



HIGHER DEGREE BY RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Master of Information Technology (Research)

1. Scope

- 1.1 This Framework applies to all candidates enrolled in the Master of Information Technology (Research), their appointed supervisors, examiners, and all academic and professional staff involved in the administration, governance and support of the course at Lincoln Institute of Higher Education (LIHE).
- 1.2 This Framework governs the entire lifecycle of a candidate's enrolment, from admission through to the final examination of the thesis and conferral of the award.

2. Purpose and principles

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Framework is to provide a single, authoritative source for the policies, procedures and responsibilities governing the MIT (Research); to ensure a high-quality, consistent and equitable experience for candidates; to define the rights and responsibilities of candidates, supervisors and LIHE so as to foster a transparent and mutually respectful research culture; and to ensure compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, with particular regard to Standard 4.2.

2.2 Guiding principles

- **Research integrity:** commitment to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018).
- **Excellence in supervision:** high-quality, expert and consistent supervisory guidance that develops independent researchers.
- **Candidate success and wellbeing:** a supportive research environment that promotes timely progression while prioritising wellbeing.
- **Procedural fairness:** transparent, consistent processes subject to fair and impartial review.
- **Quality assurance:** continuous monitoring, review and improvement of research training.

3. Rights and responsibilities of candidates and supervisors

3.1 This section responds directly to Standard 4.2.1a by defining and recognising the rights and responsibilities of research candidates and supervisors. It is complemented by the Candidate–Supervisor Agreement (Appendix B), which records these mutually at the individual level.

3.2 Rights of the candidate

A candidate has the right to:

- Competent, accessible supervision by a Principal Supervisor and at least one Associate Supervisor, meeting the minimum contact frequencies in clause 5.5;
- A clear statement of expectations, milestones and timelines, and timely feedback on submitted work;



- Access to the research facilities, resources and training reasonably required for the project;
- Induction to research, and to ongoing professional development;
- Fair, transparent assessment and examination, and a right of appeal (Section 9);
- Ownership of the intellectual property they create, consistent with the Intellectual Property Policy and the Candidate IP Deed;
- Be treated with respect, to raise concerns without detriment, and to a safe and supportive research environment; and
- A change of supervisor where the supervisory relationship has broken down, without disadvantage.

3.3 Responsibilities of the candidate

A candidate is responsible for:

- Taking primary ownership of the research project and its timely progression;
- Maintaining regular contact and attending scheduled supervision meetings prepared;
- Submitting written work and milestone documents by agreed deadlines;
- Acting on feedback and maintaining satisfactory progress;
- Completing the research induction and integrity training before commencing data collection;
- Conducting research ethically, obtaining ethics approval before collecting any data, and complying with all institutional policies; and
- Raising concerns affecting progress at the earliest opportunity.

3.4 Rights of supervisors

A supervisor has the right to appropriate workload allocation and caseload limits (clause 5.6); to accreditation, training and development for the supervisory role; to reasonable access to resources to supervise effectively; and to raise concerns about a candidature, or to withdraw from a panel on reasonable grounds, without detriment and with orderly handover.

3.5 Responsibilities of supervisors

The supervisory panel is collectively responsible for expert disciplinary guidance; helping the candidate form a viable research plan and methodology; timely, constructive feedback; monitoring progress against milestones; upholding the Code and ensuring the candidate is trained in ethical practice; supporting research communication and publication; and career and professional development guidance. The Principal Supervisor holds primary responsibility and leads the panel; the Associate Supervisor provides supplementary expertise and continuity.

4. Admission, candidature and induction

4.1 Admission

4.1.1 Admission is governed by the principles of fairness, transparency and academic merit, in accordance with the Admissions Policy and Standard 1.1. An offer is made only where the entry requirements are met and LIHE has the capacity to provide appropriate supervision and resources.

Academic entry



An applicant must hold a Bachelor degree with Honours (AQF Level 8) in IT or a cognate discipline with a significant research component; or a Master degree (AQF Level 9) in IT or a cognate discipline with a significant research component; or a Bachelor degree (AQF Level 7) in IT or a cognate discipline with a minimum credit average plus demonstrated equivalent research experience.

