Graduate Research Programs for UWA

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The introduction of named Graduate Research Programs at the University of Western Australia facilitates:

1. the development of explicit, and distinct, HDR training curricula for particular fields of research,
2. the development of streamed curricula to suit candidates with different post-graduation career aspirations,
3. a strategic focus on research training in high performing research programs at UWA (as defined by ERA, e.g.),
4. a focus on the strategic development of research training in other identified areas of comparative advantage identified for the University,
5. provision of a framework that encourages co-supervision in teams across schools, centres and institutes and (ideally) simplifies the management of resources associated with research training across business units and administrative structures.

Groups of researchers (generally organised by broad Field of Research and crossing school, faculty, centre boundaries) will apply to have a proposed GRP formally accredited by the Board of the Graduate Research School. Not all HDR students need necessarily be enrolled through a GRP.

GRPs will develop more specific curricula for the MPhil and PhD. There is the opportunity to recognise the different nature of the diverse HDR cohorts, to provide coursework specific to particular disciplines and to design aspects of the program — including progression and examination — to best fit the nature of research in that field or the expectations of the program held by external stakeholders (e.g. potential employers).

The preferred model is for coursework/formal learning to be distributed throughout the candidature, on the grounds that:

- different skills may be more appropriately taught or developed at different stages within candidature,
- distributing coursework through candidature may assist in scaffolding the research program and so hastening completion,
- students’ career aspirations may not be well established at enrolment but become more focused during their candidature,
- distributing coursework through candidature may reduce the risk of interfering with the smooth progress of the research project, especially in cases where engagement with a research program develops from Honours, through to PhD

Coursework (formally taught elements) fall into the following categories:

- **Enabling**— for students in their first year of candidature formal learning might include units to fill any knowledge gaps in the discipline, additional English language support for NESB
students, advanced statistics, research integrity training, project planning and management, etc. While currently designed to be crafted into the first year of PhD candidature, these may be delivered in a bridging ‘new look’ Master’s.

- **Enriching** — for students whose candidature has been confirmed formal learning programs might include: participation in interdisciplinary masterclass, seminar or workshop series organised though the Institute of Advanced Studies; external internships (advanced service learning/consultancies) with industry, business, government, NGOs; advanced units in the *History and Philosophy of Science*, to partially address a ‘stewardship of the discipline’ outcome of the broader PhD.

- **Articulating** — units which might be taken up in the later stages of candidature and which might include: commercialisation (descendants of CTS) and Intellectual Property management, knowledge transfer and translational research practice, policy development, tertiary pedagogy, research team management, entrepreneurship and business planning, media training.

Particular formal learning modules may be mandatory for all HDR candidates (*Research Integrity Training, History and Philosophy of Science*, e.g.) and at least some of this would be offered centrally through the Graduate Research School. Some coursework modules would be specific to particular GRPs, others (e.g. Biostatistics) may feature in the curricula of a number of GRPs. The figure below illustrates schematically for the PhD.