

# Student Administration Approval Roles

## What you need to know when approving research proposals in eVision

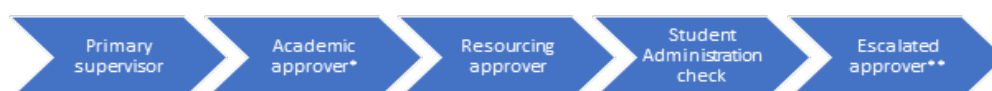
(Updated 1 November 2020)

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## 1. Summary of Student Administration roles:

Student Administration holds three different roles in online thesis approvals. The primary role is in the approval chain providing a final administrative check and 'confirming' prior academic approvals by the Primary Supervisor, Academic Approver, and Resourcing Approver(s). The usual approval chain is:



In some cases, where approval is clear cut and straight-forward, Student Administration submits the final approval; in other cases, escalated approval is mandatory, automatic and by-passes Student Administration. Escalated approvals go to the Graduate Research School for PhDs, or to the relevant Divisional Associate Dean Postgraduate for all other research degrees.

Student Administration also holds two 'behind the scenes' roles, one to help keep the process moving when an Approver in the chain is unavailable ('approving on behalf of') and the other to keep the underlying framework up to date ('managing Programme Directors').

All three roles are explained in further detail below (sections 3-5).

## 2. Outside Student Administration Scope:

In the following situations, Student Administration has *no role* in the approval process.

### Complex cases

There are some 'complex' cases that automatically by-pass Student Administration and go directly to the relevant Escalated Approver (GRS or ADPG). In these cases, the Escalated Approver conducts the final administrative checks with their final approval. These cases include:

- *Variation requests* for *all* research degrees submitted by the Academic approver, and
- *Complex PhD* applications involving:
  1. Upgrade from Masters to PhD degree
  2. Part-time students
  3. English language waiver applied for
  4. Entry eligibility is *other research experience*
  5. Additional papers have been identified
  6. Students studying via distance

### 'Papers + Thesis' programmes

Where students are already 'on the programme' (admitted a year or more previously) online approval ends once the Primary Supervisor, Academic, and Resourcing approvals have been provided; Student Administration has no role.

(Please note that with these programmes the Programme Co-ordinator will still receive an auto-gen email advising that the proposal has been approved, but no action is required because the student is already admitted and on the programme.)

See Approval Chain Charts showing where Student Administration fits in the approval chain (*Appendix 1, Figure 1.1 for PhDs, 1.2 for all other degrees*).

### 3. Confirmation of Approval Role

Student Administration's primary role is to perform a final administrative check and 'confirm' the approvals entered by previous approvers. This involves a quick pre-check and four checks associated with tick boxes in the approval task. See *Figure 1 (showing the 4 tick boxes in the approval task)*.

Where all checks are passed, Student Administration should 'agree to all' and click 'approve'. Where one or more of the checks does not pass, Student Administration should identify what the problem is (by unticking the relevant box and adding a mandatory comment about why the check failed) and then either send it back for 'changes required' or 'escalate' it up to a higher authority for resolution (GRS for PhDs or ADPG for all others). The appropriate decision box will activate depending on whether all checks are passed or not.

Detailed instruction on how to conduct each of the checks follows.

Figure 1:

**Student Administration confirmation**

Do you agree to approve? \*

☐ Student meets grade requirements set out in the [regulations](#) where applicable

☐ Supervision meets regulation requirements where applicable

☐ All required supporting documentation is provided, see [Graduate Research School](#)

☐ Student meets English language criteria where applicable

**Comments**

*Please note any comments entered will be lost if you leave this tab*

[Help](#)

Changes required  Final approval  Escalate

#### Pre-check

Before beginning your checks, quickly review the Recommendation Notes, Comments, and Important Notes on the Approval Summary (see Figure 2). Look for any ‘red flag’ comments that indicate the student is borderline or raises questions or concerns, in which case you may want to consider escalating approval. (Note: ‘Important Notes’ only display where an approver has previously recorded that changes were required. These will already be resolved, and the notes are for information only; no action is required by Student Administration.)

Figure 2:

Proposed topic	Genetics		
Previous experience	PhD. Research Proposal Research Title: The Significance of Genetics The era of globalization today... <a href="#">read more</a>		
Recommendation notes	Research proposed by Ms Andrea is novel, includes strong research methodology and will extend the... <a href="#">read more</a>		

The online approval for this student started on 5/Mar/2020.

Approval Stage	Approver Name	Approved Date	Comments
✓ Primary Supervisor approval	Assoc Prof Caroline Beck	10/Mar/2020	Student has average result of A
✓ Academic approval	Dr. Susie Lawless	12/Mar/2020	Great research topic
✓ Resourcing approval (Programme Director - Genetics)	Dr. Susie Lawless	12/Mar/2020	Great research topic
✓ Resourcing approval (HoD - Botany)	Assoc. Prof. David Orlovich	13/Mar/2020	Creative research

Important note(s)

- Previous changes required		
Comment	Entered by	Entered Date
Change in supervision required	Student administration	6/Feb/2020

## Conducting the checks needed to ‘confirm approval’:

*What are you approving...*

### 1. GPA Check - ‘Student meets grade requirement set out in the regulations’

*What to check...*

This is a quick administrative check to see if there are any ‘red flags’ indicating that relevant grade requirements are not met or that further investigation by an Escalated Approver is warranted. A cursory review is all that is required. SA staff are not expected to calculate GPA’s, assess the size or quality of the thesis/dissertation used for admission, calculate grade equivalences, or undertake a detailed assessment of the student’s academic record. Responsibility for conducting the full GPA/grade assessment sits with the Academic Approver. (See Appendix 2.4 for a sample of the Academic Approval page.) SA’s role is to ‘sense check’ the available grade information as a final administrative check prior to confirming approval, and escalate if there are any questions or concerns.

Note:

- If you are the Programme Coordinator, it is likely that you have already conducted some level of GPA check prior to assigning the application to the Department for Proposal Assessment. If so, a quick review of your prior assessment is all that is required (no need do it again or take it to another level). The below is primarily for staff who were *not* previously involved in assessing the student's grades and now need to do a final check.
- If the student did not meet grade requirements and a variation was requested, approval will automatically by-pass Student Administration and go directly to the Escalated Approver, so you will not see those. (*See Appendix 1 for how variation cases bypass Student Administration.*)

### Where to look...

#### 1.1 Is there a grade requirement?

Use the '**regulations**' link in the approval task. This will take you to the Otago Qualifications page, from which you can link to the relevant qualification, and then to their regulations. Admission requirements are in Section 1 of regulations; check to see if they contain a grade requirement. If no, this check is complete. If yes, continue below.

Note: PhD's *usually* require a B+ on the advanced papers in the qualifying degree as well as on a dissertation/thesis of more than 0.25 of full-time full-year study (but there are other factors as well). Non-PhD research degrees *usually* require a B+ on relevant prior study (and again there are often other factors as well). Requirements vary between degrees, so it is important to check the regulations.

#### 1.2 Has the grade requirement been met?

- a. Go to Supporting Information tab (in Online Approval), and as relevant:
- b. Expand the **Documents** section:
  - i. An *Otago Academic Record* link will be available if the student has studied at Otago. The Otago Academic Record shows specific marks and grades for each paper taken as well as GPA information at the end (cumulative, and by year, and by level of study). *See Figure 3.* If the student has previously completed a research component that needs to be assessed (e.g. a Master's dissertation) the points/credit value of that research component will also show on the record along with the grade awarded.