English language proficiency (unified standard)

An applicant must demonstrate English language proficiency, applied identically to domestic and international applicants, by one of: IELTS (Academic) overall 6.5 with no band below 6.0; TOEFL iBT overall 86; PTE Academic overall 58 with no communicative skill below 50; or Cambridge C1 Advanced overall 176 with no score below 169.

Note: the TOEFL iBT requirement is corrected from the previous version and unified with the other LIHE course documents at overall 86 (para 187).

4.2 Period of candidature

Full-time: minimum 2 years (6 trimesters), maximum 3 years (9 trimesters). Part-time: minimum 4 years (12 trimesters), maximum 6 years (18 trimesters). The maximum excludes approved leave. Extension beyond the maximum is considered only in exceptional circumstances on application to the Research Committee. "Trimester" is used consistently throughout.

4.3 Variations to candidature

Leave of absence (minimum one, maximum three trimesters in total), changes between full-time and part-time (before the census date, with visa compliance for international students), and withdrawal (by written notice to the Registrar) are administered under the Enrolment Policy and the Student Progression and Completion Policy. The maximum completion date is adjusted for approved leave.

4.4 Coursework and structure

4.4.1 The course comprises 48 credit points: six core subjects and no electives. MITR101–103 (research-training coursework, 4 credit points each, 12 credit points total) precede the three-part thesis — MITR104 (10 cp) and MITR105 (10 cp), which are ungraded Pass/Fail milestone subjects, and MITR106 (16 cp), the externally examined thesis.

4.4.2 There is no nested exit award. The previous Graduate Diploma exit pathway is removed, consistent with LIHE's advice to TEQSA that it will not proceed with the exit qualification (paras 175–177).

4.5 Induction to research

4.5.1 Every commencing candidate and supervisor completes a mandatory research induction in Trimester 1, before any research involving data collection. The induction covers: the Code of Conduct for Graduate Research; research integrity and the Australian Code; intellectual property and the Candidate IP Deed; research ethics and the requirement for approval before data collection; data management; authorship and publication; supervision expectations; and the reporting and appeal channels in this Framework.

4.5.2 Completion of the research integrity training and the academic and research integrity module is a recorded hurdle within MITR101, and progression to research activity is withheld until completion is recorded, consistent with the Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy.



5. Supervision

5.1 General principles

5.1.1 LIHE provides all candidates with high-quality, consistent and effective supervision. All supervisory appointments and practices are governed by this Framework and the Supervisor Accreditation Policy, ensuring supervisors are appropriately qualified and equipped in accordance with Standard 4.2.3.

5.2 The supervisory panel

5.2.1 Every candidate is supported by a supervisory panel of at least two supervisors: a Principal Supervisor and at least one Associate Supervisor. No candidate is supervised by a single supervisor, and no student-facing document states that an Associate Supervisor is merely “possible” (para 121).

5.2.2 The Principal Supervisor holds primary responsibility for guiding the candidate’s research and progress, must be accredited under the Supervisor Accreditation Policy, and is ordinarily a member of LIHE academic staff.

5.2.3 The Associate Supervisor provides supplementary expertise, guidance and continuity, and may be a member of LIHE academic staff or an appropriately qualified external or adjunct expert accredited for the role. The term “Associate Supervisor” is used consistently throughout this Framework and the policy suite; the former term “Co-supervisor” is discontinued (para 95).

5.2.4 Panel composition is determined by the HDR Coordinator in consultation with the candidate and approved by the Research Committee on admission. Changes to the panel require Research Committee approval.

5.3 Responsibilities of the panel and the candidate

The collective responsibilities of the panel, and the responsibilities of the candidate, are as set out in Section 3.

5.4 Change of supervisor

5.4.1 A candidate or a supervisor may request a change to the panel. The HDR Coordinator facilitates the change, ensures continuity of supervision, and ensures the candidate is not disadvantaged. Where a change arises from a breakdown in the relationship, the matter may be handled confidentially and without attribution of fault.

5.5 Minimum supervision contact

5.5.1 To give effect to Standard 4.2.1a, minimum meeting frequencies are specified for both the Principal Supervisor and the full panel. These are minima; more frequent contact is expected where the stage of the project requires it.

Meeting	Minimum frequency
Principal Supervisor and candidate (individual meeting)	At least once every two (2) weeks for full-time candidates; at least once per month for part-time candidates.
Full supervisory panel (Principal + Associate + candidate)	At least once per trimester, and at each milestone.



