

Navigating your HDR Studies

in the

**School of Natural and Built
Environments**

Initiated by HDR students for HDR students

Navigating your HDR within the School of NBE

Starting your HDR research can be stressful enough without also trying to navigate the day-to-day issues of getting things done. Here HDR candidates have put together some basic guidelines, tips, tricks and reassurances on how things work within the School of Natural & Built Environments (NBE) at the **Mawson Lakes Campus** and **City East Campus**.

By Georgia Pollard and other HDR students from the Lunchbox Seminar Group and NBESS.
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“To achieve great things, you need a plan... and not enough time”

- Leonard Bernstein

Getting started: Induction & beyond

To start you off here is the link to the Research Degree Student page (lots of useful links!):
<http://w3.unisa.edu.au/researchstudents/default.asp>

Your induction takes time:

<http://w3.unisa.edu.au/researchstudents/milestones/induction.asp>

- Research Induction Plan – complete within the first 2 weeks
- Lab induction - with Mr Tim Golding (Team Leader: Technical Services)
- Need to complete the WHS modules (online - use the link above)
- Statement of Agreement (like a Supervisor Agreement) – complete within the first 2 weeks
- Research Education Support Activities ([RESA](#)) activities: lots of good courses on: data management, library skills, writing scientific articles, etc.
- Supervisory team: arrange a regular meeting schedule. They are there to support you but be mindful they are busy with their own work.

Getting your desk/office

You will be shown to an office (or told about your office) as part of your induction. If anything ever breaks in your room, for example, lights gone out, door/lock issues, air conditioning trouble, you can contact FM Assist with a maintenance request:

<http://i.unisa.edu.au/staff/facilities/fm-assist-services/maintenance-and-porter-services/faq---csr/>

Other FM Assist services: <http://i.unisa.edu.au/staff/facilities/fm-assist-services/>

Getting your student ID and key or swipe access

Please refer to the link below for instructions on how to get a student ID card:-

http://askcampuscentral.unisa.edu.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/116/~/_/how-do-i-get-a-student-id-card%3F

To apply for access please use the link below:-

<http://i.unisa.edu.au/staff/facilities/forms/access-request/>

Religious needs

Please refer to the link below:-

<http://w3.unisa.edu.au/current-students/StudentServices/ReligiousNeeds.html>

Parking

All [parking](#) around **Mawson Lakes** campus is paid parking. It's easiest to download and use the UniSA Parki App to pay, simply download the app from the App Store for iPhone and Google Play for Android. It is reasonably cheap, about 20 cents an hour. If you don't pay for parking you will risk receiving a parking fine.

Or you can apply for an unreserved carpark through the Facilities Management Unit:

<http://i.unisa.edu.au/staff/facilities/fm-assist-services/parking/>

This can work out to be a little cheaper in the long run, particularly if you think you're going to be on campus most days a week.

At **City East** there is no car parking on campus (except for those with a mobility issue and have documentation, then a permit can be obtained from Campus Security).

Motorbikes can be brought onto campus but require a permit from Campus Security.

Other car parking: metered short term parking on Victoria Drive \$\$ or multi-story Wilson Parking 15 Frome Street or UPark on Rundle Street \$\$.

We suggest you use public transport or a bicycle. There are two covered and secure bicycle cages on City East campus – see Campus Security for activating card access.

For those cycling in, there are showers outside the gym, level 2 Centenary Building and also other buildings around the campus.

Your Personal Development (PD) Fund

Upon request, you have access to a PD fund once your Confirmation of Candidature has been confirmed (normally within the first six months – FTE {Full-Time Equivalent}). You are provided with an amount of money which you can spend on training, conferences, software licences etc. Just keep in mind that any equipment you purchase with your PD fund belongs to the university and must be left behind once you finish. To reclaim anything you purchase you will need to keep the receipt and provide a bank statement showing the money coming out of your account. Use the FSO3 Finance form for PD claims available through the APPIAN system. Please see the School Office if you have any questions or issues accessing this online.

TIP: Try to get other funding for your research and save your PD fund for conferences.

