
 - Coordinating and keeping records of regular communication between the Supervisors, the Candidate, and the Research Coordinator for resolving any issues.
 - Providing appropriate guidance for the Candidate to develop an ethics proposal for their Research.
 - Monitoring and reporting on the Candidate's progress and making recommendations on Course milestones.
- (b) Associate Supervisors are responsible for:
 - Supporting the Principal Supervisor and replacing them as Principal Supervisor if they are absent from AIB for a period no longer than six weeks.

3. Candidate Responsibilities

- 3.1. Candidates are responsible for demonstrating a professional attitude towards the Research.

- 3.2. Candidates must complete induction and orientation within four weeks from the commencement of the Course.
- 3.3. Candidates are responsible for understanding the requirements of candidature as outlined in the Research Candidate Handbook and AIB policies and procedures.
- 3.4. Candidate's Research output must be their own work with any contributions by other people clearly stated in the Research thesis/project, and any Research must be conducted ethically and in accordance with the Research and Scholarship Policy and Procedure, Research Integrity Breach Management Procedure, and [Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure](#).
- 3.5. PhD Candidates' thesis must make a significant and original contribution to knowledge; DBA Candidates' thesis must make a significant and original contribution to knowledge in the context of professional practice; Outputs from the MMgt project must be contributing to the development of the field of research and/or practice.
- 3.6. Candidates must play an active part in maintaining regular contact with Supervisors, ensuring an appropriate schedule of meetings to discuss progress, identify issues and seek appropriate guidelines.
- 3.7. Candidates are expected to maintain satisfactory progress and meet relevant academic Course milestones as per AIB Research Candidate Handbook. Failure to make satisfactory progress may lead to the Candidate being asked to show cause why their Candidature should not be terminated or, if appropriate, transferred to another Candidature.
- 3.8. Candidates are expected to engage in collegial and professional development opportunities made available by AIB, and more broadly within their field.

4. Supervision and Appointment of Supervisors

4.1. Appointment of Supervisors

- (b) Supervisors will be appointed during the application phase, under advisement of the Research Admissions Committee, and will be formalised on admission. The Candidate and Supervisors must all agree to the appointments.
- (c) AIB works with the applicant to agree to a minimum of two Supervisors (a Principal and Associate Supervisor) who will meet the Research needs of the Candidate and have the appropriate skill sets to enable the Research thesis/project and the Course to be completed in a timely manner and is of sufficient quality.
- (d) The skill set AIB seeks in the Supervisors for a Candidate, through their qualifications and experience, is two-fold. The primary skill is in mentoring Candidates through a high-quality Research thesis/project process, including: development of a value-added Research proposal; sound, relevant and valid data collection and analysis; and communication of findings through a thesis. The primary skill is supported by expert in-depth knowledge of the underlying disciplines of the Research, and the skill to

assist Candidates to identify gaps in relevant theory and application knowledge.

- (e) Principal Supervisors must be an AIB academic staff member. AIB has a core of part-time and full-time academic staff and Research advisors who may be appointed as Principal Supervisors. To cover facilitation and transdisciplinary needs AIB has a list of available and approved affiliate staff who may be Associate Supervisors.
- (f) If a Supervisor ceases to be an AIB academic staff member, and if it is considered to be in the best interest of the Candidate, AIB has the discretion to retain them as a Supervisor under either:
 - an adjunct appointment; or
 - a formal contract under which they are accountable to AIB for supervisory duties.
- (g) Research Supervisory Panels may also include external end-user advisors as appropriate for the Research Degree Candidate's discipline and project. External end-user advisors are not necessarily Researchers. They provide advice and expertise together with access to end-user resources and research settings which are complementary to those provided by AIB and its Supervisors. Their role is thus complementary to that of a Candidate's academic Supervisors. Advisors are not included on the supervision register.
- (h) To be considered for a Supervisor role, potential Supervisors must meet the academic and Research eligibility requirements. Research Supervisors will have a Research Doctorate degree, or equivalence as approved by the Academic Dean in accordance with the Policy for Determining the Equivalence of Professional Experience and Academic Qualifications, in order to supervise a Candidate and must have relevant Research experience in the Candidate's field of Research.
 - (i) Principal Supervisors must be Research Active as per the Research and Scholarship Policy, and have appropriate experience in Research supervision (e.g. have sat on at least one HDR supervisory panel to completion) and/or have completed AIB Supervisor Training, as approved by the Associate Dean, Research.
 - (ii) Associate Supervisors must be Research Active as per the Research and Scholarship Policy or have appropriate expertise as approved by the Associate Dean, Research. Staff who do not have previous experience of supervision are required to gain experience by acting as Associate Supervisors with an experienced colleague, and/or to undertake AIB Supervisor Training.