Meeting	Minimum frequency
Record of meetings	Meetings are recorded (agenda and action points), lodged with the Research Office, and reviewed at the Annual Progress Report.

5.5.2 A persistent failure to meet the minimum contact frequency — by either party — is a matter to be raised with the HDR Coordinator and recorded in the Annual Progress Report.

5.6 Supervisor accreditation and caseload

5.6.1 All supervisors must be accredited and entered on the Register of Approved Supervisors under the Supervisor Accreditation Policy before supervising. Accreditation requires relevant disciplinary expertise, an active research profile evidenced by outputs in the past three years, completion of supervision and integrity training, and (for a Principal Supervisor) prior supervision experience or co-supervision under mentorship.

5.6.2 A Principal Supervisor is allocated no more than three (3) concurrent HDR candidates as Principal, to protect the quality and availability of supervision. Caseload is monitored by the HDR Coordinator and reported to the Research Committee (paras 119–120).

6. Progression and milestones

6.1 General principles

6.1.1 Timely progression is a shared responsibility of the candidate, the panel and LIHE. Formal milestones monitor progress, provide structured feedback and identify support needs, in accordance with Standard 1.3.

6.2 Annual Progress Report

6.2.1 Each candidate completes an Annual Progress Report with the panel, documenting progress against the plan, goals for the next 12 months, impediments and strategies, the effectiveness of the supervisory relationship (including whether minimum contact frequencies were met), and any update to the Candidate–Supervisor Agreement. Failure to submit may result in a finding of unsatisfactory progress.

6.3 Confirmation of Candidature

6.3.1 Timing (corrected). Confirmation of Candidature is completed by the end of Trimester 3, within MITR103, after the candidate has completed the research-training coursework (MITR101–103). Confirmation does not occur in Trimester 4. This corrects the inconsistency identified at para 102, where the milestone was stated as “end of Trimester 3” but in practice fell in Trimester 4 within MITR104.

6.3.2 Purpose. Confirmation provides a formal, rigorous peer assessment of the research proposal to ensure the project is well-conceived, feasible within the standard period, methodologically sound, and appropriately resourced and supervised, and that the candidate is ready to proceed to the thesis.

6.3.3 The Confirmation Panel comprises a Chair (the HDR Coordinator or a senior academic delegate with no involvement in the project), the candidate’s Principal and Associate Supervisors, and an independent LIHE academic with expertise in the area who is not on the supervisory panel.

6.3.4 No later than two weeks before the meeting, the candidate submits a research proposal (approximately 4,000–6,000 words) covering the provisional title, problem and significance, critical



literature review, research questions or hypotheses, methodology and design, ethical considerations, a project timeline, and references; together with an oral presentation.

6.3.5 Outcomes are: Confirmed; Confirmed with conditions (minor revisions within a defined period); Resubmission required (major revisions, one further attempt within one trimester); or Termination of candidature where the project is fundamentally unviable. Assessment uses the Confirmation of Candidature Assessment Form.

6.4 Unsatisfactory progress

6.4.1 A candidate may be found to be making unsatisfactory progress for failing a milestone, failing to maintain contact, or failing to progress at an acceptable rate. The panel first raises the concern and agrees an improvement plan; if progress remains unsatisfactory, the HDR Coordinator issues an “At Risk” notice, triggering a mandatory meeting and a formal Progression Support Plan with actions and a review date. Failure to meet the Plan may lead to a recommendation to the Research Committee for termination, subject to the candidate’s right of appeal (Section 9).

7. Thesis submission and examination

7.1 General principles

7.1.1 The examination of the MITR106 thesis is the final, formal assessment, designed as a rigorous, impartial and independent peer review, in accordance with Standard 1.4.6. The process is managed by the Research Office and overseen by the Research Committee.

7.2 Pre-submission

7.2.1 At least three months before the intended submission date, the candidate lodges a Notification of Intention to Submit, signed by the panel. Concurrently, the Principal Supervisor (in consultation with the Associate Supervisor and candidate) submits a Nomination of Examiners.

