

GRADUATE RESEARCH CENTRE - Confirmation of Candidature Guidelines

A. Deadlines and Progression

Doctor of Philosophy	Within 6-12 months (EFT) of initial enrolment and after successful completion of required coursework*
Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated)	Within 3 months (EFT) of 'Towards Confirmation' workshop (using relevant format)**
Professional Doctorates	Within 3-6 months (EFT) of completion of required coursework*
Masters (Research)	Within 6 months (EFT) of initial enrolment

*Doctoral candidates must have completed any prescribed coursework for their program to the required level (normally 70% minimum average), as confirmed by the PhD Coursework or Professional Doctorate Coordinator, prior to presenting for candidature confirmation.

** PhD (Integrated) students must have successfully completed Year 1 of the program (70% minimum average across 5 coursework units and 70% minimum for the Year 1 Thesis), and attended the Towards Confirmation Workshops, prior to presenting for candidature confirmation.

Candidates who have not presented for candidature within 12 months (EFT) of their initial enrolment (Masters and Doctor of Philosophy) or 18 months (EFT) (Professional Doctorates) will be deemed to be making unsatisfactory progress and will be subject to the Unsatisfactory Progress review process.

NB: A candidate's enrolment in their research program is provisional and continuation of enrolment is subject to candidature confirmation.

B. Confirmation of Candidature Components

To be considered for confirmation of candidature a graduate researcher must have their candidature formally evaluated by a review panel. The review process involves careful and independent academic scrutiny of the following:

- A detailed research proposal;
- A detailed budget outlining the resources required for the project;
- A formal public oral presentation of the proposed research.

Confirmation of candidature will take into consideration:

- the academic merit, feasibility and viability of the student's proposed project in relation to the degree for which the student is applying to be a candidate;
- the capacity of the College to ensure that adequate supervision, resources and infrastructure are available to support the proposed project;
- the capacity of the candidate to undertake the project successfully in the format proposed within the time frame stipulated for the degree for which the student is applying to be a candidate with the enrolment time fraction proposed.

The panel, through its Chair, makes a recommendation to the College Director, Research and Research Training, who has final responsibility for candidature approval.

C. Format and Content of Written Candidature Proposal (see Appendices A, B and C)

- Candidates undertaking either a Masters by Research or a PhD by the following formats: traditional thesis, PhD by Publication or Professional Doctorate - should follow the guidelines in Appendix A
- Candidates undertaking a Masters by Research by creative project and exegesis should follow the guidelines in Appendix B
- Candidates undertaking a PhD by creative project and exegesis should follow the guidelines in Appendix C

Appendices A, B and C (depending on your format are intended to provide a broad framework for graduate researchers and supervisors in the preparation of the candidature proposal. It is expected that the body of the candidature proposal (Sections 1-8) will provide sufficient detail for the review panel to make a full assessment of the academic merit, feasibility and viability of the proposed project, whilst also exhibiting scholarly discipline in its focus and precision. For most disciplines the length of the proposal should be at least 10 and no more than 16 pages (excluding references). Colleges may wish to supplement this information with discipline specific and/or further page length guidelines.

Your proposal must be typed on A4 paper single sided using 11 or 12 font in Times New Roman or Arial, with a minimum 1.5 line spacing. The left and right margins must be a minimum of 3cm and pages numbered. All diagrams, tables etc must contain a number and caption and be placed as near as possible to relevant text.

Please note that the content of the written candidature proposal and its assessment by the review panel in determining whether candidature is to be confirmed will take into account the academic level and requirements of the HDR program in which the candidate is enrolled.

In summary, the requirements for Masters and Doctoral degrees are:

Masters by Research: the research at examination should demonstrate:

- A thorough understanding of the relevant techniques in the field of research by both a thorough review of the literature and application;
- Competence in the chosen field through judicious selection and application of methods to yield a significant body of work;
- Capacity to critically evaluate and effectively present this body of work.

Doctor of Philosophy: should uncover or create new knowledge by the discovery of new information, formulation of theories, development of new approaches, or the innovative re-interpretation of existing ideas, theories or approaches. The research at examination should demonstrate:

- A deep and thorough understanding of the relevant techniques in the field of research;
- Competence in the chosen field through judicious selection and application of methods to yield a significant body of work;
- Capacity to critically evaluate and effectively present this body of work;
- Independence of thought and approach;
- An original contribution to knowledge.

Professional Doctorate: focuses on the issues and problems of a particular profession and assists candidates to develop new knowledge within their professional area. The degree is at the same academic level as the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) but differs from it in that it deals with issues and problems specific to the profession. The research at examination should demonstrate:

- A thorough understanding of the relevant techniques in the field of research;
- Competence in the professional area through judicious selection and application of methods to yield a significant body of work;
- Capacity to critically evaluate and effectively present this body of work;
- Independence of thought and approach;
- An original contribution to practice and/or extending knowledge within the profession.

D. Constitution and Composition of Review Panel

The role of the panel is to undertake a high quality and independent review of the written candidature proposal as well as its presentation orally by the candidate prior to candidature confirmation.

The College Director, Research and Research Training (or their nominee) will approve the composition of the panel which will comprise three members:

1. Chair – College Director, Research and Research Training or their nominee;
2. A Discipline Leader or academic who has expertise relevant to the candidate's research area, but has not been involved in the candidate's supervision;
3. An academic and active researcher with appropriate qualifications and relevant supervisory experience. This person may, but does not necessarily have to be an expert in the specific field of research, provided they have broad knowledge and expertise in relation to research in the field.

Normally, an expert external to the College or University should be sourced to achieve an appropriate level of balance and expertise. However, it may be possible, in some cases of significant critical mass of research expertise within the University, for the College Director to determine that an appropriately constituted panel can be formed internal to the University. When an external panel member is nominated, any request for reimbursement of travel costs must be approved by the College Director prior to confirmation of the panel.

The Principal Supervisor must attend the presentation, whilst attendance by the associate supervisor(s), although highly desirable, is optional.