4.2. Supervision

- (a) Although the Supervisors have joint responsibility to supervise the Candidate for the duration of Candidature, the Principal Supervisor has the main responsibility of coordinating and recording communication between the Supervisors and the Candidate, and for resolving any issues.
- (b) Supervisors must fulfil their responsibilities as detailed in the AIB Supervisor Guidelines, paying attention to the duties specified for the various phases of Candidature, i.e. before Candidature, during Candidature and towards the end of Candidature.

- (c) Regular contact should be maintained between Candidates and their Supervisors by appropriate means of communication, for academic supervision, guidance, and academic support and feedback. Detailed contact requirements are outlined in the AIB Supervisor Guidelines.
- (d) Candidates requiring non-academic wellbeing or special needs support should be referred to AIB's central services in accordance with Student Support Policy and Procedure.
- (e) Where it is anticipated that a Candidate's Principal Supervisor will be absent or where a Principal Supervisor is unexpectedly absent from duties contracted through AIB for more than six weeks, the Research Coordinator will, during that period, appoint a temporary replacement Principal Supervisor until a replacement Principal Supervisor is appointed.
- (f) The Research Coordinator will, after consultation with the Candidate, appoint a permanent replacement Principal Supervisor where:
 - (i) The Candidate's experience will be adversely impacted if the original Principal Supervisor is no longer employed with AIB; or
 - (ii) There is a change in the Candidate's Research thesis such that a different Principal Supervisor would be more appropriate; or
 - (iii) Irreconcilable differences between the Candidate and the Principal Supervisor require a change in supervision arrangements.
- (g) Supervisors should support or liaise Candidates with appropriate support to ensure understanding of AIB policies and procedures.
- (h) In the case of an issue between a Candidate and any member of the Research Supervisory Panel:
 - (i) the Candidate should try to resolve the issue with the members of the Research Supervisory Panel first.
 - (ii) If unable to do so, the Candidate should contact the Research Coordinator or nominee to assist in reaching an informal resolution.
 - (iii) If there is no resolution to the issue, after following the process described in Section 4.2.(h) (i) and (ii), complainants may submit a formal grievance as set out in the [Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy and Procedure](#). An alternative Supervisor should be appointed to the Candidate in the interim.
- (i) Supervision load limits:
 - (i) Principal and associate supervisors will be limited to a supervisory load not exceeding five full-time equivalent research and research-pathway Candidates, and not more than seven individual Candidates.
 - (ii) Associate supervisors count 50% toward the supervision load limits specified above. Workload recognition and recognition of successful completions are also shared.
 - (iii) Exceptions can be made to Clause (i) to the number of FTE Candidates supported by a Principal Supervisor, where the Principal Supervisor has demonstrated the capacity to do so. This exception must be approved by the Academic Dean, with reference to the workload allocation metrics.

4.3. Review of Supervision

- (a) AIB reviews the performance of its Supervisors on at least an annual basis, through the Candidate progress reports and performance review.

- (b) Candidates and Supervisors will have the opportunity to provide individual confidential feedback about the supervisory relationship through verbal discussion with the Associate Dean, Research and/or Research Coordinator on a needs basis throughout Candidature.

