



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

Higher Degree by Research Student Handbook

School of Economics and Public Policy (SEPP)

Approved by SEPP's research committee on the 13th of June, 2024

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This document provides the requirements of the Higher Degree Research (HDR) program milestones following the University requirements. The document outlines the obligations of students, supervisors, and school approvers. Later version of this handbook will include additional information as required.

Supervisors, HDR students and school approvers are responsible for and make sure that for staying up to date with information from the Adelaide Graduate Research School (AGRS) [website](#), and checking the information the AGRS sends via email with news and updates for HDR students and Supervisors.

The information below combines information provided by the AGRS and SEPP requirements.

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Applying to SEPP HDR programs

1.1. Applying to the University

The Adelaide Graduate Research School ([AGRS](#)) is the first point of contact for prospective research students. If you are interested in applying for Higher Degree Research (HDR) degree at the University of Adelaide, please go to the AGRS website and search for [Future Students](#). This website provides information about the process of admission, scholarship applications and enrolment. Please read information in the website carefully before you apply for a place in the program and before contacting anyone at the AGRS or at the School.

1.2. Potential Supervisor

Prospective applicants are required to undertake a standardised pre-assessment process prior to completing an application for Admission and/or Scholarship. Please contact the AGRS at research_degrees@adelaide.edu.au to undergo the pre-application process. Further information about the pre-application process will then be provided; the process includes the nomination of up to 3 potential supervisors that align with your research interests / strengths. Before contacting anyone at the school, look at the school's [research themes](#) and our [academics' profiles](#), including their research interests and recent publications, and currently funded research projects. You also are required to submit a portfolio of documents for consideration to the AGRS. Pre-application submissions will be reviewed by the AGRS for completeness, quality and eligibility before being provided to the school and to potential supervisors. Please note that the school will not confirm the availability of an appropriate supervisor without a formal application lodged with the AGRS.

Some scholarships which require support from the school, please inform the AGRS of this requirement and they are going to direct you to next steps.

1.3. Application

Prospective students apply online with no application fee. All the information about the required documents, such as English Proficiency requirements, as well as a step-by-step guide to the application process can be found [here](#).

1.4. Scholarships

The University of Adelaide offers scholarships to MPhil and PhD applicants on a competitive basis. No separate scholarship application is required. Information about scholarships can be found [here](#).

1.5. The HDR program

The HDR program in the School of Economics and Public Policy has two streams: i) Economics and ii) Global Food and Resources. Our program aims to equip our HDR students with the advanced expertise required to pursue careers in academia, research organisations and the public or private sectors.

- i) **Economics Stream:** The HDR Economics stream is tailored for students who already have a background in economics or a similar field that emphasizes strong analytical and mathematical skills. Applicants are expected to have one semester background in linear algebra, multivariate calculus, and mathematical statistics. They also have taken advanced undergraduate level courses in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and Econometrics and have written a substantial thesis.

- ii) **Global Food and Resources Stream:** The HDR stream in Global Food and Resources focuses on topics typically related to economics, business and policy issues affecting agriculture, natural resources, international development and food value chains. Applicants typically have a background in agricultural/resource/food/development economics and related fields in applied economics. They also tend to have demonstrated research experience in the form of a master and/or undergraduate thesis, publications and/or research experience.

For more information, please visit the [AGRS](#) website.

2. Getting started

Congratulations and welcome to the University of Adelaide and to the School of Economics and Public Policy! As you move forward with your plans to begin your studies/move to Adelaide, please make sure that you stay in touch with your supervisor, and that you inform them, our administrative coordinator Ms Mei Yong yokemei.yong@adelaide.edu.au, the Postgraduate Coordinator (PGC) alexandra.peralta@adelaide.edu.au of the date of your commencement/arrival. This is important to ensure you have access to the resources you need to start your program. When arriving make sure you organise meetings with Mei, the PGC, and with your supervisor.

The AGRS website contains important information to get you started. This includes completing your enrolment, things you need to do in the first week at the University, during your first two months and the resources available to you for the life of your degree. You can find all these information [here](#), please read carefully.

