

# Professional Doctorates Policy

Application of Policy

(1) This Policy shall apply to the postgraduate coursework programs leading to professional doctorate awards of the University.

## Section 1 - Interpretation

(2) In this Policy, unless the context or subject matter otherwise indicates or requires:-

(3) Pro Vice-Chancellor means the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the College responsible for the program.

## Section 2 - Program Requirements

(4) The coursework professional doctorate is a postgraduate coursework award of not less than 240 units consisting of:-

- a. postgraduate level courses;
- b. a research component including:
  - i. one or more research related courses; and
  - ii. A supervised research project (or projects); and (in some cases)
- c. practicum/clinical experience/placement.

(5) The program must contain a research component representing the equivalent of not fewer than 80 units. A pass in the thesis will be a requirement of the award.

(6) A candidate must fulfil those requirements of a program which were in force at the time he or she first enrolled in that program except where a candidate has taken a break in studies of one year or more (Leave of Absence or unapproved leave). The program requirements which will then apply are those operating at the time of recommencement or readmission.

## Section 3 - Courses

(7) Only courses approved by the College Board as courses suitable for a Doctoral Degree (Professional) program may be offered in that program.

(8) The College Board will allot each course a unit value.

(9) Except in exceptional circumstances, the CAL for the University, and specific programs, will be finalised before the commencement of the re-enrolment process in any year. The President Academic Senate has delegated authority to approve changes to the CAL which are proposed after the commencement of the re-enrolment period.

(10) Where there is any change in the CAL or the PAL, the College Board must make all reasonable provision to permit

candidates already enrolled to complete the award or one deemed equivalent. Such alternative arrangements must not disadvantage candidates in terms of completion times.

(11) To complete a course successfully, a candidate must satisfy any published requirements, and gain a satisfactory result in the assessment items approved for the course by the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the College responsible for the program.

## **Section 4 - Admission**

(12) Admission to a Doctoral Degree (Professional) program shall be on such terms as may be prescribed in the relevant Schedule and on such additional terms as may be prescribed by the College Board.

(13) In normal circumstances this would require:

- a. successful completion of an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in the field of the proposed professional doctorate or a cognate area; and
- b. relevant professional experience in the field of the proposed professional doctorate or a cognate area.

(14) In exceptional cases, where these criteria are not met, the candidate will be required to complete a lower qualification within the nested series of awards prior to enrolling the Doctoral Degree (Professional).

## **Section 5 - Enrolment**

(15) An applicant may enrol in the University only if the applicant:

- a. has satisfied the requirements for admission;
- b. has been offered a place in a program of study in accordance with the selection criteria and approved procedures; and
- c. has completed the enrolment procedure prescribed by the University or its partner organisation.

(16) A candidate who undertakes courses with a load of 30 units or greater in a term is deemed to be a full-time candidate (see Note 1). A candidate who undertakes courses with a load of less than 30 units in a term is deemed a part-time candidate.

(17) Unless otherwise approved by Academic Senate, the maximum full time load imposed by a program, and the standard full-time load, shall be 40 units in a semester and trimester and 10 units in a Summer Term.

(18) A candidate may choose to take up to 50 units a semester without approval unless they are bound by the provisions of the Procedures for Review of Progress.

(19) A candidate who wishes to undertake more than 50 units in any semester, more than 40 units a trimester, or more than 10 units in a Summer School, must obtain permission from the Pro Vice-Chancellor.

(20) A candidate must only enrol in courses that conform to the requirements of their program as prescribed by Academic Senate.

(21) A candidate will not be permitted to count towards an award any course that is substantially equivalent to one that the candidate has previously counted towards the same award.

## Section 6 - Fees

(22) Candidates must pay any prescribed fees for the program by the due date to the University or its partner organisation. Failure to pay the fees due by the due date in the relevant term may result in cancellation of enrolment for that term.

## Section 7 - Assumed Knowledge

(23) For progression purposes, a College Board may prescribe assumed knowledge for any course: for example, a level of achievement in a specified course or courses desirable for successful study in another course.

(24) Ignorance of the assumed knowledge requirements for a course cannot be the basis of an application under the Procedures for Addressing [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items](#) or for an appeal under the Procedures for [Appeal Against a Final Result](#).

(25) Only eligible candidates may enrol in or gain credit for any course that has a course requisite attached to it by Academic Senate.

## Section 8 - Credit

(26) A candidate may be granted credit by the Pro Vice-Chancellor in specified and/or unspecified courses of a program leading to an academic award of the University in recognition of prior learning.

(27) Credit may be granted for:-

- a. no more than 120 units for courses that have been completed:
  - i. towards a postgraduate award (whether completed or not) from another institution; or
  - ii. towards a completed postgraduate award at the University of Newcastle that is not nested with the proposed program of study; or
- b. any relevant courses completed at the University of Newcastle not already counted towards a completed postgraduate award; or
- c. any relevant courses undertaken by a student of the University of Newcastle who has taken out a lower postgraduate award nested with the Doctoral Degree (Professional).