5. Extensions to Course Registration Duration

5.1. Each Course has a specified maximum Course registration duration during which students and Candidates are expected to complete the Course. Duration periods for Research Courses are outlined in the Course Briefs:

- [Doctor of Business Administration](#)
- [Doctor of Philosophy](#)

The maximum course duration for the Research pathway courses, Master of Management and Graduate Certificate in Research Methodologies, align with the coursework durations outlined in the Academic Progress Procedure, Section 3.

5.2. To request extension of the PhD or DBA Research Course registration period beyond the maximum limits set in the [Course Briefs](#), written requests with relevant supporting documentation for extensions beyond the limits set in the [Course Briefs](#) must be addressed to the Academic Dean or nominee and submitted to rh@aib.edu.au.

5.3. Upon Review of the written request, the Academic Dean or nominee may, in its sole discretion, grant an extension of time for such period as it deems appropriate. Candidates should note that there may be financial implications of any extension of time to the Candidature.

5.4. Extensions to the maximum Course duration will not exceed six calendar months for PhD and DBA Candidates. Any approved extension may be subject to strict conditions. Failure to meet those conditions may lead to termination of the Candidature. Multiple extensions to Candidature will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

5.5. The decisions on extensions of maximum Course duration will be reported at the Research & Higher Degrees Committee.

6. Variations to Enrolment

6.1. Leave of Absence

- (a) When availability of subject impacts the Candidate's progression, the Candidature period will be adjusted accordingly, and the details of the adjusted end date will be communicated to the Candidate in writing.
- (b) Candidate may request Leave of Absence for a period of up to 12 months due to unforeseen circumstances. They may be eligible to apply for additional periods of Leave of Absence if there are compelling circumstances.
- (c) Where the Candidate wishes to apply for Leave of Absence, a written application with reasons and relevant supporting documentation must be addressed to the Academic Dean or nominee and submitted at rh@aib.edu.au.

- (d) After considering the recommendation from the Candidate's Research Supervisory Panel, the Academic Dean or nominee will determine if Leave of Absence has been granted and the outcome of the application will be advised in writing including the adjusted end date of the Candidature.

6.2. Change of full time/part time status

- (a) When the Candidate wishes to change their study load status from full time to part time, or vice versa, they must discuss the change with their Research Supervisory Panel in the first instance and then submit written application to rhd@aib.edu.au.
- (b) After considering the recommendation from the Candidate's Research Supervisory Panel, the Academic Dean or nominee will determine if change of study load status has been granted and the outcome of the application will be advised in writing including the adjusted end date of the candidature.

6.3. Substantial Research proposal changes

- (a) Substantial changes to the research proposal may have impact on supervision arrangements and Candidature duration, and may require the Candidates to re-take a Research proposal subject incurring additional costs.
- (b) The approval for substantial Research proposal changes is required from the Associate Dean, Research who will consult with the Research Supervisory Panel regarding the assurance that:
 - (i) the degree can be completed within the maximum Candidature period,
 - (ii) the revised Research plan is well developed and realistic, and
 - (iii) any funding and/or resourcing implications are identified.
- (c) The Candidate will be advised in writing the outcome of their request for substantial changes to Research proposal.

6.4. Withdrawal from Candidature

- (a) If a Candidate wishes to withdraw from their studies, they are encouraged to discuss this with their Research Supervisory Panel and the Research Coordinator, to try to resolve any problems the Candidate may have in the study environment.
- (b) If the Candidate decides to withdraw, they must notify the Research Coordinator of the withdrawal in writing, giving the reasons for and the effective date of the withdrawal. The Candidate may first need to withdraw from Subjects in accordance with section 1 of AIB [Withdrawal and Deferral Policy and Procedure](#).
- (c) AIB may at its own discretion withdraw a Candidate from a Subject or a Course:
 - (i) If a Candidate is not showing sufficient progress in the Subject or a Course, and has not responded to AIB's contact or support; and/or.
 - (ii) Where there are concerns for the wellbeing of a Candidate.
- (d) The Research Coordinator will confirm the date on which the withdrawal is effective and take any action necessary to suspend any scholarship

and/or instigate any refunds, if applicable, in accordance with the [Student Refund Policy and Procedure](#).

