This document provides information for students undertaking graduate research degrees (theses) at the University of Otago in Wellington. It should be read in conjunction with the relevant Departmental Handbook and the University of Otago PhD and Master’s handbooks.

If you have any suggestions for material that you would like to see this handbook cover, or if you find any errors, please contact trevor.williams@otago.ac.nz
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Introduction

Welcome to your graduate research degree with the University of Otago, Wellington.

This guide is designed to help you navigate the process of completing a Master’s or PhD at the University of Otago, Wellington. It includes information about getting started, keeping going, and the final stages of your study. It will help you to find support and resources here in Wellington and via the Dunedin campus, as well as pointing you in the direction of some of the myriad of material available online.

This is a living document and so we would like to know what is, and what else would be, useful.

Mission statement

The University of Otago Wellington will take a leadership role in the Aotearoa/New Zealand health system and community, recognising the Treaty of Waitangi as the mandate for the good health of all New Zealanders, through:

- the provision of outstanding research-informed undergraduate and postgraduate health science education;
- contributing nationally and internationally the highest quality scholarship, teaching, research, and clinical practice;
- preparing graduates to meet the diverse and multicultural health needs in Aotearoa/New Zealand and international settings, now and in the future;
- staff and students contributing to knowledge and understanding within the health sciences;
- promoting health and education within the community using the highest quality basic and applied research;
- taking account of its proximity to central government and policy agencies.

Who's who

The UOW Postgraduate Office:

Trevor Williams is the Co-ordinator Student Experience for the Wellington campus. His office is located on Level C. He is the person who sorts out enrolments and any other issues for any research student, and who doctoral students will submit their thesis to at the end of it all. Master’s students submit to their department. Check out the postgraduate office webpage for useful links and information. http://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/departments/postgraduate/

Other key UOW personnel:

- Associate Dean Māori, Associate Professor Bridget Robson bridget.robson@otago.ac.nz
- Associate Dean Pacific, Dr. Dianne Sika-Paotonu dianne.sika-paotonu@otago.ac.nz
- Associate Dean Teaching and Learning (includes Postgraduate), Associate Professor Diane Kenwright Postgraduate, diane.kenwright@otago.ac.nz
- Associate Dean Research, Associate Professor William Levack william.levack@otago.ac.nz
- Student Learning Advisor, Emma Osborne emma.osborne@otago.ac.nz
The Graduate Research School:
http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/support/index.html

The Graduate Research School (GRS) is based in Dunedin and is the main group in the University responsible for ensuring your graduate research experience goes well. They provide individual coaching (which can be done by videolink in Wellington), workshops and seminars, and various resources. They also administer the university postgraduate scholarships. The Graduate Research School offers specific resources and support for Māori postgraduate students. Pete Russell is the Māori postgraduate support advisor.

The Higher Education Development Centre (HEDC):
http://www.otago.ac.nz/hedc/students/index.html

HEDC are also in Dunedin and provide workshops and seminars in Wellington several times a year. Emma Osborne is the HEDC Student Learning support advisor for the Wellington campus, helping students develop skills in writing and presenting. She works across undergraduate and postgraduate students, and is available for individual support including reading pieces of your writing, and giving feedback on structure and writing style. She also runs writing workshops.

Forms, policies and guidelines
The Graduate Research School have a useful page with all the necessary forms and guidelines for PhD and Master’s by thesis study. This is the place to find the forms for changing your supervisor or your topic, going full or part-time, applying for a deferral, applying for a postgraduate publishing bursary, and guidelines for everything from externally-sponsored research to proofreading of your finished thesis.

Check out: http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/policies/index.html
Getting started

When you start (or before!) it is good idea to have a browse of the range of resources available through the University, so that you know what is out there when you come to need things.

Here are some useful things for the beginning of your journey:

**Online University resources**

*The Otago PhD handbook:*
http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/phddoctoral/programme/otago400006.html

This is an online resource produced by the Graduate Research School. It includes information about the process from admission to the programme through to graduation. Early in your PhD (or before starting) it is useful to look at parts relating to supervision, and the first year of your PhD.

*The Otago Research Master’s online resource:*
http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/researchmaster/index.html

This is the equivalent resource for Master’s students. Again it has some useful information for getting started, particularly relating to supervision, expectations of Master’s level research, and sources of funding.

Graduate Research School’s [The First Year page](#) for PhD candidates provides some useful information (and some also relevant to Master’s students), including links to the student-supervisor agreement and skills audit which are useful documents to complete early on.

Blackboard has a large amount of useful information, including specific resources for each stage of your study. Once you log in with your university username, click on Graduate Research Support for Doctoral (or Master’s) Candidates. This will take you the resources available to graduate students.

**Workshops and Training**

Important early skills include scoping and planning your thesis, and reviewing the literature.

The Graduate Research School (GRS) offers a range of workshops. GRS staff usually visit Wellington twice a year to run workshops – check the website or ask Trevor Williams about upcoming visits. Early in your PhD or Master’s journey it is worth attending the “Embarking on your Doctoral/Master’s thesis Journey” workshop. Check the GRS website for upcoming dates.

The Higher Education Development Centre (HEDC) also offers a range of workshops and seminars ([http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/workshop/list.do?type=SLC](http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/workshop/list.do?type=SLC)), including workshops on planning your research journey, thesis writing, and reviewing the literature. Some workshops and seminars are only offered in Dunedin, but if we ask they can be offered in Wellington, or we can join them via video link. If you find something you are interested in, contact the workshop organisers or talk to the departmental postgraduate research convenor or Trevor about what we can offer in Wellington.

**Planning your study**

There are also a good range of books, ebooks and other resources available through the library on the process of undertaking postgraduate research. The [Thesis Information library guide](http://otago.libguides.com/thesisinformation/planning) provides a good starting point.

HEDC also have a useful list of digital resources on study skills, writing, and research [here](#).
It is often useful when you at the planning stages to have a look at what others have done. OURArchive (https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/) is an online repository of Otago research that can be used to check out the theses of past students. Hard copies of PhD and Master’s theses may also be available in your department.

**Supervisory relationship and Student-Supervisor Agreement**

Every candidate must have a principal supervisor, who will be supported by co-supervisors, and possibly advisors.

A good supervisory relationship is the essence of a successful postgraduate research programme. This should be an open, honest and professional interaction between student and supervisors, based on mutual respect, trust and good-will. There is no single prescription for an ideal supervisory arrangement. It should, however, be viewed as an evolving partnership, in which an initial student/teacher relationship develops towards increasing equality as the project reaches its culmination in the production of the thesis.

Good supervision relies on open communication between the supervisors and the candidate. At the outset of the project, it is important that all parties are clear about their expectations of each other. These expectations will be discussed as part of the "Student-Supervisor Agreement" (Appendix 5), which should occur early on in candidature and a copy of the agreement must be uploaded in eVision as part of the first progress report process for PhD students. It should be accepted by all concerned that the early phases of work may lead to problems which will need to be worked through in a constructive manner if the project is to flourish. Although academic matters will be of primary concern, students and supervisors should be prepared to talk candidly about other issues affecting the candidate's ability to make progress.

To avoid misunderstandings, it is a University requirement for individual students and their supervisors to draw up a written agreement or memorandum of understanding (MoU) (Appendix 5) which can be referred to if difficulties arise and reviewed regularly in the light of changing circumstances. A copy must also be uploaded to eVision. Such agreements would deal with frequency of meetings; progress reports to be provided by the student; the nature, promptness and limits of feedback on written work; involvement in presenting seminars on the research while in progress; financial support, if any, to be available to the student once the tenure of any scholarship has ended; target dates for various stages of the research; principles for establishing authorship of any resulting publications.

Details on the responsibilities of Heads of Departments, supervisors and students can be found here: http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/phddoctoral/programme/otago403601.html

**Skills you will need**

Think about what skills you are going to need to complete your thesis.