(28) The granting of such credit will be on such conditions as the Pro Vice-Chancellor or College Board may determine.

(29) A candidate will not be granted credit for undergraduate level courses. A candidate may be granted credit for Honours Program courses at 4000 level at the discretion of the Pro Vice-Chancellor in accordance with provisions set down by College Board.

## Section 9 - Change of Enrolment

### Withdrawal from Course(s)

(30) A candidate may give notice in writing to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice President of withdrawal from a course, on or before the prescribed date. The withdrawal shall take effect from the date of receipt by the University of such notice.

(31) A candidate who withdraws from a course after the prescribed date for the course will incur an academic penalty.

(32) A candidate who withdraws from a course after the census date for the term will incur financial liability for the course.

(33) In courses which contain a placement the Head of School or Deputy Head of School may set a date, different from the University's prescribed 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. That date and its significance must be clearly specified in the Course Outline for the course.

### **Adding Course(s)**

(34) A candidate may not add a course or change from one course to another after the beginning of the third week of term, except that, in exceptional circumstances, a candidate may apply in writing to the Head of School or Deputy Head of School offering the course for permission to add a course after the end of the second week of the commencement of a term, but before the relevant prescribed date.

## **Section 10 - Interruption of Studies**

### **Leave of Absence**

(35) A candidate shall give notice in writing to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice President of intention to suspend studies and at the same time seek Leave of Absence from the program of up to one calendar year no later than the prescribed date of the first teaching period for which leave is being sought.

(36) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice President shall seek advice from the Pro Vice-Chancellor before granting Leave of Absence.

(37) Leave of Absence shall not normally be granted to candidates who have not completed the requirements for at least ten (10) units of study in their program.

### **Return from Approved Leave of Absence**

(38) Failure to enrol as directed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice President following a period of approved leave of absence, will result in enrolment in the program being cancelled.

(39) A person returning from approved Leave of Absence of twelve months or more will be re-enrolled in the program subject to the program requirements applying at the time of re-enrolment.

### **Re-admission**

(40) A person who is absent without leave from a program may apply for re-admission to the program. If successful, the applicant will be re-admitted to the same or an equivalent program under the program requirements operating at the time of re-admission.

## **Section 11 - Progress**

(41) Candidates undertaking the Doctoral Degree (Professional) award will be subject to the Procedures for Review of Progress. Candidates may be subject to exclusion under these procedures.

(42) Once a candidate commences the research component of the program, the progress of the candidate will be monitored according to guidelines provided by the Research Training Sub-Committee, a sub-committee of the Research Committee (hereafter referred to as 'the Committee').

## Section 12 - Research Component

(43) The research component of the degree shall consist of one or more research related courses and one or more research projects leading to a thesis, as determined by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for the purposes of the program.

(44) No research project may be undertaken until the research related courses have been successfully completed.

(45) The thesis shall have a total unit value of not less than 60 units but may cover one or more individual research projects. One project is to have a minimum 40 unit value.

(46) The work for the project (or projects) and the preparation of the thesis shall be carried out under the direction of a supervisor or supervisors appointed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor on the recommendation of the Head of School or Deputy Head of School.

(47) The topic of a project (or projects) and the resulting thesis shall be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor on the recommendation of the Head of School or Deputy Head of School in which the candidate is carrying out the research for the project(s).

(48) A thesis submitted for a degree shall embody the result of a project (or projects), investigation, design or other research undertaken by the candidate, and shall:-

- a. be written in English;
- b. be accompanied by an abstract of approximately 300 words describing its content;
- c. be typed, bound or presented in the manner prescribed by the Committee;
- d. consist of a candidate's own account of the research undertaken by the candidate, the greater part of which must have been completed subsequent to admission to candidature for the degree. Work done jointly with other persons may be accepted provided the Pro Vice-Chancellor is satisfied on the candidate's part in the joint research;
- e. not contain as its main content any work or material which has previously been submitted for a University degree or other similar qualification unless the Committee otherwise permits; and
- f. unless stated otherwise in a pre-existing (prior to 2007) contract or memorandum of Understanding undertaken by the University, be completed and submitted at the conclusion of the units assigned to the thesis, with a maximum of one calendar year at a full-time load from the commencement of the thesis, or part time equivalent. Candidates failing to complete and submit within this timeframe (except under the provisions of the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy](#)) must enrol in a 20 unit thesis extension course in the following term. The Committee must be kept informed of any variations in this timeline and be supplied with reports on progress towards completion and submission.

## Section 13 - Inability to Complete Research Component

(49) A candidate who is unable to complete the requirements of the research component of the program but who has completed all the requirements of the coursework component may, at the discretion of the Pro Vice-Chancellor and in accordance with any provisions set down by College Board, be granted credit towards another award of the University according to the Rules Governing Postgraduate Coursework Awards.

## Section 14 - Submission of the Thesis

(50) A candidate should normally have completed all other courses required for the degree before the thesis is submitted.

