

University of Wollongong

# **Graduate Research School**

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WEBSITE DESIGN UPLIFT

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# **Contents**

Introduction	2
Site Analysis	3
Competitive Research	4
Prioritized Changes	5
Details of Changes	6-13
Future Planning	14
Other Suggestions	15
Conclusion	16

# **Introduction**

This document outlines suggested changes to uplift the UOW Graduate Research School website. Based on the current website (November 2021), there are a few key pages that require some attention, ensuring that enrolled and prospective research candidates are able to find current and correct information. The suggestions put forward in this document aim to optimize organization of information and make it more digestible, but are by no means an exhausted list. By utilizing the common components used across the UOW website, each suggested change refers to an example, recommending that the content be organized or displayed in a similar fashion.

Following the details of suggested changes, a section on future planning offers some advice on the future maintenance of the website.

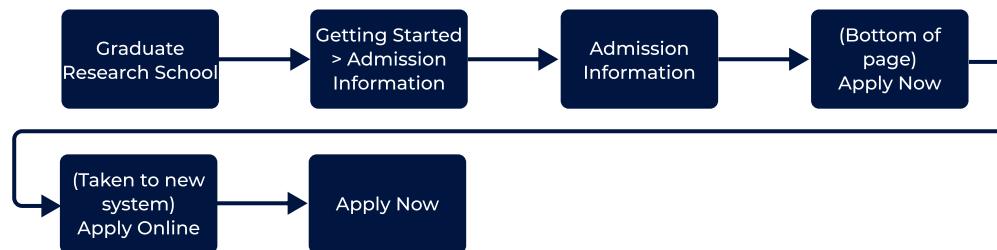
# Site Analysis

To gauge the usability of the site, some critical user flows were mapped out. Each rectangle is a landing page / section that prompted further navigation. By analyzing these critical flows, some pain points were found.

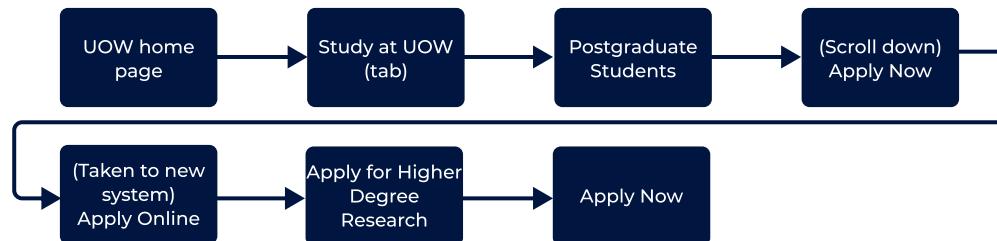
How to find the GRS Page on the UOW Website:



How to find the GRS Application form from GRS Page:



How to apply for postgrad from UOW home page:



# Competitive Research

The focus for this competitive set is the graduate research sections of each university website. The 3 listed universities have user-friendly websites and other specific features have been noted.

1

## University of Tasmania

### Use of pictograms

#### Why study with us?



Worldwide reputation for research excellence



Quality supervision and support



Tasmania offers a unique study lifestyle experience

### Easy steps to apply

#### How to apply

If you are interested in applying to undertake a Higher Degree by Research, please use the following steps to assist you in understanding the application process.

Step 1 - Before you start	▼
Step 2 - Find a project	▼
Step 3 - Submit an application	▼
Step 4 - Wait for a response	▼
Step 5 - If your application is successful	▼

2

## University of NSW Sydney

### Quick facts

#### QUICK FACTS GRADUATE RESEARCH

100

UNSW Higher Degree Research Candidates from over 100 different countries

867

UNSW graduated 867 Higher Degree Research Candidates in 2019

2958

2958 academics are currently supervising Higher Degree Research Candidates as of this term

4500

4500 Higher Degree Research Candidates enrolled in 2019

3

## Macquarie University

### Clear site breakdown

#### Research

Research Expertise

[PhD and research degrees](#)

Explore research degrees

Areas of research

HDR academic advice

Fees and costs

Scholarships

How to apply

Important dates

HDR Forms

FAQs

Contact us

### Easy steps to apply

Step 1: Entry requirements

Step 2: Find a supervisor

Step 3: Research proposal

Step 4: Scholarships

Step 5: Submit

Step 6: Review Offer and Accept

# Prioritized Changes

These suggested changes were made to improve the usability and readability of the GRS website. This isn't an exhausted list, and further changes are discussed in later sections of this document. This section sorts the changes by level of priority and effort (low, medium or high). Given these ratings, the changes are sorted with low effort and high priority first. The details of changes are provided in the next section of this document.

