

How to get off to a good start with your research degree



LET'S GET STARTED

essential information for new postgraduate research students 2009



Life Impact The University of Adelaide



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essential information for new postgraduate research students 2009

original presentation by

Professor Richard Russell

Pro Vice-chancellor (Research Operations) &
Dean of Graduate Studies

adapted by

Dr Ian Green

Researcher Education & Development
Adelaide Graduate Centre

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Outline

- The PhD journey
- The Adelaide Graduate Centre
- The Research Student Handbook
- Your responsibilities
- Your supervisors
- Candidature and Scholarships
- Studying Part Time
- Milestones
- The First Milestone
- A Word on your Thesis
- Keeping things on track
- What to do if things go wrong





The PhD Journey

“As experienced by most students the research journey has positive and negative aspects, but because emotions can dominate perceptions many students have sharper experience and recollections of the the down side of a PhD.

But they continue to complete their research successfully and come out as better researchers and personally more resilient”

Tricia Wilkins 2005





The PhD Journey

Whilst you will all experience individual journeys it is important to realise that some of the hurdles will be emotional and these may be more difficult to conquer than the practical problems.

The top three strategies for survival are:

- **Seeking the support of others**
- **Developing self management techniques that work for you**
- **Learning the research process**

You also need a supervisor who understands your needs and is able to support and develop them.





Adelaide Graduate Centre (AGC)

Located on Level 6 at 115, Grenfell Street

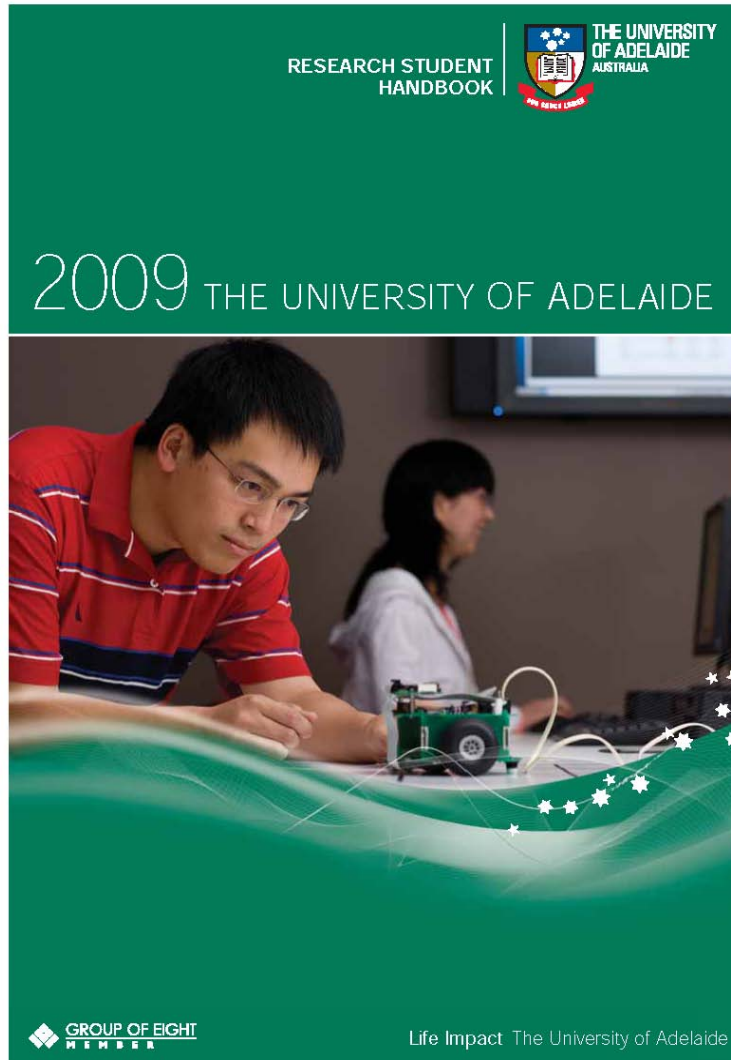
- Dean of Graduate Studies
- Graduate Centre Managed by Anne Witt
- Each Faculty has its own dedicated administration officer

The AGC is responsible for administrative issues eg. candidature, scholarships and examinations as well as academic & professional development (the Integrated Bridging Program & Researcher Education & Development programs)





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The Research Student Handbook



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The Continuous Quality Cycle





Students and the CQC

As a research student you are expected to engage in the the quality cycle:

1. Implementation

- to be familiar with the responsibilities of Students (see Appendix 1 of Research Students Handbook)
- to abide by the rules and regulations that govern your candidature
- to meet milestones and deadlines, especially for annual reviews, and major reviews (and to understand the associated consequences of not being timely)

2. Review

- to provide honest and thoughtful feedback to the University.





