

Graduate Research Training Policy (MPF1321)

1. Objective

The objectives of this policy are to:

- (a) provide the framework to ensure academic standards and integrity in the University's research training;
- (b) set clear responsibilities and accountabilities for decisions affecting graduate research candidates; and
- (c) ensure that the University's graduate research training processes are transparent and that decisions affecting graduate research candidates are consistent and fair.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all:

- (a) graduate research courses;
- (b) graduate research candidates;
- (c) University staff responsible for graduate research courses and candidates; and
- (d) persons external to the University appointed as a supervisor or examiner.

3. Authority

This policy is made under the [University of Melbourne Act 2009 \(Vic\)](#) and the [Academic Board Regulation](#) and supports compliance with the:

- (a) *Higher Education Support Act 2003*;
- (b) Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF);
- (c) Higher Education Standards Framework;
- (d) *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*;
- (e) National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007;
- (f) *Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011*;
- (g) *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012*; and
- (h) The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

4. Policy

Course duration

4.1. The course duration for research courses are set out in the [Courses, Subjects, Awards and Programs Policy](#); this includes the requirement to ensure that projects are achievable within the relevant expected course duration.

Deferral of candidature

4.2 Applicants may apply to defer their commencement in their course prior to enrolment.

4.3 The maximum period of deferral is 12 months; a lesser period may be granted.

4.4 Deferral is not automatically granted and the dean is not obliged to grant deferral.

4.5 When making decisions on requests to defer, factors that the dean considers include:

- (a) restrictions or conditions applying to any scholarship held by or offered to the candidate;
- (b) course specific criteria as documented in the course accreditation instrument;
- (c) regulatory requirements; and
- (d) the capacity to provide supervision, and the availability of facilities and resources as described in the [Principles for Infrastructure Support for Graduate Research Students](#) for the normal duration of the course.

Transfers of candidature

4.6 A candidate who wants to transfer to the University from another institution must apply in accordance with the [Selection and Admission Policy](#).

4.7 A candidate of the University who wants to transfer to another graduate research course at the University must:

- (a) meet the eligibility requirements of the course to which they wish to transfer; and
- (b) satisfy their supervisors and the dean of their ability to complete the course in a timely manner.

4.8 A dean may admit a student directly into confirmed candidature if they successfully completed the confirmation requirements in a graduate research course at the same or higher AQF level:

- (a) at another Australian institution; or
- (b) at the University.

4.9 A candidate who holds or has held a Research Training Program (RTP) Fee Offset scholarship has any consumed candidature time deducted from their enrolment entitlement for the course of study, as required by the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#) (Cth) and Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2017.

4.10 Candidature time undertaken at the other institution may be deducted from the course duration.

4.11 International candidates transferring from another Australian institution have the candidature time already used deducted from their entitlement.

Candidates at outside institutions

4.12 Candidates may be located at an approved outside institution for the duration of the candidature provided that:

- (a) supervision provided at the institution meets the supervision requirements of this policy;
- (b) the candidate attends the University to take part in seminars or activities required by the enrolling department; and,
- (c) the candidate meets all progress review requirements for their course.

4.13 In exceptional circumstances, a dean may apply to the Research Higher Degrees Committee (RHDC) to place a candidate at an institution which is not an approved institution. Approval may be given where:

- (a) the conditions listed in section 4.12 are met;
- (b) the institution meets the criteria listed in section 5.2 (a-d); and
- (c) the application is endorsed by the dean of the relevant faculty.

4.14 Candidates who wish to complete part of their research project at another institution must apply to study away in accordance with this policy and the [Student Travel and Transport Policy](#).

Supervisors

4.15 All candidates must have at least two supervisors for candidates who commence after 1 January 2017.

4.16 Where a candidate has more than one supervisor, one supervisor must be designated as the principal supervisor. The principal supervisor-

- (a) must be a member of the academic department of the candidate unless otherwise approved by the relevant dean;
- (b) has administrative responsibility for the candidate; and
- (c) must be a registered supervisor.

4.17 All supervisors must have theoretical and methodological expertise relevant to the candidate's research project.

4.18 Co-supervisors have a more specific or secondary role in the supervision of a candidate's research.

4.19 A supervisor who is not a University staff member or an honorary appointee may be appointed as an external supervisor. External supervisors must agree to take direction in respect of supervision from the candidate's dean.

4.20 A person must not be appointed nor remain as a supervisor of a candidate if that appointment, or its continuation, could reasonably be expected to give rise to a real or perceived conflict of interest that could affect in any way the progress or standing of a candidate.

4.21 A full-time candidate in a graduate research course at the University may not:

- (a) supervise another candidate at either the University of Melbourne or any other institution or
- (b) be a member of the advisory committee of another candidate at either the University of Melbourne or any other institution.

4.22 A part-time candidate in a University graduate research course who meets the supervision requirements may supervise candidates in a course at a lower AQF level, with the permission of the relevant dean.

Advisory committee

4.23 The dean must establish an advisory committee for every candidate on enrolment.

4.24 The advisory committee must:

- (a) remain in place from enrolment to submission of the thesis, excluding periods the candidate is on leave of absence or lapsed (for those candidates where the candidate has been granted permission for a late submission); and
- (b) be comprised of at least three people including the advisory committee chair and the candidate's supervisors. Other members can include academic staff, honorary appointees or external members.