LOW MED HIGH



The scale consists of three colored circles: a light green circle for 'LOW', a yellow circle for 'MED', and a red circle for 'HIGH'.

#	Brief explanation	Priority	Effort
1	Re-title 'Frequently Asked Questions'	Yellow	Green
2	Remove 'Contact Us' section	Yellow	Green
3	Move 'International and Domestic Postgraduate Tuition Awards and Fee Offsets' to Enrolment Management page	Yellow	Yellow
4	Collapse sections in 'Thesis Submission and Graduation'	Yellow	Yellow
5	Collapse sections on 'Student and supervisor resources and training' page	Red	Red
6	Remove 'Annual Progress Report' section	Green	Green
7	Re-order list to prioritize 'Graduate Research School' and 'HDR Award Rules'	Green	Green
8	Add 'Upcoming Events' section	Red	Yellow

# Details of Changes

## #1 Re-title 'Frequently Asked Questions'

The 'Frequently Asked Questions' section on the 'Admission Information' page to be re-titled or omitted. The information under this section outlines important information about admission process.

Suggestion for new title: Important Information

## Frequently asked questions

TYPES OF HIGHER RESEARCH DEGREES -

HDR RESEARCH BY DISTANCE LEARNING +

APPLICATION PROCESS +

FINDING A SUPERVISOR +

Link: <https://www.uow.edu.au/research-and-innovation/graduate-research/admission-information/> 6

## #2 Remove 'Contact Us' section

The 'Contact Us' section on the 'HDR Scholarship Information' page to be removed. The 'Contact Us' tile seen on the right is not needed as the below section appears at the bottom of the page.



Remove

Already exists

### #3 Move 'International and Domestic Postgraduate Tuition Awards and Fee Offsets' to Enrolment Management page

The 'International and Domestic Postgraduate Tuition Awards and Fee Offsets' section on the 'Frequently Asked Questions' page to be relocated on the 'Enrolment Management' page. This information is important for students to find, and so should be easier to locate.

#### International and Domestic Postgraduate Tuition Awards and Fee Offsets



The following arrangements apply to all higher degree by research students commencing in 2020 onwards.

##### International Postgraduate Tuition Awards for international HDR students:

1. The duration of a full course International Postgraduate Tuition Award (IPTA) aligns with the standard course duration of the HDR program.  
The maximum term for all new full course IPTAs is:
  2. Masters by Research – 2 years full time or 4 years part time
  3. Doctorate by Research – 4 years full time or 8 years part time
  4. Eligible students can apply for Sessional IPTAs in two rounds each year
  5. Students are eligible to receive a Sessional IPTA for a **maximum of one session only**
  6. For students with existing International Postgraduate Tuition Awards (IPTA) please refer to your original scholarship offer letter as the duration advised in your offer letter will remain unchanged.

##### Research Training Program (RTP) fee offsets for domestic HDR students:

1. The duration of a Research Training Program (RTP) Fee Offset aligns with the standard course duration of the HDR program. The maximum term for the RTP Fee offset is:
  2. Masters by Research – 2 years full time or 4 years part time
  3. Doctorate by Research – 4 years full time or 8 years part time

#### #4 Collapse sections in ‘Thesis Submission and Graduation’

The information on the ‘Thesis Submission and Graduation’ page is organized into sections. By making these sections collapsible, it makes the page more readable and easy to navigate. Exhibited below.



[Expand All](#) | [Collapse All](#)

Policies and Guidelines



Writing Up



Formatting Your Thesis



Submission



Thesis Database



Finished, what next?



