UQ Graduate School

Infrastructure Support Guidelines

UQ is committed to providing infrastructure support of the highest possible quality for its research higher degree (RHD) students - that is the provision of all resources that are mutually agreed by the student, Advisors and the School/Institute that are necessary for a viable and feasible research project that can be completed to a satisfactory standard in an appropriate period of time.

Timely and successful completion of the University's RHD programs are due, in part, to the provision of appropriate levels of infrastructure. Schools and Institutes play an important role in matching prospective RHD students and their projects with timely provision of human, physical, financial, and technical resources. Academic units enrolling RHD students must strive to attain optimal standards of resources for those students. At a minimum, they include:

- the work of individual Advisors;
- the infrastructure support available through Schools/Institutes;
- the institution's policies with respect to RHD student research; and
- administrative structures and procedures designed to assist RHD students.

Good advisory practice from the perspective of the individual Advisor is articulated in HUPP 4.60.1 Effective Guidance: The Role of the Advisor for Research Higher Degree Candidates.

These guidelines articulate the provision of infrastructure support for RHD students at the level of the School or Institute. Throughout this guideline the term "School" also refers to those organisational units such as Institutes and Centres with University approval to enrol RHD students.

1. Direct research costs

When a School/Institute recommends acceptance of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) or Master of Philosophy (MPhil) student it does so after establishing that funding for the direct costs necessary for the research project are available. The direct costs of research (and other resource implications) must be taken into account when thesis topics are negotiated with prospective RHD students.

The Application for Admission and Scholarship and the School Recommendation on an Application for Admission and Scholarship each make explicit reference to funding for the project. All research projects must be designed with consideration to the resources that are likely to be available to carry them out.

All parties involved at the School level including the Principal Advisor and the Head or Postgraduate Coordinator (if this position is responsible for RHD student resource allocation) must ensure that RHD students are only accepted to undertake projects for which adequate resources and infrastructure are available for the student's project to be successfully completed. Other resource implications include the full costs of:

- access to resources or facilities at other organisations in Australia or overseas;
- travel to complete fieldwork, collect data, or to visit libraries or other repositories;
- training in techniques;
- necessary coursework undertaken outside the enrolling unit.
These issues are particularly important when recommending acceptance of an RHD student who will be remote from the campus for the majority of candidature and when a student is proposing to amend their candidature to remote status.

Arrangements to access such facilities external to the School/Institute or University should be negotiated before commencement of candidature to avoid unnecessary delays and thus ensure continuity in the student’s research project.

The University, like other research organisations, can never promise to support any program of research regardless of cost. It is essential that costs are considered carefully when decisions are made about research questions, techniques, and directions. This is especially important when any of these factors change during an RHD student’s candidature.

2. Information to be provided to RHD students

2.1 School Induction

RHD students must undergo an induction process as soon as practicable after commencement of candidature during which they can be informed of School and University facilities and services available to them throughout their candidature. The UQ Graduate School, Library, TEDI, Information Technology Services, Student Services, ICTE and other technical and administrative units provide services and access to infrastructure for all RHD students and the School should maintain a readily accessible list of such services for students in hard copy form and/or on the School web site. The UQ Graduate School web site also provides information on many services, University policies relevant to RHD students, and training programs and seminars.

The resource needs of RHD students vary across a wide range of disciplines, so it is important that Schools clearly articulate the facilities and other support (such as travel for conference presentation) available to RHD students who enrol with it. Access to some resources such as conference travel may be only provided on merit by application and if so, this must be made clear to students.

Formal induction is required within a few days of commencing laboratory or fieldwork for occupational health and safety reasons. See HUPP 2.30.16 Occupational Health and Safety in the Laboratory (Postgraduate Students).

2.2 Early Meeting with Advisor(s)

It is essential that RHD students and advisors consult prior to commencement of candidature or within a few days of commencement to discuss both general infrastructure support and project specific support. This will clarify what has been agreed to at the commencement of RHD candidature.

