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Curtin Institute of Radio Astronomy
HDR student record

Welcome to the Curtin Institute of Radio Astronomy.   This document is to record and track important review processes to complete your studies with us. A copy must also be sent to the Graduate Student Coordinator.

This document is important and must be kept up-to-date in consultation with your supervisor.

Student Name:
Student ID:
Preliminary supervisory panel:
Commencement date:

Degree:	**PhD/Masters**	**Full-time/Part-time**
Funding:	**RTP CSC Other (please indicate**	
Duration:	**2 years/3 years/4 years**	

** this plan should be amended to best fit the student's duration at CIRA

There are a number of formal Office of Research & Development (ORD), Science & Engineering (SAE) Faculty and CIRA reviews for every student undertaking a higher degree. These are set out below. You and your supervisor should plan these dates within two weeks of commencing (enrolment) and review regularly to ensure you are on track.

The timeline below is based on a 3 year full-time PhD. For degrees with a shorter time lines, generally, the timeline should be expanded or shrunk accordingly. For example, an 18-month MSc degree should have a half way review at 9 months (rather than 18 months) and a pre-completion review at 15 months (rather than 30 months). However, in the case of such a short degree, not all Journal Club presentations will be required (so as to avoid presentations every 3 months). The details of the timeline should be determined by the supervisor, with agreement from the Directors.

Each review comprises a report and other paperwork delivered to the panel two weeks before the panel meeting which should be after the corresponding Journal Club presentation as outlined below.

Preparation of Candidacy Research summary & formal submission to SAE Faculty
https://research.curtin.edu.au/guides/forms/forms.cfm#candidacy

Candidacy Research summary submission to CIRA Directors & your panel	due: (insert A)
Complete application for Candidacy form up to Part 5, item 4	due: (same date as above A)
Journal Club – review of candidacy & research plan	due: (insert B)
Short viva interview after Journal Club	due: (same date as above B)
Submission of Application for Candidacy - Deadline	due: *enrollment+6 months*

The formal SAE application for candidacy needs to be submitted 6 months after your enrolment. Two to three weeks before this deadline, the research summary submission should be sent to the CIRA Directors and your nominated review panel. The Journal Club presentation should be scheduled approximately one week after this to allow you time to consider the panel response.

The panel for the viva interview will comprise three CIRA staff members who are not your supervisors. The purpose is to review the research proposal, proposed thesis committee, etc, and most importantly ensure you are capable and fully engaged with your research plan. The viva panel will discuss any conditions to be included on the Candidacy submission with the supervisor(s) afterward, as well as providing brief feedback to you . If all is good then you will obtain a 'yes, with no conditions' recommendation to be 'Confirmed for Candidature' when you submit the form to the Faculty.

Overview of Presentations Required

Time	What	Duration of talk*
6 months	Candidacy	30min talk at JC
12 months	Review of paper (outside immediate area of expertise)	20min talk at JC
18 months	Mid-PhD Review & Practise Conference talk on first results	20min talk at JC
24 months	Review of paper (outside immediate area of expertise)	20min talk at JC
30 months	Pre-completion Review & Summary	30min talk at JC
36 months	Pre-completion summary (if not submitting)	30min talk at JC
36 months/Completion	Full seminar post thesis submittance	45min seminar

*including questions

Journal Club presentation – review of paper - due: *commence+~12 months*

18 month (half-way review, due 18 months after enrolment).
At this review the panel will review your progress with the main research of your PhD, along with a draft of Chapter 1 (introduction and literature review) and at least a start of Chapter 2 (research methods/data).

18m review – submission of report* & drafts of Chapters/papers to panel   due: 2 weeks before interview
18m review – panel interview   due: *enrolment+18 months*
18m Journal Club Practise Conference talk on first results of 20mins   (around same date as above)

The review panel will be as similar to your Candidacy panel as possible. The purpose of this review is to ensure that adequate progress has been made with the research and that it aligns with the candidacy research plan. The student is expected to have drafted Chapter 1 of their thesis and made a good start on Chapter 2 (normally to cover methods and data inputs). Changes to supervisors, arrangements or degree level (PhD/Masters etc conversions) will be notified at this time. All documentation should be provided to the panel 2 weeks before interview.

Journal Club presentation – review of paper - due: *commence+~24 months*

Pre-completion review (due 30 months after commencement)
At this review the panel will review evidence of completed portions of your research (as per your candidacy research plan) along with a plan to complete and submit your thesis within the next 6 months.