E. Review Process

- Candidates and supervisors will be advised by the College Support Officer (CSO) of the scheduled oral presentation date(s) shortly after enrolment or commencement of the research phase of the degree.
- Panel composition will be proposed by the Principal Supervisor to the CSO at least one month prior to the scheduled presentation date, for approval by the College Director or nominee.
- Once the panel has been approved by the College Director, Research and Research Training or their nominee, meeting invitations will be circulated to all participants in a timely manner by the CSO.
- An *'Application for Candidature'* comprising the following:
 - completed *'Application for Confirmation of Candidature'* form
 - candidature proposal in accordance with the content/format guidelines (Appendix A, B or C depending on your format)
 - Graduate Research Supervision Agreement (Appendix D)
 - A completed Pre-Confirmation VU MyPlan (on the Graduate Researcher Toolkit, and under particular pathway)
 - Complete the OH&S Induction online (<http://intranet.vu.edu.au/PC/OHS/OHSTraining.asp>). Please attach your Certificate of Completion
 - Completed [Computer Workstation Adjustment Worksheet](#)
- The Application for Candidature will be due to the Graduate Research Centre two weeks prior to the scheduled presentation date. All relevant documentation will be circulated to the panel by the CSO including a proforma on which feedback of the panel member will be recorded.
- When a panel convenes, the College will designate a panel writer responsible for the draft of the final panel report. In many cases this will be the internal panel member other than the Chair, but Colleges have the discretion to make alternative arrangements.

- A global email indicating only the time, venue, date and abstract of the presentation will be sent by the CSO inviting graduate researchers and supervisors to attend the scheduled oral presentations. The candidate's research proposal is not circulated to the wider University community.
- Each candidate's oral presentation will be 20 minutes in length. This will be followed by 10 minutes for open discussion and questions from the panel and the floor, and then by a period of closed discussion and questions by the panel with the candidate (approx. 10 minutes).
- Panel members will then discuss the written proposal and oral presentation in private to determine the classification category. The candidate will be verbally advised of the panel's recommendations and any other feedback and suggestions. Formal written confirmation of the panel's deliberations will follow after the meeting.
- The Chair will ensure that the panel report and recommendation on candidature confirmation is forwarded to the CSO within two weeks of the oral presentation.
- Upon receipt of the report, the CSO will email all relevant documentation to the candidate/supervisors and confirm follow-up actions and timelines for resubmission of a revised candidature proposal, if required.
- If revisions are required, relevant documentation and a revised candidature proposal are to be forwarded to the CSO (within the agreed timelines) for distribution to the panel, as indicated below.
- Final approval of the '*Application for Candidature*' lies with the College Director, Research and Research Training.

If exceptional circumstances prevent the candidate from presenting on the nominated date, an alternative date may be requested. **Exceptional circumstances** will be considered on a case by case basis and include medical, personal or family circumstances (evidence required). The request would normally need to be made no less than 14 days prior to the scheduled candidature presentation.

F. Classification of the Oral Presentation and Candidature Proposal

The panel will classify the candidature presentation and proposal in one of the following four categories:

- 1) Confirmed; no amendments required.
Candidature documentation, together with the panel report, will be forwarded to the College Director, Research and Research Training for final sign-off and candidature approval.
- 2) Confirmed subject to satisfactory completion of minor amendments;
Candidates will have 2-4 weeks to revise and resubmit the candidature proposal;
Chair to review and approve resubmitted proposal;
College Director, Research and Research Training: final sign-off and candidature approval.
- 3) Confirmed subject to satisfactory completion of major revisions;
Candidates will have 4-6 weeks to revise and resubmit the candidature proposal;
Chair and one panel member to review and approve resubmitted proposal;
College Director, Research and Research Training: final sign-off and candidature approval.
- 4) Not confirmed; candidature is deferred for further work (proposal to be re-written and re submitted);
Candidates will have eight weeks to complete the resubmission;
Entire panel to review and approve resubmitted version (no oral presentation required, although such a presentation may be requested);
College Director, Research and Research Training: final sign-off and candidature approval.

Please note that the Director has discretion, regardless of the proposal's academic merit, to not endorse the panel's academic recommendation on candidature if s/he is not satisfied that the College is able to meet the supervisory and/or resource and infrastructure requirements for the conduct of the proposed research.

G. Failure to Obtain Confirmation of Candidature

If a candidate:

- has been assessed as 2) or 3), but revisions are not made to the satisfaction of the Chair within the stipulated timeframe (2-4 or 4-6 weeks), then the candidature is not considered to be confirmed. In such cases the candidate will receive written notification of this and be provided with a second and final opportunity to submit a revised version to the Chair within four weeks on the understanding that if the revised version is not received within this time period and/or is not considered to meet the required standard then candidature has not been confirmed at the second attempt and the candidate will not be able to pursue the research degree at Masters or Doctoral level. In such cases, the candidate, supervisor(s) and College Director or Panel Chair will meet to discuss alternative study options and discontinuation from the course.
- has been assessed as 4) (deferred) and the resubmitted proposal is assessed by the panel as not of the required standard, the candidate will receive written notification that candidature has not been confirmed and that they will not be able to pursue the research degree at Masters or Doctoral level. In such cases, the candidate, supervisor(s) and College Director or Panel Chair will meet to discuss alternative study options and discontinuation from the course.

If the candidate does not discontinue their enrolment, the University will provide notice in writing of its intention to discontinue their enrolment after 20 University business days.

APPENDIX A

Written Candidature Proposal Guidelines (MRes and PhD by traditional thesis, by publication or Professional Doctorate)

1. Title

The title of thesis should be clear, indicate key ideas to be explored and contain no more than 150 characters. Abbreviations are discouraged.

2. Abstract

This section should provide the reader with a broad overview of your research: what it is, why it should be undertaken - the rationale for the research, how it will be conducted and its contribution to knowledge. You should use about 150 words for this statement.

3. Aims of the Project

- Describe the aims and background to your proposal;
- Briefly refer to earlier or related research on which your research will build;
- State the overarching research question and any sub-questions your research will seek to answer. What is the research problem you are seeking to solve?