#### Thesis submission and graduation

Step-by-step guide to thesis preparation and submission.

##### POLICIES & GUIDELINES

- [HDR thesis preparation, submission and examination policy](#)
- [HDR thesis by compilation guidelines](#)

##### WRITING UP

- [What is a thesis? / thesis writing resources](#)
- [Problems with writing](#)
- [Plagiarism](#)

##### FORMATTING YOUR THESIS

- [Thesis template \(PDF Version\)](#)
- [Thesis template \(Word Version\)](#)
- [Thesis template \(LaTeX Version\)](#)
- [UOW brand policy](#)
- [HDR thesis checking through turnitin](#)
- [Turnitin - instructions for HDR students](#)

##### SUBMISSION

- [Agreement for deposit of HDR thesis in digital repository](#)
- [The thesis submission and examination process](#)
- [Nomination of Examiners](#)

##### THESIS DATABASE

- [Track your progress](#)

##### FINISHED, WHAT NEXT?

- [Research career launch scholarships](#)
- [Career services](#)
- [Alumni](#)
- [Graduation](#)
- [Graduation FAQs](#)

## #5 Collapse sections on ‘Student and supervisor resources and training’ page

The two sections on the ‘Student and supervisor resources and training’ page are hard to digest and could intimidate a user. By making these sections collapsible, it makes the page more readable and easy to navigate. Exhibited below.

### Resources for students

- [Professional development](#)
- [Library research resources](#)
- Parking Ballot Application for 2021 is now closed.
- Heads of post-graduate studies (finding a supervisor)
- [HDR jobs and internship opportunities](#)
- [Careers](#)
- [Training and events](#)

### Resources for supervisors

- [Checklist for supervisors](#)
- [Australian Council of Graduate Research \(ACCR\) website](#)
- [Epigear training programmes](#). The Epigear Supervising Doctoral Studies Programme, Epigear Research Skills Toolset Programme and Epigear Research Integrity modules are designed to support researchers and supervisors of HDR candidates. The Supervising Doctoral Studies Programme provides essential training on topics including attracting and selecting doctoral applicants, approaching supervision, managing progress, expectations and examination preparation, and issues in supervision. The Research Skills Toolset modules offer information on undertaking literature review, research methods and ethical research, etc. These courses have much to offer both new and experienced supervisors and can be accessed via the following UOW Moodle sites:
  - [HDR supervision training-supervising doctoral studies](#)
  - [Introduction to research integrity and ethics](#)
  - [Research skills toolset](#)
  - [Best practice in HDR supervision publication](#)



### Resources for Students

### Resources for Supervisors

[Expand All](#) | [Collapse All](#)



## #6 Remove 'Annual Progress Report' section

The 'Annual Progress Report' section on the 'Frequently Asked Questions' page to be removed. This information already exists on the 'Enrolment Management' page.

### Annual progress reports

#### Purpose of Annual Progress Report (APR)

The Annual Progress Report is the means by which the University assesses whether the student candidature will continue into the following year. Written reports from students and their supervisors are an important and formal means to monitor research student progress.

- Remove →
- Each report should be a frank appraisal of the student's progress by both the supervisor and the student.
  - The annual report is the means by which the University assesses whether the candidature will continue into the following year.
  - The Progress Report form will also provide an opportunity for you to check and update if necessary the details pertaining to your full-time/part-time status, your thesis title, and your supervisor.

#### One warning rule:

HDR Students who do not complete section 1 or 3 of the APR by the due dates noted below will be given **one written warning**. Those students who have not completed Section 1 or 3 by due date **will have their candidature discontinued**. Re-enrolment once discontinued, may only be possible by submitting a new application for admission through the online application process. Approval for admission in these cases will be at the Faculty's discretion.

## Enrolment & Candidature Changes

COURSE COMPLETION TIMES + FEES AND COURSE LIMITS + ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS -

CHANGING THESIS TITLE + COURSE TRANSFER + HDR TIMELINE DIAGRAM + LEAVE OF ABSENCE +

#### Purpose of Annual Progress Report (APR)

The Annual Progress Report (APR) is the means by which the University assesses whether the student candidature will continue into the following year. An APR from a student and their supervisors are an important and formal means to monitor research student progress.

