

Confirmation Process Procedure

Last Modified Nōnahea i Whakarerekē	1 January 2024
Review Date Rā Arotake	12 months
Approval Authority Mana Whakaae	Dean of Postgraduate Research

Kupu Whakataki | Introduction

These guidelines provide information for PhD students to aid in their preparation for the PhD Confirmation Process. They should be read in conjunction with the Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy and the Research Student Supervision Policy. If anything in these guidelines conflicts with UC Regulations or policies, the Regulations and policies prevail.

The Confirmation Process is a key milestone for doctoral students at the University and should showcase a well-defined proposal for your research, and a detailed plan for how to complete it. Any questions regarding the Confirmation Process should be directed to a student's senior supervisor in the first instance. If further clarification is required, please contact Te Kura Tāura | UC Graduate School (graduateschool@canterbury.ac.nz).

Aratohu | Guidelines

A student enrolled full-time in the PhD programme at UC must complete the Confirmation Process within 12 months of enrolment, and a student enrolled part-time must complete the Confirmation Process within 18 months of enrolment. Failure to complete the Confirmation Process within the required time may result in cancellation of enrolment in the PhD programme.

The Confirmation Process is comprised of two key stages: (1) submission of a written Confirmation Proposal to a Panel and (2) an oral presentation to the Panel, followed by questioning.

If your research is dependent on the approval of UC's ethics committee(s), or any other committee or organisation, any required approvals should be obtained before undertaking the Confirmation process.

Confirmation Proposal

The Confirmation Proposal forms a blueprint for the thesis. It is as a result of at least nine months of work to transition the initial thesis proposals or ideas, into a well-defined proposal that articulates the clear rationale for the research and describes, in detail, how it will be undertaken.

A Confirmation Proposal must include a relevant literature review that situates the research within the field, describes how it will contribute to advancing knowledge, and details a series of research questions and hypotheses, if appropriate. It must also include a detailed description of the proposed research including the methodology, proposed data analysis techniques, and any resources that will be required to complete the research.

The specific requirements of the Confirmation Proposal will differ across disciplines. Research students are encouraged to discuss and confirm an appropriate format with their Senior Supervisor. For all research students, the Confirmation Proposal must also include a report of progress to date and detail a series of goals to be achieved with a timeline for completion (e.g., a Gantt chart is one way to complete this task).

The Confirmation Proposal is developed with the support of a student's supervisory team, and the final version of the Proposal should have been through multiple rounds of review and feedback.

It is the student's responsibility to submit the final version of the Confirmation Proposal to the Senior Supervisor, for distribution to the Panel, at least two weeks prior to your Confirmation Oral Presentation. From that point, it is the Senior Supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the Proposal is circulated to the Panel in a timely manner.

The Panel will consist of at least three members: (1) An independent assessor; (2) the senior supervisor; and (3) at least one co-or associate supervisor. If the independent assessor is a member of staff at UC, they may act as the Panel Chair. If they are not a member of staff at UC, a fourth person—a member of UC staff—will be appointed to the Panel to act as chair.

It is the Senior Supervisor's responsibility to select an appropriate independent assessor, following consultation with supervisory team and doctoral student. The independent assessor must be an experienced researcher, with relevant and current expertise within the field of research, who has not been involved in the development of the research. It is the senior supervisor's responsibility to arrange the timing of the Oral Presentation, and the PhD student must make themselves available to complete the Oral Presentation at a time suitable to members of the Panel.

Confirmation Oral Presentation

The next step is for the research student to present their research to the Panel, followed by a discussion and question-and-answer (Q&A) session. In most cases,

students will give a 10 to 20 minute overview of their research—sometimes for a departmental/school audience. The presentation convention is set by the Head of Department/School. Students should liaise with the graduate research coordinator in their Department/School for details of the process. The research presentation will be followed by the Q&A session, attended by the Panel only, which can last up to an hour. Students should talk with their supervisors and/or graduate research coordinator about particular requirements for their department/school. In general, the Q&A session provides an opportunity for the Panel to probe a student’s thinking, the rationale for their work, and level of knowledge of the field. They will follow up on questions that have arisen from their review of the Confirmation Proposal, and may ask some challenging questions. This approach provides students with the opportunity to have a robust discussion about their research direction with an expert or experts from outside of their supervisory team.

Next Steps

Following the Oral Presentation, the Panel will discuss their recommended outcome. They will inform the student of their recommendation, usually on the same day. The Panel will provide the student with written and verbal feedback on both the Confirmation Proposal and the Oral Presentation. Next, the Chair of the Panel will make a recommendation to the Amo Rangahau | Dean of Postgraduate Research, who will decide on the outcome of the Confirmation Process.

As detailed in the PhD Regulations, the outcome may be to: (i) confirm the student's enrolment; or (ii) extend the student's enrolment for up to six months; or (iii) transfer the student’s enrolment to a relevant master's degree (with the student's agreement); or (iv) cancel the student's enrolment in the PhD. The student will be notified by Te Kura Tāura when the Amo Rangahau | Dean of Postgraduate Research has determined the outcome of the confirmation process.

If a student disagrees with the outcome of the confirmation process, they may appeal the decision. Further information about appeals is provided in the PhD Regulations and the General Regulations for the University.

He kōrero anō | Related Documents and Information

Ngā Waeture | UC Regulations

- [Academic Misconduct Regulations](#)
- [Appeals Regulations](#)
- [Doctor of Education Regulations](#)
- [Doctor of Health Science Regulations](#)
- [Doctor of Musical Arts Regulations](#)
- [Doctor of Philosophy Regulations](#)
- [General Regulations](#)
- [Qualification Regulations](#)

Te Pātaka Kaupapa Here | UC Policy Library

- [Academic Integrity Guidance](#)
- [Animal Ethics Committee Code of Ethical Conduct](#)

- [Allocation of Academic Activities and Establishing Academic Staff Workload Policy](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- [Equity and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Financial and Enrolment Information – Doctorate, Master’s Thesis, and Dissertation Students Policy](#)
- [Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Human Research Ethics Policy - Research Involving Human Participants](#)
- [Intellectual Property Policy](#)
- [Proofreading and Editing Guidelines](#)
- [Research Conduct Policy](#)
- [Research Student Supervision Policy](#)
- [Thesis Availability Policy](#)
- [Staff Code of Conduct](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)

Te Pae Tukutuku me te Ipurangiroto o UC | UC Website and Intranet

- [Forms, policies and guidelines for Doctoral students \(University website\)](#)
- [Te Kura Tāura| UC Graduate School Homepage \(University website\)](#)
- [Raise a concern for Staff and Students \(University website\)](#)
- [Research Homepage \(University website\)](#)
- [University of Canterbury website \(University website\)](#)