

Higher Degrees by Research Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to prescribe:

- a. the establishment, quality assurance, revision, discontinuation and disestablishment of Higher Degree by Research awards and programs at the University of Newcastle;
- b. the provisions established to deal with admission and enrolment;
- c. the requirements of the degree that candidates must comply with and the penalties that apply in the case of non-compliance.
- d. the responsibilities of the University in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), including delivery of learning outcomes, volume of learning and compliance monitoring.

(2) This Policy:

- a. is an essential part of the delegations framework operated by University officers and bodies to create, establish or amend awards and programs of the University and in relation to admission and enrolment;
- b. represent the University's commitment to promoting legislative compliance; and
- c. demonstrate the University's commitment to promoting the highest standards of academic knowledge and protecting the integrity of its awards and programs.

(3) Procedures supporting this Policy are developed in accordance with the University of Newcastle [Policy Framework](#). This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- a. the degree schedules for the Doctoral Degree (Research) and Masters Degree Research which prescribe the structure of the degree;
- b. the University [Code of Practice for Higher Degree by Research Candidature](#), approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) to provide guidance to candidates, supervisors, units and faculties in relation to good practice in postgraduate research, supervision and conduct and describes the respective rights and responsibilities of all parties.

(4) In the event of an inconsistency between an Academic Senate policy document and a Divisional, College or School policy, procedure or guideline, the policy document of Academic Senate prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

Section 2 - Scope

(5) This Policy applies to Higher Degree by Research awards and programs created, established and offered by the University of Newcastle, to applicants for those programs, and candidates enrolled in a higher degree by research.

Section 3 - Awards - Establishment

(6) In accordance with Section 16 of the [University of Newcastle Act 1989 \(NSW\)](#), Council has the authority to establish awards that are conferred by the University of Newcastle.

(7) Council is authorised, on the recommendation of Academic Senate, to approve the establishment of awards.

(8) Exit awards are not consistent with the framework of a Higher Degree by Research and therefore cannot be awarded by Council.

(9) The awards established by Council will be specified in the Schedules to the [Awards and Graduation Policy](#).

Section 4 - Awards - Disestablishment

(10) Council is authorised to approve the disestablishment of an award on the recommendation of Academic Senate.

(11) Council will ensure that disestablished awards are archived in the Schedules to the [Awards and Graduation Policy](#).

Section 5 - Awards - Amendments

(12) Council is authorised to approve amendments to awards on the recommendation of Academic Senate.

(13) Council will ensure that any amendment to the nomenclature of awards is reflected in the Schedules to the [Awards and Graduation Policy](#).

Section 6 - Awards - Qualification Types

(14) In accordance with Section 16 of the [University of Newcastle Act 1989 \(NSW\)](#), Council is authorised to confer awards. The conferral of the award, through the provision of a testamur, certifies the requirements of the qualification have been met.

(15) The Higher Degree by Research awards offered are:

- a. Masters Degree (Research) (AQF Level 9)
- b. Doctoral Degree (Research) (AQF Level 10)

(16) Council is authorised to create and grant Honorary Awards.

(17) Specific award qualification requirements, including the volume of learning, are listed in the relevant Award and Program Schedule.

Section 7 - Program - Qualification

(18) Academic Senate is authorised to amend the Schedules to this Policy.

(19) Research Committee on behalf of Academic Senate will monitor program completions to ensure that the programs offered by the University continue to align with the strategic directions of the University as determined by the Council.

(20) The President of Academic Senate is authorised, on behalf of Academic Senate, to

- a. amend program requirements on a case by case basis. Any such decisions will be reported to Academic Senate; and
- b. waive program requirements to grant a posthumous award. Any such decisions will be reported to Council.

Section 8 - Programs - Creation and Approval

Approval Pathway

(21) The Program and Course Approval Committee is authorised to approve the creation of new programs.

(22) A new Higher Degree by Research may be proposed by the relevant academic unit. The new program is then:

- a. endorsed by the Research Committee;
- b. approved by the Program and Course Approval Committee;
- c. ratified by the Academic Senate.

(23) Approved Higher Degree by Research programs will be recorded in:

- a. the relevant schedule to the Policy according to the type of qualification; and
- b. the University of Newcastle AQF Qualification Register, in accordance with the [AQF Qualifications Register Policy](#).

Section 9 - Programs - Quality Assurance

(24) Academic Senate is responsible for ensuring that programs offered by the University, where appropriate, comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework including the:

- a. learning outcomes, graduate attributes and generic skills;
- b. quality assurance arrangements for each program including a system of review and audit; and
- c. development of policies and procedures relating to quality program management.

Section 10 - Program - Pathways

(25) Academic Senate is authorised to approve policies and procedures to provide appropriate pathways for Higher Degrees by Research in accordance with the Higher Education Standards Framework, including the [AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy](#).

(26) Program articulation arrangements consistent with the [AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy](#) will be described in the relevant Awards and Program Schedule.

Section 11 - Program - Revision

(27) The Program and Course Approval Committee is authorised, on behalf of Academic Senate, to approve revisions to programs including changes to academic content, program structure and program requirements.

(28) The Program and Course Approval Committee is required to ensure that revisions to programs:

- a. do not disadvantage continuing candidates; and
- b. comply with the Academic Senate approved cycle of program reviews.

(29) The Head of School or Deputy Head of School is required to notify the Dean of Graduate Research of any revisions or variations to a program.

