Macquarie University

English Language Skills and HDR Candidates

Background
The need for research candidates to have a high level of English language proficiency is implicit in being a Macquarie higher degree research candidate. The Higher Degree Research Committee endorses this as a basic requirement for receiving a Macquarie research education and being a Macquarie researcher.

In support of its research education program, the University has specified minimum English language requirements for admission to a research degree. These requirements are called proof of English proficiency. For research degree applicants whose qualifications were gained in a country where English is not the main spoken language, English proficiency requirements are met through the satisfactory completion of an English language testing program. The testing requirements are as follows:

- TOEFL (computer-based): Overall of 237 with minimum 19 in Listening, 19 in Reading, 25 in Structure/Writing and TWE of 5.0; OR
- TOEFL (paper-based): Overall of 580 with 53 in Listening, 52 in Reading, 59 in Structure/Written Expression and TWE of 5.0; OR
- iBT (internet-based TOEFL): Overall score of 92 with 23 in Speaking, 18 in Listening, 17 in Reading and 22 in Writing; OR
- IELTS (academic version): Overall 6.5 with minimum of 6.0 in each band

The Australian Government has also determined that for some countries, in order for a student Visa to be issued to undertake postgraduate research (Visa sub-class 574) some English language test proficiency is required. Applicants will need to check with the local Australian Embassy regarding English requirements in order to obtain a Visa.

While there is a minimum level of English proficiency expected, some Macquarie discipline areas such as English, Law, Linguistics and Medicine generally require higher levels of English proficiency. Macquarie research scholarship applicants needing to meet English language proficiency requirements are also expected to achieve a higher level of attainment. Such scholarship applicants are expected to attain one of the following:

- TOEFL (computer-based): Overall of 250 with minimum 19 in Listening, 22 in Reading, 26 in Structure/Writing and TWE of 5.0; OR
- TOEFL (paper-based): Overall of 600 with 53 in Listening, 56 in Reading, 61 in Structure/Written Expression and TWE of 5.0; OR
- iBT (internet-based TOEFL): Overall score of 100 with 23 in Speaking, 23 in Listening, 23 in Reading and 25 in Writing; OR
- IELTS (academic version): Overall 7.0 with no less than 6.0 in each band

IELTS centres operate worldwide. Students wishing to arrange an IELTS tests are able to check the location of the closest centre on the IELTS test website.

Research Applicants and English Language Programs
Short and longer term English Language programs are available through The Centre for Macquarie English (CME). The longer term courses are ten to twenty weeks in duration,
subject to need, and are undertaken on campus. Full costing details are available at CME and the course requirements must be met before research degree enrolment.

The CME Master IELTS on-line program is a web-based in-depth course for IELTS test preparation. The CME On-Line program has four modules: academic writing, academic reading, listening and speaking. Students undertaking all four modules receive 90 days’ access to the course. Macquarie University offers assistance to complete this program or its individual components, to potential research candidates who otherwise satisfy entry requirements, but whose proof of English proficiency does not currently meet requirements. Financial assistance is targeted to assist research applicants for whom a joint PhD enrolment is under negotiation.

Financial assistance is provided to research applicants from Universities with whom Macquarie has a Memorandum of Understanding and would like to extend collaborative research engagement. The University recognizes that there may be instances where such research applicants may have difficulty in completing IELTS while undertaking a national qualification exam, for example, PhD admission to a Chinese University for joint enrolment applicants. Macquarie funding is available to support these joint enrolment students. The process is as follows:

- Macquarie will pay the cost of this program plus the cost of the subsequent test for candidates who have at least an IELTS test result of 5 (and 5 in writing – the most critical requirement) and who otherwise meet MQ admission and scholarship requirements.
- Candidates undertake the test at an offshore location as they will be without a student Visa. After completing the test and satisfying requirements, Macquarie will confirm the enrolment offer and any scholarship allocation. Travel arrangements can then be made subject to this confirmation. A Joint Enrolment agreement is to be either in place or under negotiation for such candidates.
- Macquarie pays the program cost direct to CME who will also arrange a local placement test.
- A Memorandum of Understanding should be in place for applicants from designated universities.
- All formal offers of sponsored on-line assistance are made through HDRO (hdrfuture@mq.edu.au).

Enrolled Candidates

Currently enrolled candidates wishing to take further English language courses may contact The Centre for Macquarie English (CME) for details of English programs offered.

For example, CME delivers a highly successful embedded program within the Department of Law, which is available to other areas across the University. The program complements the mandatory Legal Research Units taken by candidates and is run as a series of workshops. It consists of five modules which address needs as individually identified, provide assistance in developing academic reading, writing and editing skills, and assist in the development of ongoing strategies to address language and thesis writing requirements for the research thesis chapters. The Law English language support program was endorsed by the Higher Degree Research Committee as a good practice example.
The Faculty of Business and Economics supports the development of academic writing skills and provides high-quality training programs with a focus on developing writing excellence in areas such as grant applications, journal submissions, research theses and research proposals. Training is also provided by the Faculty to support research candidates and staff in public speaking and making presentations.

The Department of Linguistics also offers embedded academic literacy workshops to help HDR candidates. “Preparing a Thesis Proposal” is aimed at HDR students at the outset of their study and provides models and guidelines for writing a thesis proposal with particular emphasis on the introductory stage and the expression of aims, research questions or hypotheses. “Writing a Literature Review” describes the purpose and structure of a Literature Review and its relationship to the research question. “Expressing Your Voice” provides valuable tools for quoting, summarising and paraphrasing evidence and also has strategies for avoiding plagiarism. “Features of Academic Writing” helps in the development of writing clear English and explores cohesion in writing. “Writing a Research Report” examines the purpose, structure and language of a research report through the analysis of examples. These programs have excellent feedback from research candidates.

Faculty Associate Deans Higher Degree Research across the University are able to advise about the English proficiency and academic literacy programs either currently offered within the Faculty, or able to be accessed by research candidates.

CME’s IELTS Master course can be undertaken at anytime as a refresher English language course to help research candidates maintain a high level of general English proficiency throughout their studies at Macquarie.

General information about support and training programs offered by the University is available from the Higher Degree Research Office (HDRO) website at: http://www.research.mq.edu.au/students/current_students/documents/080731_HDR_Training_and_Support.rtf