Masters Degree (Research) - Awards and Programs Schedule

Schedule to the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) As a higher education provider authorised to self-accredit, the University of Newcastle (University) is responsible under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 for ensuring that programs comply with the Provider Course [Program] Accreditation Standards. This Schedule provides the detailed principles and criteria that underpin the self-accreditation process for each Masters Degree (Research) award that may be delivered and conferred by the University of Newcastle.

(2) This Schedule supports the implementation of the Governance Rule and the Higher Degree by Research Policy. The Governance Rule describes each type of higher degree by research qualification offered by the University and provides a description of Academic Senate's role in approving and monitoring these programs.

(3) Within the Schedule the general program principles and structures have been tabulated and the approved programs that are offered under it will be listed on the University website.

(4) In the event of an inconsistency between subordinate policy documents and any Rule(s) or Schedule to the Rule(s), the Rule(s) made by Council prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

(5) Extracts from AQF (Second Edition) have been included in this document with permission of the Australian Qualification Framework Council (January 2013).

Section 2 - Principles and Program Structures

Model:- Masters Degree (Research)

(6) This table describes an AQF level 9 program leading to the award of Masters Degree (Research) under the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

Volume of learning	160 units typically completed in 2 years of full-time study or equivalent.
Purpose	The Masters Degree (Research) will be an ungraded degree awarded for a significant contribution achieved through a program of advanced study and research to any branch of learning of concern to the College in which the candidate is enrolled.
Maximum Time	The program shall be completed and submitted for examination in: i) not less than one year of full-time enrolment or equivalent part-time enrolment, from admission to candidature, except with the permission of the Dean of Graduate Research; and ii) not more than two full-time years of enrolment or equivalent part-time enrolment from admission to candidature, except with the permission of the Dean of Graduate Research.
Principles and Structure	A candidate will be admitted to a program of advanced study and research approved and completed to the satisfaction of the Head of School or Deputy Head of School. The research will primarily be embodied in a thesis; and other work as approved by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School may be submitted and considered in conjunction with the thesis.

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Admission and Selection Criteria		To be eligible for admission to candidature an applicant shall have satisfied: i) all of the requirements for admission to the degree of Bachelor with Honours Class 1 or Honours Class 2, Division 1 or any other degree approved for this purpose; or ii) all the requirements for admission to a degree of Bachelor in the University or another degree approved for this purpose; or iii) in exceptional cases produce evidence of possessing such other academic or professional qualifications and/or experience as may be approved; or iv) in the disciplines of education, medical physics, nursing, social work, social sciences and surgery have completed a minimum standard of professional experience as required; and v) the English language proficiency requirements as described in the English Language Policy. An applicant shall not be admitted to candidature unless adequate supervision and resources are available, as determined by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School.
Specialisation or Major		This section is intentionally blank.
Additional Admission Requirements		May be prescribed by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School.
Learning Outcomes Descriptors		Learning outcomes descriptors underpin the design of all Masters Degree (Research) programs offered by the University. Learning outcome descriptors will be developed for each program as prescribed by AQF for the purpose of qualifying individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research and scholarship and as a pathway for further learning.
i	**Knowledge**	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Research) will have: i) a body of knowledge that includes the understanding of recent developments in one or more disciplines; and ii) advanced knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning.
ii	**Skills**	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Research) will have: i) cognitive skills to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on theory and its application; ii) cognitive, technical and creative skills to investigate, analyse and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories and to apply established theories to different bodies of knowledge or practice; iii) cognitive, technical and creative skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level; iv) cognitive and technical skills to design, use and evaluate research and research methods; v) communication and technical skills to present a coherent and sustained argument and to disseminate research results to specialist and non-specialist audiences; and vi) technical and communication skills to design, evaluate, implement, analyse, theorise and disseminate research that makes a contribution to knowledge.
iii	**Application of Knowledge and Skills**	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Research) will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: i) with creativity and initiative to new situations and/or for further learning; ii) with a high level of personal autonomy and accountability; iii) to plan and execute a substantial piece of research.
Qualification for the Award		The candidate will be recommended for admission to the degree by the Dean of Graduate Research on the advice of the Research Training Sub-Committee.
Grading of the Award		The award will be conferred as an ordinary award.
Qualification Title		Master of Philosophy
Pathways - General		Our pathways for candidates have been developed in accordance with the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy. Approved entry pathways are described in the Admission and Selection Criteria in this table.
Pathways – Credit and Advanced Standing		Credit is not consistent with the framework of a Higher Degree by Research and therefore cannot be granted. A candidate enrolled in a Doctoral Degree (Research) may be permitted to transfer to the Masters Degree (Research) with approval from the supervisor, Head of School or Deputy Head of School and Dean of Graduate Research. Transferring candidates will be required to satisfy the Masters Degree (Research) confirmation requirement if not previously confirmed at the Doctoral Degree level. Except with the permission of the Dean of Graduate Research candidates who transfer from a Doctoral Degree shall be deemed to have commenced candidature from the time of admission to the Doctoral Degree.

