



# What is it like to be a research student at the University of Melbourne?

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# Research at Melbourne

The University of Melbourne is one of the top research universities in the world. According to the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT), Melbourne is the No. 1 research university in Australia and No. 4 in Asia Pacific.

The University aims to graduate students who are

- Academically excellent and independent critical thinkers
- Leaders in communities
- Attuned to cultural diversity
- Active global citizens

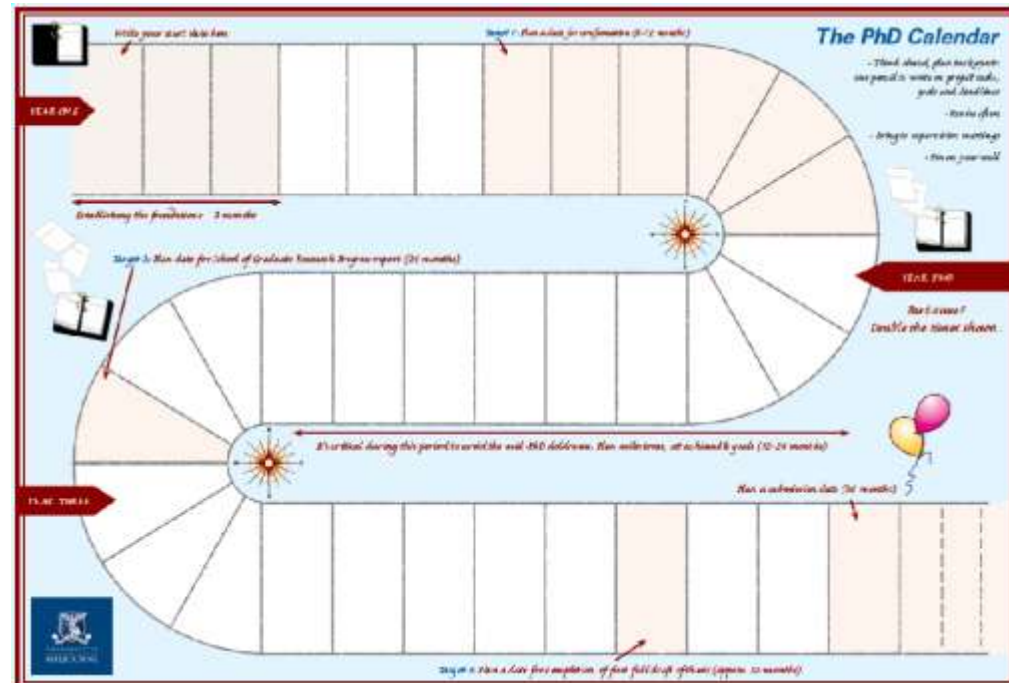


# What you can expect

- You will arrive at the University having submitted a **one- or two-page outline of your proposed research project**.
- You will have a high level of knowledge in your field of study and the expectation of developing more expertise.
- You can expect to gain new perspectives, a broader outlook and a global understanding.
- You will have read about the University and be excited about your research, but there may be some differences between your expectations and the experiences you have as a research student.
- Your established ways of thinking and studying may be challenged as you adapt to your new research environment.

# Key Points in the Research Journey

- Acceptance of your **research proposal**, offer and enrolment
- **Confirmation Report and Oral Presentation**  
(9 –10 months after enrolment)
- **Progress Report**  
(end of 2<sup>nd</sup> year)
- **80 word summary**  
(3 months prior to thesis submission)
- **Public presentation of research findings**  
(prior to submitting your thesis)
- **Submission of thesis**



# Research students

- As a research student you will have a lot of freedom in your studies because there are no classes you must attend and you determine your research topic.
- This autonomy and flexibility is very rewarding but requires you to take responsibility for your studies. You will have to motivate yourself, manage your research project and your commitment independently.
- In the **Confirmation report and Oral presentation** you will be expected to demonstrate your progress to date and your research skills. Of course your supervisor will guide you.