4. Contribution to Knowledge and Statement of Significance

Contribution to Knowledge (Academic Contribution): Explain the benefits of the research in terms of generating new knowledge that can be disseminated to the academic community and more broadly.

Statement of Significance (Practical Contribution): Describe how the research is significant and explain the benefits of the research for the community or a particular section of the community, such as industry or business processes or practices.

Please note that the nature and level of contribution to knowledge and practice must be commensurate with the HDR program that the candidate is enrolled in (refer to B and C for more detail).

5. Literature Review

The purpose of the brief literature review is to demonstrate where your proposed research fits in with what is already known through existing literature about your field of research. It should achieve the following:

- Analyse critically the major approaches in the research literature that you have identified, including theoretical traditions and key findings;
- Indicate any gap(s) within the literature, in knowledge or approaches to the field;
- Indicate how your research relates to and extends the existing literature, and showing that your research topic has not been undertaken previously. You should be specific in your selection of literature to include.

NB: DO NOT include literature to support the methodology of your study here. This should be discussed in the Methodology section.

6. Methodology and Conceptual Framework

The research methodology and the conceptual (or theoretical) framework informing the methodology cover the design of the research and the methodology(s) for collecting and analysing information. The methodology (that is, the research paradigm, design or approach) and the proposed methods should be identified and justified in the context of your field(s) of study. You should explain how and why your methods are appropriate and feasible for the research question/topic; for example, if they have produced reliable results in similar studies or, if not, how a

new or different methodology illuminates the study. Any sampling technique and justification of sample size should be described and justified as appropriate for the study and the data collected. For qualitative studies it is important to briefly explain how the conceptual framework will inform the approach to qualitative data analysis.

You need to demonstrate also that the proposed study design is feasible and appropriate for what you aim to discover, and can be achieved with the time and facilities and support that is available. It should not be too broad or too narrow.

At Masters level, the task is to conduct original research. The problem being addressed is often the prime focus and the study may be exploratory or descriptive, and does not necessarily innovate conceptually or methodologically.

At Doctoral level, the theoretical focus and the nature of the contribution to new knowledge is more important. You will need to specify whether you are using an existing (pre-tested) framework for your study (where the research is replicated and results compared with previous findings) or developing your own framework.

This section should take into account the following:

- Describe the research design in a manner that enables disciplinary experts to assess its appropriateness, the scale of the research and its feasibility;
- Justify your methodology e.g. you may describe how the study will be framed (for instance, a positivist or interpretivist approach?) and then discuss your method in this context. Show how the method you have chosen matches the research questions and propositions or hypotheses you have generated in your conceptual framework;
- Data Collection:
Identify what data is to be collected and what data collection techniques are being used? What are their advantages/ disadvantages? If there are possible alternative techniques that are not being used, indicate why (for instance, why use a survey for a particular section of the study instead of interviews or focus groups?);
- How will the data be analysed? If you are analysing statistics be clear as to what statistical procedures you will be using and how they might provide answers (for instance, a statement such as "SPSS will be used to analyse the data" is not suitable);
- Be clear about how the data will be used to address research questions, propositions or hypotheses;
- If possible, outline different phases of your study and how the completion of one phase leads logically into the next. This should match with your timeline;
- Indicate how your study will address the aims of the project that you have identified;
- Address the 'generalisability' of your findings. A limited sample size or focus of your study may limit the applicability of your findings. This is not necessarily a problem but it is important to relate it back to the earlier contributions that you stated your study would make.

7. Ethics Approval

Specify whether Ethics Committee approval will be required for the project and if so, whether an ethics application has been submitted. Candidates are reminded that Ethics approval is needed for **ANY** study involving people such as interviews, surveys or observations, as well as for studies involving animal experimentation or genetically modified organisms that have implications for biosafety.

A brief statement outlining the ethical risks associated with the proposed research should be included in the proposal together with a justification for the approach and the proposed risk mitigation. We recommend that, if in any doubt as to whether an application is required, further advice be sought from the Office for Research <https://www.vu.edu.au/researchers/research-lifecycle/conducting-research> or researchethics@vu.edu.au.

Generally, PhD, Professional Doctorate and Masters by Research candidates need to obtain Confirmation of Candidature **before** submitting their project for Ethics Approval. In special cases, the relevant Ethics Committee (HREC) will review projects before Confirmation of Candidature, however, researchers will need to make a strong case for seeking early ethical approval. Specific examples are when candidates are undertaking

a pilot study, or because approval in an ethically complex project will determine the approach the project takes. Note that, in such cases, if changes are required at Confirmation of Candidature for projects already approved by the Ethics Committee, the Chief Investigator (principal supervisor) is required to submit a request for amendment to the approving committee. Candidates who believe that their project may constitute such a case should discuss the matter with their principal supervisor very early in the process.

However, if human participants are involved, students are requested to meet with the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee, prior to candidature confirmation to discuss the ethical issues relevant to their projects.

8. Researcher Development

All research projects require the building and extension of skills – both those particular to the research itself and as part of a candidate's development toward becoming a professional researcher. Use the **VU MyPlan** to determine your contextualised researcher development needs. Your confirmation proposal will require you to nominate the **3 priority areas of researcher development** which have been identified through the **VU MyPlan** discussion with your supervisors. Please indicate:

- a) What those development areas were;
- b) How you have addressed them to date;
- c) How effective the skill development has been;
- d) How you will continue to use and embed those 3 priority areas of skill development.

9. Occupational Health & Safety Risks

All projects involve aspects of occupational health and safety, even if it is just the layout of your workstation. It is imperative that as the project is developed, all health and safety issues are identified, appropriate risk assessments are conducted and, where required by Occupational Health & Safety policy, a comprehensive induction is undertaken prior to accessing the relevant equipment, materials or research techniques. You should discuss any issues and requirements with your supervisor (and College Occupational Health & Safety officer or laboratory manager), to ensure early identification of the risks associated with the research project. This will allow identification, and purchase if necessary, of the appropriate protective equipment, as well as the time required to eliminate or minimize the risks.