Pathways – Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	For Research degrees RPL is a process that assesses the individual's formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes or standards for entry to a qualification. Research degree candidates are assessed on research experience: i.e. demonstrated research experience that is equivalent to the standard of Honours Class 2, Division 1 such as professional work experience in a research environment, published papers in refereed journals, conference papers or equivalent creative material. RPL will not be recognised for credit or advanced standing in a research degree.
Pathways – combined degree	A candidate for the degree will not be permitted to enrol in any other degree or award whether of this or another tertiary institution, except with the permission of the Dean of Graduate Research.
Pathways – nested or integrated qualifications	Nested or integrated qualifications are not consistent with the framework of a Masters Degree (Research).
Pathways – Exit	There is no exit award from a Masters Degree (Research).
Pathways - Graduate	Graduates of this program may seek admission to a Doctoral Degree (Research).
Professional Accreditation	This section is intentionally blank.
Additional Information	Submission of thesis for examination: The candidate shall submit a copy of the thesis in accordance with the provisions of the Higher Degree by Research Policy and the Higher Degree by Research Procedure. Examination of thesis: The Dean of Graduate Research will appoint two examiners and at least one reserve, none of whom shall be a member of the staff of the University.

Section 3 - Relaxing Provision

(7) To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any case, the President of Academic Senate, on the recommendation of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) or relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor may relax any provision of this Schedule provided that the relaxation:

a. does not compromise compliance with external obligations (including but not limited to contractual, legislative or accreditation requirements);
b. does not override a decision made under a formal delegation of authority;
c. does not replace a decision that is subject to a formal delegation of authority; and
d. gives due consideration to the principles of procedural fairness.

Section 4 - Reporting

(8) The President of the Academic Senate will report all applications of the relaxing provision of this Schedule to the Academic Senate.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	12th November 2025
Review Date	9th October 2028
Approval Authority	President Academic Senate
Approval Date	11th November 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Craig Simmons Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Enquiries Contact	Rohan Walker Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) Graduate Research

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Academic Senate" - The Academic Senate of the University as described in the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Council" - The governing authority of the University established under section 8A of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Graduate" - (Noun) Has the same meaning as in section 3(2) of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Class" - When referring to a class attended by Students, a class is any teaching and learning activity of a course. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Advanced standing" - A form of credit for any previous learning as defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework.

"Applicant" - Where referring to a student, an applicant is an individual seeking entry to a program or course offered by the University or its partner organisation/s. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Award" - When referring to a University qualification, this term means an academic qualification approved by Academic Senate that is conferred when a student has met the relevant program requirements. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Candidature" - The period of time between acceptance of offer and termination, withdrawal from, or completion of a higher degree by research program, including periods when a candidate is not enrolled.

"Credit" - When referring to course credit, credit is the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit can reduce the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Candidate" - With regard to Higher Degree by Research it has the same meaning as student. For all other instances it is a person considered for appointment to a position.

"Exit award" - An academic qualification that is conferred when a student has met the program requirements of a

linked program within the same field of study as listed in the relevant Awards and Programs Schedule.

"Learning outcome" - In accordance with the AQF definitions, the expression of a set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Thesis" - A dissertation involving research by a candidate for the award of a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) qualification.

"Unit" - When referring to an academic unit, unit means the proportional amount of academic credit allotted to a course. This term is used to define the requirements for a program award of the University and indicate a student's enrolment load. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.