Figure 3

### Grade Point Average

Based on a 9-point scale.

Cumulative	6.9
For 2017	6.4
For 2018	6.6
For 2019	6.8
For 2020	8.8
At 100 level	6.4
At 200 level	6.9
At 300 level	7.3

- ii. *Transcripts* for study at other institutions usually appear under Qualification Documents. (Sometimes they are under Application or Student documents, depending on how they were uploaded, so a wide sweep is advised). Transcripts should be attached to a particular qualification and labelled with the document type 'Transcript' for easy identification. *See Figure 4*. If there are multiple transcripts, ensure you use the one for the 'qualifying' degree.

Figure 4

The screenshot shows a web interface with a 'Documents' tab selected. Below the tab, the heading 'Qualification documents' is visible. Under the heading, there is a section titled 'Document type'. Below this section, there is a list of documents. The first document is 'Other (Bachelor of Arts Honors in Geography)'. The second document is 'Transcript (Academic transcript)'. The third document is 'Transcript (Academic transcript)'. The fourth document is 'Other (Bachelor of Arts Honors in Geography)'.

Most transcripts include grade scale information as well as some pre-calculated GPA information at the end of the record, but this varies from institution to institution, and can be quite complex to compare with Otago equivalences, especially with overseas institutions. For international students, refer to the International Assessment (below).

- c. Expand the **International Assessment** section, where relevant.

This provides average grade and grade scale information, along with information about the student's overseas study and institution. *See Figure 5*.

Figure 5:

International assessment	
English language requirement met	No
Most recent study	Master Of Science (Development Management)
New Zealand equivalent	Master's degree (coursework and thesis)
Institution	University of Agder, Norway
Institution recognised	Yes
Grades	Average grade: C
Grade scale	Please see attached document
Specific notes from International Office	

If the International Assessment is blank, check the Documents section to see if this information has been provided separately in an 'International Coversheet' (or similar) document.

Note: The International Assessment may also be blank if the international student is a returning Otago student (who don't go through the International Admissions process).

If the overseas institution is listed as 'not recognised', escalation is recommended.

- d. Compare the grade requirements (from 1.1 above) with the documented grade information available on the Supporting Information tab (from 1.2 above). The University of Otago grade scale (Figure 6) indicates Otago's grade, mark and GPA equivalences.

As noted before, you are not required to make a detailed assessment of whether all grade criteria are met, whether the research component is sufficient, or calculate the relevant GPA ... that was the responsibility of the Academic Approver. You are only asked to 'sense check' the grade information that is available at a glance, and if anything strikes you as 'out of line' or questionable, escalate it for further investigation prior to final approval.

Figure 6

Grade	Percentage	Grade Valu
A+	90 or above	9
A	85-89	8
A-	80-84	7
B+	75-79	6
B	70-74	5
B-	65-69	4
C+	60-64	3
C	55-59	2
C-	50-54	1

### *GPA Check Outcomes...*

**Confirm:** If there is no grade requirement, or the grade requirement has clearly been met or *appears to be met on its face*, then this check is satisfied and can be confirmed. This confirms that nothing jumped out as warranting further investigation and relies on the Academic Approver's prior assessment that grade requirements were met.

**Escalate:** If there are any 'red flags' that suggest grade requirements might not be met, or that raise questions or concerns, you should escalate approval for further investigation. A mandatory comment is required and should explain the specific grade issue that raises concern (the more explicit the better).

**Changes required:** This outcome should be used when it is *clear* that the student does not meet grade requirements and no variation was requested. In such cases, selecting this outcome will send it back to the beginning which will give the Department or Academic Approver the opportunity to make a case for variation. A mandatory comment is required and should specify why the grade requirement is not met; the more explicit the better. When there is doubt about grade requirements, escalation is the better option.

### *What are you approving...*

## **2 Supervision Check – *Supervision meets regulation requirements where applicable***

### *What to check...*

This check involves checking that the *number* of supervisors, *weighting*, and their *recorded supervision experience* (not their disciplinary expertise) meet requirements. It is primarily designed for PhD's (where complex rules apply) but a quick check of non-PhD supervision is also required. This is a final administrative double-check; primary responsibility for checking supervisory arrangements sits with the Academic Approver. *See Appendix 2.4 for a sample of the Academic Approval page.*

### Non-PhD

#### *Requirements:*

- Only a Primary Supervisor is required. Co-supervisors are optional.
- The Primary Supervisor must hold the same or higher degree as the degree being supervised.
- Where co-supervision is involved, the Primary should have the greatest, or equal greatest, percentage of the workload.

### *Where to look...*

- Go to the Supporting Information tab from your Approval page; open up Supervisory Arrangements; the Primary Supervisor is listed. *See Figure 7.*
- Check the 'title' of the Primary Supervisor in the Name column (their title always displays with their name); if title is Dr/Assoc Prof/Prof ... they hold a PhD, which means they meet requirements. If not, escalate for further investigation.

## PhD

### Requirements – from PhD Regulation 6 (a-c)

- Need 2 Supervisors; or Primary Supervisor + Departmental Advisory Panel (of 2 or more members)
- Primary must hold the greatest, or equal greatest, percentage split of all supervisors on the supervisory team (e.g.  $> = 50\%$  if two supervisors;  $> = 34\%$  if three supervisors)
- Primary must have previously supervised at least one PhD to completion
- If Primary hasn't supervised a PhD to completion before, requirements can still be met **if** the supervisory team includes a
  - Co-supervisor who has supervised a PhD to completion, AND
  - Co-supervisor holds at least 33% of the supervision workload.

### Where to look...

- Go to the Supporting Information tab from your Approval page; open up Supervisory Arrangements. *See Figure 7.*

### Number of Supervisors

- If 2 supervisors have been entered, this check is met.
- If only 1 Primary Supervisor has been entered, the Department Advisory Committee question will display as either 'Yes' or 'To be confirmed later' (this is system controlled) and this check will be met. *See Figure 7.*

Figure 7

The screenshot shows a web form titled 'Supervisory arrangements'. It contains several sections: 'Academic staff' with a table of supervisors, 'Departmental Advisory Committee' with a question, 'Paper code' with a subject dropdown, and 'Resource allocation' with a department dropdown. The 'Academic staff' table has columns for Role, Name, Department/Job Title, Weighting %, and a link. The 'Departmental Advisory Committee' section has a question 'Advisory committee in place for this student?' with a dropdown menu. The 'Paper code' section has a 'Subject' dropdown menu. The 'Resource allocation' section has a 'First Department' dropdown menu and an 'EFTS split' field.

Role	Name	Department/Job Title	Weighting %	
Primary Supervisor	Mrs Janet Horton	School of Geography	80	Workload
Co-supervisor	Assoc. Prof. Douglas Hill	School of Geography	20	Workload

Departmental Advisory Committee  
Advisory committee in place for this student? To be confirmed later

Paper code  
Subject: GEOG - Geography

Resource allocation  
First Department: GEOG - School of Geography  
EFTS split

### Weighting

- Check the Weighting % column; ensure Primary has sufficient weighting (as noted above).