- (e) A Candidate who has withdrawn and who subsequently wishes to re-enrol must apply to AIB for re-admission in accordance with the [Admission Policy and Procedure](#). AIB will determine whether the Candidate will be re-admitted and whether the period of Candidature will be adjusted to take account of the previous Candidature.

7. Upgrade or Transfer between Degrees

7.1. New applicants or applicants returning to study with AIB

- (a) Applicants returning to study with AIB or transferring from another institution, if approved, must complete the bridging module where previous study was undertaken within 10 years from the application date. If it is more than 10 years, the applicant will not be eligible for Credit in accordance with AIB [Articulation Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure](#).

7.2. Current AIB Candidates

- (a) Current Candidates can only apply for an upgrade after one year of the full-time candidature has been completed and before the final year of full-time candidature. Upgrades from MMgt to DBA or PhD must meet the requirements of the pathways outlined in the relevant [Course Briefs](#). Candidates should discuss the option of upgrade between degrees with their Research Supervisory Panel in the first instance.
- (b) A written application from eligible Candidates and written endorsement from the Research Supervisory Panel must be submitted to rh@aib.edu.au providing a justification for their application.
- (c) A request for an upgrade from MMgt to a doctoral degree or from DBA to PhD will be assessed by the Research Proposal Assessment Panel and a recommendation from the Research Supervisory Panel must be submitted to the Associate Dean, Research.
- (d) The Research Coordinator will notify the applicant in writing of the outcome of an application. The Candidate may lodge an appeal in accordance with the Stage of AIB [Student Complaints, Grievance and Appeals Procedure](#).
- (e) Decisions made by the Research Proposal Assessment Panel will be noted by the Research & Higher Degrees Committee in their next sitting.

8. Research Course Requirements

8.1. Orientation to Research

- (a) A commencing Candidate must satisfactorily complete the Orientation to Research module prior to commencement of the course. The module addresses issues such as research code of conduct, academic integrity, ethics, occupational health and safety, intellectual property, and any additional issues necessary for the type of Research undertaken (including rights and responsibilities of Research Candidates and the role of Supervisors).

- (b) The Research Coordinator is responsible for ensuring Candidates will receive an appropriate induction orienting them to study with AIB that will include information about: support services for general or personal support; English language programs; relevant legal services; emergency and health services; AIB's facilities and resources; complaints and appeals processes; and requirements for course attendance and progress.

8.2. Assessments

- (a) The coursework subjects including Research Training will be designed and marked in accordance with the AIB [Assessment Policy and Procedures](#).
- (b) Assessments for Research subjects will be customised to the Candidate's Research and designed to help the Candidate progress with their thesis (DBA, PhD) or project (MMgt).
- (c) Coursework subjects including Research Training, if applicable, must be successfully completed before the Candidate can begin the Research component of the Course. Further details of research and coursework subjects are outlined in the [Course Briefs](#).

8.3. Research Proposal

- (a) The proposal must be approved by the Research Supervisory Panel prior to submission to AIB for approval by the Research Proposal Assessment Panel. A Candidate may submit a Research proposal for assessment against the advice of the Research Supervisory Panel only after adequate advice to resolve the matter is provided in a three-way discussion between the Candidate, Principal Supervisor and Research Coordinator (or the Associate Dean, Research).