# Research students cont.

## Expected skills:

- **Independent Thinking**

You will need to be able to independently read, understand and critically examine the work of others. You are expected to be able to:

- express your own ideas
- show how your thinking relates to the thinking of others
- justify your claims



# Research students cont.

## Independent Researching

- You will be expected to maintain an international focus by
  - finding relevant resources, both local and international and hardcopy and online, yourself,
  - follow up a line of thinking by tracing the idea through the bibliography of a book and finding related material.

## Organisation Skills

- You will be organising your research project. This means understanding what the project involves and managing your time and resources so that deadlines are met.

# Expectations of research students cont.

- **Academic Honesty**

You will be expected to have an understanding of the research culture:

- To acknowledge the ideas of others through correct referencing
- To express the ideas of others in your own words

- **Ethics in the research context**

If you are working with other people, for example interviewing, you must have an ethics clearance.

# Working with your supervisor

- Your supervisors (generally two) are academics who guide and support you.
- Your regular meetings with your supervisors are central to your studies and you need to be prepared for them.
- Your supervisors may often expect you to take the initiative: ask questions (about your project, about support, conference opportunities, etc.), discuss goals, future directions and any problems. Request more meetings if needed.
- You may experience very different relationships or differences in perspective as you work with your supervisors. This may at times be confusing, but you need to be prepared to form your own opinion.
- As you move from being a novice researcher to being an expert in your field, your relationship with your supervisor will change and you will be expected to be more independent.

# Writing

You will be undertaking a lot of writing during your candidature.

- Be prepared to write a number of drafts
- Be prepared to rewrite after your supervisor has given you feedback on your work
- Be aware that each faculty will have their own referencing preferences
- Sometimes faculties have preferences for particular writing styles
- Your writing style will also be influenced by your area of study



# How you can prepare

You can prepare for your studies at the University of Melbourne while still in Taiwan:

- **As you think about your topic and write your research proposal consider:**
  - background information
  - your reasons for the research
  - where your project fits within your field of research
  - your purposes and aims
  - the relevant literature
  - the research design
- **Familiarise yourself with the processes** for enrolment, confirmation, examination, etc. by reading the PhD or MPhil handbooks at [www.gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/current/](http://www.gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/current/)

# How you can prepare cont.

- **Study academic and Australian English**
  - Read theses from your field of study to get a better grasp of academic English and academic conventions like the thesis structure. You can find theses through the Australasian Digital Theses Program at <http://adt.caul.edu.au/>
  - Familiarise your self with the Australian accent
  - Watch Australian films, documentaries or TV
  - Listen to Australian radio on the internet

All these activities will make it easier for you to talk to your supervisors – remember that discussing your ideas and progress with your supervisors will be crucial!

# How you can prepare cont.

- **Think about the transition** to a new academic, geographic, administrative and social environment. Look at the “International Terminal” of the Academic Interactive Resources portal to learn more about what to expect: <https://airport.unimelb.edu.au/international/>
- **Learn about Australian culture** by reading books, watching films or browsing the internet. Also check the “Studying & Living in Melbourne” pages from the International Student Services at the University ([www.services.unimelb.edu.au/international/melbourne/index.html](http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/international/melbourne/index.html))

# Making the most of your studies

There are a number of things you can do to make the most of your studies at the University of Melbourne. Build up your skills by

- participating in writing seminars offered free through the School of Graduate Research and the Academic Skills Unit
- attending free language classes by the Academic Skills Unit and the School of Languages and Linguistics
- applying for a grant to do fieldwork or attend international conferences outside of Australia
- making an appointment for an individual consultation with an academic skills adviser
- attending a Thesis Writers' Circle
- accessing award-winning online resources, such as Postgraduate Essentials and AIRport.

# Making the most of your studies cont.

But doing a research degree at Melbourne University is not only about study. It's a great opportunity to make friends and meet people from all over the world. Being a research student can be isolating so make sure you network and get involved in one of the many clubs, societies and other activities on campus.



# Making the most of your studies cont.

Most students encounter some problems during their research journey, be it academically or personally. There is plenty of support available to students at the University. The key is to know where to find it and not to be shy to ask for help if needed. The “student support” page for future students lists many of the services available:

[www.futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/about/support](http://www.futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/about/support)

The Academic Skills Unit helps all students to develop their language and academic skills through individual tutoring, workshops and short courses:

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/asu/>



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