### Supervision Experience

- Check Supervisor title in the Name column to ensure they hold a PhD.
- Click on the Workload link by the Primary Supervisor. *See Figure 7.*
- Scroll to bottom of page, the last sentence confirms whether they have supervised at least 1 PhD to completion; if 'Yes', this check is completed.



- If 'No' (hasn't supervised to completion before) there are two other ways this requirement can be satisfied:
  - a. Primary + Co-Supervisor meet requirements. This check focuses on the *Co-Supervisor*:
    - *Experience*: repeat above for Co-Supervisor (click on Workload link, scroll to bottom, see if they have supervised a PhD to completion); if yes then
    - *Weighting*: On the Supervisory Arrangement page, check the Weighting % (right column on screen) if they hold 33% or more, this check is passed; and the 'supervisory team' meets the experience requirements.
  - b. Experience outside of Otago.
    - If the Primary Supervisor has supervision experience outside Otago (i.e. has supervised a PhD to completion at another University) this will not be recorded in eVision but will satisfy this requirement.
    - Primary Supervisors whose experience is based on *external supervision* are asked to note this in the Comments box. This will appear in the Comments column of the Approval Summary dashboard. Academic Approvers will check for these notes when undertaking their supervision check, and if necessary, will follow up and add their own comments.
    - SA staff, therefore, should check the Comments column on the Approval Summary for external supervision notes. *See Figure 8*. If either the Primary Supervisor or Academic Approver indicate that supervision requirements are met by external experience, then this check is met. If there are no notes in the Comments section about external experience (and the requirement is not otherwise met), then this check is not passed, and should be escalated to GRS for further investigation.

Figure 8

The online approval for this student started on 5/Mar/2020.

Approval Stage	Approver Name	Approved Date	Comments
✓ Primary Supervisor approval	Assoc Prof Caroline Beck	10/Mar/2020	Student has average result of A
✓ Academic approval	Dr. Susie Lawless	12/Mar/2020	Great research topic
✓ Resourcing approval [Programme Director - Genetics]	Dr. Susie Lawless	12/Mar/2020	Great research topic
✓ Resourcing approval [HoD - Botany]	Assoc. Prof. David Orlovich	13/Mar/2020	Creative research

### Supervision Check Outcomes (both PhD and non-PhD) ...

**Confirm:** If supervision requirements are met under any of the above pathways.

**Escalate:** If you are uncertain about a supervisor's experience (or some other aspect the supervisory requirements), escalate it for review by GRS (PhDs) or the ADPG (non-PhD). A mandatory comment is required and should identify the specific concern you have about the proposed supervision (the more explicit the better)

**Changes required:** Where supervision requirements are clearly not met 'Changes required' should be entered. This outcome will send it back to the beginning so the necessary changes can be made and the approval process started over. Changes cannot be made without sending

it back, so doing so facilitates correction. A mandatory comment is required and should specify what change is required and why. When in doubt, escalation is the preferred option.

*What are you approving...*

### **3 Document Check – *All required supporting documentation is provided***

*What to check...*

This check involves going into the Documents section of the Supporting Information tab and confirming that all required documents have been provided and uploaded into eVision. This is a final administrative 'double-check'. Initial responsibility for document checking sits with the Primary Supervisor. *See Appendix 2.3 for a sample of the Primary Supervisor Approval page.*

**3.1. Document Check** - Student Administration's document check task is two-fold:

1. Check that all the required documents *are there*.
2. Check that each required document *is what it claims to be*. This is a quick 'common sense check' to make sure that the document 'on its face' is what it claims to be. If it says it's a transcript, open it up to ensure it is a transcript, from the correct institution, covers the relevant years, etc. If it says it is a Department Support Letter, open it up to ensure it looks like a support letter from the relevant department. A quick 'on its face' administrative check is all that is required; you are not otherwise expected to check the document's content or quality.

*Where to look...*

Document requirements vary depending on the degree and the circumstances involved, so it is important to use the Document Guide/Checklist to determine what supporting documents are required in which circumstances. These are the primary source of information on document requirements and they can be accessed from the GRS website here:

[Document Guide](#)

[Document Checklist](#)

In general, there is a 'baseline' document requirement that applies to *all* research students (thesis proposal, transcripts, and a CV). Additional requirements build upon that baseline depending on the specific circumstances of the student. For example, *all PhD* students also require a Department Support letter and *most PhD students* also require one External Reference (but this can vary depending on where their qualifying degree is from and whether the student also has a scholarship application); etc.

In short, there are several variables that impact document requirements, especially in the PhD space, so it is important to **use the Document Checklist and Guide** as a reference when doing the document check.

*Document Check Outcomes...*

**Confirm:** If all required documents are present then this check is passed and can be confirmed.

**Changes required:** If required documents are missing, you can:

Select 'Changes required' and send it back to the department so they can chase and upload the missing documents and resubmit for approval. If you select this outcome, please specify in your mandatory comments exactly which documents are missing.

OR ...

Depending on the circumstances, you may instead elect to contact the Department outside the system to see if they are able to quickly upload the missing document so that you can complete this check and expedite approval. You will need to use your discretion when selecting this option because it would mean approval of a document previous Approvers may not have seen. If you select this approach, escalation is advised.

**Escalate:** If you are uncertain about whether the documents provided meet requirements or if an additional document was added after previous approvals were given, select Escalate so that final approval can be given by GRS (PhDs) or the ADPG (for non-PhDs).

When escalating, the mandatory comment should identify the specific issue and specific document you are concerned about.

*What are you approving...*

#### **4 English Check – Student meets English language criteria where applicable (PhD only)**

This is for *international PhD* students only\*.

(\*For all other degrees, English language is assessed as part of *University Admission* rather than *Programme Admission*.)

This is an administrative check to confirm that English language requirements are met, or where not met, are escalated to GRS for consideration and decision-making. Where appropriate, this will enable GRS to approve 'limited offers' conditioned on English language being met; and it enables GRS to give Student Administration information about the terms to be included in the 'limited offers'.

If this check is *not applicable*, the check is met.

*What to check...*

For International PhDs: Are English language requirements met?

There are 3 possible scenarios:

- 1 Requirements are met.
- 2 Requirements not met and no waiver has been sought.
- 3 Requirements are not met and a waiver has been requested.

Student Administration's check only involves the first two scenarios. If a 'waiver' has been requested, approval automatically by-passes Student Administration and goes directly to GRS.

Where to look...

a. Requirements:

Otago accepts a variety of different international tests to establish English language proficiency. There are different standards for each test, and different standards for undergraduate and postgraduate study. (E.g. The *IELTS* postgraduate requirement is a score of 6.5 in the academic mode, with no individual band below 6; the *internet-based TOEFL* is a score of 95 with a minimum writing score of 22; etc). There are 11 different recognised tests.

The full list of Postgraduate English requirements can be found [here](#).

PhD requirements are the same as the generic Postgraduate standard. Tests must have been taken within two years of the proposed study start date.

b. Did student meet requirements?

Go to the Supporting Information tab, expand the International Assessment section, and review the first line. See Figure 9.

Figure 9

The screenshot shows a web form titled "International assessment". The first row has a yellow highlight on the text "English language requirement met" and a dropdown menu set to "No". Below this are several rows of text input fields: "Most recent study" (filled with "Master Of Science (Development Management)"), "New Zealand equivalent" (filled with "Master's degree (coursework and thesis)"), "Institution" (filled with "University of Agder, Norway"), "Institution recognised" (filled with "Yes"), "Grades" (filled with "Average grade: C"), and "Grade scale" (filled with "Please see attached document"). At the bottom is a label "Specific notes from International Office" followed by a large empty text area.