The Supervisory Panel

- The University requires you to have a “panel” of at least two registered supervisors - make sure you use it
- The “Principal Supervisor” takes the main responsibility for your progress
- Your co-supervisors may be more or less involved but NOT ignored. They are especially important if the principal supervisor is away
- You may come to depend on others: post-doc fellows, experts elsewhere, etc





Types of Supervision

- Two extremes:
- **The Oxbridge model** – “Here’s the key to the lab. (or a map of the library), I’ll see you in 3 years”
- **At the other end of the scale** – “Here’s your plan for today, report back tomorrow morning with your results, or “This is the theoretical model you should use, so go and read through this list of articles and we’ll discuss it on Tuesday”
- In reality, **YOU** must develop a relationship with your principal supervisor that suits your progression towards becoming an independent researcher.





Knowledge Sharing in the Supervision Relationship

		<u><i>Student</i></u>	
		Knows	Doesn't Know
<u><i>Supervisor</i></u>	Knows	Shared	Teaching & Learning
	Doesn't Know	Backwash	Exploration & Discovery





Candidature & Scholarships

- A PhD should take 3 years full time and a Research Masters, 1.5-2 years (6yrs & 4yrs part-time).
- The Research Training Scheme (RTS) gives you 4 years exemption from HECS for a PhD and 2 for a Masters.
- However, your Scholarship runs for 3 years (PhD) and 2 yrs (Masters). The PhD scholarship only can be extended by 6 months in exceptional circumstances.
- Ultimately, your supervisors will determine how much work is needed but you must be mindful of the constraints
- **International students be careful !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**





Studying part-time

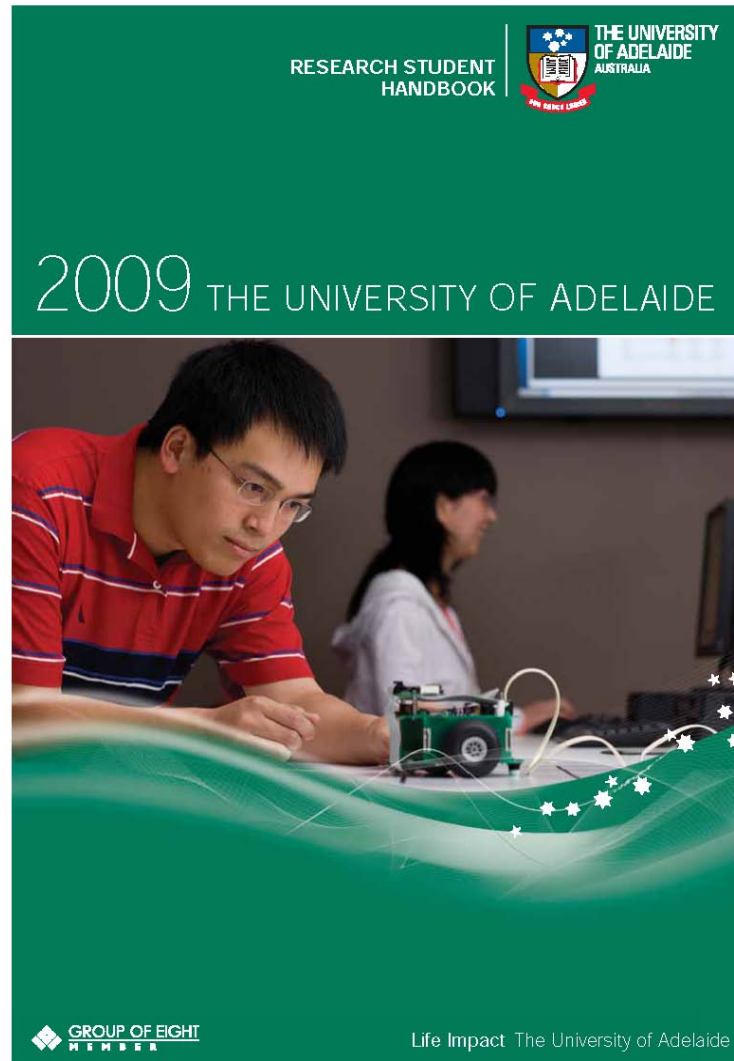
This approach to study presents particular challenges such as:

- Financial security
- Balancing work, family and study commitments
- Negotiating goals, timelines and outcomes for your research
- Participating in your research community





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Please now
open your
Handbook