- You will definitely need to be able to use word processing and referencing software.

Information Technology Services (http://www.otago.ac.nz/its/services/training/) offers courses in a variety of useful software including Endnote and Word, as well as specific courses such as thesis formatting using Word. These courses are usually run in Wellington 1-2 times per year. Contact it.training@otago.ac.nz or talk to Trevor Williams in the Wellington Postgraduate Office about when the next Wellington course will be. ITS also offer some great online support including training videos.
in Endnote and Word formatting. The Library at UOW are also a great source of help with referencing software (particularly EndNote and Mendeley).

- **Will you also need to learn to analyse data using statistical or qualitative software packages?**

  ITS offer courses in Excel, R and SPSS, as well as providing online courses and tutorials. Your supervisors can also help you to get started in using software and identify useful sources of online support.

  The [Public Health Summer School](#) runs each February at UOW and offers a variety of courses in research skills (denoted by an ‘R’ on the programme). Courses are subsided for students and staff, and include courses in qualitative methods, epidemiology, literature review, and getting started with various software packages (such as SAS, STATA and NVivo). The line-up changes every year so have a look at the next year’s courses on the Department website from October each year.

  The Social Statistics Network runs courses through the University of Auckland which may be useful to you if you cannot find what you need locally. [http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/our-research/research-centres-and-archives/compass/nzssn.html](http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/our-research/research-centres-and-archives/compass/nzssn.html)

- **Are there other skills you’d like to get while you’re here?**

  As noted above the GRS provide a skills audit document which can be used early on to figure out what skills you have and what skills you want to develop: see [The First Year page](#). At the time of writing GRS are developing a more formal programme of teaching for PhD students.

  The UOW [Intranet](#) (which you can access from any of the university computers) has information about free training courses offered on campus in Wellington (including IT and library courses, but also Te Reo courses, and other things which may be of interest). To find this go to the [staff and student info tab](#) at the top of the screen. Room bookings for the shared rooms on level C and D can also be made through this site.

- **Literature review**

  The University of Otago, Wellington library website provides you with access to the Otago catalogue and wide range of databases. The site also includes a growing number of guides to help you navigate the literature, including topic specific guides which can provide a useful starting point. Guides can be found [here](http://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/library/otago019005.html).

  The library is located on Level D. The library staff can help you with finding the information you need including developing search strategies to review the literature. They are also a great source of help with managing your references in Endnote, Medley or other referencing software. They run [courses](#) and are also happy to meet with you individually at a time that suits.

  There are many ways to make it easier for yourself to keep up to date with the literature as you go. It is worth setting up alerts on Google Scholar for any key articles that are commonly cited in your area. That way you can get alerted any time those articles are cited in a new publication. You can also set up alerts to get notified when key authors publish new work. Subscribe to table of contents alerts for key journals. Ovid Medline can be set to periodically rerun your main search and send you any new results.
Resources for your study
Think about the resources you will need to complete your study, and discuss your requirements with your supervisors. Some resources will be common to all students and other resources will be specific to your project. PhD students are typically supplied with desk space in the department and a computer loaded with a basic package of software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Endnote, etc.). Discuss with your supervisor about other software you will need, such as NVivo, Stata, SPSS, etc. Master’s thesis students may also be supplied with some resources, depending on the requirements for your project and your Department’s resources. You should discuss all your resource requirements with your supervisor. A consultation form describing your IT requirements will go your supervisor and then to your Department’s Lead Client Services Administrator.

Think about what research costs are involved in your study, such as fees for accessing data, costs for transcription, specialist software or equipment, or koha for participants, and how you will go about funding them. Discuss possible funding opportunities with your supervisor at the planning stages of your thesis.

Introduction to UOW (PhD candidates only)
In addition to familiarisation with a student's home department and staff, an introductory meeting will be organised with Diane Kenwright, Associate Dean Learning and Teaching and Trevor Williams. This is to allow introductions to take place and the opportunity for the student to ask any questions they may have.

All new students are expected to attend this and a suitable time will be arranged in the first few weeks after their official start date.
Getting on with it

The six month and annual review process (PhD students only)

At approximately six months into your PhD you are required to complete a progress review. This process involves a self-review of your progress. There are particular milestones you must demonstrate that you have met (see your Department’s confirmation process in Appendix 1 of this document). By this stage you will also need to have expanded your initial research proposal into a full proposal with specific aims and target dates for the various stages of the research, in discussion with your supervisors. There is no required form for this review, but a suggested template can be found here.

The documentation of the process is managed online in eVision. The review process then involves a meeting with your supervisors, convened by an external chair (usually another senior academic in the department or the school) who will go through the progress report form with you and your supervisors, and make a recommendation on confirmation of your candidacy. This happens anywhere between six months and one year of study, and requires sufficient evidence of progress. Trevor Williams can help you with the administrative aspects of your progress report (and any other administrative aspects of your PhD).

This review meeting is also an opportunity to update your MoU, review the student-supervisor relationship and take steps to deal with any problems that have arisen. You can contact the progress meeting convenor for a confidential conversation before the review meeting if you need one (they should contact you, but feel free to contact them if you haven’t heard from them). The progress meeting convenor should then negotiate with you (or your supervisors if they have raised issues) to either address these issues or clarify a process for them to be addressed. For example, whether a further formal meeting is required, and who this should involve, or whether the matter will be taken up with the Head of Department, a Postgraduate Convenor, an Associate Dean, or with the Manager or Dean of the Graduate Research School.

Confirmation is required to continue your study. Once you have been confirmed, you will have annual review meetings (every calendar year, even if part-time). The Graduate Research School coordinates these meetings via eVision, and you and your supervisors will receive notifications.

As part of the review process, there is also a requirement for evidence that you have discussed your future career plans with your supervisors. Make sure you take this opportunity to ensure that you are having discussions and seeking advice from your supervisors about what will happen when you have finished your PhD, and what you can do during your PhD to help make this happen.

See the GRS webpage on reporting progress for more information:
http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/phddoctoral/programme/otago404401.html

Workshops and training during your journey

The Graduate Research School offers a workshop called Keep Calm and Carry On for those in the midst of their PhD journey, which is usually offered annually in Wellington. Contact Trevor Williams to find out when this is happening next.

HEDC also offers workshops for postgraduate students. As above these can often be joined remotely or organised locally. Remember to look at past as well as future courses as these can be run again if there is a demand.
Also be on the lookout for other training opportunities. We are sometimes able to access workshops at Victoria University, so keep a look out for these opportunities.

The Public Health Summer School runs each February at UOW and offers a variety of courses. Courses are subsided for students and staff and the line-up changes every year so have a look at the next year’s courses on the Department website from October each year.

**Getting support**

The UOW student counselling service provides confidential counselling for all students at UOW. Contact Denise for an appointment.

http://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/departments/studentaffairs/otago076779.html

Atareira in Wellington a really helpful free service and it's self-referral. This is slightly different to most services in that it is to support whanau who have a loved one with a mental illness though (https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/mental-health-addictions/mental-health-addictions/atareira/?solo=subservices&index=0&

*The Graduate Research School:*

http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/support/index.html

The Graduate Research School (GRS) offer a range of support services, and can be a good starting point to ask what help may be available. They can also help resolve problems between supervisors and students if they are unable to be solved locally. Nikki Fahey graduate.wellbeing.coach@otago.ac.nz provides individual performance coaching free to students (which can be done over Skype in Wellington).

The Graduate Research School also offers specific resources and support for Māori postgraduate students. Pete Russell runs regular hui both in person and virtually.

The Higher Education Development Centre offers support for postgraduate students, in particular a peer writing support programme, where they support the establishment of writing groups with other postgraduate researchers.

**Conferences and Travel**

Take the opportunity to get out there and share your research.