Field	Value
English language requirement met	No
Most recent study	Master Of Science (Development Management)
New Zealand equivalent	Master's degree (coursework and thesis)
Institution	University of Agder, Norway
Institution recognised	Yes
Grades	Average grade: C
Grade scale	Please see attached document
Specific notes from International Office	

If the answer to the English language question is:

- a. **Yes** – this is scenario #1 above, and this check is passed.
- b. **No (or No but...)** – then:
  - Check the Documents section to see if a *new* English language test result has been provided since the original International Assessment was completed. (English proficiency results are usually under Student Documents.) If a *new test with a satisfactory* result has been provided, then this check is passed. Action as 'Yes' above.

- If no new satisfactory result has been provided, then this remains a 'No' or 'No but...' and should be escalated to GRS for review *in every case*. This is scenario #2 above: not met and no waiver. (If a waiver had been requested, it would have gone straight to GRS.)

c. **Blank** - If the entire International Assessment page is blank:

This suggests the student is an international PhD candidate who is also a returning student (who completed a previous degree at Otago). These students do not go through the International Assessment with the PhD application because they are treated as domestic students for admission purposes. If confirmed as a returning Otago student, this is deemed to satisfy English language requirements.

*To check:* Expand the Documents section on the Supporting information tab and check if they have an Otago Academic Record link:

- If **yes**, this check is passed. In this case, please include a note in the Comments box that the student is a returning student and meets English requirements that way.
- If **no**, they are not a returning student, and should be escalated to GRS for consideration. When escalating, be sure to untick the English language box and include detailed notes about the relevant circumstances in the Comments box (no test taken, failed test, out of date test, scores achieved, etc).

#### *GRS to provide 'conditional' terms*

If GRS opts to approve 'conditioned on meeting English language' they will include specific information about those conditions in the Comments box. This specifically aims to provide Student Administration with the appropriate wording for the 'limited offer'. The GRS comments will appear in the Approval dashboard (with the Escalated Approval) as well as in the auto-generated approval email that goes to the Programme Co-ordinator.

#### *English Language Outcomes*

**Confirm:** This should be selected where the English requirement is either:

- **not applicable** (the applicant is not an international PhD student and the check is not required); *OR*
- **applicable and met** (the applicant is an international PhD student and has provided a satisfactory English language test result or is a returning Otago student).

**Escalate:** **All other cases** should be escalated to GRS for consideration.

**Changes required:** Do not use.

## **4. Approval 'On Behalf Of' Role**

This role allows Student Administration to enter a decision on behalf of an Approver who is unable to do so themselves. It is designed as a backup to prevent the approval process from stalling when one Approver in the chain is unavailable. This role sits *only with* Student Administration (e.g. neither Department academics nor Client Services Administrators can enter approvals on behalf of others) and

can only be used with written authorisation on an 'OBO Authorisation' form. Approval on behalf of is only available for the first three levels of approval; Primary Supervisor, Academic and Resourcing.

### **Context:**

Three factors need to work together to support use of the 'on behalf of' functionality:

- a. *Justification:* There needs to be a valid reason the Approver is unable to enter their own decision (e.g. they are doing research at the bottom of the sea and have no access to the internet)
- b. *Alternative Approver:* An Alternative Approver, with comparable knowledge, skills, and role to the Approver, has assumed responsibility for making the necessary checks and reaching an informed decision in place of the unavailable Approver; and
- c. *Authorisation:* Someone with a 'higher' role has approved the Alternative Approver and authorised Student Administration to enter their decision on behalf of the unavailable Approver.

### **Student Administration Process:**

1. Get authorisation. Send Department the OBO Authorisation form and ask that it be completed and returned (electronic or typed signature is acceptable).

- The OBO Authorisation form can be found [here](#).

*Note: Where possible, prepopulate the form with whatever information you have before sending it to the Department for sign-off; this helps Departments who are new to the task.*

2. With the completed OBO form in hand, go to RSM Research Proposal Assessment; go to the Approval tab; scroll down to 'Approve on behalf of'. *See Figure 10.*
3. For Academic Approval only: Review the decision on the OBO form to see if a variation is required; enter the variation answer. (If yes, include the reason a variation is required from the OBO form in the 'Reason' comments box; *see Figure 10.*)
4. Complete the 'Reason for approving' comments box; this is mandatory. Use the 'reason' entered on the OBO form. Include any 'comments to accompany decision' entered on the form. Include any other relevant comments that will be useful to the next approver in the chain. (There is a 250 character limit, so you may need to summarise information provided on the form.)
5. Upload the OBO form using the Upload function. Uploading the form will activate the decision buttons below (they will remain greyed out until the form is uploaded).
6. Enter the decision indicated on the OBO form by clicking either 'Approve on behalf' or 'Changes required'.

Figure 10

**Research proposal assessment and student management**

Staff tasks

Assigned to department Recommendation entered Recommendation submitted

Name: Hermione Armstrong Granger (Hermione A) ID: 5883641 Programme: Doctor of Philosophy Stage: Proposal approval Primary supervision: School of Arts - History

Student Details Thesis Management Scholarships

Background Reassignments Recommendation **Approval** Documents Activity log

**Online approval**

The online approval for this student started on 25/May/2020.

Approval Stage	Approver Name	Email sent	Approved Date	Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Primary Supervisor approval	Assoc. Prof. Filus Flitwick	25/May/2020	19/Jun/2020	Student has an excellent research proposal.
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic approval (HoD - School of Arts - History)	Prof. Minerva McGonagall	19/Jun/2020		
<input type="checkbox"/> Resourcing approval (HoD - School of Arts - History)	Prof. Minerva McGonagall			
<input type="checkbox"/> Student administration confirmation	Mr David Armstrong			

**Approve on behalf**

Use the following section to approve on behalf or set the research proposal task for changes required.

Do you need to make a case for a variation, where the student won't meet the regulations?

Reason for approving on behalf\*

Please note any comments entered will be lost if you leave this page

Upload approval on behalf form\*  no file chosen  
(doc, docx, pdf - 5 MB max)

☐ Approve on behalf ☐ Changes required

- When the 'on behalf of' approval has been entered, the name of the Student Administration staff who entered the decision will be recorded in the Approval Stage Summary, and the 'Reason' comments will appear in the Comments column.

## 5. Managing Programme Directors Role

### Context:

This role also sits only with Student Administration. It concerns *Academic Approval* only. It enables Student Administration to enter a specified Programme Director into the system to replace the HoD as the Academic Approver (otherwise the HOD is the default Academic Approver).

Programme Directors can be added against a single qualification, or a cluster of qualifications (e.g. all programmes in Aviation Medicine). Once a Programme Director is entered, the online Academic Approval email and task will go directly to the Programme Director (rather than to the HOD.)

The term 'Programme Director' is used generically to encompass any academic staff member who is responsible for academic approvals for a specific research programme, endorsement, discipline, or major. This may include roles such as Academic Leaders, Programme Managers, Academic Coordinators, Heads of Discipline, etc; the specific title 'Programme Director' is not necessary.

Written authorisation from the Associate Dean Postgraduate (for both PhD and non-PhD programmes) is required for any changes to Programme Directors in the system.

