Graduate Research School

The University Of Queensland
AUSTRALIA

Discover the Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Placement Program

Apply your research in professional environments, build valuable networks and develop career-ready skills.



What is an HDR placement?

An HDR placement is an elective, structured opportunity to apply your research skills and expertise in a professional setting outside the University.

Open to domestic and international HDR candidates, placements allow you to work with a host organisation or research end-user on a defined project for a specified period. They provide an opportunity to gain practical experience, build professional networks and develop transferable skills while contributing your research expertise to a real-world challenge.

Placements are flexible and can be undertaken full-time or part-time, on-site, remotely or in a blended format, including with organisations overseas. An HDR placement is a dedicated research collaboration and is separate from clinical placements, standard employment and university-based roles.

An HDR placement provides an opportunity to discover how your research expertise translates into professional environments. By working on real projects with external partners, you can strengthen your ability to communicate complex ideas, apply advanced research skills to practical challenges and gain insight into how organisations use research and evidence.

How to apply

From idea to placement, we'll guide you through the process.

Step 1: Check your eligibility
Make sure you are actively enrolled in a UQ HDR program. You cannot undertake a placement while on an approved interruption. Additional eligibility requirements apply if you are seeking funding.

Step 2: Find a host and develop your project
Connect with a host organisation to co-develop your project plan. Once finalised, submit your formal application and completed placement project brief directly to the Graduate Research School (GRS).

Step 3: Execute the placement agreement
The GRS will work directly with your host organisation to put the required placement agreement in place. The agreement must be fully executed before your placement can commence.

Step 4: Accept your offer and get started
Once everything is approved, GRS will send you an official placement offer. Accept your offer and, once all requirements are complete, you'll be ready to being your HDR placement.

Key benefits

Take your research beyond the University and discover where your skills can take you.

An HDR placement gives you the opportunity to apply your expertise to real-world projects and challenges, build sought-after transferable skills and gain valuable experience beyond the University. Expand your professional network, explore different career possibilities and build confidence working in new environments, while demonstrating the value your research skills can bring to organisations beyond academia.

Eligibility and funding

Understand who can undertake an HDR placement and the funding options available to support your experience.

All actively enrolled UQ MPhil and PhD candidates can undertake an HDR placement. Placements must be undertaken with an external host organisation or research end-user and structured as a clearly defined project that is separate from your thesis research. HDR placements are flexible and can vary in length and structure depending on the project and host organisation. Additional eligibility requirements, including minimum placement duration, may apply if you are seeking funding to support your placement.

Financial support

Financial support is available to eligible PhD candidates undertaking an HDR placement. To be eligible:
- your placement must be with a research end-user.
- your placement must be a minimum of 60 business days, excluding public holidays.
- your project brief must be submitted within the first 18 months full-time equivalent (FTE) of your PhD.

Eligible PhD candidates may be able to access one of two funding options:

- **UQ PhD Industry Placement Scholarship:** For candidates receiving a UQ-funded living stipend, the scholarship recognises the additional time commitment involved in undertaking a placement and provides extensions to your living stipend and thesis submission date.
- **UQ PhD Industry Placement Award:** For candidates who do not receive a living stipend scholarship, or whose stipend is managed by an eligible external sponsor, the award provides a one-off payment following successful completion of the placement. Candidates may also be considered for extensions to their thesis submission date and tuition fee offset.

Candidates interested in funding should plan early to ensure they meet the eligibility requirements and relevant timeframes.



HDR candidate responsibilities

Know what's expected of you before, during and after your HDR placement.

As an HDR candidate, you are responsible for:

• maintaining active enrolment in your HDR program and obtaining endorsement from your advisory team before commencing your placement.

• working with your host organisation to develop a project brief that clearly outlines the placement activities, objectives, location and intended learning outcomes.

• declaring any funding or financial support you will receive from your host organisation.

• accepting your official HDR placement offer in writing before commencing your placement.

• meeting the commitments agreed with your host organisation throughout the placement.

• notifying the GRS promptly of any changes to your placement, particularly changes to the activities or scope agreed in your project brief.

• completing and submitting your placement reflection following the placement.

Beyond your HDR

Research careers span sectors, industries and professions. Understanding where HDR graduates go next can help you prepare for the opportunities ahead.

Careers beyond academia: More than half of HDR graduates build careers beyond the university sector, applying their research expertise across industry, government, not-for-profit and other professional settings.

The value of placement experience: HDR graduates with industry placement experience report strong employment outcomes, highlighting the value of gaining professional experience and applying research capabilities beyond the academic environment.

Preparing for what comes next: An HDR placement gives you the opportunity to build this experience during your candidature, helping you understand different professional environments, strengthen your networks and demonstrate how your research capabilities can translate across sectors.

Hear from our HDR Candidates

Real experiences. Different pathways.

Our candidates have taken their research beyond UQ and into professional settings. Their stories show how placements can build connections, broaden perspectives and open up new opportunities. Discover how they applied their expertise, what they gained and how their placement shaped their next steps.

"This experience showed me the value of translating research knowledge into the real world."

Genevieve Kieseker - School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

"It was a great opportunity to apply some of what you learn as an HDR candidate to finding solutions to social problems."

Sreang Chheat - School of Political Science and International Studies

Getting started

Ready to explore an HDR placement?

Start by considering the type of experience you're looking for and the organisations that align with your research expertise, interests and career goals.

Talk to your advisory team.

Discuss how a placement could complement your HDR and when it might fit best within your candidature.

Explore potential hosts.

Consider research end-users and organisations where your skills and expertise could contribute to a real-world project or challenge.

Plan early.

If you are interested in placement funding, remember that additional eligibility requirements and timeframes apply.

Speak with the GRS.

Our HDR Placements team can provide guidance on eligibility, funding and the placement process, and help you understand what comes next.

Take your research beyond the University and see where an HDR placement could take you.

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