8.4. Approval of the Research proposal

- (a) The Research proposal must be submitted to a specially convened Research Proposal Assessment Panel for approval. Candidates are also required to submit an oral presentation on their proposal to the Research Proposal Assessment Panel (in person or by video).
- (b) The Research Assessment Panel will comprise at least three academic members of staff and is constituted on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the reason for convening the panel, the criteria for membership and any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest. The Research Proposal Assessment Panel will be nominated by the Research Coordinator, in consultation with the Research Supervisory Panel, and approved by the Associate Dean, Research.
- (c) The Research Proposal Assessment Panel may require the Candidate to re-present their Research proposal if it finds that the scope of the project is inappropriate to the course in question, or if it determines that the Research proposal, as drafted, contains serious methodological or ethical issues that need resolving.
- (d) If there is no consensus amongst the Research Proposal Assessment Panel, the Academic Dean will initiate the resolution process with view to making a determination after being suitably appraised.
- (e) When the Research proposal, which does not pose unreasonable ethics concerns, has been approved by the Research Proposal Assessment Panel,

an application will be made by the Candidate for consideration by AIB's Ethics Committee.

8.5. Ethics Approvals

- (a) Following Research Proposal approval, Candidates must apply for ethics approval using the required Ethics Approval Application Form and the Research Candidate Handbook guidelines.
- (b) If a Candidate's Research proposal does not receive ethics approval, the Candidate has the option of resubmitting the Research proposal for ethics approval after the deficiencies have been rectified or of choosing another Research approach or topic, failing which, their Candidature will be terminated.
- (c) Candidates must ensure that their proposed Research project complies with the Research Candidate Handbook guidelines.
- (d) Upon approval of the proposed Research project by the Ethics Committee, the Candidate may commence the fieldwork under the guidance of the Principal Supervisor.

8.6. Thesis and Research Project Milestones Requirements

- (a) Before Candidates can enrol in DBA or PhD research thesis or MMgt research project, Candidates must complete relevant pre-requisite subjects as outlined in the [Course Briefs](#).
- (b) Research thesis and research project components consist of compulsory milestones such as oral presentations and the Annual Progress review (see Section 9 of this HDR Procedure for details). Progression from one subject to the next is dependent on the successful completion of these milestones. Further information on the course milestone requirements is available in the Research Candidate Handbook and in the relevant Course Briefs.
- (c) The final thesis and/or research project is examined externally as per the requirements set out in Section 10.

9. Reviews of Candidate Progress

9.1. Annual Progress Review

- (a) The annual planning and Review cycle is to assist the Candidate to plan ahead and work towards the final thesis submission, along with monitoring the progress of each Candidate's research project. This regular cycle assists Candidates, supervisors and Research Operations Team to identify strategies to support students at risk of not making satisfactory academic progress (i.e. not meeting the required course milestones as per the Research Candidate Handbook).
- (b) Each year the Candidate and the Principal Supervisor, commencing 6 months after the Course enrolment and annually thereafter, in consultation with Research Supervisory Panel members, complete a Progress Report that facilitates monitoring of Candidate's progress.
- (c) Prior to submission, the Candidate may independently discuss their progress with the Research Coordinator and identify any issues placing them at risk of not making satisfactory progress.

- (d) The Candidate and the Supervisor should submit their respective completed Progress Report Forms to the Research Coordinator with all the required signatures, including that of the Candidate.
- (e) Candidates and/or Supervisors may provide confidential feedback about the supervisory relationship to the Research Coordinator or the Associate Dean, Research either through the review or, in case of urgency, at any other time.
- (f) The Research Coordinator will communicate in writing the approved course of action to the Candidate and Research Supervisory Panel. The outcomes may be as follows:
 - (i) **Confirmation of continuation**
For Candidature to be confirmed, the Candidate must demonstrate satisfactory completion of relevant course milestone requirements set out in the Research Candidate Handbook.
 - (ii) **Extension of provisional Candidature**
Candidature period may be extended for a specified period to give the Candidate a further opportunity to meet the conditions for continuation of candidature. Strategies, supported by the Research Operations Team, will be identified to support students at risk of unsatisfactory progress.
 - (iii) **Termination of Candidature**
Candidature will be terminated if the Candidate has failed to comply with the course milestone requirements after having been advised in writing that failure to comply within the required time will result in termination of candidature. Candidate will be provided with an opportunity to submit a 'show cause' as detailed in section 9.2.
- (g) Candidates must make satisfactory progress during Candidature to obtain approval for continued enrolment in the program. All Candidates must undertake their Reviews of Progress, including students who are on leave. Candidates who fail to participate in the Reviews of Progress will be deemed to have made unsatisfactory progress.
- (h) The Research Supervisory Panel are expected to monitor the performance of the Candidate relative to the standard for the degree throughout the period of the candidature, and to ensure that the Candidate is made aware if the Candidate's progress is unsatisfactory or if the work is below the standard generally expected. The Research Operations Team is available to assist in identifying strategies to support Candidates at risk of unsatisfactory progress.
- (i) Where the Principal Supervisor perceives that it may become necessary to recommend that a Candidature be terminated because of unsatisfactory progress, the Supervisor must give the Candidate a preliminary warning in writing to that effect, stating the reasons why the Candidate's progress is unsatisfactory. The Supervisor is required to inform the Candidate's other Supervisor(s) of the preliminary warning and work with the Candidate to improve the Candidates' progress.