2.3 Provision of Hard Copy Lists of Facilities

Either as part of the School induction or the early meeting with the advisors, the RHD student should be provided with a hard copy list of facilities available to all students and a hard copy list of resources specific to their research project. The list of facilities for all students should also be available on the School’s web site and updated at least annually – see the School Infrastructure Pro-Forma

2.4 Ancillary Student Services
Schools should ensure that RHD students are aware of ancillary support services such as counselling, health, accommodation, English-language and academic writing support, careers/employment and child care.

2.5 International RHD Students

Schools should advise international RHD students about University provision of assistance with English language skills.

3. Infrastructure Support

3.1 Office accommodation

All full-time RHD students should be provided with or offered shared office accommodation that includes a sole-use desk, lockable filing cabinet and bookshelf facilities. If, at times, a sole-use desk is not available to every full-time student, shared use of a desk or other satisfactory, flexible arrangements should be negotiated between the School, the advisor and the student. Schools should endeavour to provide part-time RHD students with shared office accommodation and at least shared use of a desk. It is acknowledged that some schools face challenges regarding space and accommodation.

3.2 After hours safety

With regard to security and safety, there should be 'after hours' (ideally 24-hour, 7 days per week) access for RHD students to their offices, labs or shared work space. 'After hours' work in any University facility must comply with relevant Occupational Health and Safety regulations. 'After hours' work in a laboratory may require more than one person to be present for safety reasons (that is, the student cannot work alone). See the Occupational Health and Safety Unit web site for additional information.

3.3 On-campus IT facilities

RHD students must have access to on-campus IT facilities for data analysis, writing and information access. This might involve:

- the use of desktop computers, mainframe systems, or high performance computing time;
- networked printing; technical advice;
- help with academic software supported by the University.

Schools may offer additional software support appropriate to the discipline and/or the project. RHD students need an appropriate level of access to research and communication tools such as the WWW and e-mail, including dial-in access. They should also be provided with a level of access to download electronic information from journals and other sources that is appropriate to their research project and their stage of candidature. Information Technology Services Planning & Policy (ITSPP) Committee and Postgraduate Studies Committee (PGSC) have jointly recommended that Schools allocate Off Net download quotas to RHD students on the same basis as to academic staff.

3.4 Internet services

Remotely based RHD students must have reasonable access to University Internet services and other resources required to support their research and thesis preparation.
3.5 General maintenance and consumables

Schools should determine annually the levels of general maintenance and consumables that will be provided to RHD students, and inform them and their advisors accordingly. Provision of resources, such as photocopying, printing, funds for research travel, outside mail, controlled STD or ISD telephone use and fax use, need to be commensurate with the requirements of research topics and thesis writing. Reasonable limits will vary from discipline to discipline, from school to school, and occasionally from project to project.

3.6 Conferences

RHD students should be encouraged to present their work at appropriate national and international conferences. It is highly desirable that Schools contribute to conference participation costs: it is acknowledged that the level of support offered will vary between Schools. Ideally, PhD students should be supported at least partially by the School to participate in a minimum of two national conferences and one international conference during candidature, while MPhil students should be supported at least partially by the School for a minimum of one national conference. RHD students should therefore be encouraged and supported to apply for external funding to participate in conferences. Some training in presentation skills should also be provided.

3.7 Professional development

Wherever possible, Schools should offer suitably qualified RHD students the opportunity to tutor, demonstrate or engage in other professional development activities, within the guidelines on work approved by the University.

3.8 Library resources

Schools should encourage RHD students to make effective, efficient use of Library resources. This will often require participation in general orientation sessions and tours, as well as specialist courses run by the University Library and other specialist libraries. Research topics that will involve the acquisition of significant library holdings should be discussed with appropriate Library staff before the topic is finally agreed. If the acquisition of necessary Library holdings is not feasible, funds will need to be available to permit students to spend time at other libraries where the appropriate material is available. The University meets the cost of inter-library loans that are related to the RHD student’s topic and approved by the principal advisor.

(This revised policy draws upon the University of Melbourne “Infrastructure Support for Postgraduate Research Students: The Responsibilities of Academic Departments” policy, which itself references the 1997 UQ policy; and the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA "2004 Statement of Minimum Resources for Postgraduate Study").)