HDR students at SEPP are responsible for staying up to date with HDR University and School processes and policies. These can be found in the AGRS [website](#) and in this document.

3. Supervisors

The supervisory panel for HDR (Higher Degree by Research) students at the School of Economics and Public Policy (SEPP) requires a full-time academic at SEPP to serve as the principal supervisor. Additionally, there must be at least one other academic from SEPP or another school within the University of Adelaide acting as a co-supervisor. Title holders (adjuncts) and external supervisors can only co-supervise HDR students at SEPP and are limited to a maximum of 20% of the total supervision share.

A full-time academic is defined as a teaching/research or research-only academic working at 1.0 FTE (full-time equivalent). The principal supervisor is an academic at SEPP with either a continuing position or a 4-year fixed-term contract with the University of Adelaide. Consideration for principal supervision will be given on a case-by-case basis when the principal supervisor has a fixed-term contract of less than 4 years at the time of appointment. In such cases, at least one co-supervisor must have a contract of at least 4 years with the University of Adelaide at the time of appointment. Additionally, a supervision transition plan for HDR students must be in place from the commencement in case the principal supervisor leaves the University of Adelaide.

Following University of Adelaide policy, supervisors are expected to meet with students on a fortnightly basis. Supervisors and HDR students need to discuss the times and days for these meetings. Supervisors need to ensure that the student takes notes (including any agreed actions and decisions) at meetings, which are later circulated to all members of the supervisory panel. It is expected that these notes will be saved in an agreed location for future reference and provision to the AGRS or School on request.

Supervisors are responsible for staying up to date with HDR related processes at both the University and School levels. The AGRS sends regular updates to supervisors about HDR policies and procedures. Information can also be found in the AGRS [website](#) and in this document.

4. Coursework

i) Economics Stream:

Students in the Economics stream are encouraged to audit four Level IV courses during the first year of their PhD program. These courses include Econometrics IV, Macroeconomics IV, and Microeconomics IV. Additionally, they are encouraged to audit an elective from the following courses: Advanced Time Series Econometrics IV, Behavioural Game Theory and Experiments IV, Economic Development IV, International Finance IV, International Trade IV, and Public Economics IV.

Students are expected to schedule a meeting with their supervisors to plan their coursework. The final decision on the courses will be based on the student's background and research requirements. Students who have completed the School of Economics Honours or Master of Economics program and have already taken these courses are not required to audit them. Similarly, students from other Australian Go8 Universities with Honours degrees in Economics may also have their coursework waived based on marks and coursework content.

The format in which students take courses at the school is to 'audit' them, which means they do not receive an official transcript for these courses. The training plan should be documented in the CCSP and major review forms. Students in the Economics stream are expected to put forth effort and strive to pass any course they take with SEPP. Passing a course requires a final grade of at least 50 in each course, and students are encouraged to achieve an average coursework mark of at least 65 for all courses.

If students encounter difficulties or issues affecting their performance, they should discuss these matters with their supervisor, course coordinator, and the PGC as necessary.

ii) Global Food and Resources Stream:

Students in this stream are encouraged to audit the Research Methods course and discuss their training needs with their supervisors. Additionally, they are encouraged to audit courses in resource economics, development economics, or econometrics. Identifying their training needs and consulting with their supervisors is crucial. Given the interdisciplinary nature of their research, students may also take courses outside of SEPP.

There is no cost for courses provided by SEPP. Students in the Global Food and Resources stream are expected to attend classes, tutorials and engage with assessment tasks in agreement with course coordinators and supervisors. The courses are recorded in the CCSP, Major Review and Annual Reports of progress.

If you are considering training outside SEPP, it is encouraged that you first pursue training opportunities that are free, before undertaken paid courses.

To audit courses, you may undertake the following steps:

- Find the course that you are interested in on the Find Your Course page: <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/course-outlines/>.
- Contact the coordinator of the course by email, either directly (and copy your Principal Supervisor) or ask your supervisor to do so on your behalf, asking if the course can be audited. Depending on the course and the School or Department administering the course, you may be able to audit the classes for free and get the access to the materials on MyUni (The University of

Adelaide's online learning platform: <https://myuni.adelaide.edu.au>). Alternatively, you may be asked to pay to "audit with access to materials" (NOT for SEPP courses).