Please provide details of health and safety issues related to the conduct of your research covering: 1) Identification of hazards associated with the research activities; 2) Assessment of risk; 3) Any safeguards or controls implemented, or to be implemented. Please note that, in cases where there are significant risks, a risk identification and management plan may be required to be submitted and approved prior to candidature being confirmed. Further clarification of requirements is available from the Graduate Research Centre or through your supervisors.

10. Conclusion

To conclude your proposal, make a statement about the study's contribution to knowledge and its significance to the field. You should focus on its theoretical significance and not just the potential implications of the study. Candidates completing a Professional Doctorate should make a statement about its contribution to the profession. Candidates completing a Masters (by Research) may find that the significance of their work is through replication of other studies in a new field, context or setting.

11. Budget

Each College has funding available to support the completion of the research and thesis. Consult your supervisor to find out about the funding that you have access to via your College. It is also important to indicate in your proposal if additional funding will be needed and if so, whether it has been approved, and/or how this additional funding will be sourced. Expenses should also cover items that are not funded by the University (e.g. Self-funded or via an industry sponsor), as well as those that are. Once you have submitted your budget and had it approved, you cannot expect to be granted additional funding, so please ensure that you have carefully costed what will be required to undertake your research project, so that your budget request is accurate.

12. Timeline

When representing your project plan and timeline please use a Gantt-chart. Along with the activities normally associated with conducting research, also include your plan for further training in specific research skills and knowledge and your plan to participate in the research community (such as attendance or presentation at research conferences or seminars at VU, locally, nationally or internationally).

Candidates who will be completing their thesis by creative product involving exhibition or performance need to include the timing of this event and final completion of the thesis.

Candidates who will be completing their thesis by publication need to include the timing of submissions for publication in the timeline.

A sample is provided below:

	200?				200?				200?			
	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
PhD core coursework												
Candidature Proposal												
Ethics Approval												
Literature Review (Ch. 2 - 1 st and updated drafts)												
Conference Attendance/Participation												
Additional Coursework/ methodology training												
Phase 1 Data collection												
1 st Draft – Chapter 3												
Training to support outcomes (pubs, conferences, 3MT etc)												
Phase 2 Data collection												
1 st Draft – Chapter 4												
Phase 3 Data collection												
1 st Draft – Chapter 5												
1 st Draft – Chapter 1												
1 st Draft – Chapter 6												
1 st Draft – Conclusion												
Thesis Revision of drafts and finalisation												
Submission												

13. Reference List

Only include references here that are cited in the proposal document. The panel understands that there are many accepted methods of referencing. Please ensure that whichever method you choose to use that you are consistent throughout the document.

APPENDIX B

Masters of Research by creative project and exegesis: Description and Written Candidature Proposal Guidelines

The Masters by Research (MRes) (by Creative project and exegesis) is comprised of two interrelated components:

1. The Creative Component (in whichever discipline)
2. The Critical Exegesis (or written analytical component)

The Masters by Research (by Creative project and exegesis): Description

The MRes (by Creative project and exegesis) should contribute to knowledge by 1) the production of a creative Component and 2) through the scholarly exegesis which situates that project. The MRes as a whole should demonstrate the development of new approaches or the innovative re-interpretation of existing ideas, theories or approaches.

1. The Creative Component (written, performed, exhibited):

A Creative Component is a fully conceptualised and stylistically developed creative work of international publishable/performable standard. It must:

- Be presented in a format which provides a durable record of the work undertaken for the creative Component. It must represent no more than 70% of the total work submitted for examination;
- Demonstrate understanding of the creative discipline;
- Provide evidence of the skills required to produce a coherent and professional standard piece of work;
- Present a creative undertaking which is in dynamic relation to the theoretical ideas explicitly developed within the Exegesis;
- Be of publishable standard/merits public display or presentation.

2. The Exegesis (or written analytical component):

- An Exegesis is the scholarly work which explicitly speaks to the concerns of the creative Component (stylistic, theoretical, aesthetic, historical etc).
- The Exegesis is a theorised and analytical discourse which presents new and authoritative contributions to knowledge within the discipline by discussing and situating the Creative Component, thereby providing the broad context for the ideas and precedents which inform the development of the Creative PhD.
- While more flexible in its form than a conventional thesis, an Exegesis should still produce a Research Question which serves the function of providing a conceptual overview of the discussion, situating the creative work within relevant fields of knowledge and debate.
- As scholarly discussion which functions to situate the Creative Component, the Exegesis
 - Might be produced in a standard academic style;
 - Might develop a hybrid discourse of analytical/creative research method and expression;
 - Might utilise a practice-led research methodology.
- For the MRes (Creative), the Exegetical component must comprise no less than 30% of the total work (eg. 12 - 20,000 words). The precise ratio (30/70 – 50/50) to be explicitly negotiated between the graduate researcher and supervisor.

The research at examination should demonstrate:

- A thorough understanding of the relevant techniques in the field of research (both creative and scholarly) by both a thorough review of the literature and by application;
- Competence in the chosen field through judicious selection and application of methods to yield a significant body of work;
- Capacity to critically evaluate and effectively present this body of work.

The MRes by Creative project and exegesis: Written Candidature Proposal Guidelines

Please note there are 2 components to your Confirmation of Candidature Proposal:

- The written proposal, according to the headings below. For most disciplines, the length of this Candidature Proposal should be at least 10 and no more than 16 pages (excluding references).
- The Presentation, which will involve speaking to a series of slides for 15-20 minutes and reading/presenting a short section of your creative work (5 minutes)

For a full-time Masters by Research student, confirmation of candidature will take place

- Approximately 4-6 months after commencement

1. Title

- a. What is the overall title of your MRes by Creative project and exegesis?
- b. What are the sub-titles of your i) Creative Component and ii) Exegesis?