30m review – submission of report* & drafts of Chapters/papers   due: 2 weeks before interview
30m review – panel interview   due: *enrolment+30 months*
30m Journal Club: Pre-completion summary of 30mins   (around same date as above)

The review panel will be as similar to your Candidacy panel as possible. The purpose of this review is to ensure that significant progress has been made with the research and that it is on track to submit on time (3 years). The student is expected to have ~3-4 Chapters in draft at this stage and at least one journal paper submitted. All documentation should be provided to the panel 2 weeks before interview.

36 month review (due 3 years after commencement)
This review is only required if you are requesting an extension beyond 3 years. The panel will examine evidence that you will complete within the extension and will need to see current copies of all material (i.e. completed & draft chapters). All documentation should be provided to the panel 2 weeks before interview.
3rd year review – panel interview   due: *enrolment+36 months*

36 months/completion – A full celebratory seminar on your research and results!

CIRA Process of formal reviews

Background & expectations
CIRA holds a formal set of reviews for students at the pre-candidacy (6 month) and later stages of their PhD research to assist both the supervisory panel and the student –
- · in ensuring that they are on track, and
- · to provide an independent, expert review of the student's progress

The review process has the additional benefit in that it has enabled CIRA staff to be more aware of the range of our students' research, and to be able to assist each of our students outside of their formal supervisory panel.

The panel review processes should be viewed as wholly constructive. Where necessary advice is to be conveyed to the supervisor who will then consider if, and how, this should be addressed. There is no formal system that ensures that the panel's recommendations are implemented.

A: Pre-Candidacy review
The pre-candidacy review allows an independent panel to assess whether the student has a good grasp of the research, topic and context, and that they are motivated and well supported to succeed over their next two-and-a-half years' research. The discussion is not intended to be a complete assessment of all aspects of the proposed research as this should be an ongoing discussion between the student and their supervisory panel.
The names of the panel members will be notified to the student in advance and the viva discussion will usually take place on the same day as the Student's Journal Club.

Purpose
The viva is to review student progress and support, their research proposal, proposed thesis committee, etc., and most importantly ensure that the student is proving capable and fully engaged with their research plan.
The outcomes are to determine if any conditions are to be included on the Application for Candidacy submission (Part 5, question 5), as well as providing brief feedback to the supervisory team and the student.

Format of discussion
- General review of candidacy progress (first 6m) & plans: e.g. 'what is the most relevant paper you have read so far & why? What do you think the most challenging aspect of your research will be?
- Specific discussion of questions arising from the candidacy research plan: e.g. 'how will you… who will you be working with…' etc to probe student's appreciation of the research.
- Other questions to probe how the student is tracking; hours worked, general comfort level with research etc (try to find any emerging issues, supervisors being absent etc.)

The student is invited to ask questions as well as being free to make comments on the process/feedback.

B: CIRA 18 month & 30 month reviews
The reports for the 18 month and 30 month reviews are where the student highlights their achievements and challenges faced through the last period and to track progress against the overall research plan.

These reports must be submitted with other material (e.g. chapter drafts, papers) as noted in the detail for the 18 month and 30 month reviews. A copy of **this document** (recording the key review dates) will also be required.

The Report should be ~2-3 pages long containing the following:
Thesis title
Research Review – About 1-2 pages, summarising
          Research that been completed & results
          Any observational experience
          A summary of the current work at hand

          Plans for publication of current work
          List of meetings attended

List of journal club, seminar, etc talks presented
Any other activities – membership of Organising committees, roles etc
Future work – About 1 page, to cover
What work has yet to be started: are the data ready?
Are there any additional skills to be acquired, software to be written?

Progress against research plan
Revision of the research plan
List of published or proposed papers
Thesis completion timeline in detail (for 30 month review only) including whether you think you might be applying for a an extension

References are not required within the report as they are expected to be included in the draft chapter(s) by the time of these reviews. The panel will be looking for assurance that you can conclude research and interpret your results. The panel should inform CIRA Admin if a student is intending to apply for an extension so that the process can be complete before 36 months.

Guide questions for all reviews
This section outlines the typical set of questions the panel and student should cover:

0. (Not part of the viva discussion with the student). Pre-viva, the panel should do an overall review of candidacy research proposal, reports and draft chapter(s). Check length and general content: are these clear, directive and with evidence of sufficient background reading and awareness of the subject matter?