The Health Sciences division provides $2000 for each PhD student once during their studies to present at an international conference. For more information see: http://www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences/students/postgraduate/otago033835.html

The postgraduate office administers a local fund for conference travel during your Master’s or PhD. Contact Trevor Williams for more information.

Scholarships to attend conferences are also available specifically for Māori and Indigenous Pacific postgraduate students (http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/phddoctoral/otago030105.html).

The scholarships office has information on a wide range of scholarships and grants, some of which you can apply for after starting your study.

Have a look at the databases of external sources of funding too:
It is worth noting that there are grants specifically available to support you during your research, including allowing you to spend time overseas, and previous students in our department have been successful at gaining these awards. Some NGOs and other organisations specific to your area of research sometimes have travel grants, so check out their websites for research support.

Writing support
Emma Osborne is the Student Learning Advisor for the Wellington campus, helping students develop skills in writing and presenting. She works across undergraduate and postgraduate students, and is available for individual support including reading pieces of your writing and giving feedback on structure and writing style. She also runs writing workshops.

Getting together with other students to form a peer writing group can be a good way to gain extra support and feedback on the writing process. HEDC provide information and support from setting up a peer writing group, or ask around the department to see if there are any groups you could join.

Grammarly is a useful free resource for checking your grammar and polishing your writing.

Deferrals and holidays
It is possible to defer or temporarily withdraw from your studies, for academic or personal reasons. A deferral stops the clock in terms of EFTS, calendar years, tuition fees and scholarships. Typically, deferrals are not granted for periods of less than two months or more than 12 months. Deferrals have to start on the first day of a month and stop on the last day of a month. Typically, only two deferral periods are granted; further deferral periods will be granted in exceptional circumstances.

If you are considering a deferral, make sure you have discussed it with your supervisors.

To apply for a deferral (PhD and Master’s), log in to eVision, click on My Research, then Request for Deferral. You must state a reason for your deferral, and the application should be endorsed by the supervisor(s), the Head of Department and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

You are entitled to take holidays and breaks during your thesis. Four weeks leave is permitted per year. For longer periods, please discuss with your primary supervisor.

Publishing during your thesis
You will want to publish the work you have done in your PhD or Master’s in an academic journal at some point. A publishing bursary is available for postgraduate research students to help you do this after you finish (see the next section). However if you are doing a PhD it can be a good idea to try to get one or more papers from your thesis published while you are still working on it. This has the advantage of providing some independent peer review of your work before you submit it for examination. It is also very reassuring to examiners to see that you parts of your thesis have been peer reviewed and deemed worthy of publication.
You can include your papers as chapters or as appendices to your thesis. The University has guidelines about how to incorporate published work in your thesis: (http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/phddoctoral/programme/otago406003.html).

You also need to be aware that there are more and more predatory journals out there which will try to get you to publish with them but do not have the rigorous peer review processes and therefore the prestige and value of trusted journals. It is worth checking with your supervisors regarding any journal you are considering submitting to.

http://thinkchecksubmit.org/ is a useful tool for choosing a journal, and includes a checklist for assessing the trustworthiness of journals you are considering submitting to.

The end game
Enrolment requirements for submission
For a PhD it is necessary to complete at least 3.0 years EFTS before you can hand in. If you have been enrolled part-time it pays to check that enough time will have elapsed by your planned hand-in date. The Graduate Research School staff can check this for you. There is 1 year EFTS minimum for a Master’s by thesis, but it pays to check with the department and/or Trevor if you have any questions.

If you are planning to hand in part way through a semester you have to enrol for that semester. The unused portion of your fees will be credited back on a pro-rata basis for the period after you hand in. Talk to Trevor or the GRS in Dunedin if you think this situation is likely to apply.

Workshops
The Graduate Research School and HEDC run workshops on the final stages, including on what examiners want, and the examination process and the oral. You can check on their webpages for upcoming Wellington workshops, or talk to Trevor Williams.

PhD and Master’s Handbooks
The PhD and Master’s handbooks provide important information on the completion process, including formatting, the requirements for presentation of your thesis, the oral examination, etc.

Formatting your thesis
The Thesis Information library guide (http://otago.libguides.com/thesisinformation/writing) provides information and advice on the style, formatting and referencing requirements for a thesis.

Proofreading
Some students have their thesis proofread prior to handing in. Ask around about who other have used to do their proofreading. The university has guidelines on proofreading theses which can be found on the GRS policies page: http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/policies/index.html

Checking for plagiarism
Blackboard has a tool which allows you to upload your thesis for plagiarism checking, either as individual chapters or the whole thesis. Go to Blackboard: https://blackboard.otago.ac.nz/ and log in with your university username.

Submitting
Completion of your thesis will require attention to paper type, printing and binding, before submission for examination. So that you can make any required revisions to your thesis before final
deposit, it needs to be temporarily bound in a soft binding before submitting it for examination. Carefully check your printed copy for any missing pages or printing errors!

PhD candidates need to submit four soft-bound copies of their thesis to Trevor Williams; Master’s candidates are required to submit three copies to their department. You are required to complete one hand-signed Thesis Submission Declaration Form. The form and other information about submitting your thesis can be found at the Thesis Information library guide (http://otago.libguides.com/thesisinformation/submitting).

Once you have submitted, the clock stops in terms of EFTS, calendar years, tuition fees and scholarships, although you are still enrolled.

Now… celebrate your achievement!

The examination process and the oral exam
Once submitted, your thesis will be sent for examination to the examiners chosen by your supervisors. For PhD candidates, your supervisors will also have selected a senior staff member within the school as Convenor of Examiners for your thesis. For Masters thesis examinations, depending on your department, there may be a person who convenes all Master’s theses examinations or your supervisor will nominate a senior member of staff to convene your examination.

Your Convenor will advise you when all the examiners’ thesis reports have been received. An oral examination is mandatory for all PhD candidates enrolled from January 2014. The oral examination is an opportunity to discuss your thesis with the examiners. Your Convener sets up the oral examination for you, also known as a viva. The examination takes place after receiving the examiners’ thesis reports. Check for procedures with your supervisor.

The format of the oral examination will vary from case to case, and will be made clear in the Oral Examination Briefing Report. Normally, it will include the following: a brief overview of the thesis by the candidate; questions from the examiners on the substantive issues communicated to the candidate beforehand; other questions and ‘free’ discussion. Questions may also be addressed to the supervisors.

Before depositing your final thesis with the library, it is likely that you will be required to undertake revisions of your thesis. These should be done in consultation with your supervisors.

The GRS also provide a Hitting the Home Stretch workshop for PhD candidates in the final year of their PhD journey aimed at helping you reach your goal of successful submission of your thesis. Information on courses available can be found here: http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/community/events/index.html

More information on the examination process, including the viva, can be found here: http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/phddoctoral/programme/otago406402.html#oral

To find out what examiners want:

Other useful resources for the viva are on the Thesis Information library guide http://otago.libguides.com/thesisinformation/submitting
Printing and binding your thesis
Following corrections to your marked thesis, and notification of completion of the examination process, you will need to print and hard-bind two copies of your final thesis. They will be deposited in the university library and your department’s library. Final hard-bound copies are handed-in to Trevor Williams. A completed Author Declaration Form must be bound into one copy of your thesis. You will also need to deposit your thesis electronically.

Uniprint in Dunedin provide a printing and binding service, or you may use local Wellington printers, such as Modern Book Binding http://www.bookbinders.co.nz/ or Wakefield’s Digital https://www.wakefields.co.nz/thesis-binding

PhD candidates can claim a cost waiver or refund for printing and binding the two thesis copies for degree conferral and final submission, provided that your thesis was submitted within 4EFTS.