Admin Stuff

Forms and guidelines for research degree students:

<http://w3.unisa.edu.au/researchstudents/forms/default.asp>

If you ever need to book a room on any campus for a meeting etc. you can do so through FM Assist (best to give them at least a few days warning though and to give a description of what you need the room for e.g. need a projector / smart board etc.):

<http://w3.unisa.edu.au/facilities/procedures/onlineforms/roombooking.asp>

If you ever need to get a criminal assessment/police check for tutoring/volunteering on field trips or for your research, please contact the School Office and they will arrange for one to be sent to you from Human Resources.

“Get to know how things work so you can work with the system not against it.” – A Current PhD Student

Your computer, printing & data

Updates and installations

Your computer has all basic software e.g. (Microsoft Office etc.) But check the age of the programs as they can be out of date. Any additional software or any updates you require, e.g. you may need to update Endnote, or install SPSS or Nvivo, has to be put through as an IT

request. You don't have Administrator permission to update anything yourself. Some of the student licences can have limitations.

Make an IT request via: <http://w3.unisa.edu.au/ists/new/all/it-help-desk/contact.htm>

Or call them from your office phone on Ext. 25000

Write them a nice note letting them know what you need, and always say thank you!

Other IT services for students: <http://w3.unisa.edu.au/ists/new/students.htm>

TIP: Always be polite and friendly to all Administration and IT staff - you will most likely need their help many times over.

Backing up your data

You can save things on your Uni computer and can also make use of the 25GB of online storage available via **OneDrive** (provided by the Uni) - this means you can access your files at Uni, at home, anywhere:

<http://w3.unisa.edu.au/ists/new/students/email/faq/onedrive.htm>

You may also choose to map a server drive onto your computer – you will need to contact IT to organise this.

Data is backed up nightly. You can recover data from the previous day and up to four weeks.

<http://w3.unisa.edu.au/ists/new/staff/hardware-servers-storage/backup-recovery.htm>

Secure university drive is essential to store personal research data in relation to ethics application.

“Something will always go wrong. If it’s not your computer crashing or a power outage, it’s losing your USB or forgetting to save your latest work. Always backup everything!” - Past PhD Student

Data allowance

As a HDR student you get pretty much unlimited internet for downloads and uploads - be warned that this is within reason as they do check occasionally and won't be happy if you're downloading hundreds of movies each week.

Printing

The same goes for printing, you have pretty much an unlimited printing allowance when you print from your office computer: black & white or colour and any size you need. If you ever print from a computer pool, you may need to add some printing allowance money to your account: <http://w3.unisa.edu.au/ists/new/students/printing-scanning-copying/printallow.htm>

Laminating & Binding

As a NBE HDR student, you have access to the printing and office stationary supply. At **Mawson Lakes** you will find this all in the P-Building, on level 2, room 21 (P2-21). Here there is also a laminating machine and a ring-binder tool.

At **City East** the stationery cupboard, ring binder, and laminating machine is located in BJ3-69 open space which you can access through the Staff/HDR kitchen (BJ3-70). The stationery cupboard key for HDR students hangs in HDR Student Hub space (BJ2-52).

Email

If you're not familiar with using Microsoft Office Outlook (UniSA's automatic email service) then it's worth doing a few tutorials to give your email skills a boost. There's nothing worse than having to retract an email, or accidentally emailing the head of school!

Check out the free online Lynda course available through the library (login using your uni credentials): <https://www.lynda.com/Office-tutorials/Outlook-2013-Essential-Training/111782-2.html>

It's also worth checking out all the other online courses Lynda.com has available too!

Tutoring

There's no email list or any kind of register for tutoring work. But can you ask your supervisor to let people know that you are interested in tutoring work if any comes up.

Writing your proposal

Proposal Guidelines: <http://w3.unisa.edu.au/policies/policies/resrch/docs/Guidelines3-ResearchProposals1January2017.pdf>

Look up past research proposals to compare different structures. Use these library links:
<http://search.ror.unisa.edu.au/>
<http://guides.library.unisa.edu.au/cro>
<http://search.library.unisa.edu.au/?query=any.contains.%22research%20thesis%20proposal%22>

Time frame: Your research proposal is due approximately 6 months after you begin (FTE).