All Student Administration staff involved in Online Approval have access to Manage Programme Directors functionality and, as long as they have ADPG authorisation, can update and/or change Programme Directors for their portfolio (or for any programme in the system).

### Student Administration Process:

#### 1. *Written authorisation.*

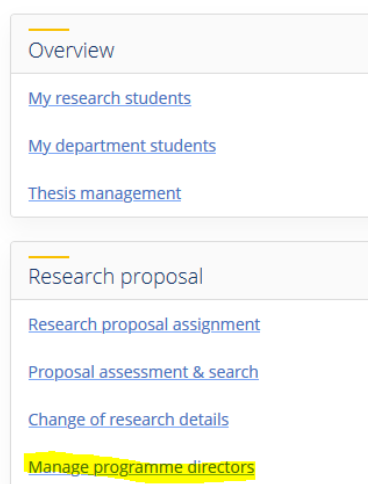
- Obtain written authorisation from the relevant Divisional Associate Dean Postgraduate to support any request to make a change to Programme Directors in the system (this includes adding, removing, or changing existing Programme Directors for all research programmes, PhD or non-PhD).
- Email authorisation is fine, as long as there is written evidence for the audit trail.
- You can ask Departments to obtain the authorisation, or you can obtain it yourself, whichever suits the situation, as long as ADPG approval is confirmed in writing.
- File the written authorisation in Student Administration records for future reference.

#### 2. *Searching for the relevant programme:*

- Go to the Graduate Research home page and select Manage Programme Directors. See Figure 11.

Figure 11

## Graduate research



- You will be asked to enter the programme type (PhD or Other); click continue.
- You will land on a page listing all research programmes and specialisations for that type (PhD or Other). Each endorsement/specialisation is listed separately. The 'PhD' list includes 101 entries; the 'Other' list includes 216 entries.
- Use the '**filter**' (upper right) to narrow the list down to the specific area you are looking for. The filter is 'dynamic' so as soon as you start typing, it will start narrowing down the options. E.g. If you want to add a Programme Director for the Master in Health Sciences



endorsed in Bioethics, select Other, then go to the filter and start typing Bioe ... it instantly reduces the list from all 216 to just 2 qualifications, the Master of Science in Bioengineering and the Master of Health Sciences endorsed in Bioethics. See Figure 12. Then tick the box of the programme you want.

- You can also filter for specific Programme Directors by name, e.g. filter to search for all programmes with a Programme Director named Hermione.
- **'Sort'** - You can also narrow your search by 'sorting' results by Specialisation or Programme Director by clicking on the arrow at the top of the relevant column. See Figure 12.

Figure 12

Programme Directors for other research programmes

Export report of Programme Directors for other

Select all

Filter: bioe

Select	Programme	Specialisation	Programme Director
<input type="checkbox"/>	Master of Health Sciences (PMHEAL01)	Master of Health Sciences endorsed in Bioethics (PMHEAL01-BIE)	Neil Pickering (DSM - Bioethics)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Master of Science (PMSCIE01)	Master of Science in Bioengineering (PMSCIE01-BIO)	

### 3. Entering/editing Programme Directors:

- Tick the boxes of the programme you want to add a Programme Director for (or 'select all' where applicable)
- Scroll to bottom of screen and start typing the name of the Programme Director you want to add. See Figure 13. This box is also 'dynamic' so as soon as you start typing it will bring up all academic staff with those letters in their name.

Figure 13

Showing 1 to 3 of 3 entries (filtered from 216 total entries)

Programme director\*

Back Assign Remove

- When the staff you are searching for appears in the dropdown options, click on it. This will add their name to the right of the box, and enter the relevant staff code (a multi-digit number) into the Programme Director box. See Figure 14.

Figure 14

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries (filtered from 215 total entries)

Programme director\* 000000039186 Neil Pickering (DSM - Bioethics)

Back Assign Remove

- Click 'Assign' to enter that Programme Director into the Online Approval system as the Academic Approver. (Click 'Back' if you want to do something else.)
- You will then be presented with a Confirmation page that summarises the assignment of the Programme Director to the programmes you have ticked. *See Figure 15.* If correct, click confirm. If changes are required, click 'Back'.

Figure 15:

The screenshot shows a 'Confirmation' page. At the top, it asks: 'Are you sure you want to assign Neil Pickering (DSM - Bioethics) as Programme Director for following specialisations:'. Below this, there is a list item: 'Master of Health Sciences endorsed in Bioethics (PMHEAL01-BIE)'. At the bottom, there are two buttons: a blue 'Back' button with a left arrow and a yellow 'Confirm' button with a right arrow.

- Once confirmed, the Programme Director is recorded in the system and will appear in the Programme Director table for that programme. *See Figure 16.*

Figure 16:

The screenshot shows a table titled 'Programme Directors for other research programmes'. Above the table, there are two buttons: a blue 'Export report of Programme Directors for other' button and a yellow 'Select all' button. The table has four columns: 'Select', 'Programme', 'Specialisation', and 'Programme Director'. There is one row of data.

Select	Programme	Specialisation	Programme Director
<input type="checkbox"/>	Master of Health Sciences (PMHEAL01)	Master of Health Sciences endorsed in Bioethics (PMHEAL01-BIE)	Neil Pickering (DSM - Bioethics)

#### 4. Removing Programme Directors

- Search and select the relevant programmes as above.
- Leave the Programme Director box blank. (If you start typing a name in this box it will deactivate ('grey out') the 'Remove' button.)
- Click the yellow 'Remove' button. This will instruct the system to remove the Programme Director for all the programmes that were selected.
- You will then be presented with a Confirmation page. This will list all the programmes included in the removal. Check and if correct, click the yellow 'Confirm' button. If incorrect, click 'Back' and make changes as necessary.

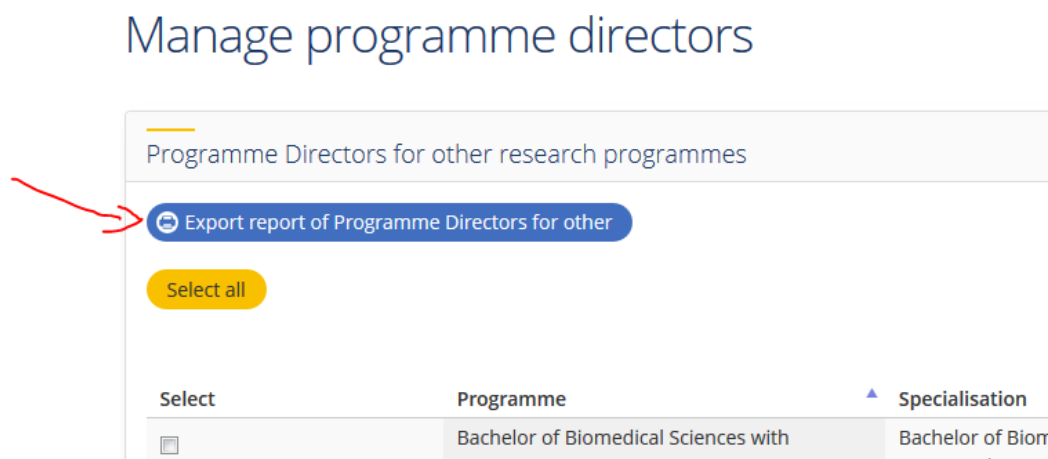
#### 5. Exporting a report of Programme Directors

You can export an excel report of all Programme Directors listed in the system. These reports can then be circulated to staff who do not have access to this functionality for checking (e.g. to ADPG, GRS, Divisions, Departments, etc). This is a handy way to conduct periodic checks (annual/bi-annual/quarterly) of the currency and accuracy of the Programme Directors in the system.