Further information on depositing your final thesis and relevant forms can be found here: http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/phddoctoral/programme/otago407401.html
http://otago.libguides.com/thesisinformation/submitting

Postgraduate publishing bursaries
Postgraduate publishing bursaries provide financial support for PhD and Master’s theses students to publish their research while waiting for their thesis to be examined. There is no selection process, but there are eligibility criteria. More information on postgraduate publishing bursaries and application forms can be found here: http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/scholarships/bursaries/index.html

It is advisable to apply for a publishing bursary no more than two months before your expected submission date. The final possible date to apply is no later than one month after submission of your thesis. Discuss applying for a publishing bursary with your supervisors as soon as you have decided when you will be submitting.

Discuss further opportunities for publishing your research with your supervisors.

The Thesis Information library website has other suggestions on getting your research published: (http://otago.libguides.com/thesisinformation/publishing).

Graduation
Congratulations! You made it!

To have your degree conferred, you must apply to graduate either in person or in absentia at the appropriate ceremony online via eVision. The GRS has information about the graduation process: http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/phddoctoral/programme/otago407001.html

Career Development Centre
http://www.otago.ac.nz/careers/planning/otago641815.html

The Career Development Centre is based in Dunedin, and offers both online resources and one-to-one support. It has material specifically for postgraduate students, including information on planning a career and marketing yourself both inside and outside academia. Career planning seminars are also offered and if there is demand these can be run in Wellington.
Every student is automatically set up with an account on Career Hub. https://careerhub.otago.ac.nz/
Log in with your student username to see online resources including recorded seminars on creating your CV or your Linked In profile, and search multiple jobs databases.
Regular events

Friday lunchtime seminars
Public Health Seminars are held almost every Friday from 12.30-1.15 in the Small Lecture Theatre on Level D. Keep an eye out for posters in the lifts and around the department for upcoming seminars. You should also get an email notification, and you can check for upcoming events and subscribe here. Occasionally seminars are also organised at other times and days. These seminars are usually organised by a team of two academic staff or PhD students. If you are interested in becoming an organiser, or you have an idea for a seminar, please contact the current seminar organising team.

Grand round
The CCHDB Grand Round occurs every Thursday lunchtime.

Other local seminars
Victoria University Health Services Research Centre seminars.
Victoria University School of Government seminars.
Massey Centre for Public Health Research seminars.

Get involved
If you can see a gap in what the department offers then do something about it! Here are some ideas of ways to get involved:

- Start a journal club or study group. We have had peer discussion groups which have worked through textbooks on particular methods. Any initiatives like this would be very welcome and supported by the department and senior staff.
- Start a writing group with your peers, or organise a writing retreat or a “shut up and write” session.
- Organise a social event – be it after work drinks or a social walk, you are sure to find someone keen.

Other resources
This is a totally incomplete list of resources out there in cyberspace which may be of interest or of help on your doctoral journey. Please feel free to make suggestions for other resources.

PHD (Piled Higher and Deeper) comics – for when you need a laugh – and to know you are not alone, others are going through the same thing!

 explorations of style – a blog about Academic writing. Front page includes useful principles and strategies to use in your writing.

Facebook group for Postgraduate Research Students, UOW - connect to other local students

James Hayton, PhD – the guy who wrote his thesis in three months, and now blogs and coaches others on getting through the research and writing process. Some useful ideas and inspiration. In fact, I have put a copy of his ten top tips on the next page.
PhD2Published – an academic writing and publishing support community. The people behind academic writing month (AcWriMo) which is an international virtual community of academic writers committing to writing goals and getting them done each November.

Patter - Blog by Pat Thompson (see also https://wakelet.com/@patter) – great resources especially for those undertaking qualitative research.

The Research Whisperer – Australian blog sharing tips and advice for academic researchers

Thesis Whisperer – Australian blog for Thesis Students

Writing for Research - Blog by Patrick Dunleavy

Thinkwell http://www.ithinkwell.com.au/ - Australian site offering productivity resources (including free ones) for academics and PhD students,

Online Writing Lab – heaps of writing resources (academic writing, proofreading, referencing, revising, grammar, writing cover letters for job applications, etc etc etc)

Write that PhD Twitter feed

Twitter hashtags: #phdchat #ecrchat (early career researcher) #phdlife #phdforum

Doctoral Writing SIG (Special Interest Group) - Australian/NZ blog aimed at supervisors and others supporting doctoral students in their writing, as well as students themselves

How to do a PhD: top 10 tips Borrowed from http://jameshaytonphd.com/everything/

1. Choose who you work with carefully
2. See yourself as a beginner
3. Start early, make mistakes
4. Analyse early
5. Get to know the literature
6. Don’t obsess over productivity
7. Give yourself time to think
8. Be decisive
9. Be adaptable
10. Separate writing for yourself from writing for an audience

Bonus tip: remember, a PhD is not everything
Appendix 1: Master’s and PhD Application and Approval Procedures

There is a large amount of information on research degrees on the Otago website:

Otago master’s website: http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/masters/handbook/otago050803.html

PhD study at University of Otago websites: http://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/departments/postgraduate/phdopportunities/index.html http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/

Differences between types of research degrees:

Master’s degree – Generally, for each Masters programme there are two options:
- Thesis option: Completion of a Postgraduate Diploma (120 points) plus a thesis (120 points). A thesis is expected to be an original piece of work and make a novel contribution to the field. It comprises at least 12 months full-time academic study (or equivalent). The thesis should normally be limited to 40,000 words of text, excluding appendices, footnotes and bibliographies. Examination is by at least 2 examiners, at least 1 of whom shall be external to the University of Otago.
- Dissertation/coursework option: Completion of the Postgraduate Diploma (120 points) plus papers to the value of 60 points plus a dissertation (60 points). A dissertation may be an original piece of work or can be a reworking or reinterpretation of existing material, eg a systematic review of moderate scope/size or a narrative review. It could be an empirical study based on analysis of existing data, a case study or programme evaluation. It comprises at least 6 months full-time academic study (or equivalent part-time). The dissertation should normally be limited to 20,000 words of text, excluding appendices, footnotes and bibliographies. Examination is by at least 2 examiners appointed by the Head of Department, at least 1 of whom shall be from outside the Department in which the student is enrolled.

Doctorate – This is a very substantial piece of independent, original academic research. Typically 80,000 words (Otago max 100,000 words of text, excluding appendices, footnotes and bibliographies). Most take 3-4 years of study. Examination is normally by 3 examiners: 1 from outside New Zealand ("Overseas External"); 1 from within New Zealand but external to the University ("New Zealand External"); and 1 internal to the University ("Internal"). There is also an oral examination.

Approval and enrolment process

1. Eligibility

The first step is to make sure that you are eligible to undertake a Master’s or doctorate. The Master’s example below is illustrative only and you should check the entry requirements for the particular Master’s you are considering.

- Master of Public Health (MPH):
  - have completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health (DPH) or equivalent with grades averaging B or better; or be enrolled for the Postgraduate DPH and have completed the requirements for a relevant degree. Such applicants must have achieved a standard
satisfactory to the Public Health Academic Committee in the papers taken in the first semester of enrolment for the Postgraduate DPH before being permitted to proceed to enrolment for the degree of MPH; and

- have completed 15 points of approved research methods with a grade of B+ or better, relevant to the candidate’s intended research design. This is in addition to candidates having completed the core DPH research methods 15 point paper: PUBH711 Principles of Epidemiology. Note: If the candidate is not undertaking an epidemiological research approach in the Master’s, a B+ in this paper is not required. However those undertaking epidemiological research are required to have achieved a grade of B+ or better in PUBH711 as well as PUBH725 (Applied Biostatistics 1 – Fundamentals); (Note: Candidates who have not completed 15 points of research methods are advised to enrol in the appropriate level research methods paper(s) as a Certificate of Proficiency).”

http://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/mph.html

- PhD: “...a Bachelor's degree with first or upper second class honours or equivalent (including a research component) or a Master's degree (including an appropriate research component) and the overall grade point average for doctoral study is normally expected to be B+ or better.” In special circumstances, a candidate who does not have these formal qualifications but can demonstrate appropriate equivalent research experience will also be considered for admission.”

http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/handbook/otago001943.html

Additional requirements for International students (if appropriate)
Overseas students enquiries should be referred to the International Office at the University of Otago to check their eligibility. Their website has information about the process:
http://www.otago.ac.nz/international/postgraduate/otago031359.html

With international students, an initial determination will be made as to whether their proposed area of research falls within the Department’s area of interest and then their inquiry will be forwarded to the University of Otago’s International Office (international.admissions@otago.ac.nz) who will provide further information about their eligibility and how to apply for admission. When international students apply via eVision their application is firstly assessed by the International Office then passed on to the department for final approval.