2. Abstract

In approximately 150-200 words, this section should provide the reader with:

- An overview of your Creative Component: what it is, why will it be undertaken, what stylistic decisions have been/will be taken and why, and what ideas/questions are raised by your creative Component;
- An overview of your Exegesis: how it situates the Creative Component, why it is important that it should be undertaken, how it will be conducted and how you consider it will be an original contribution to knowledge;
- In what ways do you see these two components of your research to be interrelated and producing the overall conceptual and creative framework of the MRes research?

3. Aims of the MRes by Creative Project and Exegesis:

What are you aiming to achieve through your Creative research, both conceptually and creatively? What is the research problem/overarching question which you are seeking to address?

In addressing this overview question, you should consider the two interrelated components of your project:

- Describe the aims and background to your Creative Component.
 - What is it aiming to achieve in stylistic and/or theoretical terms?
- Describe the aims and background to your Exegesis.
 - Briefly refer to earlier or related research on which your research will build;
 - State the overarching research question and any sub-questions your research will seek to answer.

4. Literature Review

The purpose of the brief literature review is to demonstrate where your proposed MRes by Creative Project and Exegesis) research fits in with what is already known through existing literatures about your fields of research and praxis. It should achieve the following:

- What are the other related works (creative and/or theoretical) in which your Creative Component is situated? In what ways is it in dialogue with them?
- What are the other related works and debates (creative and/or theoretical) in which your Exegetical research is situated? In what ways is your project in dialogue with them?
- Analyse critically the major approaches in the research literature that you have identified, including theoretical traditions and key findings;
- Indicate any gap(s) within the literature, in knowledge or approaches to the field;

- Indicate how your research relates to and extends the existing literature and praxis, demonstrating that your research topic has not been undertaken previously. (Remember that the PhD has a higher requirement for a new contribution to knowledge than does the MRes). You should be specific in your selection of literature to include in this section.

NB: DO NOT include literature to support the methodology of your project here. This should be discussed in the Methodology section below.

5. Methodology and Conceptual Framework

The methodology (that is, the research paradigm, design or approach) and the proposed methods should be identified and justified in the context of your field(s) of research. You should explain how and why your methods are appropriate and feasible for the overall Research Question/topic.

What is your overall method or approach to addressing the Research Question in your Creative MRes?

- What ideas and theories have influenced your approach both to your Research Question and to decisions about structuring the Creative Component and the Exegesis?
- What method have you used to approach your Creative Component (in terms of medium, praxis, aesthetic and conceptual approaches)? How do those decisions reflect the overall direction of your research?
- What method have you selected for your Exegesis and why? (eg Practice-led Research, autoethnography, mixed methods, literary studies, a more scholarly approach, the development of a hybrid form etc)? Why? How does your method relate to the overall Research Question which your Creative PhD is seeking to address?
- What decisions have you made about the structure and shape of both your Creative Component and Exegesis? What was the rationale of those decisions about style in relation to your overall Creative MRes research question?
 - How did both components relate to a) other related works in the field and b) to the overall ideas which your Creative MRes research is seeking to explore?

You need to demonstrate also that the proposed study design is feasible and appropriate for what you aim to discover, and can be achieved with the time, facilities and support that is available. It should not be too broad or too narrow.

6. Contribution to Knowledge and Statement of Significance:

Contribution to Knowledge (Academic Contribution): Explain the benefits of the research (both creative and exegetical) in terms of generating innovative approaches to knowledge that can be disseminated to the academic community as well as to relevant communities of practice.

Statement of Significance (Practical Contribution): Describe how the research is significant and explain the benefits of the research for the community or a particular section of the community, such as industry or business processes or artistic practices. Please note that the nature and level of contribution to knowledge and practice must be commensurate with the HDR program that the candidate is enrolled in (refer to B and C above for more detail).

7. Professional Development

According to the **VU MyPlan** discussions you have had with your supervisor, what have been the 3 nominated priority areas for skills/learning development? How have you addressed acquiring these skills? How successfully have you developed in these nominated areas? Using your **VU MyPlan** as a guide, describe the skills/learning areas you anticipate you will need to focus on post confirmation to a) further the research and b) continue your development as a professional and independent researcher?

8. Ethics Approval

Specify whether Ethics Committee approval will be required for the project and if so, whether an ethics application has been submitted. Please supply details of any consultation which has been conducted with staff of the Ethics area of the VU Office for Research. Students are reminded that Ethics approval is needed for ANY study involving people such as interviews, surveys or observations, as well as for studies involving animal experimentation or genetically modified organisms that have implications for biosafety.

A brief statement outlining the ethical risks associated with the proposed research should be included in the proposal together with a justification for the approach and the proposed risk mitigation.

Please note, that for ethics purposes, the supervisor operates as the Chief Investigator of the research project. The prospective ethical risks/concerns should thus be fully discussed between student and supervisor, and referred to the College Research Director or the Chair of the Ethics Committee for clarification. While formal ethics approval is typically granted after candidature has been confirmed, it is highly recommended that any projects which may/are likely to require ethics approval should be subject to preliminary clarification and advice in order to enable confirmation to occur and to prevent time being lost in the undertaking of the research.

<http://research.vu.edu.au/ethics0.php> or researchethics@vu.edu.au

While the research may not require a formal ethics application, it remains the responsibility of the candidate to consider the full implications of undertaking research with ethical integrity, in areas such as:

- situating their argument within others' words and ideas (both conceptually and structurally)
- the personal and cultural implications of making use of others' stories/experiences for the purposes of the research
- ensuring that the proposed methodological approach is justifiable from an ethical perspective

9. Occupational Health & Safety Risks

All projects involve aspects of occupational health and safety, even if it is just the layout of your workstation. It is imperative that as the project is developed, all health and safety issues are identified, appropriate risk assessments are conducted and, where required by Occupational Health & Safety policy, a comprehensive induction is undertaken prior to accessing the relevant equipment, materials or research techniques. You should discuss any issues and requirements with your supervisor (and College Occupational Health & Safety officer or laboratory manager), to ensure early identification of the risks associated with the research project. This will allow identification, and purchase if necessary, of the appropriate protective equipment, as well as the time required to eliminate or minimize the risks.