9.2. Show Cause Process

- (a) In case of the decision to terminate the Candidature, the Candidate will be requested to submit a 'show cause' within 10 business days to

rhhd@aib.edu.au to explain why their Candidature should not be terminated.

- (b) Failure to submit the show cause within the required timeframe will be deemed as acceptance of the decision to terminate the Candidature.
- (c) The Show Cause must describe the factors which led to the Candidate's unsatisfactory progress, provide reasons why AIB should not make the decision to terminate their Candidature, and should attach relevant evidence.
- (d) The Research Operations Team will review the details of the show cause, and determine whether the Candidature be terminated, or permit the Candidate to continue under specified conditions.
- (e) The Research Coordinator must inform the Candidate of the decision, including the reasons for the decision and the procedures for appeal, within 10 business days from the date when the decision has been made.
- (f) If the Candidate does not meet the condition set out in the successful show cause, the Research Operations Team may at their discretion provide the Candidate with a letter or email that their candidature has been terminated.
- (g) Students have the right to lodge an appeal when they think that the applicable policy/procedure was not followed and/or natural justice had not been applied, in which case they should follow the Stage 2 – Internal Appeal of the [Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy and Procedure](#).

10. Thesis or Research Project Examination

10.1. Appointment of Examiners

- (a) When the Principal Supervisor is satisfied that the thesis will be ready for Examination within the next three months, the Candidate and their Principal Supervisor shall:
 - (i) complete and sign an 'Intention to Lodge' form including a summary of the thesis; and
 - (ii) shortlist the names of potential external examiners, as per examiners requirements set out in 10.1.2, in consultation with the Candidate.
- (b) The criteria for the appointment of examiners depend on the degree. Irrespective of the degree, AIB will appoint at two examiners, plus one reserve. All examiners must be familiar with the Candidate's discipline and research approach, who are independent of the conduct of the Research, competent to understand the assessment and do not have conflict of interest, and be independent from AIB. Supervisors will not act as examiners.
 - (i) For PhD — examiners will be external to AIB, have PhD's, and of international academic standing.
 - (ii) For DBA — examiners will be external to AIB, have a doctoral degree, and of international academic standing. The
 - (iii) For MMgt – at least one examiner must be external to AIB, have a doctoral degree, and of national academic standing.
- (c) The 'Intention to Lodge' form will include the names of at least three possible examiners, including reserve examiners (in the event that a preferred nominee is unable to act as examiner), and provide a justification and CV for each possible examiner. The information

provided on each potential examiner should include his or her academic qualifications (and/or professional qualifications if appropriate), institutional affiliation and rank, details of any relevant published work in the field of the thesis, and a statement of their independence from AIB. The Supervisory Panel should ensure that, inter alia, the potential examiners are free from bias about the Candidate, the Supervisory Panel or the Research method adopted, and that they are still active in the field of Research pertaining to the thesis.

