

## AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY

### Research Activity Policy

REF: RAB0711/10/6  
AMENDED RAB0805/10/1

The revised National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes (July 2006) requires all principal research candidate supervisors to be research active. The Protocols define research activity as follows:

There are three broad types of research activity:

- Basic research is experimental and theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge without a specific application in view. It consists of pure basic research which is work undertaken to acquire new knowledge without looking for long term benefits other than advancement of knowledge and strategic basic research which is work directed into specific broad areas in the expectation of useful discoveries thus providing the broad base of knowledge necessary for the solution of recognised practical problems.
- Applied research is original work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge with a specific application in view. It is undertaken either to determine possible uses for the findings of basic research or to determine new ways of achieving some specific and predetermined objectives.
- Experimental development is systematic work, using existing knowledge gained from research or practical experience that is directed to producing new materials, products or devices, to installing new processes, systems and services, or to improving substantially those already produced or installed.

It is important to note that only research doctorates and research masters are included as higher degrees by research (HDR). Coursework masters and professional doctorates are excluded from this definition.

The Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) (an agency of DEEWR) process collects research publication data of books, book chapters, articles in refereed journals and conference proceedings. Books are weighted at 5 points, and all other peer-reviewed publications at 1. Book reviews are not counted. Institutions seeking university status would need to produce evidence on publication trends for this indicator over the previous five years.

All approved supervisors, included those appointed by the ACT, must also be active in scholarship. The definition of scholarship provided in the National Protocols is as follows:

Scholarship in relation to learning and teaching involves:

- demonstrating current subject knowledge and an ongoing intellectual engagement in primary and allied disciplines and their theoretical underpinnings,
- keeping abreast of the literature and new research, including by interaction with peers, and using that knowledge to inform learning and teaching,
- encouraging students to be critical, creative thinkers and enhancing teaching understanding through interaction with students,
- engaging in relevant professional practice where appropriate to the discipline,
- being informed about the literature of learning and teaching in relevant disciplines and being committed to the development of teaching practice, and
- focusing on the learning outcomes of students.

On 2 May 2008 the ACT Research Awards Board approved the following amended definition of research activity for the purposes of approving supervisors of ACT research candidates.

(1) A supervisor proposed as the main supervisor for any HDR (MTh, ThD) candidate must be able to satisfy one of the following criteria:

- Have at least one HERDC recognised publication in the previous three years; or

- Received at least one external grant from a competitive grants scheme or industry in that period; or

and that

(2) all supervisors, whether main or adjunct, be active in scholarship (see above) as defined in the revised National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Purposes (July 2006).

Appendix:

What kinds of publication are counted in the HERDC process?

- books published by commercial publishers,
- book chapters in such books,
- journal articles in peer review journals, and
- conference papers published in the conference proceedings.

The 2008 HERDC selection criteria should be noted. The specifications document defines, for example, how one might establish whether a journal in which an article is published could be classified as peer review, and what might define a commercial publisher.

<http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/8A941BE5-D558-4004-9C62-63CA08A34424/19678/2008HERDCSpecificationsFinalpdf.pdf>

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policies/research activity