Please provide details of health and safety issues related to the conduct of your research covering: 1) Identification of hazards associated with the research activities; 2) Assessment of risk; 3) Any safeguards or controls implemented, or to be implemented. Please note that, in cases where there are significant risks, a risk identification and management plan may be required to be submitted and approved prior to candidature being confirmed. Further clarification of requirements is available from the Graduate Research Centre or through your supervisors.

10. Budget

Each College has funding available to support the completion of the research and thesis. Consult your supervisor to find out about the funding that you have access to via your College. It is also important to indicate in your proposal if additional funding will be needed and if so, whether it has been approved, and/or how this additional funding will be sourced. Expenses should also cover items that are not funded by the University (e.g. Self-funded or via an industry sponsor), as well as those that are. Once you have submitted your budget and had it approved, you cannot expect to be granted additional funding, so please ensure that you have carefully costed what will be required to undertake your research project, so that your budget request is accurate.

11. Conclusion

To conclude your proposal, make a statement about both the Creative Component and the Exegesis' contribution to knowledge and its significance to the field. You should focus on both its theoretical and creative significance.

12. Timeline

Remember, that in a Creative Masters by Research, you have two related but different aspects of your project which you need to progress in tandem. When representing your project plan and timeline please use a Gantt-chart as suggested below. Along with the activities normally associated with conducting research, also include your plan for further training in specific research skills and knowledge and your plan to participate in the research community (such as attendance or presentation at research conferences or seminars at VU, locally, nationally or internationally). Candidates who will be completing their thesis by creative product involving exhibition or performance need also to include the timing of this event and final completion of the exegesis. Candidates who will be completing their thesis by publication need to include the timing of submissions for publication in the timeline. Please use the following categories to devise your own GANTT chart toward a timely submission of your research project:

My Research Project: Timetable to Completion (for part-time students, 1 year =2)

	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4	
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2
Reflecting and Planning with supervisor as reflected in VU MyPlan														
Formulation of research project/question and relationship to fields of knowledge (creative and critical)														
Confirmation of Candidature Proposal (including initial Literature Review and ethics considerations)														
Review of VU MyPlan (post-confirmation and post progress report/s)														
Creative Component: Draft Proposal														
Creative Component: Draft Section/elements														
Exegesis: Plan and Draft Introduction														
Exegesis: Draft and Revise sections														
Formal Ethics Application if required														
Revising Literature Review														
Additional research and professional skills training (as per VU MyPlan)														
Communication and Networking (publications, conferences, 3MT, Communities of Practice, etc) (as per VU MyPlan)														
Career planning and CV management (as per VU MyPlan)														
Creative Component: Complete/Perform/Exhibit														
Exegesis: Revision of drafts and finalisation														
Submission														

Please adapt this table (using Word Table tools) to reflect any additional elements which may be required by your research project, plus any variations to time (eg intermissions, part-time status)

13. Reference List

Only include references here that are cited in the proposal document. The panel understands that there are many accepted methods of referencing. Please ensure that whichever method you choose to use that you are consistent throughout the document.

SAMPLE OF YOUR CREATIVE WORK:

Include a short representative section of your Creative Component (the equivalent of 1500 words prose, 150-180 lines of poetry, 5 minutes performance) to present at your Confirmation Panel. Depending on the nature of your presentation, you may like to distribute the creative work to the panel beforehand, together with the written Candidature Proposal (above).

Appendix C

PhD by creative project and exegesis: Description and Written Candidature Proposal Guidelines

The PhD (by Creative project and exegesis) is comprised of two interrelated components:

1. The Creative Component (in whichever discipline)
2. The Critical Exegesis (or written analytical component)

PhD (by creative project and exegesis): Description

The PhD (by Creative Project and Exegesis) should uncover or create new knowledge by 1) the production of a creative Component and 2) through the scholarly exegesis which situates that project. The PhD as a whole should demonstrate the discovery of new information, development of new approaches or the innovative re-interpretation of existing ideas, theories or approaches.

1. The Creative Component (written, performed, exhibited):

A Creative Component is a fully conceptualised and stylistically developed creative work of international publishable/performable standard. It must:

- Be presented in a format which provides a durable record of the work undertaken for the creative Component. It must represent no more than 70% of the total work submitted for examination;
- Demonstrate understanding of the creative discipline;
- Provide evidence of the skills required to produce a coherent and professional standard piece of work;
- Present a creative undertaking which is in dynamic relation to the theoretical ideas explicitly developed within the Exegesis;
- Be of publishable standard/merits public display or presentation.

2. The Exegesis (or written analytical component):

- An Exegesis is the scholarly work which explicitly speaks to the concerns of the creative Component (stylistic, theoretical, aesthetic, historical etc).
- The Exegesis is a theorised and analytical discourse which presents new and authoritative contributions to knowledge within the discipline by discussing and situating the Creative Component, thereby providing the broad context for the ideas and precedents which inform the development of the Creative PhD.
- While more flexible in its form than a conventional thesis, an Exegesis should still produce a Research Question which serves the function of providing a conceptual overview of the discussion, situating the creative work within relevant fields of knowledge and debate.
- As scholarly discussion which functions to situate the Creative Component, the Exegesis
 - Might be produced in a standard academic style;
 - Might develop a hybrid discourse of analytical/creative research method and expression;
 - Might utilise a practice-led research methodology.
- For the PhD (Creative), the Exegetical component must comprise no less than 30% of total work presented (e.g. 18,000-30,000 words). The precise ratio (30/70 – 50/50) to be explicitly negotiated between the graduate researcher and supervisor.

The research at examination should demonstrate:

- A deep and thorough understanding of the relevant techniques in the field of research (both creative and scholarly) by both a thorough review of the literature and by application;
- Competence in the chosen field through judicious selection and application of methods to yield a significant body of work;
- Capacity to critically evaluate and effectively present this body of work;
- Independence of thought and approach;
- An original contribution to knowledge.