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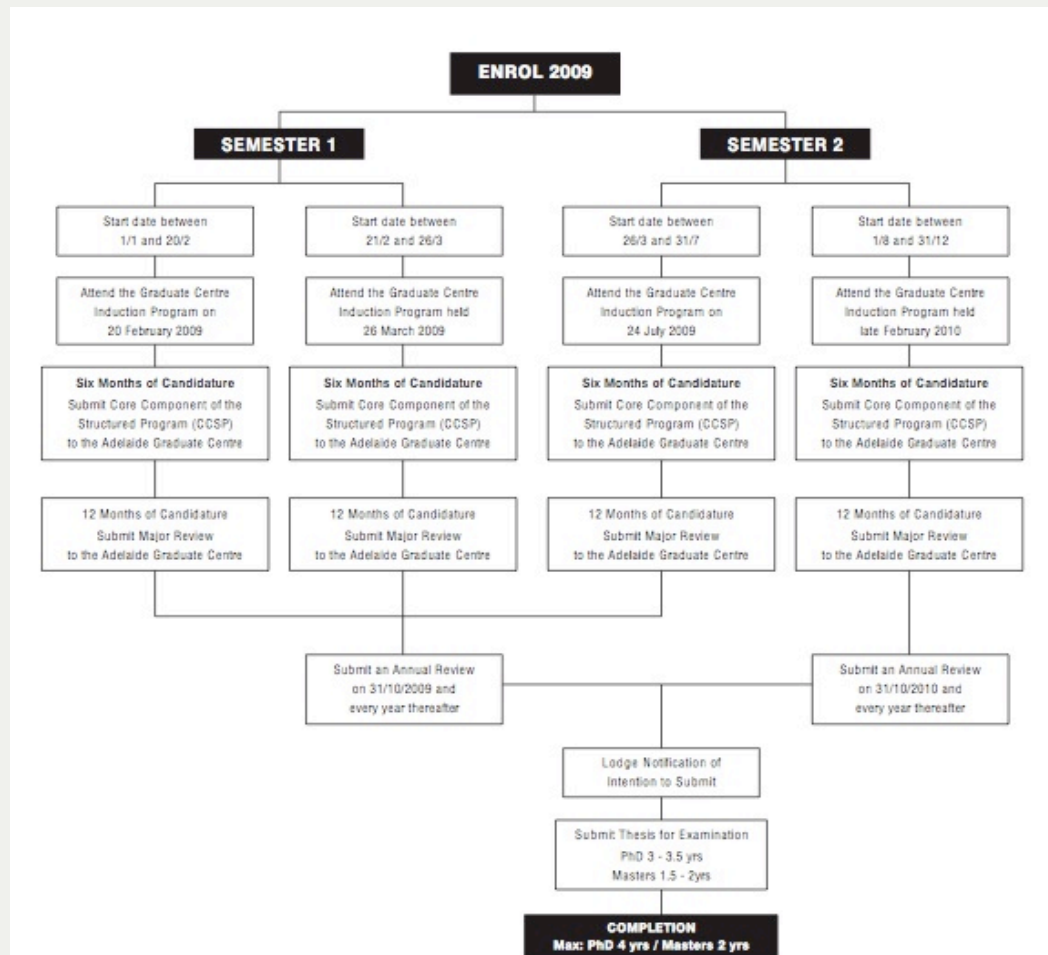
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Milestones



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The first milestone

You must complete your research proposal as part of the **Core Component of the Structured Program (CCSP)** within 6 months.

It's up to **YOU** to obtain the necessary documentation and to submit your completed CCSP to the AGC.

(Keep a photocopy for your own records)





CCSP – what's missing?

- **Minimum Resources Proforma** must be completed by your supervisor & Head of School/Discipline, in consultation with you (*and you need to understand this document*)
- **Approvals:** In drawing up your research proposal, make sure you have everything you need to do it eg. (ethics, Aboriginal Heritage Trust permits, biosafety, collection permits, visas etc.)
- **Signatures:** Your supervisor's endorsement is essential for ensuring that everything is available at the right time.





A Word on Your Thesis

CAUTION

**The rules regarding presentation of theses have been relaxed
BUT the Examination Standards remain the same!**





A Word on Your Thesis

CAUTION

PLAGIARISM WILL RESULT IN FAILURE.

Make sure you visit [“Writing and Speaking at Uni”](#) in your

[MyUni courses](#)





Keeping things on track

- Be aware of potential issues – in supervision or candidature, difficulties arising in your work environment, or the timelines of your research.
- Address issues as they emerge – don't leave it until it becomes an established problem.
- Make sure you have people you can talk to honestly for advice or help.
- These could be friends, family or colleagues – try more advanced graduate students in your department.





What if things go wrong?

Let's assume they won't, but if needed:

- Ask your **principal supervisor** for help in sorting things out.
- Alternatively, try other members of the supervisor panel, or other staff. If you are an International Student you can ask one of the **Integrated Bridging Program** lecturers for advice.
- If this doesn't help, try the **postgraduate coordinator** or **Head of School/ Discipline**.
- Finally contact **ME** or an **EWO** (Education Welfare Officer).





Generic Attributes

From our Exit surveys we know that around 56% of our research degree graduates go into academic jobs so there are a very substantial group of students who work outside of Universities.

Think about your future and use the wide range of programs available to you (RED, CPLD Faculty etc) to gain additional skills to fit you for your first employment.





Good Luck !!

- The University of Adelaide is a great place for research and researchers.
- Your PhD/Research Masters is a time of intense activity, both intellectual & physical.
- You will set new horizons for yourself, learn new skills (both generic and discipline-based), discover new things, get involved in committee work, AUPGSA, etc.
- **Above all, enjoy your time at Adelaide.**



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Dr Ian Green
RESEARCHER EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT
Adelaide Graduate Centre
ian.green@adelaide.edu.au

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