Section 12 - Programs - Discontinuation

(30) Academic Senate is authorised to discontinue a program deemed no longer viable and will report any such decisions to Council.

(31) The Program and Course Approval Committee is authorised, on behalf of Academic Senate, to approve the discontinuation of a Higher Degree by Research program on the recommendation of the Research Committee.

(32) Prior to approving the discontinuation of a program, the Program and Course Approval Committee is required to ensure that:

- a. candidates enrolled in the program are not disadvantaged;
- b. appropriate teach-out or alternative arrangements have been made for current candidates; and
- c. consideration is given to international applicants in accordance with the ESOS legislation.

Section 13 - Program - Structure: Masters Degree (Research) and Doctoral Degree (Research)

(33) The structure will be described in the [Doctoral Degree \(Research\)](#) and the [Masters Degree \(Research\) Award and Program Schedules](#). Programs will be developed according to the schedules ensuring that:

- a. 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;
- b. Upon admission candidates are deemed to have “provisional candidature” until such time as they have satisfied the requirements of confirmation as detailed in Section 34 of this Policy. Having satisfied the requirements a candidate will be identified as “confirmed”;
- c. 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.
- d. The thesis topic must:
 - i. be approved by the Head of School; and
 - ii. have any significant change(s) approved by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School.
- e. The program will be carried out under the direction of a supervisor(s) appointed by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School.

(34) For candidates who commenced from 2006 onwards, a thesis may not be accepted for examination if a candidate has not been confirmed in their degree.

Section 14 - Programs - Time Requirements

(35) Academic Senate is authorised to prescribe the maximum and minimum time for completion of a Higher Degree by Research program and this will be prescribed in the relevant Awards and Programs Schedule, ensuring that periods

of approved leave shall not be counted when calculating the duration of the program prescribed for an individual Higher Degree by Research candidate. The program durations will be in accordance with the Australian Government Research Training Scheme grant conditions.

(36) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised, on behalf of Academic Senate, to approve exceptions to minimum times for completion of a program.

(37) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised, on behalf of Academic Senate, to approve exceptions to maximum times for completion of a program.

(38) Under [Education Services for Overseas Students \(ESOS\)](#) legislation, an international student visa holder must complete within the 'expected duration of their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)'. This means they must complete within the maximum duration specified unless they have an approved extension due to compassionate or compelling circumstances or are on an intervention strategy.

Section 15 - Admission - General

(39) The admission criteria is described in the relevant Award and Program Schedule. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) is authorised to develop special admission criteria.

(40) Academic Senate is authorised, on the recommendation of the Research Committee, to approve:

- a. special admission pathways; or
- b. specific School admission and selection criteria.

(41) The Program and Course Approval Committee, on the advice of Research Committee is authorised, on behalf of Academic Senate, to approve the recommended studies and/or assumed knowledge which applicants would usually possess prior to admission to a program.

(42) An applicant who has been excluded or suspended from the University or any other tertiary institution will not be admitted to any program during a period of exclusion or suspension.

Section 16 - Admission - Requirements

(43) To be considered for admission to the University, Higher Degree by Research applicants will be required to:

- a. have met the relevant English language proficiency requirements as described in the [English Proficiency Policy](#).
- b. have satisfied the minimum academic requirements described in the relevant Award and Program Schedules;
- c. have met any other additional admission requirements that may be prescribed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation);
- d. be a minimum of 16 years of age at 1 March of the year of admission. Applicants under the age of 16 years may apply directly to the Vice-Chancellor for consideration.

(44) The Head of School or Deputy Head of School may prescribe additional admission requirements when considering an admission to candidature. This may include a requirement for the applicant to undertake an examination(s) or carry out such work as prescribed.

(45) The University may refuse admission to candidature when appropriate supervision and resources are not available. Whether appropriate supervision and resources are available will be determined by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School.

Section 17 - Admission - Conditional

(46) The Head of School or Deputy Head of School can approve conditional admission where specified requirements can be met within set time frames.

(47) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised, on the recommendation of the Research Training Sub-Committee to terminate candidature if a candidate does not meet the conditions stated in the offer of admission.

Section 18 - Admission - Offers

(48) The Head of School, Deputy Head of School and Dean of Graduate Research are authorised to make an offer of admission to a Higher Degree by Research, where the applicant has met the admission requirements specified in Section 16.

(49) Where the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) believes the learning outcomes of the program can be met, they are authorised to waive the English language proficiency requirements for a Higher Degree by Research applicant, subject to the provisions listed in the [English Language Proficiency Procedure](#).

(50) The President of Academic Senate is authorised to consider and determine the outcome of an appeal against a decision on the waiving of English language proficiency requirements, academic or additional admission requirements.

Section 19 - Admission - Internal Transfer

(51) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to approve procedures to support the internal transfer of candidates from one program to another. The availability of internal transfer will be subject to the availability of places in the program.

(52) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this Policy, the Head of School or Deputy Head of School is authorised to permit a candidate to transfer to another program within the same AQF level, on payment of such fees and charges as may be prescribed by the University.

(53) As provided in the [Doctoral Degree \(Research\) Schedule](#), a candidate for a Master Degree (Research) in the University may transfer candidature to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy subject to approval of:

- a. the supervisor;
- b. the Head of School or Deputy Head of School; and
- c. the Dean of Graduate Research.

(54) A Masters Degree (Research) candidate seeking to transfer to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy will need to satisfy the requirements of the confirmation process at a level appropriate to PhD candidature.