- Once you are granted access to the materials, the course will appear on your MyUni dashboard and you will have access to the lecture notes and be able to see notifications from the lecturer and discussion board.

If a payment is required to audit a course, the payment will be drawn from your budget and you get approval from your Supervisor, the PGC and the Associate Head of Research. Note this will only be possible if there is money available in the budget at the time.

5. Career Development

The University offers Career and Research Skills Training (CaRST). PhD students are required to complete 120 hours of this training. Please make sure that you are up to date with the requirements for each of the CaRST domains. Take advantage of CaRST courses to build your skill set in your area of expertise, and to take advantage of professional development activities. For more detail on CaRST read this [link](#) and read carefully the emails sent by CaRST with updates and training opportunities.

6. Seminars at the School

HDR students at SEPP are expected to present at the HDR School Seminar once a year. When not presenting, they should attend the HDR seminars and SEPP internal seminars. Additionally, attendance at seminars with invited speakers is required.

These seminars offer valuable opportunities to practice academic presentation skills, receive and provide feedback, learn about ongoing research within the school, and engage with distinguished academics visiting from leading Australian and international universities. This interaction is a unique chance to expand professional networks and make a positive impression on potential colleagues and employers.

HDR students are also encouraged to participate in the professional development opportunities provided by SEPP, some of which offer CaRST credits for attendance at seminars and workshops. Participation in these activities, including seminar presentations and attendance, is recorded and reviewed as part of the major and annual progress assessments.

7. Research Internships

The University of Adelaide is offering a funded research internship which will ultimately help you build critical skills and expertise, while providing a strong complement to your academic studies and a head start for your future employment opportunities, not only in higher education but across all sectors and parts of our communities. If you are interested please check the information for students [here](#). In the link provided you can also find current internship opportunities and get an idea of the type of internships you can undertake. Please make sure that you discuss your interest on doing an internship with your supervisor, and that you indicate this interest by the time of your major review

Overall, HDR students at SEPP are expected to engage with the broader School and University academic community and to take advantage of opportunities to engage with the community in South Australia including stakeholders in government and industry.

8. Candidature milestones

8.1. Summary of Candidature Milestones

Milestone	Timeline from commencement
Induction	30 Days
Expectations of supervision	30 Days and to be uploaded with your CCSP
Core Component of the Structure Program (CCSP)	6 months Global Food and Resources Stream 12 months Economics Stream
Major Review (including major review seminar)	12 Months
Annual Review	Every year 15 th of September (SEPP Deadline) Unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You first enrolled in the calendar year of the Review You submitted your thesis for examination prior to 31 October You have been advised to complete a Pre-Submission Review in place of an Annual Review of Progress Due to the AGRS every year the 31 st of October
Pre-submission Review	For ALL candidates who commenced after 1st July 2022 . 36 months FTE for PhDs 21 months FTE for Master by Research
Thesis Submission	Typically, at 3.5 years of commencement for PhD and 2 years from commencement for Master by Research Students.
PhD oral Examination	<u>All PhD students who commenced from 1st of July 2022 must complete an oral examination (sometimes known as Defence, viva voce) in addition to submitting their PhD thesis to complete their degree.</u>

8.2. Induction

The induction into the research program consists of two related but separate components. The first introduces your local area environment and procedures. The second provides detailed information about your time as a research student at the University of Adelaide. Please follow the instructions in this [link](#).

8.3. Core Component of the Structured Program (CCSP)

The CCSP is the first major milestone of your PhD, to be completed within six months to one year of commencement. Students taking a heavy coursework load in year 1 (3 to 4 Level IV courses) in the economics HDR pathway have a CCSP deadline at 12 months of commencement. Whereas students in the Global Food and Resources PhD pathway (not expected to take 3 to 4 Level IV courses in year 1) have a CCSP deadline at 6 months of commencement.

The primary purpose of the CCSP is to ensure that you have formulated a research proposal that is both academically rigorous and of a scope that is appropriate for timely submission of your thesis (namely within 3 years and 6 months for PhDs or 18-24 months for Master by Research). You are expected to formulate research questions based on the literature, outline your theoretical/conceptual framework, as well as the methodologies you intend to apply. If conducting empirical work, you are expected to describe your data briefly (secondary or primary data). In defining your research proposal, you will address, in partnership with your supervisors, a range of financial, resource, intellectual property, ethical, data, research integrity and authorship considerations.

In addition, you will formulate your CaRST development plan, coursework/training plan, budget, discuss possibilities for the completion of a research internship during your program and document your agreed '[expectations for supervision](#)'. This form needs to be completed within a month of starting your PhD and needs to be uploaded as part of your CCSP documents.

All relevant information to complete your CCSP is available on the AGRS on this AGRS [link](#). Please read carefully and follow the steps outlined for the CCSP process. Some key aspects the process are outlined below:

Key requirements:

- Preparation of a research proposal utilising the research proposal [template](#).
- The research proposal will include a literature review and will be a minimum of 3000 – 4000 words (Master/Doctorate) and a maximum of 5000 words.
- Give a 20-minute presentation, this is for those with their CCSP due at 6 months of commencement.
- Early CCSP completion (4-5 months from candidature commencement) is encouraged by the AGRS.
- Inclusion of an independent discipline expert in the assessment of the CCSP. An independent expert could be someone at the School who is not a member of your supervisory panel.

How to complete your CCSP (Please make sure you consult the [AGRS website](#), process change and it is your responsibility to ensure that you are up to date with the process)

- At least **three weeks in advance of the required completion date** for your CCSP, organise a mutually convenient time to meet with your supervisory panel (Supervisor, Co-supervisors and PGC at the minimum), arrange for a room, you have rooms at level 3, level 5 and level 6 available to book for your CCSP. Organising this meeting is your responsibility as a HDR student.
- Review your research proposal and the associated funding, ethics (if required), IP, data management and resource needs.
- Review your Career and Research Skills Training (CaRST) Skills Assessment, Development Plan, and record of CaRST activities completed to date in [CaRST Online](#).
- Review your progress since you started in candidature.
- Work through the list of items under '[Before Commencing the CCSP](#)'.
- Before meeting with your supervisors, complete all the student sections of the online form ensuring that all information provided is accurate and correct.

- Submit the form to your principal supervisor for consideration **at least two weeks prior to the due date.**

A draft research proposal should be shared with your supervisors **at least four weeks before the presentation and CCSP due date** to allow sufficient time for feedback and revision before sharing the proposal with the independent academic on your review panel. **You should share your final CCSP proposal to all members of your panel at least one week before the meeting/presentation. If you have not done this, the PGC will cancel your CCSP meeting.**

For more detail on the role of supervisors and school approvers, and the rest of the process, see the CCSP AGRS [link](#).

8.4. Major Review

The Major Review is the second major milestone of your PhD, to be completed within 12 months of commencement. It is a point in candidature at which your supervisors, school and an independent discipline expert will assess whether you have the skills, aptitude, motivation and ability to complete your degree within the expected timeframe. The assessment will consider the planned scope of the project, the quality and quantity of the work you have performed to date, **your ability to communicate your research through delivery of a seminar to your School/Discipline (this seminar is not optional)** and your career and research skills development plans. Where feasible, these plans will include participation in a research internship.

Beginning Semester 2 2024 students are required to organise together with the PGC the time and venue to deliver the School Seminar. Students need to discuss with their supervisors the time and date to ensure that they can attend. It is highly recommended to have the major review seminar and the major review meeting the same day. Please make sure that you **book a room for 2 hours** to accommodate the seminar and allow time for the committee's discussion afterwards. You have rooms at level 3, level 5 and level 6 available to book for your major review seminar and meeting. Booking the room for the agreed time and date for your major review seminar is the HDR student responsibility.

It is responsibility of the student presenting to plan their seminar with at least three weeks of advance, to find a venue and time that suits and to ensure that invitations to their seminar are sent to the school. Students need to send to the PGC and Seminar coordinator the title of their presentation, a summary or abstract of 250 words and the venue and time for the presentation.

The seminar presentation should be 30 minutes long, the presentation will be followed by a maximum of 15 minutes for questions from the audience. There is no need to include information such as budget and Gantt Chart in the Seminar part of the major review.

The major review panel will conduct an assessment considering the progress of the candidate and the quality of the work, ensuring that it is up to PhD standards at SEPP. The assessment of the panel will determine what happens next. Those students who successfully complete the major review will be confirmed in candidature. Some students may need additional time to achieve confirmation, in which case an extended major review of progress is undertaken, and for others an alternative program of study such as the Master by Research, may prove more suitable.

The major review is also the opportunity to indicate your interest on an internship. You need to express your interest by the major review and organise for the internship by 18 months of commencement. Make sure you discuss the possibility of an internship with your supervisors and that you bring this up during the major review meeting.

For additional information and answer to FAQ please click on this AGRS [link](#). Some key aspects the process are outlined below:

Key requirements:

Presentation of a seminar to the School/Discipline (This is your Year 1 Seminar presentation).

- Submission of a significant piece of writing, which may be in the form of a draft publication, thesis chapter, outline of initial data gathered, or other output approved by the School. This will depend on your research. For example, some students complete a draft manuscript for publication at the 12-month mark of their PhD, other students work on preparing primary data collection, this includes data collection instruments, sample design and preliminary data collection work, such as

assessing secondary data available. Some students conduct systematic reviews of the literature or work on developing mathematical models or expand on existing theoretical frameworks. Please discuss with your supervisors and the PGC what would be required in your case.

- A panel meeting of all supervisors plus an independent discipline expert from outside the research group and the Postgraduate Coordinator to review progress. The independent discipline expert could be someone at the School considered expert in your area and who can provide feedback on your work.
- **Ensure that all major review documents are sent to your supervisor at least 4 weeks ahead of the major review deadline, to allow for feedback ahead of the major review. Any documents pertaining your major review must be sent to your supervisor, co-supervisor, the independent discipline expert and the PGC at least one week before the major review meeting. If you do not send these documents the major review would not go ahead and will need to be rescheduled. This may affect your compliance with university deadlines.**
- If any progress concerns are identified, the review will be referred to the relevant Faculty's Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for consideration prior to submission to the AGRS.

To complete the Major Review you need to follow the following steps:

- **Complete the student sections of Major Review form, including uploading documents as required at least two weeks before the major review deadline.**
- Your principal supervisor will complete the online form on behalf of your supervisory committee and will nominate the members of the candidature confirmation review committee (which will normally, at minimum, comprise your supervisors, an independent discipline expert, and the postgraduate coordinator). A time for you to meet with the committee will be arranged, it is your responsibility to assist with arranging the meeting and venue. It is required that this meeting take place immediately after your Seminar presentation.

At the meeting you and the committee will:

- Review your research progress and planned research direction.
- Review your Gantt chart or completion plan detailing the timelines for your research from candidature commencement to thesis submission.
- Review your Career and Research Skills Training (CaRST) summary.
- Review your budget and plans for conference attendance and training.
- Review your professional relationships with your supervisor(s) to ensure your mutual expectations are aligned.
- Discuss the required Seminar.
- Discuss any problems or issues that have (or may) impact on your productivity.
- The chair of the candidature confirmation review committee, usually your PGC, will complete the online form together with the Major Review Committee and make a recommendation. You will receive an email prompt to review the committee's comments and submit the form for further processing.

For more information on the role of supervisors, the school approver and the rest of the process see the link to the Major Review [here](#).

8.5. Annual Review process and purpose

The Annual Review is intended to be an open and frank appraisal of your rate of progress by both you and your supervisory panel. The Review is due every year on 31 October.

The annual review is intended to assess your progress against the quality and quantity of work performed to date and required for timely submission. It is an important tool for identifying any problems that may be occurring so that they can be documented and resolved and, it provides you with an opportunity to formally set goals with your whole supervisory panel for the next stage of your project and in the next stage of your professional development. As a research student who is actively enrolled or on approved leave of absence, you are required to participate in an Annual Review of Progress every year, unless one of the following applies:

- You first enrolled in the calendar year of the Review
- You submitted your thesis for examination prior to 31 October
- Your candidature lapsed prior to 31 October
- You have been advised to complete a Pre-Submission Review in place of an Annual Review of Progress
- You have been granted an exemption on medical grounds

Key requirements:

- Completion of the online annual review form to record and evaluate progress during the previous period and to plan and document research and professional development goals for the next year.
- **Fill the annual review form by the 15th of September. Supervisors will be required to finalise the annual review form by the 30th of September to allow time for the PGC to read all the forms and to organise meetings with students as required. If you do not submit by the deadlines the PGC will not be able to submit your major review on time, and this may affect your compliance with University deadlines.**
- A review of your progress which involves your supervisors and the Postgraduate Coordinator.

More information about the Annual Review and to complete the online Annual Review Form go to this [link](#).

If you wish, you can organize a meeting with the PGC to discuss any grievances or issues with your progress. If the PGC is your supervisor, you can organize a meeting with other school approver.

Meetings are treated as confidential.

8.6. Pre-Submission Review (PSR)

The pre-submission review is the final progress milestone you will complete prior to submission of your thesis for examination.

The purpose of the PSR is to ensure that your thesis is on track for timely submission within the target timeframe, namely 3.5 years full time equivalent (FTE) student (or maximum of 4 years FTE for a PhD) and a maximum of 2 years FTE for a Master by Research. In preparation for your PSR meeting, you will complete the PSR form together with a Thesis Completion Plan which includes a chapter outline and indicative completion timeframes for each thesis component.

At the Pre-Submission Review Panel meeting, you will lead a discussion of your progress towards thesis completion and outline your plans for the completion of the remaining tasks. Through the course of discussion, you, together with the PSR panel, will consider contingency measures, where tasks are unable to be achieved by the target completion timeframe.

The due date for the PSR depends on your start date in candidature. The PSR is due at 36 months FTE for PhDs and 21 months FTE for Master by Research candidates who commenced after 1/7/22.

More information about the PSR and to complete the online PSR Form go to this [link](#).

8.7. Thesis submission and examination

Guidelines for submitting your thesis and more details of each stage of the submission and examination process can be found in the AGRS website [Your Thesis Examination](#).

[Thesis Preparation](#)

[Intention to Submit](#)

[Thesis Submission](#)

[Thesis Examination](#)

[Oral Examination](#)

All PhD students who commenced from 1 July 2022 must complete an oral examination \ (sometimes known as Defence, viva voce) in addition to submitting their PhD thesis to complete their degree. PhD students who commenced prior to this time can choose to voluntarily opt in to complete an oral examination. If you want to opt into an oral examination, you should answer yes to the question on the Notification of Intention to Submit form.

When there is an oral examination, the thesis will be examined as described in the Research Student Handbook and the examiners will provide a written report and make a recommendation of whether you should proceed to the oral examination. You will receive copies of the written reports and the oral examination will be scheduled approximately 2 weeks later. The oral examination will be scheduled at some time during the normal working hours for the University, i.e. between 7am to 7pm and will take a maximum of 2.5 hours and may be in person or online or a combination of both. An oral examination will be in two parts; the first part consists of a short presentation/seminar by the student of 20-30 minutes, which can be public, followed by a closed question and answer session.

An Independent Chair will lead the examination which is attended by you and the examiners of your thesis. Your principal supervisor can attend the oral examination but only if you request them to, but they do not participate in any way.

The outcome of the oral examination will be verbally communicated to you shortly after the oral examination and then confirmed in writing. The examiners can recommend the standard examination outcomes as outlined in the Research Student Handbook or request that the oral examination be repeated. If a repeat oral examination is required, this would happen within 4 weeks of the first one.

The CaRST course "[Preparing for your doctoral oral examination](#)" will help you to prepare for the oral examination.