

Subject Outline

Subject Title	Situating the Research – Research Doctorate Candidates
Subject Code	RD7002
Study Period	Research Training Periods 1-4
Attendance Mode	Standard
Campus	Townsville, Cairns and Online
Subject Coordinator/Division /College	Dean, Graduate Research Division of Research and Innovation Graduate Research School

At James Cook University, we acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which our campuses and study centres are located and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present and future. JCU is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to JCU and society.

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This subject outline has been prepared by A/Prof Liz Tynan for the Graduate Research School, Division of Research and Innovation, James Cook University. Updated December 2021.

The information provided in this subject outline is correct as at the time of completion and may change in response to changing University resources. Any changes will be approved by the College Dean or representative and will be communicated to students via the LearnJCU subject site.

1 Subject Details

1.1 Subject Outline Preparation

Q1. This subject is offered across more than one campus and/or mode and/or study period within the one calendar year.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Q2. If yes (Q1), the design of all offerings of this subject ensure the same learning outcomes and assessment types and weightings.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Q3. If no (Q2), [Type here] has authorised any variations, in terms of equivalence.		

1.2 Subject Outline Peer Reviewer

Name	Dr Laretta Grasso
Position	Manager, Graduate Research Operations
Date reviewed	20 February 2020

1.3 Staff contact details

Key Staff	Staff member	Room	Phone	Email	Consultation times*
Subject Coordinator	Dean, Graduate Research	017-028	+61 7 4781 5575	deangrs@jcu.edu.au	By appointment
Primary Advisor	This is the Primary Advisor of the Candidate undertaking this subject				
Chair, Candidature Committee	The Chair of Candidature Committee is appointed by the College Associate Dean of Research Education and approved by the Dean of the Enrolling Organisational Unit				
Coordinator Professional Development	A/Professor Liz Tynan	017-148	+61 7 4781 6278	elizabeth.tynan@jcu.edu.au	By appointment
Director, HDR Cohort Doctoral Studies Program (if applicable)	Please contact relevant Enrolling Organisational Unit for details				

*Other consultation times by appointment only.

1.4 Subject description

RD7002 is one of two subjects that must be completed by doctoral candidates to meet the requirements for the Confirmation of Candidature degree milestone and to have their candidature confirmed. Candidates should read this Subject Outline in conjunction with the [Confirmation of Candidature Procedure](#).

The overall intention of the Confirmation of Candidature degree milestone is to allow the candidate to demonstrate that:

1. The candidate's project is of a suitable scope and standard for the degree;
2. The candidate has the capacity to:

- a. complete the project in a timely manner with the resources available and the potential to obtain any required permits; and
- b. undertake a degree at the required level by demonstrating:
 - Mastery of a substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of the field of research including substantial knowledge of the principles and methods;
 - The cognitive skills to demonstrate expert understanding of the associated theoretical knowledge, and to reflect critically on the theory and practice of the field of research; and
 - The communication skills to explain and critique theoretical propositions, methodologies and conclusions and present cogently a complex investigation to peers and the wider academic community.
3. The candidate's HDR Professional Development Audit and Plan in [COC-Assessment Form and COC-Proposal Template](#) is appropriate for the candidate's degree requirements and career aspirations.

RD7002 addresses Item 2b above. The Advisory Panel will assist the candidate to complete the Assessment Item, a literature review, critical reflection and/or analysis, or a systematic review, to the satisfaction of the Candidature Committee.

1.5 Subject learning outcomes

RD7002 is intended to encourage development of critical thinking and analytic skills early in research degree candidature. Candidates will be required to show their ability to comprehend, evaluate and synthesise scholarship relevant to their project. They will need to produce a high-quality literature review, critical reflection and/or analysis of an appropriate body of literature or creative process or a systematic review that provides a scholarly foundation for their research. This work must be carried out during candidature; work written before the commencement of candidature cannot be submitted for this subject.

Candidates who successfully complete RD7002 will be able to:

1. Interpret, critique and explain theoretical propositions, methodologies and conclusions; design, theorise and communicate research that has the potential to make a significant and original contribution to knowledge and/or professional practice; and independently plan and develop an original research proposal;
2. Apply knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning;
3. Apply research knowledge and skills with intellectual independence, initiative and creativity in new situations; and
4. Communicate complex research and/or discipline concepts and plans to a broadly discipline-literate audience, using a variety of modes.

1.6 Student feedback on subject and teaching

For general information about processes for student feedback and grievances at JCU, students should consult the JCU website: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/division-of-student-life/student-complaints>

JCU staff value and appreciate student feedback as a source of evidence about the quality of our courses so you are strongly encouraged to provide considered feedback on all aspects of your HDR candidature. JCU has several methods of systematically capturing the experiences of HDR candidates.

Every year, recent JCU graduates are invited to complete the Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ), part of the nation-wide Australian Graduate Survey owned by Graduate Careers Australia.

In even numbered years, all JCU HDR candidates are invited to undertake an online survey based on the PREQ. Individual HDR candidates, their Enrolling Organisational Unit or advisors, are not identified through this process.