To run a report:

- Select Programme type, PhD or Other; click continue
- At the top of the next page is a blue button entitled 'Export report of Programme Directors' (it will indicate Other or Phd); click on it. *See Figure 17.*
- Like other exported reports, you will be given the option to either 'Open' or 'Save' the report.

Figure 17:



## 6. Help Resources

### 6.1 eVision Training Modules

- Online Approval:  
[https://smssupportdesk.otago.ac.nz/ESD/UltimateEditorInclude/UserFiles/evision/graduate\\_research/proposal\\_approval/](https://smssupportdesk.otago.ac.nz/ESD/UltimateEditorInclude/UserFiles/evision/graduate_research/proposal_approval/)
- My Department Dashboard:  
[https://smssupportdesk.otago.ac.nz/ESD/UltimateEditorInclude/UserFiles/evision/graduate\\_research/my\\_department\\_students\\_dashboard/](https://smssupportdesk.otago.ac.nz/ESD/UltimateEditorInclude/UserFiles/evision/graduate_research/my_department_students_dashboard/)
- Proposal Assessment:  
[https://smssupportdesk.otago.ac.nz/ESD/UltimateEditorInclude/UserFiles/evision/graduate\\_research/proposal\\_assessment/](https://smssupportdesk.otago.ac.nz/ESD/UltimateEditorInclude/UserFiles/evision/graduate_research/proposal_assessment/)

### 6.2 AskOtago FAQs

RSM General:

- [Definition of eVision research terms](#)
- [How to search for a research student](#)
- [How to find research student documents](#)

## Proposal Assessment

- [How to reassign a research proposal](#)
- [How to interpret the research traffic lights](#)
- [How to accept a research proposal](#)
- [How to indicate a student is not doing their thesis yet](#)
- [How to decline a research proposal](#)
- [What to do if a research proposal needs reconsideration](#)
- [How to fix an error in research proposal assessment](#)

Online Approval:

<https://otago-pataka.custhelp.com/app/answers/list/kw/Research%20Proposal%20Approval/>

### 6.3 Approver Guides and GRS Online Approval Support

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/staff/guides/index.html>

### 6.4 Email

If none of the online materials answer your questions, please feel free to email the RSM Project team at [rsm.review@otago.ac.nz](mailto:rsm.review@otago.ac.nz).

## Appendix 1 – Approval Chain Charts

Figure 1.1: Approval Chain (PhD)

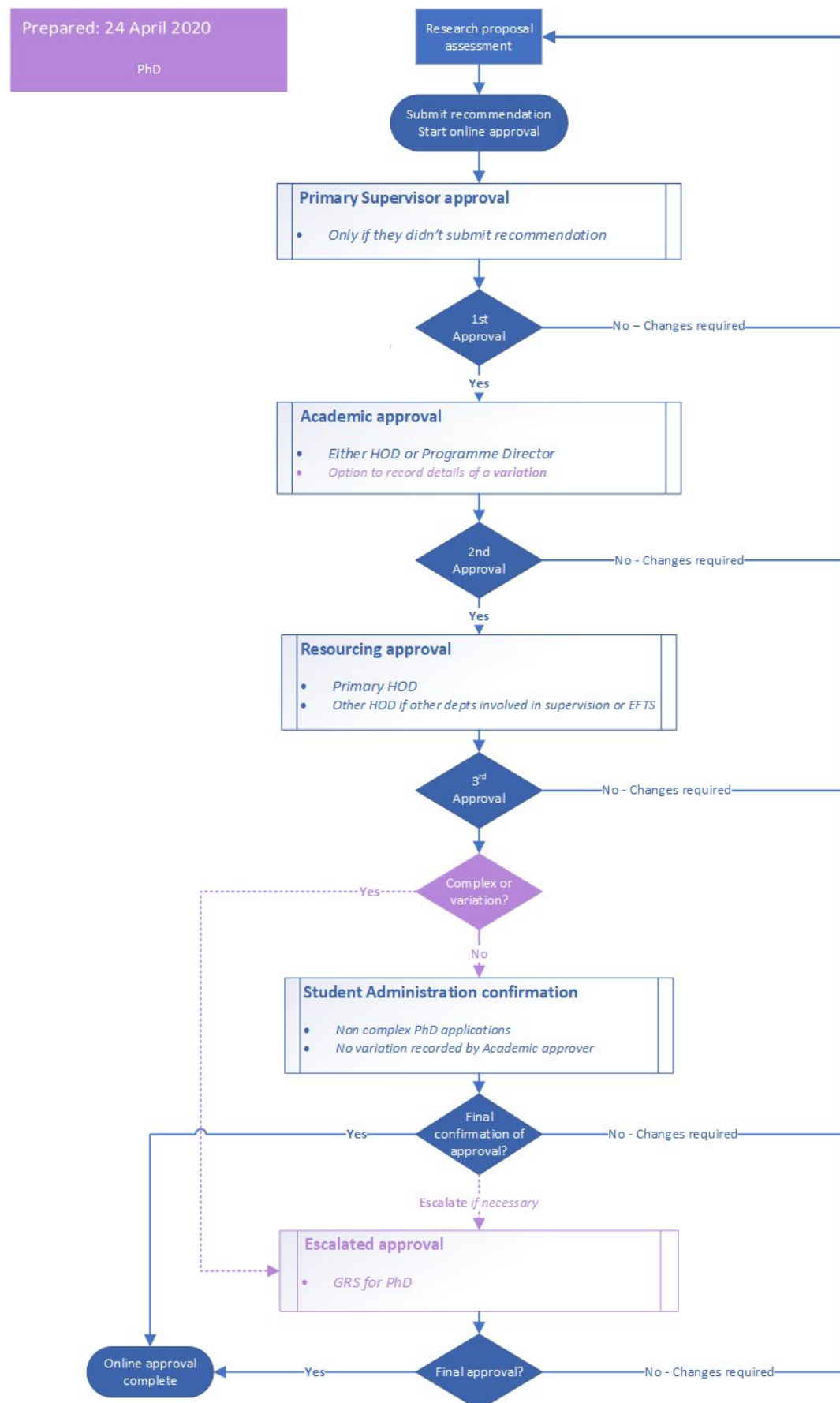
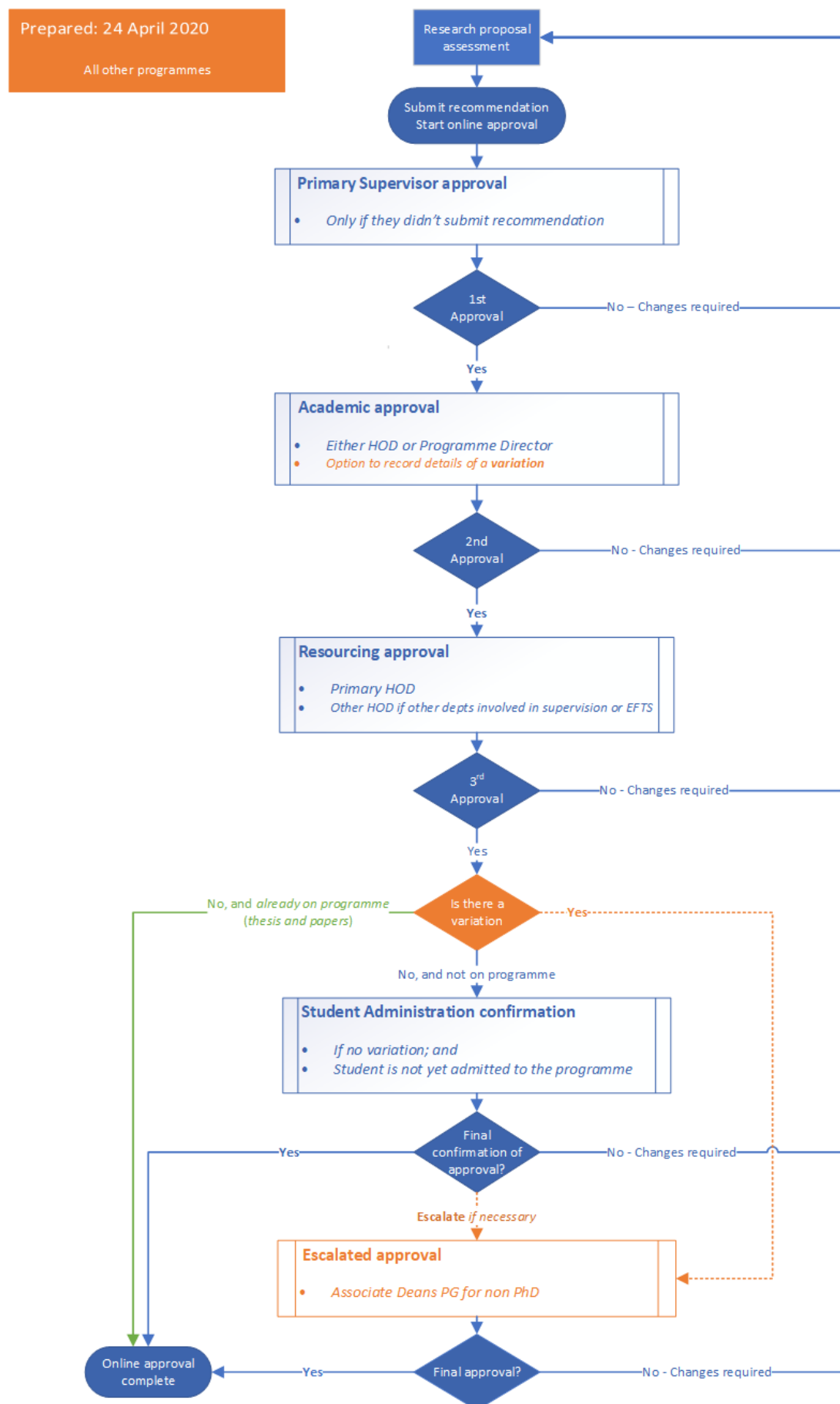


