

HDR Course Approval Policy

Section 1 - Overview & Scope

(1) The Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Course Approval Policy provides a framework for the approval of all HDR courses offered by the University of New England.

(2) This Policy is designed to ensure quality HDR courses that are aligned with the objectives of the University's Research Strategy to deliver excellent research training.

(3) This Policy applies to the development of new HDR courses, amendments to existing HDR courses and withdrawal of HDR courses at the University of New England and will be used by all UNE Representatives for that purpose.

Section 2 - Policy

Part A - Principles

(4) UNE is committed to providing HDR courses that:

- a. are academically rigorous;
- b. reflect the important role of HDR training in a knowledge-based society;
- c. actively encourage candidates to develop the skills required to undertake their research and future careers;
- d. promote collaboration and connections with other University groups and offerings, where possible; and
- e. are an efficient and sustainable use of University resources and are aligned with the University Research Strategy.

(5) Development, amendment and withdrawal of HDR academic courses must be informed by consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

Part B - HDR Course Development and Renewal

(6) When developing or renewing a HDR course, UNE:

- a. reflects on internal and external stakeholder feedback, benchmarks, standards and requirements;
- b. draws on appropriate content and established bodies of knowledge to ensure currency of curriculum;
- c. ensures the course enables HDR Candidates to be part of a scholarly intellectual community;
- d. provides for the development of relevant graduate attributes;
- e. ensures that the course design and requirements safeguard the integrity of student research and assessment;
- f. aligns the learning objectives and assessment to the desired learning outcomes;
- g. considers entry and exit pathways;
- h. considers resource implications; and
- i. undertake on an annual basis regular monitoring and review to support continuous improvement, and formal internal and external course review at least every seven (7) years.

Part C - New HDR Courses

HDR Course Proposals

(7) Proposals for new HDR courses must be endorsed by the relevant Associate Dean, Research and Dean, Graduate Research.

(8) Once the HDR course proposal has been endorsed, the proposer(s) must provide a full HDR course proposal to the Graduate Research Committee, which will include:

- a. course title;
- b. official abbreviation of the course;
- c. numerical field of education;
- d. [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) (AQF) level;
- e. course duration;
- f. date at which the course was endorsed;
- g. academic rationale for this course;
- h. any cross-school or cross-disciplinary implications and benefits;
- i. any cross-school consultation;
- j. reference to external benchmarks, standards and requirements;
- k. demonstrated reference to how the course draws from a substantial, coherent body of knowledge and scholarship in relevant discipline(s) including the study of relevant theoretical frameworks and research findings;
- l. teaching period and delivery mode;
- m. entry and exit pathways;
- n. student funding basis and expected load in coming years;
- o. CRICOS code;
- p. course aims and outcomes (minimum of three). These will appear in the UNE Course Handbook;
- q. graduate/candidate attributes;
- r. provision for appropriate development of English language proficiency;
- s. practical or work experience; or any internships requirements;
- t. records management system reference for any agreements with participating partners/institutions;
- u. course overview;
- v. summary details of course (required for Australian AHEGS statements);
- w. any course rules;
- x. course schedule information:
 - i. coursework
 - ii. assessment
 - iii. practicums
 - iv. internships
- y. practical or work experience/internship requirements

Approval

(9) The completed HDR course proposal will be considered by the Graduate Research Committee.

(10) Once ratified by Graduate Research Committee, the proposal must be forwarded to the Research Committee for endorsement through to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research for review.

(11) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research will review the proposal and endorse through to the Academic Board for approval.

(12) The approved proposal will be sent to the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer (VC&CEO) for noting.

(13) Any approved amendments will be forwarded to Academic Board for endorsement.

(14) Once the amendments have been endorsed and approved, the proposal will be forwarded to the Graduate Research School for implementation.

Disestablishment or Withdrawal of HDR Courses

(15) Where there is a request to disestablish a HDR course, the request must be forwarded to the Graduate Research Committee for consideration.

(16) The request must include the rationale for disestablishment and include any enrolment, resource, infrastructure or budgetary implications.

(17) The request must include a management strategy for teaching out disestablished courses.

(18) Graduate Research Committee will review the proposed amendments and if supported will forward to the Research Committee for endorsement through to Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research (DVCR) for endorsement.

(19) Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research (DVCR) will review the proposal and endorse through to the Academic Board for approval.