Potential supervisors will need to pay particular attention to assessing the aptitude of international students to undertake a research degree. This process could include:

- Checking on their previous grades and converting to NZ equivalents
- Checking the standing of the institutions where they obtained previous qualifications
- Reviewing samples of their own previous work, including theses (need to be cautious about using multi-authored papers for this purpose)
- Talking with referees and supervisors
- Conducting face to face interviews via Skype or equivalent
- Arranging an English language assessment if applicable.

2. Find supervisors and identify a research topic

An early step in carrying out a research degree is for the student to find suitable supervisors. The supervisors have a critical role in helping the student identify a suitable topic and shape this into a useful research proposal. They can also help with questions about admission to the programme, finding scholarship funding and enrolment.
There are several ways for students to identify potential supervisors:

- Look at the list of potential topic areas, research groups and current research projects on a department’s web page.
- Browse currently-available postgraduate research opportunities in the Division of Health Sciences [https://www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences/students/postgraduate/research-opportunities/index.html](https://www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences/students/postgraduate/research-opportunities/index.html)
- Look through the Health Sciences Staff Expertise Database [https://www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences/expertise/index.html](https://www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences/expertise/index.html)
- Talk with lecturers during your undergraduate or PG Diploma about topics of mutual interest.
- Approach the Postgraduate Research convenors for suggestions of possible supervisors in the Department. There is usually one in each department.
- Contact the Trevor Williams, Co-ordinator Student Experience, UOW for suggestions of staff to speak to.

3. **Apply for programme admission**

Students need to obtain Departmental approval to be admitted to the Master’s and PhD programme. This process includes approval of proposed research topic, research methods and supervision arrangements. Approval occurs in different ways in each department. Check the requirements for your Masters.

You will need to prepare a research proposal.

- **Research proposals** – the student, in consultation with potential supervisors wherever possible, prepares a short ‘Research proposal’. This description should follow the template for research proposals. The maximum length is 4 pages.
  In the case of PhD proposals, the student is expected to substantially revise this proposal during their first few months of study and present a revised proposal for confirmation after 6-12 months. This proposal may be up to 6 pages.

4. **Obtain scholarship funding (if appropriate)**

There are a range of scholarship options for both Master’s and PhDs. Most full-time PhD students will need a University of Otago scholarship (or equivalent) to allow them time to undertake the degree.

All thesis students are invited to apply for University scholarships when they enrol. This is done via eVision.

Scholarships information:
[http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/scholarships/otago020695.html](http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/scholarships/otago020695.html)
[http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/scholarships/index.html](http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/scholarships/index.html)

**Master’s scholarships** and **PhD scholarships**

5. **Enrol with University**

Enrolment applications for PhD and MPH thesis can be submitted at any time in the year.
Students should enrol online at www.otago.ac.nz. Applications should include a working title for a research topic, and a likely supervisor or co-supervisors who have given tentative agreement to act in this capacity.

The application will be assessed by the Department and a formal offer of a place via eVision will be made. The student needs to accept this for the enrolment process to proceed. PhD students will also be asked to supply a start date.

Once enrolment has been processed, and the student has accepted the offer, they will select the paper codes relevant to their study. Once this is done a fee invoice requesting payment of fees will be generated.

The final step in the University enrolment process is Course Approval and completion of the Student Declaration. This is also done via eVision via the Student Portal.

Once all of the above steps have been completed the student is enrolled and can begin study. In the case of the PhD programme, initial admission for the degree is provisional and is confirmed only after one year of satisfactory full-time or part time study.

At this point students can apply for an access card (if they don't have one) and their access to library and other university facilities will be arranged by the Postgrad Administrator. Cards can also be arranged at the main desk on Level C.

6. **Pay fees**

The course fee must be paid to ensure continuing enrolment and access to University facilities. Thesis students can start and register at any time during the year. Students must be enrolled in order to submit their thesis. For students who register part way through the year, fees will be payable on a pro rata basis for that year. Students who submit part way through the year or semester can apply for a pro-rata fees refund.

1. **Further enquires**

For enquiries about options, registrations and fees; please contact Trevor Williams: trevor.williams@otago.ac.nz or phone 385 5541 ext.5543
Summary of Procedure for Masters/PhD Approval and Enrolment
University of Otago, Wellington

Considering Masters/PhD study?

Assess eligibility for Masters/PhD
   Proceed if eligible

Find Supervisor(s) and Develop research ideas
   Identify potential supervisors
   Initial discussion about topics & methods

University Enrolment
   University of Otago application submitted via eVision
   Scholarship application (if applicable)

Application and Scholarship assessment
   By Department and University (PhD) and scholarships

Processing of enrollment (eVision)
   1. Offer of place (from Dept)
   2. Select courses & fees (Student for Masters)
   3. Course approval (Dept or PhD Office)
   4. Pay fees

   Enrolment Complete
The purpose of this template is to provide a framework within which candidates and supervisors can discuss their mutual expectations of the supervisory relationship and agree how they will work together over the course of the supervision. It also provides a record of that agreement, for the candidate, the supervisor(s) and the Postgraduate Convenor and/or Head of Department. The agreement represents statements of intent only, rather than being legally binding, and the implied obligations are only what a candidate and supervisor(s) could reasonably be expected to meet under normal circumstances.

*Note that this agreement uses a basic template:*

*Department’s may wish to modify sections or add additional sections to suit their particular context.*

It is important to clarify responsibilities and expectations at the start of the supervisory relationship; it is also important to recognise that the relationship will change over time; perhaps to the extent it may be necessary to re-negotiate the supervision arrangements. Occasionally either party to the relationship may need to use the problem solving mechanisms available in the Department/School or Centre, or in the wider University: an awareness of these safety nets is important in supporting a successful supervisory relationship.

### Part A: Candidate, supervisor and thesis details

1. Candidate’s name:

2. Primary supervisor’s name:

3. Other supervisors, advisors, the Departmental Advisory Committee, DAC (if there is one) and their respective roles (add more lines to the table as needed).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Capacity of contribution (e.g., co-supervisor, advisor, DAC member)</th>
<th>Role (e.g., advice on topic, method or overall progress etc.)</th>
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If any external supervisor is part of the team, has an MOU been completed and sent to HR? The guidelines and forms are available at: http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/otago009182.html

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ N/A

4.  Commencement Date:

5.  Working title of research:

Part B: Supervision expectations

The candidate and at least the primary supervisor should independently complete the attached “Supervision expectations” sheet, and then compare and discuss their expectations. Please note below any outcomes from this discussion:
Part C: Terms of supervision agreement

We agree that the following conditions govern the relationship as primary supervisor/supervisors (amend as appropriate) and candidate in relation to the thesis research which is the subject of this application. Please check the boxes as each item is discussed:

6. **Regular supervision meetings**, to take stock of progress, will occur at intervals of:

A normal expectation is that these meetings occur weekly or fortnightly with the primary supervisor, although this may vary during candidature. The primary supervisor and candidate should maintain their own written records of these meetings. Also discuss how often the candidate will meet with the co-supervisors and/or the DAC.