Figure 1.2: Approval Chain (all other programmes)



## Appendix 2 - Online Approval Mock-ups

### 2.1: Online Approval Email - Example

Tēnā koe Prof Rachel Spronken-Smith,

- **Re:** Escalated research proposal approval
- **Student name:** Andrea Armstrong
- **Student ID:** 3333699
- **Programme:** Doctor of Philosophy

This is a thesis programme and you are being asked to approve aspects of the above student's research proposal assessment and research project arrangements.

Please use the following link to start your [online approval](#)

Further information related to this process is available in [help FAQs](#).

Ngā mihi,

Student Administration

### 2.2: Supporting Information Tab (standard for all approvers)

#### Research proposal assessment online approval

Name: Dame Dereba Shoa (Name) ID: 1295975	Programme: Doctor of Philosophy Stage: Proposal approval	Primary supervision: School of Social Sciences - Social Anthropology
--	---	--

Approval	Supporting information	Exit (No Save)
----------	------------------------	----------------

Supporting information

Expand all

Documents

Supervisory arrangements

Compliance

PhD

International assessment

Scholarship

## 2.3: Primary Supervisor Approval

### Research proposal assessment online approval

<b>Name:</b> Andrea Armstrong <i>(Andrea)</i> <b>ID:</b> <a href="#">3333699</a>	<b>Programme:</b> Doctor of Philosophy <b>Stage:</b> Proposal approval	<b>Primary supervision:</b> Genetics <b>Co-supervision:</b> Botany, Psychology
---	---	---

<a href="#">Primary Supervisor approval</a>	<a href="#">Supporting information</a>	Exit (No Save)
---	--	----------------

#### Current status

<b>Proposed topic</b>	Genetics
<b>Previous experience</b>	PhD, Research Proposal Research Title: Genetics. The era of globalization today has led to the... <a href="#">read more</a>
<b>Recommendation notes</b>	Research proposed by Ms Andrea is novel, includes strong research methodology and will extend the... <a href="#">read more</a>

The online approval for this student started on 5/Mar/2020.

#### Primary Supervisor approval

Do you agree to approve?

[Help](#)

☐

Student has appropriate academic and research preparation to undertake a thesis

☐

Suitability of research proposal

☐

Compliance check information is correct

☐

All required documents have been uploaded and reviewed and where applicable reference requirements have been met see [Graduate Research School](#).

☐

Scholarship assessment completed if applicable (see other supporting information tab)

☐

Recommendation and notes are correct

☐

Agreement to supervise student

Comments

250

Changes required

Approve



## 2.4: Academic Approval Page

[Approval](#)[Supporting Information](#)

### Approval

Proposed topic	Synthesizing polymer nano hybrid materials of sensing applications
Previous experience	My recent work is progressing on the controlled wettability of soft surfaces. A hydrophobic to... <a href="#">read more</a>
Recommendation notes	dzfghdzfgd

The online approval for this student started on 29/Jun/2020.

Approval Stage	Approver Name	Approved Date	Comments
Primary Supervisor approval	Prof. James Crowley	29/Jun/2020	xdfzbgxczfbxfh

### Academic approval

Do you need to make a case for a variation, where the student won't meet the regulations?

No

[Help](#)

Do you agree to approve? \*

☐ Supervisor(s) have appropriate [expertise](#) and experience

☐ Research proposal has been considered through appropriate channels

☐ Student meets [regulations](#) and academic requirements for thesis study, or a case for variation has been made

Comments

Please note any comments entered will be lost if you leave this page

[Help](#)

## 2.5: Resourcing Approval – Primary HOD

Resourcing approval (HoD - School of Geography)

Do you agree to approve? \*

☐ Supervisors from my department are available to supervise and workload has been considered

☐ Proposed EFTS split

☐ Resources will be provided including research facilities, funding (any limitations should be made clear), study space, after-hours access, distance support where applicable, access to computing resources etc. (see details at [Resources for Graduate Research Candidates - Guidelines](#)).

