

Assessment Poll for HDR Candidates to gauge their performance and progress of candidature

(Based on material developed for JCU by Dr Carey Denholm AM, a clinical psychologist and former Graduate Dean at the University of Tasmania)

This survey is designed to assist HDR candidates to take control of their candidature through increased awareness of performance. The purpose of this poll is to provide indicators of progress (or lack of progress) and to serve as a 'rule of thumb' during candidature. The indicators are in no particular order. All you need to do is select the letter relating to the relevant statement you think best fits you at this point in time. Once you have completed the quiz, calculate your scores.

1. Monthly goals and deadlines

- A. I am meeting most of my monthly goals and hand most work in on time to my advisors.
- B. I am starting to slip in meeting my monthly goals and am struggling to hand work to my advisors when expected.
- C. I am not meeting my monthly goals and rarely hand work to my advisors on time.

2. Meeting the expectations of my Advisory Panel

- A. I have clear expectations about what is expected from my Advisory Panel. I meet them on a regular basis and keep effective notes of meetings.
- B. I have reasonable relationships with my advisors but struggle to understand their expectations.
- C. I do not look forward to supervision sessions — my relationship with my advisors is on a 'knife-edge' and supervision sessions are unproductive as I often have little progress about which to discuss.

3. Research Activity

- A. I am actively engaged with my research and am committed to its completion.
- B. I am spending most of my time reading journal articles and books and struggling to develop my own ideas.
- C. I seem to be reading with little purpose or focus.

4. Writing

- A. I do some writing relevant to my thesis every week.
- B. I work on my thesis by binge-writing every few months.
- C. I have not done any academic writing for more than six months.

5. Obtaining feedback

- A. I show my work to my advisors every one or two months.
- B. I show my work to my advisors every 3-6 Months.
- C. I rarely show my work to my advisors.

6. Incorporating feedback

- A. I am able to incorporate feedback and to integrate changing directions within my research.
- B. I am struggling to 'nail down' my research area and do not seem to have a manageable plan.
- C. I am starting to lose confidence in my ability to think and write.

7. Feedback timeliness

- A. I receive timely feedback on my work.
- B. I have been left waiting for extended periods for detailed written feedback on my work.
- C. I have to wait so long for feedback that it is no longer useful to me.

8. Contact with peers

- A. I maintain regular and positive contact with my peers.
- B. I tend to withdraw from my research group and don't socialize with peers.
- C. I am finding it difficult to leave the house each day and avoid attending university graduate research seminars.

9. Issues with research

- A. I am confident in raising issues with my advisors and my concerns and struggles are taken seriously.
- B. There are some technical aspects of the research I don't understand and I may not have sufficient background.
- C. I have serious doubts as to whether I have the academic background to complete this research.

10. Work-life balance

- A. I plan times away from my research and consider I have a good 'work-life' balance.
- B. I have things in my personal life (e.g., relationships, finances) that are beginning to worry me and regularly intrude in my daily thinking.
- C. I have a complex personal life that is requiring more time each week to sort out a number of problems.

11. Part-time work

- A. Financial pressures and/or demands of part-time work are not unduly influencing my research progress.
- B. Due to financial pressures I have to increase my part-time hours.
- C. I am in a serious financial position that is adversely impacting my capacity to work on my project

12. Personal growth and future

- A. I occasionally talk with my advisors about the impact of the research process on my thinking and personal growth.
- B. I am starting to struggle with motivation and sometimes wonder why I am doing this.
- C. I am not sure exactly where my research is headed and how it will relate to my future career.

13. Progress towards goals

- A. I have specific research goals and timelines for outcomes and regularly keep track of progress.
- B. I sometimes thinking that I am not achieving very much as compared to other candidates.
- C. I feel I have come to a stand-still.

14. Distractions

- A. I am able to manage daily distractions and frustrations and do not let them interfere with my research progress.
- B. Daily distractions are starting to intrude on my work.

C. I give into pleasant distractions (e.g., internet, socializing, gaming on line, gardening, fitness) rather than doing my research.

15. Health

A. I am monitoring and taking care of my health (i.e., diet, exercise, sleep).

B. I am become concerned about my health (i.e., lack of sleep, inadequate diet).

C. I feel stressed when I enter my work space and it takes me a long time to calm down and focus on my work.

Scoring

Count up the number of circled 'A's, 'B's and 'C's and complete the following score sheet:

	Weighting	Number of circled letter	Total
A	3		
B	2		
C	1		
		Your Score	

What your score indicates:

- **Total Score 28-39:** You are showing the indicators required for a timely and successful completion.
- **Total Score 20-27:** You are showing indicators that suggest you may be struggling at the moment. Every HDR candidate will experience some of these indicators for brief periods at some time during candidature. It is important is that these indicators do not keep occurring at a moderately high level for more than a few weeks. If you are evidencing these key indicators for a prolonged period you should seek external assistance as soon as possible from the University Counselling and Psychological Support Services, the School Director HDRT, Supervisors or the Graduate School.
- **Total Score 13-19:** You are showing indicators that suggest you are in danger of non-completion. You should seek help from the University's Counselling and Psychological Support Services, the School Director HDRT, Supervisors or the Graduate School. Experience shows that candidates scoring in this range are not likely to have a successful progress report or in-candidature review and will be required to withdraw from candidature or be placed on a leave of absence.