7. **Formal progress report meetings** for PhD candidates occur at 6 month intervals until the candidate is confirmed and then every 12 months. Candidates are expected to prepare and circulate a self-review report in advance of these meetings. The report should be sent to the supervisors and convenor, and members of the departmental advisory committee (if applicable). Candidates are encouraged to meet with the convenor prior to the meeting if there are any concerns they wish to raise.

8. **The candidate will endeavour to** work independently and meet deadlines for work in progress.

9. **The primary supervisor undertakes** to provide expert opinion on progress, and to indicate what needs to be done if progress is inadequate. The timing and nature of feedback provided by the supervisors should be discussed. Note it is expected that feedback on written work should occur at least within three weeks. Key points from this discussion are:

10. **The primary supervisor and candidate will make themselves familiar with the regulations** concerning the degree for which the candidate is enrolled, including deadlines (see details at: [http://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/phd.html](http://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/phd.html)).

11. **The workload expectations for completing this thesis have been clarified.** It is helpful for the candidate to have clarity over expected hours per week. Consider full-time and part-time status. Are there expected hours for lab work? Also discuss holidays (students should take 4-5 weeks a year).

12. **Funding for this project has been considered.** Give relevant details here:

13. **The following aspects have been discussed:**

   - Ethics approval [http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/committees/human_ethics_cmmtee.html](http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/committees/human_ethics_cmmtee.html)
   - Intellectual property [www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd](http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd)
14. In order to be confirmed as a PhD candidate, you are expected to meet the following targets [insert here]:

A normal expectation for confirmation (which may occur at 6 months or a year; any longer requires approval) is the production of a written research proposal, with substantive consideration of the literature and research methodology/methods, and the presentation of this proposal in a seminar to the department. The candidate should also undertake a skills needs analysis, and attend appropriate workshops run by Student Learning and/or the Graduate Research School. Depending on the discipline and research, other possible targets could include demonstration of mastery of experimental and laboratory techniques, and/or satisfactory completion of required coursework. It is important that any targets set include a substantive piece of writing that demonstrates the capacity for critical thinking. The requirements for confirmation must be clearly stated above!

15. The primary supervisor will provide the candidate with information about relevant departmental/school handbooks, guides, websites about postgraduate studies, resources etc., and the candidate undertakes to read the information provided in such documents or on the website.

16. Responsibility for the correct format and technical writing aspects of the thesis rests with the candidate.

17. The candidate will fulfil departmental/school obligations to contribute to annual departmental/school conferences or research seminars. Provide any relevant details here:

18. In the event of the primary supervisor being on prolonged or permanent absence, the department/school will take all reasonable steps to ensure continuity of supervision, having consulted the candidate with regard to the arrangements made.
19. The candidate has the right to request alternative supervision if he or she believes the project is being inadequately supervised. Any request should be made to the Postgraduate Convenor or HoD, or if the HoD is the supervisor concerned, to the Associate Dean responsible for postgraduate matters and all reasonable steps will be taken to find alternative supervision. Note that it is not always possible to provide alternative supervision such as in circumstances where particular expertise is required, or where the research is part of a larger project.

20. If the candidate’s work is deemed by the primary supervisor to be unsatisfactory, the primary supervisor must inform the candidate in writing. If progress continues to be unsatisfactory, the HoD, in consultation with the appropriate department / school parties may recommend to the Graduate Research Committee that the candidate be withdrawn from the research programme.

21. The candidate and primary supervisor should reach agreement about authorship of any published results of the research work. Matters to be considered include whether the supervisors are to be co-authors, and under what circumstances (such as failure of the candidate to publish work) the supervisors may publish any of the work, with the candidate as co-author (see tools such as the Vancouver protocol http://www.icmje.org/ethical_1author.html or Authorder http://www.authorder.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28&Itemid=47). See also the guidelines regarding the format of the thesis – especially the inclusion of published papers (http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/handbook/otago050800.html). Provide details of your discussion here:

This agreement should be reviewed regularly as part of the formal progress reporting process.

| Candidate: | |
| Primary Supervisor: | |
| Co-supervisors: | |
| HoD: | Date: |
This agreement (or a customised departmental one) must be signed above by the primary supervisor, the candidate, and the HoD. The candidate and the primary supervisor should be provided with copies, and one copy should be kept on file in the Departmental Office.

Note that for PhD candidates a copy of this (or a customised departmental one) will need to be forwarded to the Graduate Research School with the first progress report.
## SUPERVISION EXPECTATIONS

Read each pair of statements below and then estimate your position on each. For example with statement 2 if you believe very strongly that it is the supervisor’s responsibility to select a good topic then circle ‘1’. If you think that both the supervisor and candidate should equally be involved then circle ‘3’ and if you think it is definitely the candidate’s responsibility to select a topic then circle ‘5’. If either candidate or supervisor cannot decide on a single number, then a consecutive range of two or more numbers can be circled.

### START UP

1. Supervisors should only accept candidates when they have specific knowledge of the candidate’s chosen topic
   
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2. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to develop a research topic
   
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3. The supervisor decides which theoretical framework or methodology is most appropriate
   
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4. The supervisor should develop an appropriate program and timetable of research and study for the candidate
   
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5. The university or supervisor, as representative of the university, is responsible for ensuring that the candidate is introduced to relevant services and facilities of the department and University
   
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### MID-CANDIDATURE

6. The supervisor should insist on regular meetings with the candidate
   
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7. The supervisor should check regularly that the candidate is working consistently and on task
   
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8. It is down to the supervisor to ensure that the candidate’s thesis research is disseminated in journals and conferences
   
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9. The supervisor is always the lead journal article author and presents any conference papers relating to the thesis, regardless of who actually wrote the material
   
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10. The supervisor is responsible for arranging ethical approval and / or Maori consultation to support the thesis
    
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    |---|---|---|---|---|
    |   |   |   |   |   |

11. Acquiring resources to support the thesis, such as scholarships, equipment or funding for conferences, is the responsibility of the supervisor
    
    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    |---|---|---|---|---|
    |   |   |   |   |   |
The candidate is responsible for acquiring any resources to support the thesis, including scholarships, equipment and conference funding. The supervisor should enrol the candidate on courses that develop the candidate’s ability to enhance their thesis (e.g. academic writing, presentation)

1  2  3  4  5

It is the responsibility of the candidate to enrol on courses that develops their ability to enhance their thesis (e.g. academic writing, presentation)

1  2  3  4  5

A supportive relationship between supervisor and candidate is important for successful candidature.

1  2  3  4  5

A supportive relationship is inadvisable, as it may obstruct objectivity for both candidate and supervisor during candidature.

THE FINAL STAGE

14 The supervisor should insist on seeing all drafts of work to ensure that the candidate is on the right track.

1  2  3  4  5

Candidates should submit drafts of work only when they want constructive criticism from the supervisor.

15 The supervisor is responsible for decisions regarding the standard of the thesis and when it is ready for submission.

1  2  3  4  5

The candidate is responsible for decisions concerning the standard of the thesis and when it is ready for submission.

The supervisor should have total control in arranging the examination.

1  2  3  4  5

The candidate should have a role in arranging the examination, within University guidelines.
Appendix 3: PhD Confirmation process

Confirmation process

Confirmation of the candidacy of PhD students can occur at the time of their six month or twelve month review. Recommendations on confirmation are made by the student’s supervisors. If the supervisors decide to recommend against confirmation their decision must be brought to the department’s Postgraduate Academic Committee meeting for review and final decision.

The six and twelve month review meetings (attended by supervisors and the student, chaired by a senior staff member who is not involved with the student’s supervision) provide an opportunity to discuss the student’s evidence of progress. Following confirmation, review meetings occur every twelve months.