1. Has the student met regularly with their supervisor(s)? Do you have supervision notes/records (lab books, sets of notes from (weekly) meetings – may be online)? If not, how are they capturing discussions & tracking progress?
1a. Has the student had any difficulties, academic or personal, which might have affected their progress?

2. What has been the most interesting part of the research work to date? Prompt – it could be a paper, discovery, a first or reanalysis of prior work, or another outcome.

3. Which research related activities has the student participated in? (journal club, conferences, retreats, busy days/weeks, workshops, etc) Are there any conferences, workshops or other activities that the student is preparing for in the near future (i.e. within 6-12 months)?

4. Does the student have sufficient skills, support, computing resources, software etc? If not, what else is needed and how will this be gained?

5. The panel may ask a couple of specific questions relating to the research: e.g. how will the student do (this analysis)? Who will the student be working with…', 'what is the biggest challenge with the data' (reliability, sensitivity), etc to probe student's appreciation of the research techniques, team they are working with, etc.

6. What does the student think the most challenging aspect of their research will be? Which skills will the student need to acquire next? (e.g. analytical techniques, computing skills, other…?)

7. Is the student's plan to obtain observational data on track (if telescope proposals are foreseen).
What is the fall back plan if these do not eventuate?

8. Finish with question(s) to probe how the student is tracking; (sensible) hours worked, general comfort level with research, attendance, attitude to travel/irregular observing hours, etc: identify any real, perceived or emerging issues, e.g. supervisors being absent, etc.

Then discuss the plan of work to be done between this review and the next.

Feedback
The student should be informed on the process for feedback and the timeline involved. It is recommended that the panel agree the highlights, concerns and recommendation within 3 working days of the discussion.
The Chair should record main highlights (positives) and concerns in about 0.5 -1 pages to be discussed with the Supervisor(s) before being discussed with the student. For the pre-candidacy review, this report will also record the outcome, i.e. a recommendation to proceed to candidacy with/without reservations or other conditions as discussed next.

Candidacy Submission Recommendations
The panel will choose from one of three classes of recommendations for the submission of candidacy.

No conditions
If all is deemed satisfactory, then the student should receive a clear submission for candidacy 'with no conditions'.

With conditions
If there are reservations of the student's ability or progress, then a plan of work to be completed within 6 months from the date of the panel review should be set. This becomes a 'condition' on the Candidacy submission. There are many degrees of a 'with conditions' outcome ranging from fairly minor to borderline deferral.

The situations that might result in a 'with conditions' outcome might be
- the initial analysis work has not been well conducted or is not well reviewed, or
- the student lacks suitable background knowledge or a real understanding of the context of the proposed research work, or
-the panel has concerns on the scope of the research being proposed (either too limited or too ambitious).

Recommendations to undertake advanced English and/or presentation skills will be a 'with conditions' outcome given these deficiencies need to be addressed early in candidature.

Deferral of Candidacy
If there are serious concerns on the student's ability or other factors that the panel perceives will impact the Student's success there must be urgent follow-up with the supervisory team to determine a suitable cause of action. Such actions would usually include deferral of submission of candidacy (including a re-run of this pre-candidacy process) and documentation of the decisions made.

Annual Progress Reports (APRs)
See: http://research.curtin.edu.au/guides/hdrguidelines/apr.cfm
Requests for short annual progress reports are made by ORD each year; usually opening on 14 Feb and closing on 31 March. Reports are to be submitted online and the process requires inputs from the student and the supervisor.

ORD International Sponsored Student Reports (ISSR)
The International Sponsored Student Report (ISSR) reporting period runs from 1-31 August.

Additional resources and assistance
Candidacy approval releases the FIMS grant ($2000 pa) from the faculty for travel and other minor research expenses. Tina Sallis can assist with budgets and access to these funds. Please note that this Faculty money should be spent before any ICRAR money.

The Graduate Research School has an excellent set of online material for supervisor and PhD students as well as short training & information sessions, e.g.
>   Seminars on PhD processes (for students & supervisors): http://research.curtin.edu.au/seminars/
>   Notes and handouts are available here: http://research.curtin.edu.au/seminars/eptl.cfm#candidacy

Curtin Life also has links to a number of services, and can provide assistance with a wide range of student life concerns, health issues, accommodation, complaints and services etc: http://life.curtin.edu.au

CIRA graduate student coordinator: Dr Nick Seymour