1.7 Subject resources and special requirements

Important policy information is available for all JCU HDR candidates on the Graduate Research School website: <http://www.jcu.edu.au/grs/>

See also the Higher Degree by Research Requirements policy: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/research-education/higher-degree-by-research-requirements>

See also the Confirmation of Candidature webpage: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/forms-and-policies/hdr-confirmation-of-candidature-procedure>

An online module on plagiarism is a Compulsory Component of the GRS Professional Development Program for HDR candidates.

All HDR candidates have access and are encouraged to use iThenticate to check their papers and thesis chapters as they write them.

Candidates are strongly advised to check their RD7002 literature review or comparable work through iThenticate and to discuss the details of the report with their Advisory Panel or an appropriate member of the JCU Teaching and Learning Development Unit.

Referencing and attribution practices can differ between and even within disciplines and understanding and interpreting these differences in the context of the iThenticate matching report requires knowledge that should be obtained through the completion of the Plagiarism workshop offered by the GRS Professional Development Program.

2 Assessment details

2.1 Key dates

The following summary provides a quick reference to the most important aspects of this subject. Please make sure that you read all the details of the entire subject outline.

As per Section 5.2 of the [Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Requirements policy](#), doctoral candidates will be eligible to seek to have their candidature confirmed after the equivalent of 0.5 EFTSL of provisional candidature and must have had their candidature confirmed within 1 EFTSL of provisional enrolment. Candidates who fail to meet this timeline may be placed Under Review.

Because the completion of subjects RD7001 Planning the Research and RD7002 Situating the Research requires a meeting of the Candidature Committee to reach a final decision regarding the candidate's confirmation, it is efficient though not essential for the requirements for the two subjects to be completed simultaneously. A suggested timetable for a full-time PhD candidate to complete the requirements for both subjects is provided in the [HDR Confirmation of Candidature Procedure](#). This timetable should be modified for part-time candidates through discussions between the candidate and their Advisory Panel.

2.2 Requirements for successful completion of RD7002

The single assessable piece of work for RD7002 is a substantive piece of writing of 4000-8000 words, in a form appropriate for the discipline within which the candidate is enrolled.

The written work must be a literature review, critical reflection and or analysis of an appropriate body of literature or creative process, or a systematic review. This work must have been written since the commencement of the higher degree by research candidature. Research papers or conference papers are not suitable for submission for this subject.

The content may be broad (such as a critical synthesis of the development of theoretical thought within a discipline) or relatively narrow (for example a critical analysis of one issue to be considered within the final thesis). The work must demonstrate high level critical thinking and analytical ability that is considered suitable by the Candidature Committee to form the scholarly basis of the research project.

The Primary and at least one Secondary Advisor will be asked to submit a report on the substantive piece of written work to the remaining members of the Candidature Committee on the RD7002/RM7002 relevant proforma. Any other members of the Advisory Panel should be consulted and asked to provide feedback on the substantive piece of written work.

2.3 Assessment Guidelines

In their report, the Advisory Panel will be asked to assess:

- a. The strategy for the literature search;
- b. The logical structure of the work;
- c. The English expression; and
- d. The critical analysis within the work.

Advisors will be asked to consider their input into the written work in the context of their expectations of a doctoral candidate in the early stages of their candidature.

3 Grade for RD7002 Situating the Research

3.1 Grading System

The members of the Candidature Committee who are not on the Advisory Panel will discuss the literature review or comparable work and the RD7002 Advisory Panel Report on Substantive Piece of Written Work Proforma.

The candidate's grade for RD7002 must be recommended to the Dean, Graduate Research Studies by the members of the Candidature Committee who are external to the candidate's Advisory Panel through the Confirmation of Candidature Report Proforma. Members of the Advisory Panel and the candidate must not be involved when the other members of the Candidature Committee finalise the grade recommendation.

In exceptional circumstances, these members of the Candidature Committee may seek revisions to the written work before recommending a final grade. In this instance the Chair of the Candidature Committee must notify the Graduate Research School in writing and the candidate will be placed Under Review. The revisions must occur within three months of the Candidature Committee's meeting date unless there are exceptional circumstances which would make this unfeasible.

The grading system for RD7002 Situating the Research is as follows:

Pass: The candidate has demonstrated mastery of the knowledge in the relevant field and the cognitive and communication skills appropriate to the stage of candidature and at the level required for a research doctorate.

Conceded Pass: The candidate has not demonstrated mastery of the knowledge in the relevant field and the cognitive and communication skills appropriate to the stage of candidature and at the level required for a research doctorate. However, the standard of the work is consistent with that required for candidature within another cognate research or coursework degree offered by the University (e.g. Research Masters or Graduate Diploma).

Fail: The candidate has not demonstrated mastery of the knowledge in the relevant field and the cognitive and communication skills appropriate to the stage of candidature and at the level required for a research doctorate, nor is the standard of the work consistent with that required for candidature within another cognate research or coursework degree offered by the University.