(51) Guidelines for the submission of the thesis shall be determined from time to time by the Committee.

(52) Such guidelines shall include:-

- a. a timeline for a written notice of intention to submit the thesis for examination;
- b. the number and nature of copies to be provided;
- c. the requirement for any certification of compliance;
- d. whether any supplementary documents or work published by the candidate bearing on the subject of the thesis or project(s) will be allowed;
- e. instructions to the supervisor on providing reports or advice on completion of the program in the University and confirming that the thesis is of sufficient merit to warrant examination;
- f. procedures to be followed by the Committee and the options open to the candidate in the event that the supervisor does not provide the report required under sub-clause e (above) within two weeks following submission, or that such report is unfavourable; and
- g. an outline of the retention and access conditions to be placed on the thesis.

## Section 15 - Examination of the Thesis

(53) Guidelines for the examination of the thesis and the constituent project (or projects) shall be determined from time to time by the Committee.

(54) The Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) shall appoint two examiners and one reserve, none of whom shall normally be a member of the staff of the University. The supervisor shall not be an examiner but the supervisor's advice may be sought by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) on suitable examiners.

(55) Each examiner shall submit an independent, written report on the merits of the thesis which shall contain an assessment of the thesis in relation to the stated thesis objectives. The report shall include one of the following recommendations:-

- a. Award: the thesis be classified as passed. The examiner may specify this category for a thesis that does not require any amendments. The Committee will require that the candidate finalise their thesis within one month of official notification of the examination outcome or;
- b. Require - minor corrections: the thesis be classified as passed conditionally, subject to minor corrections, as outlined in the Examiner's report, being made to the satisfaction of the supervisor, within 6 weeks of official notification of the examination outcome. The examiner may specify this category for a thesis which requires correction of errors of presentation and minor deficiencies but which are not of sufficient importance to warrant major corrections; or
- c. Require - major corrections: the thesis be classified as passed conditionally, subject to corrections, as outlined in the Examiner's Report, being made to the satisfaction of the School as specified by the Committee, within eight weeks of official notification of the examination outcome. The examiner may specify this category for a thesis which requires correction of deficiencies other than errors of presentation, but which are not of sufficient importance to warrant submission for re-examination by the original examiner; or
- d. Revise and resubmit: the thesis be submitted in a revised form for re-examination by the original examiners, where appropriate. The examiner may specify this category for a thesis which requires major, substantive

amendment and submission for re-examination. In the Examiner's Report, the examiner shall provide detailed guidance to the candidate to assist revision and the thesis must be resubmitted together with a statement by the candidate outlining the revisions that have been made. Clause 60 details further requirements for candidates required to revise and resubmit; or

- e. 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.

(56) The Committee shall consider the reports of the examiners, any other recommendations prescribed in the Schedule or in the guidelines and advice from the supervisor and/or Head of School or Deputy Head of School and shall either:-

- a. recommend to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) that the candidate be awarded a pass grade in the thesis subject to any condition that the Committee may impose; or
- b. permit the candidate to amend and resubmit the thesis; or
- c. require the candidate to undertake further oral, written or practical examinations; or
- d. invite the candidate to provide an academic defence of the thesis, in oral or written form, in response to the reports of the examiner(s); or
- e. recommend to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) that the candidate be given a fail grade and that the candidature be terminated.

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

- a. seek advice from the supervisor and/or Head of School or Deputy Head of School;
- b. appoint an additional examiner;
- c. appoint an arbiter;
- d. invite the examiners to confer with each other and/or with the Committee, with a view to the presentation of a consolidated recommendation;
- e. direct that the candidate undertake such further examinations either oral, written or practical as the Committee may specify.

(58) A candidate will be permitted to amend and resubmit a thesis for examination once only.

(59) A candidate permitted to revise and resubmit a thesis must enrol in an extra 20 unit course in the next term from the date on which the candidate is advised of the result of the first examination and submit the revised thesis within that period, otherwise the candidature shall terminate.

## **Section 16 - Relaxing Provision**

(60) To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any particular case, the Academic Senate on the recommendation of the Pro Vice-Chancellor may relax any provision of this Policy.

Note 1: other authorities may specify another minimum for full-time study - this is the University's requirement.

## **Section 17 - Schedules**

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





## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	29th November 2022
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<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Kylie Shaw Dean of Graduate Research
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## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Nested Series of Awards"** - A linked series of postgraduate coursework programs within the same discipline area, which progress from a lower to a higher qualification e.g. from a graduate certificate, to a graduate diploma, to a masters, to a masters honours or to a professional doctorate.

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

**"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.

**"Assessment item"** - Any form of work used to measure student learning outcomes and to determine the final result for a student in a 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.

**"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.

**"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.

**"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.

**"Student"** - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

**"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.

**"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.

**"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.

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

**"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.

**"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.

**"Undergraduate"** - Refers to any qualification up to and including the level of a Bachelor Honours degree.

**"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.