Criteria for Confirmation

For PhD candidacy to be confirmed, the University of Otago requires that the student demonstrate:

1) Satisfactory endeavour and application
2) The ability to conduct a detailed literature search and review
3) Acquisition of technical or other practical skills
4) A firm understanding of methodological and theoretical issues
5) The ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing

While these criteria can be met in various ways, students in Public Health will usually be expected to provide an ‘evidence portfolio’ which includes:

- a concise statement of their research question(s)
- a critical summary and analysis of relevant literature, or other evidence of their ability to conduct a literature search and review related to their thesis research (e.g. search strategies)
- a substantial piece of writing towards their thesis (this may be the literature review above)
- an explanation of the conceptual framework(s) and methods of inquiry to be used
- a summary of their progress to date
- proposed schedule and timeline for the remaining phases of the study based on their date of submission.

There may be other requirements of the Department. Check with your supervisor to find out what they are.
Appendix 4: Progress Reporting (PhD students)

Introduction
The PhD programme is supported by a rigorous process for reporting progress as required by the regulations for the PhD degree.

The relevant regulations are as follows:
(a) While a candidate is provisionally admitted to the degree programme, progress reports signed by the candidate, supervisor(s), Head of Department and Pro-Vice-Chancellor shall be submitted at six-monthly intervals from the date of initial admission.

(b) Once confirmation has been granted, progress reports signed by the candidate, supervisors and Head of Department shall be submitted annually.

(c) If an unsatisfactory report is received, the Senate may, after appropriate consultation, terminate the candidacy.

Principles and Purposes
The progress reporting system employed at Otago is based on three major principles:
 The process should provide a stimulus for honest dialogue between the candidate, supervisors and the department; and
 The process should encourage candidates to conduct a careful and regular review of their achievements and to set goals for the next phase of research; and
 The process should provide opportunity to discuss career plans and relevant professional development opportunities.

Progress reports are used for the following purposes:
 To support recommendations regarding confirmation of candidature (The first year)
 To ensure that the project is properly “on track”, particularly with regard to the planned completion date
 To identify any problems inhibiting the progress of the PhD
 To indicate any changes to the project or its academic support (such as changes of title, changes of supervision, etc)
 To support recommendations regarding the tenure of scholarships
 To discuss career pathways and professional development opportunities

It is particularly important that the reporting process be used as a means of determining the adequacy of supervision and support. Where problems are identified, these should be signalled in the report, together with measures to rectify them.

Timing of Progress Reports
The timing of all progress reports is calculated from the date of admission to the programme.

Progress reports are due at the following intervals: six monthly until confirmation, and then annually thereafter until the submission of the thesis or termination of candidature. Note that the date of subsequent meetings is usually set by the entry of the progress report into eVision. If there is a delay in entering this report, subsequent meetings will be delayed.
The progress reporting procedure is initiated by eVision reminders that are sent to the Primary supervisor and departmental administrator nine weeks prior to the reporting period. At that stage, the student receives an alert in their eVision portal to complete their section and the self-review, and if it is their first progress report they should also complete the student-supervisor agreement. The student has two weeks to complete these questions and upload the documents.

**The Reporting Process**

A Convener who is independent of the supervisory process oversees this reporting process. This person will usually be the Head of Department or the Head of Department’s nominee. The candidate and supervisor should be consulted on this matter before the Convener is finalised. The reporting process comprises four parts:

- The preparation of a self-review document by the candidate.
- Confidential conversations between the Convener and the candidate, and between the Convener and the supervisors to determine if there have been any issues with supervision.
- A meeting, chaired by the Convener, to discuss the self-review and other matters relating to the candidate’s work. The meeting should be attended by the candidate and the supervisors.
- The completion of the PhD Progress Report Form in eVision on the basis of the discussion, which is then printed and sent to the appropriate authorities for endorsement and is uploaded to the candidate’s file on eVision by the Doctoral Office once the report is approved by the Dean of the Graduate Research School.

**Part 1: Self-Review**

In every case, the self-review is the instrument for initiating the reporting process. The production of the self-review is the responsibility of the candidate. Although there is no standard layout for a self-review document, students are advised to refer to the Requirements for the Student Self-Review Document as a general guide, alongside the following two sections (Six-month Self-Review and Annual Self-Review). In all cases, candidates should discuss and agree upon the precise format of the self-review document with their supervisors. The self-review need not be overly long. It should be a summary of work and may be augmented by appendices containing more detail. Previous self-reviews and reports should be used as a point of reference when indicating goals achieved and tasks completed. Ordinarily, a self-review should be completed and uploaded to eVision by the candidate within two weeks of receipt of the eVision reminder.

As well as providing a succinct account of the work done during the reporting period, the self-review can be used to indicate any specific areas of concern that the candidate wishes to be addressed at the subsequent meeting. We draw particular attention to the sections "Support and Resources" and "Candidate and Supervisor Responsibilities" in the PhD Progress Report Form.

The self-review should also list any publications, seminar or conference presentations related to the PhD completed during the reporting period.

Depending on departmental practice, students normally will upload the self-review document onto eVision when submitting their candidate response form. A departmental administrator can also assist in this if needed. We recommend that the student advises the supervisor/convener as soon as they have uploaded their self-review preferably at least a week ahead of the planned meeting time. The panel is comprised of the supervisors (or the supervisor and the Departmental Advisory Committee) and the meeting Convener.

**Six-month Self-Review**

As the first self-review, the six-month self-review marks a crucial moment in the candidacy. The candidate's self-review should briefly define the research proposal and thesis layout, as well as outlining the research and writing the candidate has undertaken to date, and the work planned for the following review period.
Note that the Student-Supervisor Agreement must be attached to the six-month Progress Report when the report is circulated for endorsements and then forwarded to the Doctoral Office.

**Annual Self-Review**

All self-reviews for annual reports should take the preceding report as a point of reference. The self-review should follow the format of the self-review template document.

**Confidential Feedback**

All PhD candidates are able to provide confidential feedback to the Dean and Manager of the Graduate Research School when accessing eVision to upload their self-review document. This feedback may include any concerns or questions the candidate may have with regard to their doctoral studies. Feedback is strictly confidential - the Dean or Manager will not contact supervisors or departments without the express permission of the candidate concerned.

**Part 2: Confidential Conversations with the Meeting Convener (optional)**

Prior to the Progress Meeting, the Convener should contact the candidate and supervisors independently to see if there have been any issues with the supervisory relationship. If the candidate has not been contacted by the Convener, and they wish to talk to them, they should initiate a discussion. This is a very important stage, since the candidate may feel unable to raise or admit to issues of supervision with their supervisors are present. If there are issues with supervision, the Convener should negotiate with the candidate (or supervisors) which, if any, aspects will be raised in the formal meeting and by whom, or whether the matter will be taken up with the Head of Department, a Postgraduate Co-ordinator, an Associate Dean or with the Manager or Dean of the Graduate Research School.

**Part 3: Progress Report Meeting to Discuss the Self-Review**

The Progress Report meeting is chaired by the Convener. Typically the format involves methodically going through the Progress Report form in eVision (either online or by printing out the form in advance and annotating), noting changes where appropriate and providing commentary where necessary.

The Convener should ensure that all matters raised in the self-review are discussed at the meeting. Moreover, if there are any supervisory issues that have been raised for discussion from the pre-meetings, these should be openly discussed. The candidate and the supervisors should also be asked to address the questions raised in each section of the report form.

If the panel members have any doubts about the candidate's performance in any area of their work, these should be raised courteously and frankly. The panel should also suggest practical measures to counter any perceived deficiencies in performance.

It is particularly important that, at the time of the six-month and first annual report, the candidate is given a clear warning where performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory. If the panel feels that confirmation of the candidature is seriously in question, the candidate should be advised of this at the first opportunity (ideally, this would be at the time of the six-month report) and alternative options (such as termination of candidature or enrolment for a Master's degree) outlined. If at six months, work at the expected doctoral standard looks unlikely, a plan of work should be devised to write-up research in a format that could be considered for a lesser degree (e.g., Masters or Postgraduate Diploma) and the candidate may be placed 'Under Review'.

