



# Western Sydney University

A likely candidate  
for success



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### OUR CLIENT

Western Sydney University is an Australian public university. It was established in 1989 by amalgamating existing Sydney educational facilities: the Nepean College of Advanced Education, the Hawkesbury Agricultural College and the Macarthur Institute of Higher Education. Today, Western Sydney University supports over 45,000 students and has ranked 1st in the world in the Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings for three years running.

The university has 13 campus locations throughout the greater western Sydney region, and serves over 1,500 higher degree by research (HDR) students at any given time.



### CLIENT REQUIREMENTS

Prior to their implementation of ResearchMaster's HDR module, the Western Sydney University graduate research school undertook processes related to candidature management and examinations in a manner which exchanged information between discrete silos via manual intervention.

The primary infrastructure supporting HDR processes was email. This provided limited transparency and relatively high risk of error, because each email required someone to manually review and action it. This was particularly true with regard to external examiners, whose progress on examinations and engagement could not be easily confirmed.

The double- and triple- handling of information introduced the possibility of human error and the siloed systems represented a risk that important candidate milestones might "fall through the cracks" without responsible parties noticing. The limited transparency of this process also required candidates or administrators to follow up with enquiries, contributing to administrative load.

This system introduced significant inefficiencies and risked damaging the relationship with the candidate, and, with over 1500 HDR students to serve, the Western Sydney University graduate school determined that a better-supported, more transparent, and more efficient solution was desirable. The key goals were to improve transparency, reduce the risk of manual error, and create efficiencies.



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### THE SOLUTION

The solution was ResearchMaster's Higher Degree by Research (HDR) module. All ResearchMaster solutions integrate with existing university digital infrastructure, so information from personnel management, student management, finance and other internal processes flows to where it's needed in a secure, accessible and transparent way. The HDR module is designed to allow universities to track and manage the whole lifecycle of higher degree by research candidature. ResearchMaster also provides reliable and expert implementation support.

For the Western Sydney University graduate school, ResearchMaster was particularly attractive because it is a mature and Australian-based solution. Unlike international products, it uses familiar high-context language in the way we use it in Australia. There are also a great many functions that are required by Australia's unique research landscape that come standard with a ResearchMaster solution.

For Western Sydney University, a streamlined implementation was necessary, so it was desirable that changes to the out-of-the-box product were relatively minimal.



### THE BENEFITS

#### Transparency for the graduate school

- Using the ResearchMaster HDR module, Western Sydney University can now use ResearchMaster to send these out for internal or external examination. This allows for greater transparency than the prior email-based solution. Information about the progress of examinations, as well as timelines, deadlines and expected milestones, can all be tracked in a single, central location and reviewed via dashboard. There's no need to follow up via email enquiry or find the last send date in an absent co-worker's inbox: the information is secure, accessible and centralised.

#### Transparency for candidates

- Candidates can also check their progress themselves, because the ResearchMaster HDR module permits them to log in and review their own information. This self-service capability allows individual higher degree by research students to view their information without the intermediary of administrative staff.

#### Reduced risk of manual error

- eForms draw data from internal university systems and pass it through to other such systems in a predefined and automated way. Where previously emails and siloed systems were in use, individual staff members would have to intervene to ensure that the same steps were followed for each candidate, now such processes are automated and standardised.

#### More efficient processing

- Automating processes that were once manual always improves efficiencies. In the case of the Western Sydney University graduate school, eliminating the need for personnel to sort through and manage emails manually reduces the administrative load of manual interventions.
- The ResearchMaster HDR module's centralised information and accessible dashboards avert many of the enquiries from candidates and staff regarding the progress of applications and examinations, freeing up administrative hours for more impactful work.



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### ABOUT RESEARCHMASTER

For over 25 years, ResearchMaster has managed important research processes for leading Australasian Universities and Research Administrators. To this day we continue to be the leading provider of research management solutions in Australia and New Zealand.

We offer a complete product suite that manages all aspects of the university research lifecycle, including pre & post award grants, research outputs, ethics and postgraduate students.

The ultimate combination of our products comes together in our market-leading ResearchMaster Enterprise solution. This powerful research management solution seamlessly collects, manages and reports on the full lifecycle of research activities across your organisation. ResearchMaster Enterprise solution also solves day-to-day operational problems through automation and workflow processes, and assists with long-term and strategic issues through its reporting and integration tools

“One of the key things is that ResearchMaster is an Australian-based provider. Working with other Australian universities means a lot of things in the system are already set up for other clients in the same way that we’re going to do things. ResearchMaster’s HDR candidature management is a mature product. There’s a lot of standard functionality in there, so when it comes to processing examinations we have features in the solution which are ready to go.”

**Matthew Spencer**

Research Application Administrator, Research Services  
Western Sydney University

“They’re an Australian vendor. Other, international, vendors just didn’t understand the way the Australian university environment works.”

**Gary Long**

Manager, Post-Award Data and Systems



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