- (d) The Research Coordinator presents the 'Intention to Lodge' form with the names of the proposed examiners, CVs and justification to the Research & Higher Degrees Committee of the proposed examiners for approval.
- (e) Provided approval of the proposed examiners is received from all members of the Research & Higher Degrees Committee, the Research Coordinator will officially write to the examiners to advise the name of the Candidate, the title of the thesis/dissertation and invite them to act as examiners. Should there be any disagreement about one or more of the proposed examiners, this process of the Supervisory Panel nominating proposed examiners will be repeated until such approval is obtained.
- (f) If an examiner is unable to accept an invitation or fails to respond to an invitation within six weeks including being sent reminder notifications, an invitation will be sent to a person approved as a reserve examiner.

10.2. Prior to thesis/project submission

- (a) Candidates will be required to conduct an oral presentation of their Research and thesis summary to AIB's wider academic Research community.

10.3. Submission of thesis/project

- (a) Only an enrolled Candidate may submit work for Examination for the award of a Higher Degree by Research.
- (b) The Candidate must lodge an electronic copy of the final thesis/project with the Research Coordinator. Recommended format guidelines of the thesis or project guidelines are provided in the Research Candidate Handbook. The Candidate must sign a declaration that the thesis does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text or footnotes.
- (c) (i) When the Candidate submits the thesis/project for Examination, the Principal Supervisor verifies in writing to the Associate Dean Research (or delegate) that:
 - A. the extent to which the work, that is data collection, data analysis, and writing of the thesis/project, was carried out by the research Candidate and, if an editor was used, the extent of the involvement of the editor;
 - B. the authorship of the thesis/project to the best of their knowledge;
 - C. the thesis/project is properly presented and is worthy of Examination, with appropriate permission received from the copyright holder if third-party material (e.g. photographs, maps or drawings) has been reproduced; and

- D. the Research has been conducted in a responsible manner and in agreement with approved research policies for human research ethics, or other research policies appropriate to the nature of the research.
- (ii) If the Principal Supervisor is unable to formally advise that, in their opinion, the submission is *prima facie* worthy of Examination, the Associate Dean Research (or delegate) will offer the Candidate the opportunity to withdraw the submission before Examination, or for the Candidate to make a case to the Associate Dean Research for the Examination to proceed.
- (d) On receipt of the thesis/project, the Research Coordinator will forward a copy of the thesis/project to each examiner together with the following:
 - (i) Examiner's Report and Guidelines for Examination;
 - (ii) information on the Examination processes including matters in relation to the disclosure of the examiner's report to the Candidate;
 - (iii) timelines for the completion of the assessment process (turnaround period on receipt of the thesis is normally eight weeks); and
 - (iv) information in relation to payment for Examination.
- (e) Thesis/project content will remain confidential during the Examination period and AIB reserves the right to request examiners to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement if deemed necessary.
- (f) The identity of examiners will not be revealed to Candidates until the Examination process has been completed and then not if an examiner has expressed a desire to remain anonymous.

10.4. Examination process

- (a) From the time of the submission of the thesis/project, a Candidate must not initiate contact with their examiners on any matter concerning the thesis/ project.
- (b) From the time of the appointment of examiners, there must not be any direct contact between an examiner and a Supervisor in relation to the thesis/project. If an examiner has a query, it must be directed to the Research Coordinator who will refer it to the Candidate or the Supervisors.
- (c) Consultation between examiners will not be permitted prior to submission of the initial report.
- (d) The Examination criteria for each Course will reflect the learning outcomes of the Course.
- (e) The Examination process of the thesis/project depends on the degree.
- (f) Examiners must provide AIB with a report on the prescribed form with the recommendation for one of the following Examination outcomes:
 - (i) that the thesis/project be accepted without revision; or
 - (ii) that the thesis be accepted subject to minor amendments as specified, to be done to the satisfaction of the Principal Supervisor (where minor amendments refer to corrections involving typographical or other spelling errors, errors in grammar and/or syntax, etc. and not require additional data collection or analysis); or
 - (iii) that the Candidate be required to undertake more substantial revisions to the thesis/project, to be done to the satisfaction of the

