

OFFICE FOR RESEARCHER TRAINING, QUALITY & INTEGRITY

Pre-Submission Review Guidelines

Statement of Purpose

Congratulations, you are almost at the end of your research journey!

The Pre-Submission Review is the third milestone you will meet in your Higher Degree by Research (HDR) enrolment. This milestone is an opportunity for you to present your research and discuss your progress to date, as well as your expected progress to your completion date, while receiving valuable feedback from a Panel of experts in the research community. Your presentation will be conducted in a supportive and engaging environment, thus enabling you to continue to enhance your communication and presentation skills within an academic context. The feedback you receive is designed to ensure that you are on track to a timely and successful completion, that your research skills are developing appropriately and that the supervisory arrangements are appropriate.

A. Deadlines and Progression:

Doctoral Candidates:	Within 36 months EFT of initial enrolment and after successful completion of Mid-Candidature (usually 12 months EFT after the completion of Mid-Candidature (if applicable). (3.0 Consumed Load)
Professional Doctorates	Within 30 months EFT of initial enrolment and after successful completion of Candidature (usually 12 months EFT after the completion of Candidature. (2.5 Consumed Load)
Masters (Research)	Within 18 months EFT of initial enrolment and after successful completion of Mid-Candidature (usually 6-8 months EFT after the completion of Mid-Candidature (if applicable). (1.5 Consumed Load)

Candidates who wish to submit their thesis prior to their standard duration due date must request an early Pre-Submission Review. It is a requirement to have Pre-Submission confirmed prior to submitting your thesis for examination.

Candidates must present for their Pre-Submission Review 12 months EFT from the date of approval for Mid-Candidature approval (if applicable) but no later than the timelines stipulated below. Failure to do so may result in the commencement of Unsatisfactory Progress proceedings:

3.5 years EFT for Doctoral candidates;

2 years EFT for Master by Research candidates.

B. Pre-Submission Review Components

The Pre-Submission Review will take the following into consideration:

- The quality of the research, including problem recognition, conceptualisation, research design, analytical and interpretive skills, and overall scholarly standard of the research.
- Has there been a significant change in research direction since Mid-Candidature confirmation (if applicable)? If yes, the candidate is required to submit a new research proposal to VU Research for consideration by the relevant Flagship. Significant changes may include:
 - a. a major change in resourcing and/or support;
 - b. a change in academic supervision for the new research direction.
- Timeliness of progress.
- Development of transferable skills developing appropriately via workshop attendance and training programs as per their program requirements and the demands of their particular project and goals? Reference should be made to the most recent VU MyPlan to identify strategic planning for priority skills/learning areas.
- Provision of resources, supervision and facilities.
- Responding to the recommendations, if any, of the Mid-Candidature Review (if applicable).

C. Requirements for Pre-Submission Review

i. Oral Presentation (20 mins):

The candidate is required to make a 20 minute oral presentation to the Review Panel and University community.

There are two key parts to the presentation:

1. The research project. This part of the oral presentation should focus on one aspect of research undertaken to date; this should be clearly situated within the overall context of the whole project and note anticipated future directions of the research program.
2. Progress to date and plans for progress to timely completion.

It is expected that the candidate will use power point slides (a maximum of 10) to support their presentation. The presentation will be followed by time for questions from members of the audience (10 mins). Feedback from the Review Panel will be given in a closed session with the panel members only (10 mins). All Supervisors will be asked to leave the room for the final session to review overall progress to date (this will be in lieu of the Annual Progress Review) (10 mins).

ii. Written Submission:

1. As this is the Pre-Submission milestone, it is expected that thesis submission will occur within six months (EFT). It is expected that candidates submit a draft of their thesis (or exegesis with publications or exegesis and creative work); a Table of Contents; References and Appendices.
2. A summary paper (no more than 5 pages), briefly outlining the plan of work required to complete the thesis and submit for examination.

D. Constitution and Composition of Review Panel

The role of the Review Panel is to undertake a high quality and independent review of the two elements of the Pre-Submission Review: the written submission and oral presentation.

The proposed Panel Composition* is as follows:

- Chair – Flagship Institute Deputy Director or their nominee.
- 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.
- 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. It is expected that this panel member should be external** to the Field of Research (FoR) in which the candidate is enrolled.

* Where possible, the Panel should be the same Panel convened for Confirmation of Candidature and Mid-Candidature review (if applicable).

** If an external panel member to the University is nominated, a request for reimbursement of travel costs must be approved by the Flagship Institute Deputy Director prior to confirmation of the panel.

E. Review Process:

- Candidates and supervisors will be advised of the scheduled Pre-Submission oral presentation date shortly following Mid-Candidature approval by the Candidature Support Officer (CSO), ORTQI
- Panel composition: Where possible, the Mid-Candidature Panel (if applicable, otherwise the Confirmation of Candidature Panel) will reconvene. Where this is not possible, the Principal Supervisor will nominate an academic and active researcher with appropriate qualifications to the CSO, ORTQI, at least one month prior to the scheduled presentation date, for approval by the Flagship Institute Deputy Director or nominee.
- Once the panel has been approved by the Flagship Institute Deputy Director or their nominee, meeting invitations will be circulated to all participants in a timely manner by the CSO, ORTQI.
- A completed *'Application for Pre-Submission Review'* will be due two weeks prior to the scheduled presentation date and will be circulated to the panel by the CSO, ORTQI, with the written submission.
- When the panel convenes, the Flagship will designate a panel writer responsible for the draft of the final panel report. This is normally the Chair or another panel member.
- The CSO, ORTQI will send a global email indicating the time, venue, date of the presentation and inviting fellow graduate researchers and supervisors to attend the scheduled oral presentations.
- Following the oral presentation and discussion, Panel members will discuss the written submission and oral presentation in private to determine the classification category. At the conclusion of these discussions, 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 Pre-Submission review is forwarded to the CSO, ORTQI, within 10 working days of the oral presentation.

- Upon receipt of the report, the CSO, ORTQI, will email all relevant documentation to the candidate/supervisors and confirm the Panel's classification of the review.
- Suggested feedback will be forwarded to the CSO, ORTQI, for distribution to the candidate and supervisors.
- Final approval of the '*Application for Pre-Submission Review*' lies with the Flagship Institute Deputy Director.

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 (documentary evidence required). The request would normally need to be made no less than 14 days prior to the scheduled Pre-Submission presentation.

F. Recommendation of the Pre-Submission Review

The panel will recommend one of the following outcomes for the approval of the Flagship Institute Deputy Director:

1. The outcome is satisfactory and the candidate should continue.
2. The outcome is satisfactory, subject to the recommendations of the Panel being made within the timelines stipulated by the Panel (normally within 3 months EFT).
3. The candidate is not making satisfactory progress (as detailed in the Panel Evaluation) and the candidate has 1 month EFT to provide a response to the Panel. Failure to respond or progress to be satisfactory will result in Unsatisfactory Progress proceedings being invoked.

If applicable, the panel will also recommend whether an extension to candidature (doctoral) be granted.

G. Scholarship holders

Scholarship recipients are reminded that continuation of a scholarship is subject to satisfactory progress being made. If eligible, an Extension to Scholarship can be applied for as part of the Pre-Submission review. Scholarship stipends will normally be suspended under either of the following conditions:

1. The candidate does not present for Pre-Submission review under the timelines stipulated above; and/or
2. The Flagship commences Unsatisfactory Progress proceedings.