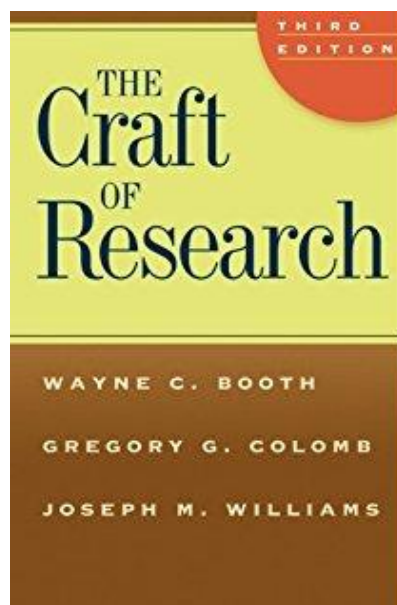
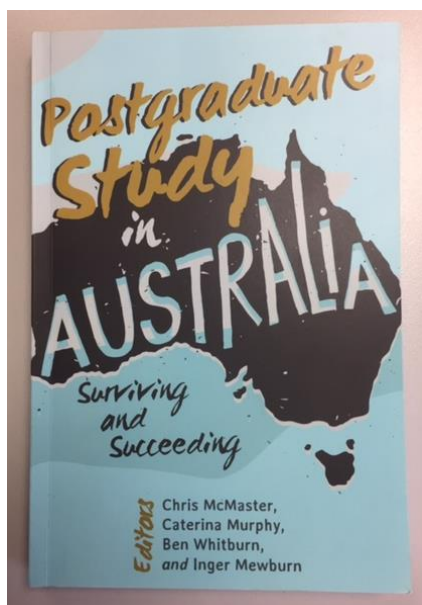
Word count/length: The proposal guidelines recommend writing **only 10-20 pages**. Don't stress if this seems way too short, talk to your Supervisor/s about how long they consider a reasonable length. To give you an idea, some of the past students proposals were: 70 pages long, 69 pages long and 74 pages long (just be aware - one reviewer refused to read my 74-page proposal because of how long it was!).

Reviewers: Generally your Supervisor/s will help make recommendations for who could be targeted to review your proposal. Finding two reviewers who say "yes" can take a while. Waiting for their review comments can take even longer. Hang in there.

TIP: Write a really detailed and comprehensive literature review - you can then use this in your actual thesis!

Consider planning for a **Thesis Containing Published Research**: this basically means that you plan to write a certain number (generally 4-6) of journal articles (and get them published!) as you go. You then end up with all your journal articles becoming the main chapters in your thesis. Good in theory but better suited to some research projects than others - you will need to discuss this with your supervisor and make sure you understand what would be expected of you:

<http://w3.unisa.edu.au/policies/policies/resrch/docs/Guidelines4b-PresentationOfThesisPublishedResearch1January2017.pdf>



These two books are wonderful general guides:

"Postgraduate Study in Australia: Surviving and Succeeding" edited by Chris McMaster, Caterina Murphy, Ben Whitburn and Inger Mewburn.

And

"The Craft of Research" by Booth, Colomb and Williams.

Ethics: If you need to apply for ethics approval for any part of your research, you should consider writing your ethics application even before your confirmation of candidature. Just

WRITE it though, as you **are not** meant to submit your ethics application until you have been confirmed as a HDR student. Link:

<http://w3.unisa.edu.au/res/ethics/human/onlinesystem.asp>

TIP: For the longer ethics questions, copy the questions out to a word document and write your responses there. It can be very hard to read, write and make changes to your longer questions in the ethics system.

Presenting

You are going to have to present your work many times throughout your HDR. Even if you feel that you aren't good at presenting, or if it makes you very nervous, you need to be able to communicate your research clearly and concisely.

Here are a few ways to practice, get better and to get help with presenting:

- Participate in the Lunchbox Seminars (it's a session for students to practice and get helpful feedback from fellow students)
- Do a RESA workshop on communicating your research. Look for one here: <http://w3.unisa.edu.au/researchstudents/workshops/communicating-research.asp>
- Register for the 3 Minute Thesis Challenge! It's a challenge to present your research in under 3 minutes (yes this is VERY short). You can only have one PowerPoint slide. But you can win prizes and it is fantastic presenting practice. It runs once a year, find out more here: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/IT-Engineering-and-the-Environment/Research/3-Minute-Thesis-2016/>
- Once a year the School of NBE holds a research Colloquium (a big get-together). You can apply to present your research as a 5-minute thesis (5MT). This is a great way to let other researchers know what you're working on.
- Take every opportunity you can to present at conferences, seminars and industry workshops. Get your research objectives out there and build opportunities to collaborate with other research groups

TIP: Dress professionally (but comfortably too), always take a copy of your presentation on a USB, try to stand still when you present and finally, **take a deep breath and smile** before you start.

Keeping fed & watered

No matter where your office is there should be a kitchen or tea room reasonably nearby which you will have access to. Most of these have a filtered boiling

hot/chilled cold water tap, a microwave, a fridge and if you're lucky a toaster and/or sandwich press. They also have basic tea and coffee supplies, with occasional biscuits or fresh fruit.

If the room has swipe-card access and it flashes red when you try to enter, use the room access form in this link to request access:

<http://i.unisa.edu.au/staff/facilities/forms/access-request/>

On the **Mawson Lakes** campus there are kitchen facilities in most buildings, including:

- P Building: P2-34 (staff and HDR kitchen) and P2-43D (NBE Project Based learning room)
- H Building: H2-44 (second level kitchen), H3-30 (third level meeting room kitchen), and H1-41 (ground floor kitchen which requires special access).
- Also kitchen space (hot water and microwaves) in the breakfast nook of the library/student lounge area.

At **City East** the kitchen facilities are located on level 3 of the Bonython Jubilee Building in room 70 (BJ3-70) and this space is available to all staff and HDR students within the school. There is also a fridge in the HDR Student Hub space (BJ2-52). As nobody monitors this fridge, it is your responsibility to keep it clean and free of biohazards (out of date food).

TIP: Get your own mug, and if you're a bit squeamish get your own cutlery set too, as the utensils in the shared kitchens can get a bit dirty.

Always clean up after yourself, in particular dry and put away your dishes or you will be haunted by passive aggressive signs about "*Please keep the kitchen area CLEAN*". You can leave food in the fridges, just be wary as they get cleaned out most Fridays.

Places to buy lunch

On the **Mawson Lakes** Campus there are now two new food places in the A Building (located across from the library). There's the seriously cool "Frankie's Diner" which serves coffee, American style burgers, fries sandwiches AND actually has beer, wine and cider for sale too! The other new place in the A building is Zambrero – tasty Mexican food anyone? There's also the new pop-up cafe in the MM-Building (Brightside Café) which has lots of different rolls, some lunch specials and does amazing coffee.

Off-campus there's a Caffe Primo close by, a Chicken shop on Goodall Parade, and a couple of cafes, a sushi place and a great Vietnamese place all within the Woolworths complex.

BEST COFFEE: from the Brightside Deli Cafe in the MM building:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/brightsidedeli/reviews/?ref=page_internal

BEST FOOD: La Vita Fresh Pasta at 37 Main Street Mawson Lakes:
<http://www.lavitafreshpasta.com.au/about>

BEST DRINK SPECIALS: the Mawson Lakes Hotel happy hour is 5-7pm Monday to Friday.

At **City East** Campus also has two new food outlets going into their Building A, (opposite the library), “A Pot Called Kettle” which does coffee and fresh South Australian food such as toasties, wraps and soups – as well as serving a little beer and wine too. Then there’s “Mr Wuhu” offering all kinds of delicious Asian food – curries, noodles, stir fries, dumplings and more. Of course there are also student facilities where you can make your own lunch along with plenty of chill out areas.

Outside of the campus you can take a short walk up to Rundle Mall and Rundle Street for a million more delicious choices to eat and drink that will suit your budget.

There is also the ‘The Hub’ over at Adelaide University. Have some fun and explore to find the cheaper and funky places as there are a lot of hidden gems!

Become part of the University Culture

Yes, you are here to conduct (amazing) research. But you are also here to become part of something more – part of our University. And this means a few different things:

- **You’re a professional now** – show up to Uni every day that you can. The more often you are on campus, the more great opportunities you leave yourself open to.
- **Get to know your office mates** – you’re going to see them almost every day for the next few years, chances are they will become your friends or even like your second family. Make an effort to befriend, understand and support one another.
- **Make the most of chances to socialise, network and learn from others.** When you receive invites to school or university wide events, try your hardest to attend and participate so you can meet staff and students within and outside of the school. Make sure you respond by accepting meeting requests or following the steps to register.
- **Be respectful of others** - It comes down to treating people the way you would like to be treated. For example, if someone looks like they are trying to get work done or are really stressed – give them time and space to work uninterrupted. Be mindful of how others may be feeling (busy, stressed, bored), but certainly reach out if you think anyone looks lonely or upset! Don’t be afraid to say, “R U OK?”
- **Take responsibility and engage with the spaces around you** – we share a lot of spaces and resources here, and are all responsible for them. It’s not just keeping things clean and tidy (although please do this for the kitchen / lab space / office!), you can also help make our spaces more fun and inviting:

- **Decorate your desk or wall space** to brighten up the room and help show people where you're from, what you like, or what your research is about.
- **Did you find out about a cool event?** Print out the event information and pin it up in the kitchen so others can learn about it too.
- **Made a poster about your research?** Pin it up in one of the hallway spaces!
- **Published a scientific article and are really proud of it?** Print out the first page and stick it to your office door. Let's make our spaces interesting, fun places to be.

“The most useful interactions are often with those people we least expect” – A Current PhD Student

Keeping sane & having fun

Check out the Uni's health and wellbeing webpage:

<http://w3.unisa.edu.au/wellbeing/index.html> as it has some great articles and recommendations for how to keep fit, happy and healthy while studying.

Need someone to talk to?

Counsellors are available to talk to on all UniSA campuses. The appointments are free and confidential. Use this link to find out more or book:

<http://w3.unisa.edu.au/current-students/StudentServices/onlinebookings.html>

Good places to chill out

Mawson Lakes Campus;

- The library has a student lounge on the ground floor. Nice and peaceful, you can even have a nap on one of the comfy chairs or beanbags.
- The community garden behind the P-Building. Winding paths past the garden beds and cool plants to look at. You can also sign up to join at the NBE front office in the P Building.
- The A building (across from the library) has now been renovated! With two food places, an awesome hang-out zone (with a pool table and a Ping-Pong table), a movie/games area and the new Coop textbook/supplies store. The food places even sell beer, wine and cider.

City East Campus;

- You can take a short walk heading north/east down Frome Road and you will have the River Torrens on your left with lots of lush lawn to relax on.
- Before you get to the River Torrens you can cross Frome Road and explore the Adelaide Botanical Gardens, a great place to sit or even to walk around.
- Along North Terrace there is the Art Gallery, Museum and the State Library which you may like to explore.

Engage! Activities outside of research:

- Join the Lunchbox Seminar! It's a group of HDR students who meet every fortnight or so, and take turns in presenting, offering topics for discussion and eating lunch together.
- Join a Uni Club or Sports Team:
<http://www.unisasport.edu.au/Common/ContentWM.aspx?CID=1091>
- There's a Mawson Lakes Cricket Team:
<http://www.unisasport.edu.au/clubs/Club.aspx?CID=20>
And a Mawson Lakes Football Team:
<http://www.unisasport.edu.au/clubs/Club.aspx?CID=555>
- Or the UniSA Gym: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/Business-community/Alumni-network/Alumni-benefits/University-facilities/>
- You can also join NBE Higher Degree by Research Student Club – Join the club via the USASA webpage: <https://usasa.sa.edu.au/Clubs/NBE> and the Facebook page to keep up with upcoming events:
<https://www.facebook.com/NBEHDR/>
- Sometimes there is free Meditation practice upstairs in the P Building at Mawson Lakes
- FREE YOGA every Wednesday at Mawson Lakes:
<https://usasa.sa.edu.au/Clubs/yoga>
- Or just read some awesome PhD comics!
<http://phdcomics.com/comics.php>

Keeping motivated

Take a good hard look at what works and what doesn't work for you:

- Where do you work best? (answer honestly now)
- When are you most productive? Early mornings? Or in the afternoons? Do you get the most done by sticking to a 9 to 5 routine? Or not?
- How are you at making goals and sticking to them?
- What is your biggest procrastination habit and how could you cut it down?

Feeling stuck in a rut? Read this great article on things to do when you have the “PhD blues”: <https://thesiswhisperer.com/2017/05/17/things-to-do-when-you-have-the-phd-blues/>

“Listen to your gut... your supervisors can make mistakes too” - Past PhD Student

Writing & Thinking

The best advice I have found for writing, thinking and working through your HDR is this blog: “The Thesis Whisperer”: <https://thesiswhisperer.com/>. For example, having trouble with “vague” writing? Read this article for some clarity: <https://thesiswhisperer.com/2017/06/28/8346/>

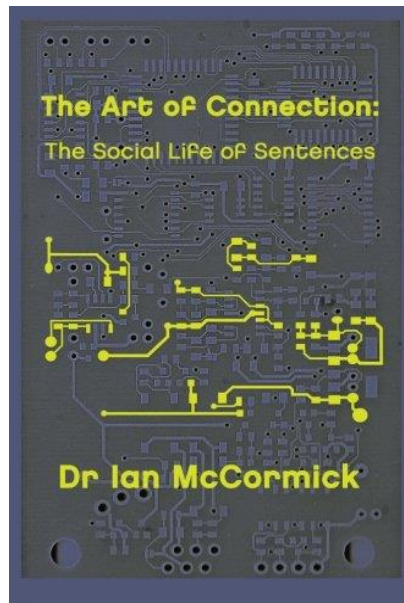
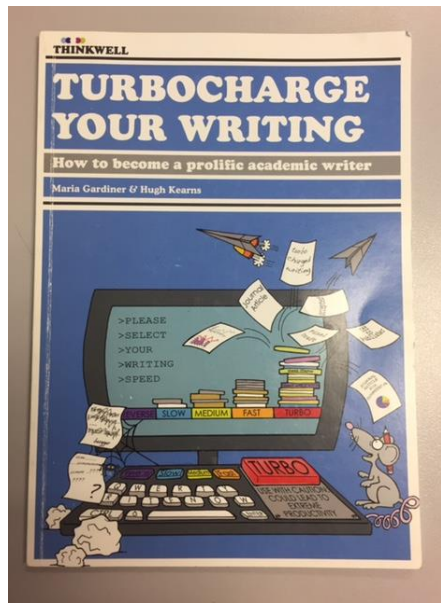
Many students are unsure when they can or should start writing. Once your proposal is accepted you can begin writing. If you are getting results within your first year, it is worth talking to your supervisor/s about whether you can write an article and try to get it published.

The Uni runs quite a few workshops on everything from writing, to presenting and how to apply for a grant. Keep an eye on this page: <http://w3.unisa.edu.au/researchstudents/workshops/>

And register for the workshops here:

<https://my.unisa.edu.au/internal/RegisterIT/res5-workshopregister.asp>

TIP: Keep a research journal and document everything as you go - this will provide you with valuable details when you're writing up and you can't remember exactly what you did. Keep in mind - the more you write now the less you will have to write later.



These two books are brilliant:

“Turbocharge your writing: How to become a prolific academic writer” by Maria Gardiner and Hugh Kearns.

And

“The Art of Connection: The social life of sentences” by Dr Ian McCormick

Final Reassurances

You are not alone in doing your HDR. There are many others experiencing the same challenges you are. If you need help... ask for it - from your Supervisor/s, from other HDR students, from the Administrative/IT/Technical staff, from your friends and family, or from a counsellor. You can do this!

“It’s all going to be okay”
- From a finished PhD student