- Principal Supervisor, and Chair of Research & Higher Degrees Committee or their nominee; or
- (iv) that the Candidate be required to undertake substantial revisions to the thesis/project and that the thesis/project be re-submitted for Examination; or
 - (v) that the thesis/project be rejected and the Candidate not be permitted to re-submit it for Examination.
- (g)** In the case of a disagreement between examiners:
- (i) In the event that examiners are not unanimous in making any one of the recommendations above, and their recommendations are at least two levels apart, the Principal Supervisor and the Candidate are provided with copies of the examiners' reports and are invited to comment. In this process, the examiners' identities are not revealed to the Candidate.
 - (ii) The Research & Higher Degrees Committee will then consider all the documentation presented and recommend an Examination outcome or recommend that a third examiner be appointed.
 - (iii) Where a third examiner is appointed, the examiner will independently examine the thesis/project and provide a recommended result. The Research & Higher Degrees Committee will consider all three examiners' reports, together with the Candidate and Supervisor response to the initial examiners and recommend an Examination outcome.
- (h)** If revisions are required, the Candidate will be asked to undertake the revisions in the following timeframes:
- (i) Minor revisions – 2 months
 - (ii) Major revisions – 4 months
 - (iii) Resubmit for Examination – 6 months.
- Candidates may apply in writing for an extension on these timelines to the Academic Dean and Associate Dean, Research at least 7 business days prior to the due date. Applications for extension must be accompanied by a letter of endorsement from the Principal Supervisor.
- (i)** In the event that an allegation of academic dishonesty has been made during the Examination process, the [Research Integrity Breach Management Procedure](#) will apply.

10.5. Outcome of the Examination

- (a)** When the Examination result, including approved revisions, has been determined, the following procedures will apply:
- (a)** the Research Coordinator will advise the Research & Higher Degrees Committee of Examination outcome, and
 - (b)** In case of successful outcome from the Examination, the Research & Higher Degrees Committee will be advised to recommend to the Academic Board the approval of the HDR award for the Candidate.

11. Candidate Conferral and Record Keeping

11.1. Certification of the Award

- (a) Candidate conferral will be conducted in accordance with the AIB [Awards and Graduation Policy and Procedure](#).
- (b) When the award is approved by the Academic Board, the Research Coordinator will provide a letter to the Candidate advising them they may now start using their post nominal, notify the Candidate of the degree conferral procedures, and provide the Candidate with a copy of the examiners' reports.

11.2. Record Keeping of Theses/Projects

- (a) The Research Coordinator will arrange copies of the final form thesis/project to be stored in the Library as a bound hard copy and an electronic copy, which will serve as the authoritative version. Copies of the theses/projects will also be sent to the Research Supervisory Panel.

12. Student Appeals and Complaints

- 12.1. Candidates who have a grievance and wish to make a complaint or appeal regarding an academic or non-academic matter should refer to the [Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy and Procedure](#).
- 12.2. Grievances related to responsible Research conduct, should be referred to [Research Integrity Breach Management Procedure](#).

Related Forms and Documents:

Examiner's Report Form
Guidelines for Examinations
Research Candidate Handbook
Intention to Lodge Form
Internal Appeal Form
Progress Report Form
Supervisor Guidelines

Responsibility:

Academic Dean
Associate Dean, Research

Current Status:	Version 3.3
Approved By:	Academic Dean
Date of Approval:	13 March 2024
Effective From:	13 March 2024
Previous Version:	17 January 2023
	26 October 2021
	6 July 2021
	22 February 2021
	8 September 2020
	10 March 2020
	30 October 2019
	21 February 2019
	9 December 2016 (<i>Research Degree Administration Policy and Procedure Version 7</i>) and 20 December 2017 (<i>Research and Research Degrees Policy, Version 5</i>)
Date of Next Review:	22 February 2024