(55) Except with the permission of the Dean of Graduate Research, candidates who transfer from a Masters degree shall be deemed to have commenced candidature from the time of admission to the Masters degree.

(56) As provided for in the [Masters Degree \(Research\) Schedule](#), a candidate for a Doctoral Degree (Research) in the University may be permitted to transfer candidature to the degree subject to approval of:

- a. the supervisor;
- b. the Head of School or Deputy Head of School; and

c. the Dean of Graduate Research.

(57) A Doctoral Degree (Research) candidate seeking to transfer to a Masters Degree (Research) will need to satisfy the requirements of the confirmation process at a level appropriate for Master's candidature if not previously confirmed at Doctoral Degree (Research) level.

(58) Except with the permission of Dean of Graduate Research candidates who transfer from a Doctoral degree to a Master degree shall be deemed to have commenced candidature from the time of admission to the Doctoral degree.

Section 20 - Transfer of Candidature from Another University

(59) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised, on the recommendation of the Head of School or Deputy Head of School, to permit an applicant who has completed a period of candidature for a research degree in another university to count the whole or any part of the period of this enrolment, as a period completed in a higher degree by research program at the same level at this University, provided that:

- a. the period of advanced study and research has been carried out under supervision in accordance with required ethics legislation;
- b. is directly related to the candidate's proposed program at this University;
- c. the candidate shall have formally withdrawn from enrolment in the higher degree of the other university for which the previous tenure is applicable, except in the case of Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD) and Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD) approved candidates; and
- d. the candidate meets the minimum period of enrolment as prescribed in the relevant Schedule, other than in exceptional circumstances as approved by the Dean of Graduate Research.

Section 21 - Admission - Deferment

(60) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to approve procedures for deferment of admission to Higher Degrees by Research.

(61) The Head of School or Deputy Head of School is authorised to approve a request for deferral of an offer of admission.

Section 22 - Enrolment - General

(62) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to approve procedures for enrolment in Higher Degrees by Research including that:

- a. a candidate may only enrol in courses that conform to the requirements of their approved program as prescribed in the Schedule.

(63) In undertaking the program, candidates shall meet their responsibilities as set out in the [Code of Practice for Higher Degree by Research Candidature](#).

(64) An applicant may only enrol at the University if they have:

- a. satisfied the requirements for admission to a program;

- b. a current offer of admission to a program;
- c. completed the prescribed enrolment procedures including acceptance of the Terms and Conditions of Enrolment and acceptance of the Terms and Conditions of Computing; and
- d. provided sufficient proof of identification (and visa information for international candidates) as specified by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Academic Registrar.

(65) Candidates who have satisfied the requirements listed in Clause 64 are deemed to have accepted the privileges and obligations of membership of the University and may obtain or request a University of Newcastle Candidate Identification card.

(66) The Dean of Graduate Research, on the recommendation of the Research Training Sub-Committee, is authorised to terminate candidature if a candidate fails to meet the requirements specified in the [Code of Practice for Higher Degree by Research Candidature](#) or meet the specified enrolment requirements under Clause 64.

Section 23 - Enrolment - Off Campus

(67) The Head of School or Deputy Head of School is authorised to approve off-campus enrolment. Where the viability of the research project could be impeded by off-campus enrolment the request may be declined or conditions imposed.

(68) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to approve procedures for higher degree by research candidates' enrolment off-campus.

(69) Candidates applying for off campus status must reside and/or work outside a 50km radius of the University campus responsible for the candidate's program of enrolment and be able to demonstrate that the arrangements will not impede their progress in any way.

Section 24 - Enrolment - Induction and Mandatory Training

(70) A higher degree by research candidate is required to complete the University's induction session and any mandatory training requirements in the time frames prescribed by the Dean of Graduate Research.

(71) The Dean of Graduate Research, on the recommendation of the Research Training Sub-Committee, is authorised to terminate candidature if a candidate fails to complete the induction and mandatory training requirements.

Section 25 - Enrolment - Coursework

(72) A candidate who has passed a course will not be permitted to undertake that course again, unless permitted by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School.

Section 26 - Enrolment - Load

(73) An applicant must nominate either full-time or part-time enrolment at the time of application. Where the viability of the research project could be impeded by part-time enrolment the Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to direct a candidate to enrol on a full-time basis.

(74) International candidates studying in Australia on a student visa must enrol on a full-time basis in accordance with

the requirements of the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) (ESOS Act).

(75) Scholarship recipients are required to enrol on a full-time basis unless approval is granted by the Dean of Graduate Research to undertake part-time study due to extenuating circumstances.

Section 27 - Enrolment - Concurrent

(76) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to approve procedures for concurrent enrolment ensuring that:

- a. A candidate (other than a JADD or DADD candidate) for the degree shall not be concurrently enrolled as a candidate for any other degree or award whether of this or another tertiary institution, except with the permission of the Dean of Graduate Research.
- b. Candidates in a JADD or DADD program will be concurrently enrolled at the authorised partner institution and the University of Newcastle as specified in the JADD/DADD Agreement.

Section 28 - Enrolment - Withdrawal

(77) A candidate may withdraw from the program of study up until the date that the thesis is submitted, only by informing Graduate Research in writing.

(78) The withdrawal shall take effect from the date of receipt of such notification. Withdrawal after the census date for the term means that enrolment load and any associated fees and charges stand.

(79) Withdrawal from the Program is not permitted once the thesis has been submitted.