- Each report should be a frank appraisal of the student's progress by both the supervisor and the student.
- The annual report is the means by which the University assesses whether the candidature will continue into the following year.
- The APR will also provide an opportunity for you to check and update if necessary the details pertaining to your full-time/part-time status, your thesis title, and your supervisor.

← Already exists

## #7 Re-order list to prioritize 'Graduate Research School' and 'HDR Award Rules'

The collapsed sections on the 'Forms, Guidelines & Policies' page to be re-ordered with 'Graduate Research School' appearing higher in the list. Within this section, the 'HDR Award Rules' link is to be prioritized.

Expand All   Collapse All	
Human research ethics	[+]
Research integrity	[+]
Animal research ethics	[+]
Gene tech and biosafety	[+]
Defence export controls	[+]
Research computing and data	[+]
Research grants	[+]
<u>Graduate Research School</u>	[+]

### Graduate Research School

#### Academic integrity

- [Academic Integrity & Plagiarism](#)
- [Research Integrity and Conduct Policy: Breaches, Concerns and Complaints](#)
- [Rules for Student Conduct and Discipline](#)

#### Candidature

#### Policies

- [Course Transfer Guidelines](#)
- [Research Proposal Review \(RPR\) Guidelines](#)

#### Forms

- [Application for Advanced Standing](#)
- [Application for Leave of Absence](#)
- [Course Transfer](#)
- [Domestic Postgraduate Tuition Award Application](#)
- [Scholarship Extension Application Form - 2021](#)

#### Rules

- [HDR Award Rules](#)

#### Fees

Focus / prioritize this link



## #8 Add 'Upcoming Events' section

The addition of an 'Upcoming Events' section to the 'Workshops, seminars, training and events' page. Having current links to upcoming events will provide quick navigation to the current events.

A screenshot of a website page titled "Workshops, seminars, training and events". On the left, there is a sidebar with a heading "Upcoming Events" followed by a horizontal arrow pointing right. Below the arrow is a list of two items: "Higher degree research student workshops and seminars" and "Three Minute Thesis competition", each preceded by a small square icon containing a plus sign. At the top right of the page, there are "Expand All" and "Collapse All" buttons.

Workshops, seminars,  
training and events

'Upcoming  
Events'

Higher degree research student workshops and seminars

Three Minute Thesis competition

Expand All | Collapse All

# Future Planning

In order to maintain the website in the future, here is a list of team ownership per web page, and a suggestion for biyearly maintenance.

Some key areas to keep up to date:

- Links
- Dates
- Documents

## Biyearly Maintenance

It is suggested that the site be checked twice a year at the end of each semester (date TBC within the team).

These changes are then to be implemented promptly, to ensure current and prospective candidates are receiving up-to-date information.

## Page Ownership

Admission Information —— Candidate Liaison

Frequently Asked Questions GRS —— Candidate Liaison & ALL

Enrolment Management —— Candidate Liaison

Student and Supervisor Resources and Training —— Training and Development

Thesis and Examinations —— Thesis Examination

HDR Scholarship Information —— Scholarships and Progression

Workshops, Seminars, Training and Events —— Training and Development

Forms, Guidelines and Policies —— Candidate Liaison & ALL

# **Other Suggestions**

Whilst in discussion with the broader GRS team, some other suggestions for website uplift were noted. The main one being to split the entire site for Students and Supervisors. This would make the site easier to navigate for both parties, however would be a lengthy process to implement.

Some other minor suggestions are listed below:

- Include icons and pictograms that help a user to navigate the site quickly
- Use relevant imagery for the content
- Minimize information where possible
- Keep important links or information at the top of a page.

# **Conclusion**

With the application and management of enrolment processes happening online, it is important that candidates are able to find current and clear information. The site may require a small uplift to raise its standards but the important part is maintaining the site in the future.