

School of Social and Cultural Studies

Graduate Admission Policy

Last Updated: 17 January 2007

Finding the right potential graduates

These recommendations assume PhD or Masters by Research enrolments only.

A discipline-based team (Chair of Discipline, Discipline Graduate Co-ordinator and potential Supervisor/s) needs to ask a set of very pertinent questions of those inquirers who contact SSCS by email, by phone or in person.

Many inquirers ask about Masters by Coursework but we have only a limited list some of which attract fees (See the Arts Faculty website).

Potential supervisors should call on their discipline team in all cases, but especially if inquirers are vague about the research discipline they wish to work in.

Asking these questions and demanding particular kinds of evidence of ability at the outset means that inquirers are not kept hanging on hopefully, sometimes for months, only to be told eventually they do not qualify. Or, can be directed to the School and/or Discipline which more specifically reflects their research interests and qualifications.

The questions and their corollaries are:

- i. Do you have an undergraduate degree with honours? Did it include a dissertation-length research component of 10,000 to 12,000 words? What year was the degree completed? Was your degree in English? If so, please provide it so that the work can be read by a potential supervisor.
- ii. If no honours dissertation, did you do a Masters in English with a research essay component of 10,000 to 12,000 words? If so, please provide it so that the work can be read by a potential supervisor.
- iii. What other professional qualifications/ experience do you have that may qualify you to undertake a higher degree? Please provide evidence.
- iv. Do you have Australian residency qualifications? If not, your degree would have to come under the umbrella of the International unit and will attract a fee.
- v. If English is a second language, what is your IELTS Score? Please note that no-one is admitted to a higher degree at UWA without a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 with no individual band under 6.0. Other English language competency measures include GCE ,WA TEE, TOEFL, Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (B), CELT bridging program.
- vi. What specific project do you have in mind? How is that project innovative or original? What kind of informed background do you bring to the project? Will you need to undertake special competency learning, eg Quantitative Analysis; a Language; to complete the research successfully?

Recommendations

1. *It is recommended that there is a specific role for Discipline Chairs to become more proactive by working with the Discipline graduate co-ordinator and the potential supervisor/s as a team over-viewing every potential candidate for a higher degree by research.*
2. *It is further recommended that transcripts be carefully viewed and that the potential supervisor read any existing dissertation before making any commitment to supporting a postgraduate enrolment.*
3. If the undergraduate and/or Masters degree was completed some years ago (more than 7 years) inquirers should be encouraged to undertake a one-year Higher Degree by Research Preliminary course to bring them up to speed. This is generally the equivalent of an Honours course but can vary from discipline to discipline. Undertaking HDR Preliminary will attract HECS but its successful completion will produce successful PhD candidatures.
4. The Confirmation milestones are now to be specifically stated on proposal forms. The specific milestones for PhD candidates in SCS are shown below. These milestones are on the website of the Graduate Research School and on the postgraduate page of the School website. **Note:** these milestones do NOT apply to Masters candidatures.

Tasks and Timeframe for fulltime PhD candidatures [Part-time in brackets]

- a) Within 6 [9] Months - Literature Review; Proposal, and Ethics Application where needed, vetted by Discipline Advisory Panel and forwarded to Graduate Research School.

Either:

- b) by 9 [12] Months - Oral Presentation of work to Discipline Seminar
- or**
- c) by 9 [12] Months - Chapter (minimum 5,000 words) to be read by Discipline Advisory Panel, **according to individual discipline practice.**
 - d) Completion of any relevant, approved development activity as cited specifically in the Research Proposal.
 - e) 12 [24] Months Annual Report including confirmation that all agreed tasks have been completed.

With the institution by the Graduate Research School of Formal Confirmation of Candidature milestones in the first year of a PhD degree, it is recommended that no potential SCS PhD students be required to enrol in a Masters degree before converting to a PhD.