PhD by creative project and exegesis: Written Candidature Proposal Guidelines

Confirmation of Candidature usually takes place:

- After the successful completion of the coursework units
- Approximately 6-9 months after commencement (for full-time students)

Please note there are 2 components to your Confirmation of Candidature Proposal:

- The written proposal, according to the headings below. For most disciplines, the length of this Candidature Proposal should be at least 10 and no more than 16 pages (excluding references).
- The Presentation, which will involve speaking to a series of slides for 15-20 minutes and reading/presenting a short section of your creative work (5 minutes)

1. Title

- a. What is the overall title of your PhD by Creative project and exegesis?
- b. What are the sub-titles of your i) Creative Component and ii) Exegesis?

2. Abstract

In approximately 150-200 words, this section should provide the reader with

- An overview of your Creative Component: what it is, why will it be undertaken, what stylistic decisions have been/will be taken and why, and what ideas/questions are raised by your creative Component;
- An overview of your Exegesis: how it situates the Creative Component, why it is important that it should be undertaken, how it will be conducted and how you consider it will be an original contribution to knowledge;
- In what ways do you see these two components of your research to be interrelated and producing the overall conceptual and creative framework of the PhD research?

3. Aims of the PhD by Creative Project and Exegesis:

What are you aiming to achieve through your Creative research, both conceptually and creatively? What is the research problem/overarching question which you are seeking to address?

In addressing this overview question, you should consider the two interrelated components of your project:

- Describe the aims and background to your Creative Component.
 - What is it aiming to achieve in stylistic and/or theoretical terms?
- Describe the aims and background to your Exegesis.
 - Briefly refer to earlier or related research on which your research will build;
 - State the overarching research question and any sub-questions your research will seek to answer.

4. Literature Review

The purpose of the brief literature review is to demonstrate where your proposed PhD by Creative Project and Exegesis) research fits in with what is already known through existing literatures about your fields of research and praxis. It should achieve the following:

- What are the other related works (creative and/or theoretical) in which your Creative Component is situated? In what ways is it in dialogue with them?
- What are the other related works and debates (creative and/or theoretical) in which your Exegetical research is situated? In what ways is your project in dialogue with them?

- Analyse critically the major approaches in the research literature that you have identified, including theoretical traditions and key findings;
- Indicate any gap(s) within the literature, in knowledge or approaches to the field;
- Indicate how your research relates to and extends the existing literature and praxis, demonstrating that your research topic has not been undertaken previously. (Remember that the PhD has a higher requirement for a new contribution to knowledge than does the MRes). You should be specific in your selection of literature to include in this section.

NB: DO NOT include literature to support the methodology of your project here. This should be discussed in the Methodology section below.

5. Methodology and Conceptual Framework

The methodology (that is, the research paradigm, design or approach) and the proposed methods should be identified and justified in the context of your field(s) of research. You should explain how and why your methods are appropriate and feasible for the over Research Question/topic.

What is your overall method or approach to addressing the Research Question in your Creative PhD?

- What ideas and theories have influenced your approach both to your Research Question and to decisions about structuring the Creative Component and the Exegesis?
- What method have you used to approach your Creative Component (in terms of medium, praxis, aesthetic and conceptual approaches)? How do those decisions reflect the overall direction of your research?
- What method have you selected for your Exegesis and why? (eg Practice-led Research, autoethnography, mixed methods, literary studies, a more scholarly approach, the development of a hybrid form etc)? Why? How does your method relate to the overall Research Question which your Creative PhD is seeking to address?
- What decisions have you made about the structure and shape of both your Creative Component and Exegesis? What was the rationale of those decisions about style in relation to your overall Creative PhD research question?
 - How did both components relate to a) other related works in the field and b) to the overall ideas which your Creative PhD research is seeking to explore?

You need to demonstrate also that the proposed study design is feasible and appropriate for what you aim to discover, and can be achieved with the time, facilities and support that is available. It should not be too broad or too narrow.

6. Contribution to Knowledge and Statement of Significance:

Contribution to Knowledge (Academic Contribution): Explain the benefits of the research (both creative and exegetical) in terms of generating innovative approaches to knowledge that can be disseminated to the academic community as well as to relevant communities of practice.

Statement of Significance (Practical Contribution): Describe how the research is significant and explain the benefits of the research for the community or a particular section of the community, such as industry or business processes or artistic practices. Please note that the nature and level of contribution to knowledge and practice must be commensurate with the HDR program that the candidate is enrolled in (refer to B and C above for more detail).

7. Professional Development

According to the **VU MyPlan** discussions you have had with your supervisor, what have been the 3 nominated priority areas for skills/learning development? How have you addressed acquiring these skills? How successfully

have you developed in these nominated areas? Using your **VU MyPlan** as a guide, describe the skills/learning areas you anticipate you will need to focus on post confirmation to a) further the research and b) continue your development as a professional and independent researcher?

8. Ethics Approval

Specify whether Ethics Committee approval will be required for the project and if so, whether an ethics application has been submitted. Please supply details of any consultation which has been conducted with staff of the Ethics area of the VU Office for Research. Students are reminded that Ethics approval is needed for ANY study involving people such as interviews, surveys or observations, as well as for studies involving animal experimentation or genetically modified organisms that have implications for biosafety.

A brief statement outlining the ethical risks associated with the proposed research should be included in the proposal together with a justification for the approach and the proposed risk mitigation.

Please note, that for ethics purposes, the supervisor operates as the Chief Investigator of the research project. The prospective ethical risks/concerns should thus be fully discussed between student and supervisor, and referred to the College Research Director or the Chair of the Ethics Committee for clarification. While formal ethics approval is typically granted after candidature has been confirmed, it is highly recommended that any projects which may/are likely to require ethics approval should be subject to preliminary clarification and advice in order to enable confirmation to occur and to prevent time being lost in the undertaking of the research. <http://research.vu.edu.au/ethics0.php> or researchethics@vu.edu.au

While the research may not require a formal ethics application, it remains the responsibility of the candidate to consider the full implications of undertaking research with ethical integrity, in areas such as:

- situating their argument within others' words and ideas (both conceptually and structurally)
- the personal and cultural implications of making use of others' stories/experiences for the purposes of the research
- ensuring that the proposed methodological approach is justifiable from an ethical perspective

9. Occupational Health & Safety Risks

All projects involve aspects of occupational health and safety, even if it is just the layout of your workstation. It is imperative that as the project is developed, all health and safety issues are identified, appropriate risk assessments are conducted and, where required by Occupational Health & Safety policy, a comprehensive induction is undertaken prior to accessing the relevant equipment, materials or research techniques. You should discuss any issues and requirements with your supervisor (and College Occupational Health & Safety officer or laboratory manager), to ensure early identification of the risks associated with the research project. This will allow identification, and purchase if necessary, of the appropriate protective equipment, as well as the time required to eliminate or minimize the risks.

Please provide details of health and safety issues related to the conduct of your research covering: 1) Identification of hazards associated with the research activities; 2) Assessment of risk; 3) Any safeguards or controls implemented, or to be implemented. Please note that, in cases where there are significant risks, a risk identification and management plan may be required to be submitted and approved prior to candidature being confirmed. Further clarification of requirements is available from the Graduate Research Centre or through your supervisors.

10. Budget

Each College has funding available to support the completion of the research and thesis. Consult your supervisor to find out about the funding that you have access to via your College. It is also important to indicate in your proposal if additional funding will be needed and if so, whether it has been approved, and/or how this additional

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11. Conclusion

To conclude your proposal, make a statement about both the Creative Component and the Exegesis' contribution to knowledge and its significance to the field. You should focus on both its theoretical and creative significance.

12. Timeline

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Revising Literature Review														
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Creative Component: Complete/Perform/Exhibit														
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Submission														

Please adapt this table (using Word Table tools) to reflect any additional elements which may be required by your research project, plus any variations to time (eg intermissions, part-time status)

13. Reference List

Only include references here that are cited in the proposal document. The panel understands that there are many accepted methods of referencing. Please ensure that whichever method you choose to use that you are consistent throughout the document.

SAMPLE OF YOUR CREATIVE WORK:

Include a short representative section of your Creative Component (the equivalent of 1500 words prose, 150-180 lines of poetry, 5 minutes performance) to present at your Confirmation Panel. Depending on the nature of your presentation, you may like to distribute the creative work to the panel beforehand, together with the written Candidature Proposal (above.)

APPENDIX D - Graduate Research Supervision Agreement

The purpose of this agreement is to initiate discussion between the supervisory team and graduate research candidate at the beginning of the research degree. It is designed to highlight areas where graduate research candidate and their supervisors may have questions and to assist them in gaining a mutual understanding of their roles. While not all of the issues listed here are appropriate in every situation, they should be seen as triggers for discussion to be customised for each situation. Both supervisors and graduate research candidates are responsible for the quality of the graduate research candidate's work and for meeting the timelines and academic hurdles required by the Graduate Research Centre to meet the University's Policies relating to graduate research Supervision and Candidature.

It is recommended that the research candidate and supervisor/s discuss this agreement at their initial meeting. The form must then be completed and submitted with the Confirmation of Candidature documentation when presenting for candidature.

1. Candidate Details

Name	<input type="text"/>	College	<input type="text"/>
Thesis Title/Topic	<input type="text"/>		

2. Supervisor Details

Name	Supervisory Status	Contribution to supervision (%)	Nature of Contribution to Supervision

3. Supervision Meeting Arrangements

To be discussed between supervisor/s and research candidate with arrangements documented below.

Items for Discussion (General):	Agreed Arrangements:
What will be the frequency of formal supervision meetings? Usual meeting time/dates? Duration of meetings (N.B.: minimum fortnightly for f/t candidates and monthly for p/t candidates)?	
How will formal meetings take place i.e.: face to face, telephone, Skype?	
Who is responsible for initiating meetings, including rescheduling?	
Who will prepare and decide on the meeting agenda and what will be discussed at the meeting?	
What are the expectations of the meeting? What role will each supervisor play?	
Are there any anticipated absences of candidate, supervisor/s over the enrolment period?	
What is the deadline for submission of draft material for review prior to the meeting?	
How will records of meetings be made and shared?	
What will be the availability of the Supervisors outside scheduled meeting times?	
What other kinds of support/knowledge/training are required for the proposed research e.g. research process, academic writing, literature review, data storage and retrieval, statistics, etc?	

4. Contact, Engagement and Feedback: Expectations and Protocols

Meetings and Communication Strategies:	Agreed Arrangements:

Are there any seminars, group or team meetings that the candidate is required to attend regularly and contribute to?	
Review of Drafts and Feedback:	
What is the agreed timeframe for supervisor feedback on drafts?	
How will feedback be provided?	
Will the Principal Supervisor provide feedback or will the responsibilities for feedback be shared across the team?	
How can the candidate raise questions about the quantity, quality or timeliness of the feedback?	

5. Supervision Process

Advice and Support:	Agreed Arrangements:
What support will be offered in developing the candidature proposal?	
What support will be offered in developing the conceptual content of the research project: e.g. resources, contacts? How much support, and of what kind, can each supervisor bring, given their respective expertise and knowledge of the topic area?	
What other kinds of support/knowledge are required for the proposed research e.g. research process, academic writing, literature review, data storage and retrieval, statistics, etc?	
What resources do the supervisors know of and how much help can they provide?	

6. Any Other Issues

Please document below any other arrangements discussed between supervisor/s and research candidate

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7. Declaration:

We agree to abide by the arrangements outlined in this agreement other than where there is mutual agreement to amend. We understand also that the graduate researcher and supervisors are expected to review the agreement at least annually (normally as part of the main annual progress review). However, any of us have the right to request a review and amendments at any time.

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Graduate Researcher's Name

Signature

Date

--	--	--

Principal Supervisor's Name

Signature

Date

--	--	--

Associate Supervisor's Name

Signature

Date

--	--	--

Associate Supervisor's Name

Signature

Date

Office Use Only: Date Received by GRC:

Last updated: June 2017