Comments

Please note any comments entered will be lost if you leave this page

[Help](#)

## 2.6: Resourcing Approval – Other HOD (Co-supervision or EFTS splits HOD)

### Research proposal assessment online approval

Name: Andrea Armstrong (Andrea)  
ID: 3333699

Programme: Doctor of Philosophy  
Stage: Proposal approval

Primary supervision: Genetics  
Co-supervision: Botany, Psychology

<a href="#">Resourcing approval</a>	<a href="#">Supporting information</a>	<a href="#">Exit (No Save)</a>
-------------------------------------	--	--------------------------------

#### Current status

Proposed topic	Genetics
Previous experience	PhD. Research Proposal Research Title: The Significance of Genetics The era of globalization today... <a href="#">read more</a>
Recommendation notes	Research proposed by Ms Andrea is novel, includes strong research methodology and will extend the... <a href="#">read more</a>

The online approval for this student started on 5/Mar/2020.

Approval Stage	Approver Name	Approved Date	Comments
✓ Primary Supervisor approval	Assoc Prof Caroline Beck	10/Mar/2020	Student has average result of A
✓ Academic approval	Dr. Susie Lawless	12/Mar/2020	Great research topic
✓ Resourcing approval (Programme Director - Genetics)	Dr. Susie Lawless	12/Mar/2020	Great research topic
✓ Resourcing approval (HoD - Botany)	Assoc. Prof. David Orlovich	13/Mar/2020	Creative research

#### Important note(s)

– Previous changes required

Comment	Entered by	Entered Date
Change in supervision required	Student administration	6/Feb/2020

#### Resourcing approval

Do you agree to approve?

[Help](#)

☐ Supervisors from my department are available to supervise where applicable

☐ Proposed EFTS split where applicable

Comments

250

✗ Changes required

✓ Approve

## 2.7: Student Administration Confirmation

### Research proposal assessment online approval

Name: Andrea Armstrong (Andrea)  
ID: [3333699](#)

Programme: Doctor of Philosophy  
Stage: Proposal approval

Primary supervision: Genetics  
Co-supervision: Botany, Psychology

[Student Administration confirmation](#)

[Supporting information](#)

Exit (No Save)

#### Current status

Proposed topic Genetics

Previous experience PhD. Research Proposal Research Title: The Significance of Genetics The era of globalization today... [read more](#)

Recommendation notes Research proposed by Ms Andrea is novel, includes strong research methodology and will extend the... [read more](#)

The online approval for this student started on 5/Mar/2020.

Approval Stage	Approver Name	Approved Date	Comments
✓ Primary Supervisor approval	Assoc Prof Caroline Beck	10/Mar/2020	Student has average result of A
✓ Academic approval	Dr. Susie Lawless	12/Mar/2020	Great research topic
✓ Resourcing approval (Programme Director - Genetics)	Dr. Susie Lawless	12/Mar/2020	Great research topic
✓ Resourcing approval (HoD - Botany)	Assoc. Prof. David Orlovich	13/Mar/2020	Creative research
✓ Resourcing approval (Other HoD - Anatomy)	Prof. Lisa Matisoo-Smith	15/Mar/2020	Yes approved
✓ Resourcing approval (Other HoD - Biochemistry)	Prof. Catherine Day	20/Mar/2020	Topic is interesting
✓ Resourcing approval (Other HoD - Computer Science)	Prof. Michael Albert	20/Mar/2020	Genetics and AI might be a good research

#### Student Administration confirmation

Do you agree to approve? \*

- ☐ Student meets grade requirements set out in the [regulations](#) where applicable
- ☐ Supervision meets regulation requirements where applicable
- ☐ All required supporting documentation is provided, see [Graduate Research School](#)

Comments

Please note any comments entered will be lost if you leave this page

250

[Help](#)

✖ Changes required

✓ Final approval

⬆ Escalate

## 2.8: Escalated Approval – Associate Dean Postgraduate

### Approval

Proposed topic	Inquiry into the Nature of Free Will
Previous experience	MA capstone project at the Joan B. Kroc Institute of Peace Studies, the University of San Diego... <a href="#">read more</a>
Recommendation notes	Hopefully this will be a good test student

The online approval for this student started on 15/Jun/2020.

Approval Stage	Approver Name	Approved Date	Comments	Variation
✓ Primary Supervisor approval	Dr. Heather Dyke	15/Jun/2020	Hoping this next Programme Director approval generates	
✓ Academic approval (Programme Director - School of Arts - Philosophy)	Prof. David Baxter	15/Jun/2020	Discussed in our School's admissions committee	Student has yet to do a research methods paper as per MA (thesis) regulations. They have a strong honours background so I would like to make a case for a variation.
✓ Resourcing approval (HoD - School of Arts - Philosophy)	Assoc. Prof. Andrew Moore	15/Jun/2020	No comment entered	

### Escalated approval (Associate Dean Postgraduate)

Do you agree to approve? \*

☐ Meets the programme [regulations](#) or a viable case has been put forward for a 'variation' to the programme regulations

☐ Supervision meets regulation requirements where applicable

☐ All required supporting documentation is provided, see [Graduate Research School](#)

Comments

Please note any comments entered will be lost if you leave this page

250

Help

✕ Changes required

✓ Final approval

## 2.9: Escalated Approval – Graduate Research School

### Research proposal assessment online approval

Name: Andrea Armstrong (Andrea)  
ID: [3333699](#)

Programme: Doctor of Philosophy  
Stage: Proposal approval

Primary supervision: Genetics  
Co-supervision: Botany, Psychology

<a href="#">Escalated approval</a>	<a href="#">Supporting information</a>	<a href="#">Exit (No Save)</a>
------------------------------------	--	--------------------------------

**Current status**

<b>Proposed topic</b>	Genetics
<b>Previous experience</b>	PhD. Research Proposal Research Title: The Significance of Genetics The era of globalization today... <a href="#">read more</a>
<b>Recommendation notes</b>	Research proposed by Ms Andrea is novel, includes strong research methodology and will extend the... <a href="#">read more</a>

The online approval for this student started on 5/Mar/2020.

Approval Stage	Approver Name	Approved Date	Comments
✓ Primary Supervisor approval	Assoc Prof Caroline Beck	10/Mar/2020	Student has average result of A
✓ Academic approval	Dr. Susie Lawless	12/Mar/2020	Great research topic
✓ Resourcing approval (Programme Director - Genetics)	Dr. Susie Lawless	12/Mar/2020	Great research topic
✓ Resourcing approval (HoD - Botany)	Assoc. Prof. David Orlovich	13/Mar/2020	Creative research
✓ Resourcing approval (Other HoD - Anatomy)	Prof. Lisa Matisoo-Smith	15/Mar/2020	Yes approved
✓ Resourcing approval (Other HoD - Biochemistry)	Prof. Catherine Day	20/Mar/2020	Topic is interesting
✓ Resourcing approval (Other HoD - Computer Science)	Prof. Michael Albert	20/Mar/2020	Genetics and AI might be a good research
✓ Student administration confirmation	Mr Greg Lewis	22/Mar/2020	Andrea has additional papers

*GRS Escalated Approval - Continued next page*

Escalated approval (GRS)

Do you agree to approve? \*

- ☐ Supervision meets regulation requirements
- ☐ Upgrade answers where applicable
- ☐ Additional paper case is appropriate where applicable
- ☐ Distance learning support is appropriate where applicable
- ☐ English language waiver case where applicable
- ☐ Meets the programme regulations or a viable case has been put forward for a 'variation' to programme regulations
- ☐ Eligibility criteria selected is correct or was corrected
- ☐ All required supporting documentation is provided, see [Graduate Research School](#)

Comments

Please note any comments entered will be lost if you leave this page

250

[? Help](#)

☒ Changes required

☐ Final approval