(20) Where the decision is taken by Academic Board to approve to disestablishment of a HDR course, this will be forwarded to the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer (VC&CEO) for noting.

(21) Once the amendment has been fully endorsed and approved, it will be forwarded to the Graduate Research School for implementation.

Course Amendments

(22) Course amendments must be categorised as significant, minor, or editorial.

(23) Significant amendments include:

- a. changes to course title;
- b. changes to admission rules;
- c. changes or redesign of 30% or more of the course of requirements;
- d. additions and/or changes to mandatory coursework units; and
- e. changes in external/accreditation status.

(24) Minor amendments include:

- a. changes or redesign of less than 30% of the course requirements;
- b. changes to exit pathways;
- c. amendments to admission periods;
- d. amendments to campus offerings; and
- e. amendments to learning outcomes.

(25) Editorial course amendments:

- a. correction of typographical errors;
- b. updates of links;
- c. presentation of published information (such as re-ordering of information); and
- d. other amendments that do not alter the intent of the course information.

Part D - Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
UNE Representatives	UNE Representatives are responsible for becoming familiar and complying with this Policy.
Graduate Research Committee	The Graduate Research Committee is responsible for monitoring, reviewing and endorsing HDR course amendments and ratifying course proposals.
Research Committee	The Research Committee is responsible for endorsing HDR course proposals and amendments through to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research.
Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research (DVCR)	The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research is responsible for reviewing and endorsing HDR course proposals through to Academic Board for approval.
Academic Board	Academic Board is responsible for reviewing and approving HDR course proposals and noting HDR course amendments.
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer (VC&CEO)	Approves this policy and notes the approval of HDR course proposals.

Reporting

(26) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research will report new HDR courses and HDR course rescissions to Academic Board bi-annually, as well as reporting to Academic Board on HDR course reviews and monitoring, as required.

Quality Assurance

(27) All HDR courses will undergo periodic review to ensure a framework for evaluating HDR courses as part of the University's quality assurance cycle, assessing the objectives, structure and course management to ensure that HDR courses are meeting the objectives of [UNE's Strategic Plan](#).

(28) The HDR course approval process must comply with University policy and administrative requirements, and enable the University to comply with all legislative and reporting requirements.

(29) The implementation of this Policy will be supported through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research regularly monitoring and providing an annual report to the Research Committee and Academic Board on the operation of, and compliance with, this Policy.

Section 3 - Authority and Compliance

Authority

(30) The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer, pursuant to Section 29 of the [University of New England Act](#), makes this University policy.

(31) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research (DVCR) is authorised to make procedures and processes for the effective implementation and operation of this policy, and to publish as associated documents any tool that will assist with compliance.

(32) Policy Administrator for this policy is the Director Governance and University Secretary, who is authorised to make minor administrative updates to this policy.

Compliance

(33) UNE Representatives must observe this policy in relation to HDR higher degree research course approval. Non-compliance may be a breach of the Code of Conduct and may be addressed under the disciplinary provisions of the relevant Enterprise Agreement.

(34) This policy is consistent with all legislative standards and regulatory frameworks, including the [Higher Education Support Act \(HESA\)](#), the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(HESF\)](#), the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act \(ESOS Act\)](#) and the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students](#). Further information regarding compliance obligations is available via the Compliance Register.

(35) This policy operates as and from the Effective Date. Previous policies relating to HDR higher degree research course approval are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date.

(36) Notwithstanding the other provisions of this Policy the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer may approve an exception to this Rule, where the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer determines the application of the Rule would otherwise lead to an unfair, unreasonable or absurd outcome. Approvals by the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer under this clause must be documented in writing and must state the reason for the exception.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	7th December 2023
Review Date	7th December 2025
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer
Approval Date	7th December 2023
Expiry Date	To Be Advised
Unit Head	Chris Armstrong Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research
Enquiries Contact	Research Services + 61 2 6773 3715

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"UNE Representative" - Means a University employee (casual, fixed term and permanent), contractor, agent, appointee, UNE Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.

"Code of Conduct" - A document (variously referred to as a 'Code of Ethics', 'Code of Behaviour' and various other titles) broadly communicated within the entity setting out the entity's expected standards of behaviour.

"CRICOS" - The Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) is a register of Australian education providers approved to offer courses to people studying in Australia on student visas and a list of the courses offered.

"UNE Course Handbook" - This means the listing of Courses and units offered by UNE and is available digitally via une.edu.au