The meeting with the candidate should also provide the opportunity for open discussion of supervisory arrangements, issues, practical, technical and financial support. It is imperative that the projected completion date of the project be monitored and that any significant changes to the project, its supervision or support be recorded in the progress report.
Part 4: Completing the Report Form

During the meeting, the Convener will, in consultation with the candidate and the supervisors, fill out the standard PhD Progress Report form (either online or on a hard copy), being sure to answer all the questions. Minutes may also be taken of the meeting, which are then uploaded in eVision as a record of the meeting. The report form is designed to identify any matters of concern which need to be addressed and commentary should be provided in the appropriate areas or in the meeting minutes (if these are being kept). If no matters of serious concern are identified, the commentary need not be lengthy, but if progress is "fair" or "unsatisfactory", then an explanation is required in terms of what has led to this rating and steps that will be taken to try and improve progress.

Once completed, the PhD Progress Report form should be printed off (if completed online) and signed by all parties, who should receive a copy of the signed report. If a hard copy form has been annotated in the meeting, the convenor should arrange for any annotations to be entered into eVision (by themselves or an administrator in the department) and then the form should be printed and circulated for signatures. If there is disagreement about the report, this should be raised with the Dean or Manager of the Graduate Research School. In such cases, a candidate or a supervisor may make a personal written statement relating to a progress report.

Once required signatures have been gathered, and the form has been signed by the HOD, it should be sent to Trevor Williams to obtain the additional signatures. Supervisors and candidates are also advised to retain a copy for their records.

Copies of the PhD Progress Report form are available for download from eVision by authorised staff, or can be obtained on request from the Doctoral Office.
INTRODUCTION

This template is designed to help you evaluate your own skills and knowledge, identify what strengths you have, and what areas you may need to develop.

You may find this particularly helpful to do at the early stages of your doctoral study, particularly if you have entered your doctorate straight from a taught qualification, and have little experience outside of studying within a University.

It is based around the skills categories defined in the University of Edinburgh’s Skills Guide for Doctoral Researchers (available at: http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/doctoral/resources/skills).

As well as the Skills Guide, you may wish to gather any additional supporting information available to you regarding the skills required for your current role. It may be helpful to use your project plan, and any other documents that outline what you are required to do i.e. tutorial plans, if you are teaching.

HOW DO I START?

First, it is important to do some preparatory work.

There are many reasons why you might want to review what you know and what you can do:

- early on in your project when you need to ensure you have all the knowledge and skills necessary to complete your project;
- when you are preparing for a review meeting;
- at the end of / after your project, when you wish positively present your skills, knowledge and experience on paper as preparation for an interview.

Firstly, therefore, think of the purpose for doing your review. Make some rough notes in the space below:

1. Why am I doing a self-assessment?

---

1 Adapted from Skills Audit Template at: http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/doctoral/resources/skills
You may then want to think about your experience to date and start to make rough notes about your own achievements. For example, you might wish to think about skills developed through the following:

- Previous research projects, tasks, objectives and goals you have completed.
- What you specifically did and/or what your role was in an activity.
- What you achieved and the impact of your work.
- What has gone well, what has gone not so well and what you’d like to change.

2. My experience to date: what have I learnt and achieved?

Now think about doctoral study – what skills might you need to complete your doctorate? See the table on the following page and make an assessment of your skills. Once complete note down in the box below particular areas you will need to work on. Ensure you share this with your supervisor!

3. Skills I may need to better develop for doctoral research
Skills Audit for Doctoral Research (adapted from Wisker, G. The Good Supervisor, p96)

Rating: 1 = new to develop, 2 = some skills, 3 = quite confident, 4 = confident, 5 = strength of mine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Possible support to further develop this skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turning a research topic in to a research question, which addresses a gap in knowledge.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project planning.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Time management.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge and retrieval.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge management.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bench skills.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fieldwork skills.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analytical skills.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical skills.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calculation skills.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation skills.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluative thinking.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem-solving in different contexts.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative thinking.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>Networking with others to share and develop</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>ideas and work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading for different purposes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reviewing the literature critically and in a dialogue.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing and interpreting data.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drawing conclusions, both conceptual and factual, and backing up with data.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using appropriate computer packages and programmes e.g. SPSS and NUDIST Nvivo.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing for different audiences.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing at different levels, e.g. for theses and articles.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structuring and presenting papers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing discussions about your work in context and with a variety of colleagues and experts.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finishing off pieces of work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Many people, when completing such a self-assessment, also like to consider what skills and knowledge they need for the next steps in the career, i.e. skills that may be needed when applying for future potential job roles. You may wish to make notes on this too to help you complete the audit template.

4. What will I need to know, and be able to do, for my future career plans?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>Skill Description</th>
<th>Evidence of Skill</th>
<th>How I Am Doing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

COMPLETING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Now you have made some notes, it will be much easier to complete the template.

We have headed up each area of the template under the headings in our skills guide. This is purely to give you some initial structure; you don’t have to have or show every skills area in the guide.

Take some time to go through this audit and reflect on your skill areas. For each section, complete the following:

**For Skill Area:** We have used headings from the Skills Guide, so there is not much to add here. We would encourage you think though of any additional skills areas not covered, specifically any technical skills that are particularly relevant to you. You can add extra skills area headings at the end.

**For Skill Description:** Use the Skills Guide and/or your supporting information to define each specific skill that you need in your research project and other activities in the University. Add as many skills in each area as you think is necessary; just keep adding more rows to the table.

**For Evidence of Skill:** Record activities, experiences or events you played a part in that shows your ability in each particular skill. It may be you have already lots of experience in an area. It may be you have just a small amount of experience or none at all (i.e. for those areas you wish to develop in future); that is fine. It is important that you think honestly and widely, and don’t just focus on skills you already have and do well.

**How I Am Doing:** Try to define what level you think you are at (i.e. doing really well, good basic understanding/competence, needs improvement, etc.)
Be honest and be careful not to underestimate yourself.

**AFTER YOU’RE DONE**

Hopefully, if you have taken some time doing this, you will have a good written overview of skills you have developed and of the real breadth of skills you hold. We hope you will find this a useful record to have.

You may also find it useful to highlight areas that you would like to work on and develop. Skills that you feel you need to improve in and are important to your current research project should be prioritised.

You will want to check out our courses and events pages to see what development options are available, and also look at self-study resources to help address knowledge gaps.
**SELF-ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE**

Skills, Knowledge & Attributes I need for my research project, other University roles (e.g. part-time tutoring), and my future career

**EXAMPLE TEXT** - this is just to show you what sort of ideas you might write

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>Description of specific skill</th>
<th>Evidence of skill</th>
<th>How I am doing</th>
<th>How can I further develop this skill?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication and Dissemination</td>
<td>Demonstrate effective verbal presentation skills</td>
<td>I have presented my research at a number of small internal seminars; I get nervous beforehand, though feedback from other researchers has generally been positive.</td>
<td>I am doing OK; room for some improvement</td>
<td>Attend a workshop on presenting my research Join the conference peer support group and plan my international conference!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal &amp; Interpersonal</td>
<td>Manage yourself, your time, and the priorities of your research project.</td>
<td>I aim to set some basic ‘to do’ lists every day; aim to set blocks of time aside to work on specific tasks (though doesn’t always happen!)</td>
<td>I wish to improve</td>
<td>See Brian Johnston – the Personal Performance and Development Coach – he can really help me with strategies to avoid procrastination!</td>
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We would encourage you to complete this electronically so you can add/delete rows as appropriate.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>Description of Specific Skill</th>
<th>Evidence of skill</th>
<th>How I am doing</th>
<th>How can I further develop this skill?</th>
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<th>Management</th>
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<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
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<td>Commercialisation, Knowledge Transfer and Exchange</td>
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<td>Other Skill Area (complete as needed)</td>
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Graduate Research Student (PhD and Master’s) Guide

March 2019