7.2.2 Two external examiners are nominated, of good international standing with a strong publication record, experienced in postgraduate research examination, and independent of the research, the candidate and the panel. The Research Committee approves the examiners. All supervisors and examiners sign a Conflict of Interest Declaration (co-authorship or shared grant in the last five years, prior supervisory or employment relationship, or close personal relationship all constitute conflicts).

7.3 Submission and examination

7.3.1 The candidate submits a digital thesis meeting the Thesis Formatting and Submission Guide, accompanied by the panel’s signed approval to submit. If a supervisor considers the thesis not ready, they provide written reasons and the matter is referred to the Research Committee.

7.3.2 The Research Office sends the thesis and the assessment criteria to the two examiners, who are ordinarily given six to eight weeks. Examiners provide a written report assessing contribution to knowledge, scholarship and literature, methodology, analysis and argument, and quality of presentation.

7.4 Examination outcomes (corrected terminology)

7.4.1 To avoid confusion with the thesis subject result, each examiner recommends one of the following outcome categories (not “grades”) (para 106):



- Accept — award without changes;
- Accept subject to minor amendments — editorial or formatting corrections to the satisfaction of the HDR Coordinator (typically within four weeks);
- Accept subject to substantive revisions — revisions to the satisfaction of the Research Committee (typically within three months);
- Revise and re-examine — significant revision and a second examination (typically within six to twelve months); or
- Not accepted — the thesis does not meet the standard for the degree.

7.4.2 How the outcome determines the MITR106 subject result: the externally examined thesis determines the subject result; the pre-submission seminar and the response to examiners are hurdle requirements that must be satisfied but do not carry separate weighting. MITR104 and MITR105 are ungraded Pass/Fail milestone subjects and are not part of the thesis examination outcome.

7.5 Post-examination

7.5.1 Where examiner recommendations are consistent, reports go to the HDR Coordinator, panel and candidate to proceed. Where they are significantly discrepant, the Research Committee adjudicates, and may appoint a third adjudicating examiner, invite the examiners to confer, or determine the matter on the reports. Once approved revisions are complete, the candidate submits the final thesis and the Research Committee recommends conferral to the Academic Board.

8. Roles and responsibilities (summary)

Role	Key responsibilities	Reference
HDR Candidate	Owns the project and its progression; maintains contact and attends meetings prepared; submits work and milestones on time; completes induction and integrity training before data collection; conducts research ethically; lodges and reviews the Candidate–Supervisor Agreement.	Sections 3, 5, 6
Principal Supervisor	Primary academic guidance; leads the panel; meets the candidate at least fortnightly (full-time); timely feedback; guides milestones; oversees examiner nomination; certifies readiness; accredited under the Supervisor Accreditation Policy; no more than 3 concurrent candidates as Principal.	Sections 3, 5
Associate Supervisor	Supplementary expertise; participates in meetings and provides feedback; continuity during Principal absence; accredited under the Supervisor Accreditation Policy.	Section 5
HDR Coordinator	Oversees admission and panel formation; chairs Confirmation; monitors cohort progress and supervisor	Sections 3–6



Role	Key responsibilities	Reference
	caseload; escalation point for candidate–supervisor issues.	
Dean (Research)	Owns this Framework; accountable for research training quality; Research Integrity Officer; reports to the Academic Board.	All
Research Committee	Oversight of HDR policy and procedure; approves examiners and panel changes; adjudicates discrepant examinations; decides extensions and progression appeals; monitors quality.	Sections 4–7, 9

9. Appeals

9.1 LIHE provides a fair, transparent, timely process to appeal academic decisions relating to candidature, progression and examination, consistent with procedural fairness. No candidate is disadvantaged for appealing in good faith.

9.2 Grounds are procedural irregularity with material impact, or new and substantial evidence not reasonably available at the time. Academic judgement alone is not a ground.

9.3 The process is: Stage 1 — informal resolution with the Principal Supervisor or HDR Coordinator; Stage 2 — formal appeal in writing to the Chair of the Research Committee within 10 working days, considered normally within 20 working days; Stage 3 — final review by the Student Appeals Committee within 10 working days of the Stage 2 decision. The Student Appeals Committee is the final internal body. Nothing limits access to the National Student Ombudsman.

9.4 An authorship dispute is dealt with under clause 10 of the Authorship and Publication Policy; a research integrity concern is dealt with under the Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy.