

2026 FAQs

Clinician Researcher Track

The Clinician Researcher Track - refers to combining a PhD or an MPhil into the medical program. Students must be eligible to enrol in a Higher Degree Research (HDR).

What is a Higher Degree by Research (HDR)?

- A Higher Degree by Research (HDR) is a term that collectively refers to a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and a Master of Philosophy (MPhil). Both are postgraduate degrees and are administered by the UQ Graduate School. [See options for HDR degrees here](#)

Can anyone do a HDR (MPhil or PhD) during medical school?

- Not all students will be eligible. Please see the descriptions of the PhD and MPhil on the Graduate School website which describes each HDR and eligibility details. <https://study.uq.edu.au/study-options/phd-mphil-professional-doctorate>

What is the model for combining a HDR with the MD Degree?

- The MPhil or the PhD is undertaken as an intercalated model, which means that you interrupt your MD degree to do full time MPhil or PhD research
- INTERCALATED MD-MPhil – requires one year out of the MD.
- INTERCALATED MD-PhD – requires three years out of the MD.

When can I apply to do a HDR (PhD or MPhil) during the MD?

- Enrolled domestic MD students can apply to a PhD or MPhil in ~ August/September of MD Year 2 to commence the HDR the following January.
- Enrolled international MD students apply in June of MD Year 2 to commence the following January.

When can I start the PhD or MPhil?

- The earliest an enrolled MD student can start either the Intercalated PhD or MPhil, is January after successful completion of MD Year 2.

PLEASE NOTE: *If you are interested in or considering an MPhil or PhD while enrolled in the MD program, first you must get approval from the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Behavioural*

Sciences to apply. You will need to complete the [Clinician Researcher Track Expression of Interest](#) If you have any questions, email the Director of Higher Degree Research (Associate Professor Bernadette Richards, bernadette.richards@uq.edu.au)

I am a UQ-Ochsner student. What are my HDR options?

- Ochsner students who are interested in pursuing the MD-PhD or the MD-MPhil should contact the Director of MD Research to discuss eligibility at **any time and before 1st May of MDY2**.
- Please read the FAQs for UQ-Ochsner Students.

I am an international student. What are my HDR options?

- International students who are interested in pursuing the MD-PhD or the MD-MPhil should contact the Director of MD Research to discuss eligibility at any time and **before 1st May of Y2**.

What scholarship opportunities are available to MD-HDR students?

- The UQ Graduate School Scholarship (UQGSS) is the primary funding for HDR tuition and living stipend. All details are at this link : [Graduate School Scholarships \(UQGSS\) – includes Research Training Program \(RTP\)](#)
- Application for the MPhil or PhD includes the UQGSS i.e., there is no separate scholarship application.

I do not have a research Honours as part of my Bachelor's degree, am I still eligible to enrol in an MPhil or a PhD?

- Look carefully at the specific entry and eligibility requirements for the relevant degree on this webpage. <https://study.uq.edu.au/study-options/phd-mphil-professional-doctorate>
- After you have read the requirements, if you are not clear you are eligible, you may fill in the [Expression of Interest Form](#) and/or Director of Higher Degree Research (bernadette.richards@uq.edu.au) with your CV and any questions

I have an Honours degree based on GPA only, does this count as Honours to the Graduate School?

- High academic merit is very important to gaining entry into a HDR. However, it is unlikely that you would be able to enrol in a HDR without any prior research experience.
- Look carefully at the specific entry and eligibility requirements for the relevant degree on this webpage. <https://study.uq.edu.au/study-options/phd-mphil-professional-doctorate>

What are HDR 'Progress Reviews' (PRs)?

- Completion of HDR Progress Reviews is mandatory for all HDR candidates.

- The PR process provides a structured approach to the progression of your research degree. Progress Reviews help keep you on track, and ensure you receive regular feedback and guidance throughout your candidature.
- *It is the student's responsibility to understand the PR process, what is required for each, and when each PR is due.*
- The School of Medicine HDR Support webpage gives a comprehensive guide for completing each PR. <https://medicine.uq.edu.au/research/hdr-student-support>

Reminder: Please direct any questions you have regarding the MD-PhD or the MD-MPhil, not answered on these FAQs or the website, to the Director of Higher Degree Research, Assoc Professor Bernadette Richards (bernadette.richards@uq.edu.au)

HDR Project Topic and Supervision

Can I choose my own HDR project and supervisors?

- Yes. Keep in mind that it is important to take time to consider your area of research and an appropriate supervisor.
- The decision regarding your research project must be made in partnership with an appropriate supervisor and final approval of your project is by the Director of MD Research, during an interview.

How many HDR supervisors do I need?

- Every HDR candidate must have at least two supervisors who are qualified and approved to supervise HDR students. One will act as Principal and at least one other will act as a co-supervisor.

Can I choose a project and/or advisor outside the Faculty of HMBS, in another UQ school, research centre or institute?

- Yes this is possible. However, it must be discussed with and approved by the Director of Higher Degree Research as early as possible, and before the application deadline.

Can I choose a supervisor who does not hold a paid position at UQ but is a clinician in a teaching hospital i.e., an Academic Title Holder?

- Yes. This is possible. However, it must be discussed with and approved by the Director of Higher Degree Research as early as possible.

Do MD-PhD and MD-MPhil students get any 'special consideration' associated with the MD curriculum?

- Yes. MD-PhD and MD-MPhil students will receive special consideration for certain choices such as clinical placement in MD Year 3 and Year 4.
- **NOTE:** *Your special consideration is not guaranteed and it is not automatic. You must apply through the same process as all other students and within the required time limit.*