(80) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised, on the recommendation of the Head of School or Deputy Head of School, to permit a candidate to withdraw from a coursework requisite within their program.

(81) In courses which contain a placement the relevant Head of School or Deputy Head of School is authorised to set a date, different from the University's census date for that term, after which permission of the Head of School or Deputy Head of School is required for a candidate to withdraw from the course without incurring an academic penalty.

Section 29 - Re-Enrolment

(82) To continue in a program, a candidate will re-enrol annually, or seek leave of absence.

(83) To re-enrol the candidate will complete the prescribed procedures and pay the fees and charges no later than the date specified.

(84) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to terminate candidature if the candidate fails to enrol or re-enrol by the date specified.

Section 30 - Leave of Absence

(85) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to approve procedures relating to leave of absence.

(86) The Dean of Graduate Research, is authorised, on the recommendation of the Head of School or Deputy Head of School, to approve leave of absence from the program for a period of up to twelve months, only after completion of one year of full-time or part-time equivalent candidature.

(87) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised, in exceptional circumstances, to approve a leave of absence after the completion of less than one year of full-time or part-time equivalent candidature or a second consecutive leave of absence from a research higher degree for a period of one academic year.

(88) On return from leave of absence, a candidate must re-enrol on the same basis as previously, unless a variation has been approved.

(89) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to terminate the enrolment of a candidate where the candidate is absent without leave for a period exceeding six months;

(90) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to grant international candidates studying in Australia on a student visa, a leave of absence on the basis of compassionate or other compelling grounds, in accordance with the approved procedures.

Section 31 - Enforced Leave

(91) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) is authorised, on the recommendation of the Behavioural Risk Group, to apply enforced leave conditions on a candidate's enrolment that may include but not be limited to:

- a. restrictions on enrolment; and
- b. withdrawal or restrictions of privileges, such as the use of University facilities.

(92) The Vice-Chancellor is authorised to apply restrictions if a candidate is deemed to require enforced leave, including:

- a. restrictions on enrolment;
- b. suspension from a program;
- c. exclusion from a program or School;
- d. exclusion from any University campus or location;
- e. exclusion from the University.

Section 32 - Limits on Admission and Enrolment

(93) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) is authorised to limit admissions and enrolment to Higher Degree by Research.

(94) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to act, on a case by case basis, where it is considered that approval or denying of a request by a Head of School or Deputy Head of School will be detrimental to the University's financial position, strategic priorities, or compliance obligations.

Section 33 - Fees

(95) Council, in accordance with the [University of Newcastle Act 1989 \(NSW\)](#), is authorised to impose fees, charges and fines and will also set the tuition fee principles and fee limits for Higher Degree by Research.

(96) The Vice-Chancellor is authorised, on behalf of Council, and in accordance with the principles and fee limits set by Council, to:

- a. approve or alter any tuition fees; and

- b. approve or alter any miscellaneous fees and changes.

(97) In respect of tuition fees or miscellaneous fees and charges owed to the University of Newcastle by the candidate authorised officers of the University may under appropriate circumstances, defer, waive, reduce or refund fees and charges, to permit the admission or continued enrolment of a candidate. The fee types and limits are outlined in the University's [Delegations Policy](#).

(98) The Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Academic Registrar is authorised to set the due date for fees and charges.

(99) Candidates must pay any prescribed fees for the program and/or course(s) to the University or its partner organisation by the due date. Failure to pay the fees due by the due date in the relevant term may result in an inability to enrol or cancellation of enrolment.

Section 34 - Candidature - Confirmation and Progression

(100) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to approve procedures to assist progression through a Higher Degree by Research.

(101) In order to progress from provisional to confirmed status, candidates are required to undertake a confirmation process within twelve months of commencement of candidature on a full-time or part-time equivalent basis and shall satisfy the following requirements:

- a. the provision of a written document containing at least:
 - i. a critical review of recent work in the field;
 - ii. an updated research proposal;
 - iii. an updated plan of research;
 - iv. an updated timetable for completion of the thesis; and
 - v. a comprehensive statement of the resources required to complete the project within the funded period;
- b. provide an oral presentation; and
- c. provide a verbal defence of the research proposal before a Confirmation Committee.

(102) The Confirmation Committee will determine an outcome following the completion of the confirmation process. There are three possible outcomes:

- a. candidature is confirmed;
- b. the candidate is required to revise their work and undertake a second attempt at confirmation within three months (FTE); or
- c. a recommendation is made to the Committee for termination of candidature.

(103) A Higher Degree by Research candidate may not undergo a third attempt at confirmation, unless, in exceptional circumstances, an additional attempt at confirmation is approved by the Dean of Graduate Research.

(104) The candidate, the supervisor and the Head of School or Deputy Head of School shall submit progress reports as required.

(105) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised, on the recommendation of the Research Training Sub-Committee to terminate candidature if a candidate fails to complete progress reporting requirements.

(106) In addition to the confirmation process and the progress report(s), the supervisor and the Head of School or Deputy Head of School may submit reports on the candidate's progress to the Dean of Graduate Research at any time.

(107) Following review of the submitted reports on the candidate's progress, where progress is considered to be unsatisfactory, the Dean of Graduate Research or the Research Training Sub-Committee may either place conditions on the continuation of the candidature, or refer the candidate to show cause to the Committee why their candidature should be permitted to continue.

(108) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised, on the recommendation of the Research Training Sub-Committee, to terminate candidature where the progress of the candidate is deemed unsatisfactory by the Committee.

Section 35 - Candidature - Ethics and Safety

(109) Candidates and supervisors must ensure that the research is undertaken in accordance with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and the relevant underlying University of Newcastle policies.

(110) The candidates and supervisor must ensure that any approvals or training required are acquired before the research commences. This will include:

- a. ethics approvals; and
- b. safety clearance.

(111) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised, on the recommendation of the Research Training Sub-Committee to terminate candidature if a candidate fails to meet requirements specified in Clause 109 and 110.

Section 36 - Candidature - Thesis

(112) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to approve procedures relating to thesis requirements ensuring that:

(113) Candidates must be enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research at the University of Newcastle at the time of submission of the thesis.

(114) A thesis submitted for a Higher Degree by Research will meet the requirements of the degree as prescribed in the relevant Schedule.

(115) Candidates enrolled in a JADD or DADD program may be subject to additional or varied conditions regarding the thesis and thesis examination. Additional conditions will be described in the relevant JADD/DADD Agreement under which the candidate has been enrolled.

(116) A thesis will:

- a. unless otherwise approved, be written in English
- b. be accompanied by an abstract of approximately 300 words describing its content;
- c. be presented in the manner prescribed by the Research Training Sub-Committee;
- d. be compliant with copyright provisions and avoid copyright infringement; and
- e. will include a statement of originality and where applicable, statements acknowledging collaboration and authorship. Such statements must be endorsed by the supervisor.

(117) The greater part of the research must be completed subsequent to admission for candidature to the degree,

unless approval is granted by the Dean of Graduate Research for research undertaken at another institution where no other award has been conferred;

(118) A thesis may:

- a. Include publications arising as a consequence of the research undertaken for a thesis. When the candidate includes a co-authored published paper or co-authored scholarly work, or a substantive component of a co-authored published paper or co-authored scholarly work in the body of the thesis, the candidate must include in the thesis a written statement attesting to their contribution to the joint publication. This statement must be signed by the supervisor. A statement is not required when publications are included as an appendix to the thesis.
- b. in the creative and performing arts, consist of two parts, the creative component and the exegesis. The Procedures for a [Research Thesis with a Creative Component](#) set the criteria for the creative component, the exegesis and the relationship between the two parts, and also set out the process for presentation and examination.

(119) A doctoral thesis submitted in the form of a typescript should not normally exceed 100,000 words, excluding appendices, tables and illustrative matter.

(120) A master's thesis submitted in the form of a typescript should not normally exceed 80,000 words, excluding appendices, tables and illustrative matter.

(121) An exegesis forming part of a thesis and accompanying a creative or literary work or series of works should not normally exceed 40,000 words excluding appendices, tables and illustrative matter.

(122) Use of a professional editor is permitted in preparing the thesis for submission. Candidates are required to comply with the [Guidelines for editing research theses](#) as provided by the Institute of Professional Editors and the Australian Council of Graduate Research Inc.

Section 37 - Candidature - Thesis by Publication

(123) A thesis by publication will include:

- a. a full explanatory overview that links the separate papers and places them in the context of an established body of knowledge;
- b. a literature review;
- c. if detailed data and descriptions of methods are not otherwise given within the separate papers, they must be included in the body of the thesis or as appendices to the thesis;

(124) For a thesis by publication:

- a. the separate papers provided under Clause 118 must be published, in press or submitted to scholarly media only, i.e. refereed publications classified by current national standards and refereed conference papers, however at least 50% of these papers must have been published. Papers published up to three years prior to enrolment may be included provided they were published in scholarly media and do not represent more than 50% of the total papers;
- b. publications submitted by the candidate for another degree may only be referred to in the thesis literature review;
- c. the number of papers submitted should demonstrate that the body of work meets the requirements of the degree as outlined in the relevant schedule;

- d. the candidate must be the lead author in at least 50% of the papers written in the time of their formal Higher Degree by Research candidature. Any published paper of which the candidate is a joint author may only be included in the thesis provided the work done by the candidate is clearly identified. The candidate must include in the thesis a written statement from each co-author attesting to the candidate's contribution to a joint publication included as part of the thesis. These statements must be endorsed by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School.
- e. the Head of School or Deputy Head of School may seek the approval of the Dean of Graduate Research to include a paper that is outside the scope of this Policy.

(125) Where a thesis has been examined, and the candidate has been permitted to revise and resubmit the thesis, work published since the original examination may be included as an appendix to the resubmitted thesis.

Section 38 - Submission of Thesis for Examination

(126) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to approve procedures relating to thesis submission including that:

(127) A candidate will provide Graduate Research:

- a. not less than six weeks prior to submission, written notice of intention to submit the thesis for examination; and
- b. the number of copies of the thesis as prescribed in the Schedule, in the format prescribed in the [Thesis Preparation and Submission Guidelines](#) together with a statement signed by the candidate and the supervisor that the thesis complies with Clause 116.

(128) In the case of a JADD or DADD program, candidates will submit their thesis in accordance with the conditions stipulated in the JADD/DADD Agreement.

(129) The supervisor shall provide a report:

- a. advising that the candidate has completed the program under the direction of the supervisor; and
- b. confirming that the thesis is of sufficient merit to warrant examination.

(130) In the event that the supervisor does not provide the report required under Clause 129 within two weeks following submission, or that such a report is unfavourable, a candidate may make a request in writing to the Head of School or Deputy Head of School that the thesis nevertheless be accepted for examination. The Head of School or Deputy Head of School shall seek:

- a. the comments of the supervisor on the thesis;
- b. such other information as the Head of School or Deputy Head of School may require; and
- c. will determine whether or not the thesis will be accepted for examination.

(131) The candidate shall make the required thesis declaration at the time of submission of the thesis as prescribed by the Dean of Graduate Research.

(132) The candidate must have completed any courses or placements required for the degree before the thesis is submitted.

Section 39 - Examination of Thesis

(133) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to approve procedures relating to thesis examination including that:

(134) The Dean of Graduate Research shall appoint the number of examiners as prescribed in the relevant Schedule.

(135) The names of examiners will not be disclosed to the candidate prior to the submission of the thesis, nor released after the examination process is completed unless the examiner(s) specifically approves the release of his/her identity, subject to the provisions of the [Government Information \(Public Access\) Act 2009](#) (GIPA Act).

(136) Only the Dean of Graduate Research, or delegate, may communicate with the examiners regarding the examination process while the thesis is under examination. Breaches of this provision in relation to communication with examiners will be referred to the Research Training Sub-Committee for information and may be interpreted as misconduct and referred to the appropriate authority.

(137) Each examiner will submit an independent, written report on the merits of the thesis which will contain an assessment of the thesis in relation to the stated thesis objectives and as a requirement for a Higher Degree by Research. The report will include one of the following recommendations:

- a. **AWARD** (including typographical amendments): The thesis meets the required standards in terms of the nature and quality of work undertaken, and the degree can be awarded without any further work by the candidate, other than the correction of a small number of typographical, or similar, minor errors in the final copy.
- b. **CORRECTIONS REQUIRED**: The thesis meets the required standards in terms of the nature and quality of work undertaken, and the degree can be awarded without further examination once the candidate has made a number of corrections and clarifications in the thesis, as specified in the examiner's reports. The required corrections are more substantive than typographical and other minor errors and may include additional revisions to literature, method, analysis and discussion, revisions to creative works, additional experiments and/or data analysis, which improve but do not change the outcomes of the research. The corrections are to be done to the satisfaction of the university's Higher Degree Research Committee, and would be normally completed within a period of less than six months.
- c. **REVISE AND RESUBMIT FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION BY THE ORIGINAL EXAMINERS**: The thesis does not currently meet the standard required for the award of the degree, but with further work it is believed that the required standard may be achieved. The required amendments, as specified in the attached report, are substantive and may include new experiments or data collection, additional analyses, revision of the scientific method or any essential work that may alter the conclusions drawn in the thesis. The candidate is required to re-enrol for up to 12 months and carry out this further work. The thesis will then be resubmitted for re-examination. "Revise and Resubmit" can only be recommended once for a given thesis.
- d. **FAIL**: The thesis be classified as failed, without right to resubmit the thesis, on the basis that a significant amount of additional research work and/or major, substantive revision will not raise the thesis to an acceptable standard.

(138) A candidate will be permitted to amend, or revise and resubmit a thesis for examination once only.

(139) The revised thesis must be submitted for examination for the same award as previously examined.

(140) Where a thesis has been examined, and the candidate has been permitted to revise and resubmit the thesis, work published since the original examination may be included as an appendix to the resubmitted thesis.

Section 40 - Examination of Thesis - Committee Recommendations

(141) The Research Training Sub-Committee is authorised to:

- a. consider the reports of examiners, and any other recommendations prescribed in the relevant Schedule; and
- b. may inform itself by seeking the opinion of the supervisor, Head of School or Deputy Head of School or any other person that the Committee deems suitable to provide a professional opinion.

(142) Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, before making any recommendation, the Research Training Sub-Committee may take one or more of the following actions:

- a. appoint an additional examiner;
- b. appoint an arbiter;
- c. invite the examiners to confer with each other and/or with the Committee, with a view to the presentation of a consolidated recommendation;
- d. direct that the candidate undertakes such further examinations or other work either oral, written or practical as the Committee may specify.

(143) In response to the recommendations from the examiners and other information collected under Clause 141 the Research Training Sub-Committee will recommend to the Dean of Graduate Research that:

- a. the candidate be admitted to the degree subject to the submission of the final electronic copy of the thesis as outlined in Clause 137a; or
- b. the candidate be admitted to the degree subject to any condition that the Committee may impose and submission of the final electronic copy of the thesis as outlined in Clause 137b; or
- c. the candidate is permitted to amend, or revise and resubmit the thesis as outlined in Clause 137c and 138-140; or
- d. the candidate is required to undertake further oral, written or practical examinations or other work; or
- e. the candidate is not to be admitted to the degree, and that the candidature be terminated.

Section 41 - Defence of Thesis

(144) Where the Research Training Sub-Committee determines they will make a recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Research that the candidate is not to be admitted to the degree they will invite the candidate to provide an academic defence of the thesis, in oral and/or written form, in response to the reports of the examiner(s), following which the Committee will review their determination, and make their recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Research based on both the examiner(s) reports and the academic defence.

Section 42 - Recommendation of a Masters Degree (Research) following an Unsuccessful Doctoral Degree (Research) Thesis Submission

(145) Where the examination process, including any assessment by an arbiter, leads to a recommendation that a Doctoral Degree (Research) thesis is not of an acceptable standard and candidature is to be terminated under Clause

143e the Research Training Sub-Committee may recommend to the Dean of Graduate Research that a Masters Degree (Research) be considered as an alternative award.

(146) In such cases, the Dean of Graduate Research shall consider the examiners' reports; any arbiter's report; consult with the School and any other appropriately qualified person deemed suitable by the Research Training Sub-Committee to provide a professional opinion. The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to reject or accept the recommendation from the Committee that the thesis is considered for a Masters Degree (Research).

(147) The Dean of Graduate Research may require revisions to be made to the satisfaction of the School prior to the awarding of the Masters Degree (Research), which must be submitted in electronic form within six months of official notification of examination outcome.

Section 43 - Appeals Against Classification of Thesis

(148) A candidate may, within 28 days of the date of the letter of notification of classification, lodge an appeal in writing to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

(149) Appeals will only be permitted on the following grounds:

- a. procedural irregularities in the examination of the thesis or in the conduct of any examination which forms part of the determination of the result. Appellants will be expected to demonstrate that an aspect(s) of the examination process, as determined in this Policy or the approved procedures, was not appropriately followed and that this caused, or was likely to have substantially contributed to, the classification of the thesis; or
- b. documented evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of one or more of the Examiners.

(150) Upon receipt of an appeal, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) shall review all relevant information to determine if a case exists for reconsideration of the candidate's thesis classification. In such cases, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) may resolve that:

- a. the candidate be permitted to resubmit the thesis for examination by a new examiner or examiners. The new examiner/s shall examine the thesis and
- b. submit a written recommendation to the Research Training Sub-Committee under the same provisions as the original examiners; or
- c. the classification of the thesis be confirmed;

Section 44 - Completion of Program

(151) Award of the Degree and Availability of Thesis.

- a. To qualify for admission to the degree a candidate shall have been enrolled and satisfied the requirements prescribed in this Policy and the relevant degree Schedule.
- b. In the case of candidates enrolled in a JADD or DADD program any additional requirements will be specified in the JADD/DADD Agreement.

(152) The Dean of Graduate Research, on the recommendation of the Research Training Sub-Committee, is authorised to terminate a candidate's enrolment or place conditions on continued candidature where the candidate has failed to submit a thesis or the final electronic copy within prescribed time limits.

(153) Any copies of the thesis submitted by the candidate shall become the property of the University. The copies are subject to any confidentiality agreements entered into by the University, the candidate and any sponsoring body of

the research.

(154) The University will retain any soft bound office copies of the submitted thesis until such time as the final electronic copy is submitted to the University's institutional digital repository.

(155) The Dean of Graduate Research, in exceptional circumstances, is authorised to permit the candidate to submit a hard bound copy of the thesis with Graduate Research in place of the electronic copy. The same time requirements apply to the submission of the thesis as per Clause 127a.

(156) Once the final electronic copy has been received, the Dean of Graduate Research and the Vice-Chancellor will approve the award of the degree.

(157) A research candidate is deemed to have qualified for the award of the degree when the Dean of Graduate Research and Vice-Chancellor authorise admission to the degree under delegated authority from Council.

(158) The candidate may make an application to the Dean of Graduate Research to embargo the thesis for a specified period. The Dean of Graduate Research shall consider this application, taking into account advice from the School, and may determine that the thesis will not be made available electronically or in print form without the written consent of the author for a specified period.

(159) Subject to any determination under Clause 158 the library may supply in any medium, a copy of the thesis upon request to any person or library.

Section 45 - Candidature: Coursework Examinations

(160) Where a candidate is required to undertake coursework as part of their program, examinations in courses will be conducted in accordance with the [Course Management and Assessment Manual](#) and any further provisions specified in the relevant Schedule, or the JADD/DADD Agreement of a JADD or DADD program.

Section 46 - Candidature: Cancellation of Admission

(161) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to cancel an applicant's offer where they have failed to accept their offer of admission by the date specified.

Section 47 - Candidature: Termination of Enrolment

(162) The Dean of Graduate Research is authorised to terminate candidature in the following circumstances:

- a. where the candidate has failed to enrol or re-enrol by the date specified; or
- b. where the candidate is absent without leave for a period exceeding six months.

(163) Before terminating candidature under Clause 164, the Dean of Graduate Research will notify the candidate in writing of the grounds for termination and shall give the candidate an opportunity to 'show cause' by making written representation. The Dean of Graduate Research shall take the representation into account before reaching a final decision.

(164) Before terminating candidature under Clause 165, the Dean of Graduate Research will notify the candidate in writing of the grounds for the determination and will give the candidate an opportunity to 'show cause' by making representations in writing and provide an opportunity to address the Research Training Sub-Committee in person. The Committee will take such representations into account before making a recommendation to the Dean of Graduate

Research.

(165) The Dean of Graduate Research, on the recommendation of the Research Training Sub-Committee, is authorised to terminate candidature or place conditions on continued candidature in the any of the following circumstances:

- a. where the candidate has not met the conditions stated in the offer of admission;
- b. not complying with the rules, policies and by-laws of the University of Newcastle;
- c. failing to pay fees and charges payable to the University or partner institution;
- d. failing to complete the University's HDR induction session and any mandatory training requirements in the time frames prescribed by the Dean of Graduate Research;
- e. failing to undertake confirmation in the time frame prescribed;
- f. failing to pass confirmation;
- g. where the progress of the candidate is deemed unsatisfactory by the Committee;
- h. failing to submit progress reports;
- i. failing to obtain any approvals required by the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) or the appropriate University Ethics and Safety Committees;
- j. where the candidate has failed to submit a thesis within prescribed time limits, including extensions of enrolment;
- k. where the candidate has failed to submit the final electronic copy within prescribed time limits,
- l. international candidates studying in Australia, who have not completed in the maximum time as stated on their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) and do not have an approved extension due to compassionate or compelling circumstance or have not participated in a documented intervention strategy, may not be permitted to continue their studies, as the University reserves the right to refuse a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) extension application;
- m. where the candidate has failed to comply with reasonable direction of the supervisors, Dean of Graduate Research or the Committee including failure to participate in an intervention strategy;
- n. where the candidate is no longer able to undertake the agreed research project for reasons such as, but not limited to:
 - i. the candidate is unable to be supervised by appropriate supervisors and alternatives cannot be found after reasonable efforts by the relevant officers;
 - ii. the project is no longer viable and an appropriate alternative cannot be found.
- o. exceeding the maximum time for obtaining an award.

(166) Where a recommendation that candidature be terminated is accepted by the Dean of Graduate Research, the candidate shall be notified in writing.

(167) The [Student Conduct Rule](#) applies when allegations of research misconduct or non-academic misconduct are made.

Section 48 - Candidature: Right of Appeal

(168) A candidate whose candidature has been terminated by the Dean of Graduate Research may appeal against the decision in writing, within 20 working days of the date of the letter of notification of termination of candidature.

(169) Appeals will be permitted on procedural grounds only. The following are not matters that form the basis of an appeal:

- a. rejecting an assessment of the merit of their work will not be permitted;

- b. inadequacy of supervision;
- c. other arrangements during the period of study.

(170) Issues identified under Clause 169 will be resolved under the University's [complaints resolution procedures](#).

(171) If the candidate was unable to make representations due to exceptional circumstances, the candidate may appeal for reconsideration of the decision within 20 working days of advising the Dean of Graduate Research of the nature of the exceptional circumstances.

(172) Upon receipt of an appeal, the Dean of Graduate Research shall convey the submissions of the candidate to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) who shall determine if a case exists for reconsideration of the candidate's termination of candidature. If it is determined that a case does exist, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) is authorised to advise the School and the Dean of Graduate Research to allow the candidate to re-enrol and resume candidature under whatsoever conditions the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) determines.

(173) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) is authorised, on the recommendation of the Head of School or Deputy Head of School and in consultation with the Dean of Graduate Research, to re-admit a former candidate whose enrolment was previously terminated. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) may prescribe whatsoever terms and conditions on the candidate's re-admission.

Section 49 - Relaxing Provision

(174) To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any particular case, the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, on the recommendation of the President of Academic Senate and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), may relax any provision of this Policy.

Section 50 - Schedules

(175) [Doctoral Degree \(Research\) in Clinical Psychology - Awards and Programs Schedule](#).

(176) [Doctor of Philosophy in Health Psychology Schedule](#).

(177) [Doctoral Degree \(Research\) Awards and Programs Schedule](#).

(178) [Masters Degree \(Research\) Awards and Programs Schedule](#).

Status and Details

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| Enquiries Contact | Kylie Shaw Dean of Graduate Research <hr/> Graduate Research |

Glossary Terms and Definitions

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

"Working day" - Any day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a public holiday in Newcastle, on which business may be conducted.

"Academic year" - The period 1 January to 31 December in a given year.

"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.

"Assumed knowledge" - The knowledge base upon which a course builds and which is deemed necessary at the commencement of that course to succeed in that course.

"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.

"Campus" - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

"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.

"Census date" - The date in each term on which a student / candidate enrolled in a course is deemed to be financially liable for the course.

"Confirmation Committee" - A panel convened by the School of the Higher Degree by Research (HDR) program in which the candidate is enrolled, for the purpose of confirmation of candidature.

"Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)" - Means the document issued through the Australian Government's relevant department and associated systems, by authorised officers of the University that confirms that an international student is eligible to enrol in a course. The CoE is required under Commonwealth Legislation for the student visa.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Non-academic misconduct" - Means conduct by a student that is defined as non-academic misconduct in the Student Conduct Rule.

"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.

"Volume of learning" - Identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes specified for a particular AQF qualification type. It is expressed in equivalent full-time years.

"Concurrent enrolment" - Enrolment in two programs at the same time.

"Discontinuation" - When used in relation to a program, this refers to a program for which no new intakes are to be accepted. For all other uses the generic definition applies.

"Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD)" - Is an arrangement whereby a doctoral degree candidate is jointly supervised by the University and another institution, is enrolled at both institutions, and receives two testamurs, each acknowledging the dual award. Each DADD candidature is governed by an individual Candidate Agreement.

"Due date" - The date specified in the course outline when an assessment item is to be submitted for marking or another date that may be set by the Course Coordinator.

"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.

"Officer" - Has the meaning given in the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth), or any replacing legislation.

"Postgraduate" - Any qualification being at the level of Graduate Certificate or above.

"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.

"Research misconduct" - A serious breach of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research that is intentional, reckless or negligent.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Term" - When referring to an academic period, term means a period of time aligned to an academic year for the delivery of a course in which students enrol and for which they are usually charged fees for example semesters, trimesters, summer, winter or full-year term. The academic year for a term is determined by the academic year in which the course commences, not concludes. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Testamur" - A ceremonial document presented to a graduate upon the successful completion of their program.

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