4.25 The advisory committee must:

- (a) ensure the research project is appropriate to the course, can be completed within the time-frame available, is appropriately resourced, and complies with all relevant legislation, policies and processes;
- (b) in accordance with this policy for confirmation, recommend whether the candidate may continue to pursue the course in which they are enrolled;
- (c) monitor the candidate's academic progress;
- (d) recommend an extension to candidature if it is deemed necessary;
- (e) convene, attend and report on the candidate's completion seminar in accordance with the completion seminar guidelines;
- (f) mentor the student on matters pertaining to the research project;
- (g) mentor the student to develop the graduate attributes as described in the University [Handbook](#); and
- (h) individually counsel the candidate on matters the candidate may wish to raise in confidence.

4.26 The advisory committee chair must be:

- (a) an academic staff member of the candidate's department;

(b) a person registered as a principal supervisor but not the candidate's supervisor or a person associated with the research project; and

(c) appointed by the candidate's head of the department.

4.27 The advisory committee chair must:

(a) ensure the committee fulfils its responsibilities;

(b) advise and support the candidate and their supervisors; and

(c) convene meetings of the advisory committee.

Full or part-time study and course duration

4.28 Candidates may apply to study full or part-time. When making decisions on applications to study full or part-time, factors that the dean considers include:

(a) expected course duration;

(b) scholarship requirements;

(c) course requirements;

(d) regulatory requirements; and

(e) academic progress.

4.29 International candidates holding student visas are required to complete their course within the duration specified in the offer letter except in limited circumstances.

4.30 Onshore international candidates holding student visas may take less than a standard full-time load only if they have approval from the University, and one or both of the following apply:

(a) they have compassionate or compelling circumstances; and/or

(b) an intervention strategy has been activated under the academic progress requirements.

4.31 Full-time candidates are admitted for the usual course duration specified in the [Handbook](#).

4.32 Part-time candidates are admitted for twice the usual course duration specified in the [Handbook](#), on a pro-rata basis.

4.33 The University may impose a fee on candidates for an extension of candidature beyond the maximum RTS entitlement.

4.34 Candidates must make themselves aware of the expiration dates of any scholarships or sponsorships they hold.

4.35 Candidates must complete the minimum period of candidature and meet the examination requirements of this policy to be eligible to submit their thesis or its creative equivalent for examination.

Probationary candidature

4.36 All candidates are admitted on a probationary basis.

4.37 The probationary periods are:

- (a) for a full-time Master Degree (Research) candidate - a minimum of three months and maximum of six months;
- (b) for a full-time Doctoral Degree (Research) candidate - a minimum of six months and maximum of 12 months;
- (c) for part-time candidates - twice that for a full-time candidate in the relevant course type; or
- (d) for Doctoral Degree (Research) candidates who are required to complete 75 credit points or more of coursework subjects prior to confirmation - a maximum of 18 months.

4.38 In exceptional circumstances a dean may grant one extension to the probationary period, as follows:

- (a) full-time Master Degree (Research) candidates - six weeks; or
- (b) full-time Doctoral Degree (Research) candidates - three months; or
- (c) part-time candidates, twice that for a full-time candidate in the relevant course type.

4.39 Candidates must successfully complete the confirmation requirements for their course by the expiration of the probationary period, or any approved extension to the probationary period, to be admitted to confirmed candidature.

4.40 Candidates who do not complete the confirmation requirements are making unsatisfactory progress and are subject to the unsatisfactory progress rules of this policy.

Maintaining satisfactory academic progress

4.41 Candidates are required to:

- (a) make satisfactory progress towards the timely completion of their course; and
- (b) understand the progress expectations for their course as discussed and confirmed with their supervisors and advisory committee.

4.42 Candidates' supervisors and advisory committees must monitor and report on candidates' academic progress and in particular must:

- (a) understand the progress expectations for the candidate's course;
- (b) discuss, confirm and record a progress plan at commencement;
- (c) alert the candidate to the satisfactory progress expectations;
- (d) monitor the candidate's progress and assess whether satisfactory progress is being made; and

(e) formally review the candidate's progress at progress reviews and record the outcome in a prescribed progress review form; and

(f) implement remedial measures to assist the candidate if the candidate is considered at risk of making unsatisfactory academic progress.

4.43 Supervisors must meet with the candidate to discuss their progress at least every six months and keep a record of the discussions if it is not recorded in a prescribed progress review form.

Candidature conditions

4.44 Candidates must:

(a) access enrolment information;

(b) ensure their enrolment meets course requirements and is consistent with approved course structures;

(c) ensure their enrolment meets scholarship and/or sponsorship requirements; and

(d) enrol in and register for coursework subjects as required.

4.45 Candidates and their supervisors must confirm:

(a) supervisory expectations and arrangements; and

(b) a schedule of supervisory meetings.

4.46 To maintain candidature, candidates must:

(a) maintain satisfactory progress;

(b) complete all prescribed progress review requirements; and

(c) agree to the University's terms and conditions of enrolment each year.

4.47 The relevant dean may suspend, vary the terms of, or terminate a candidate's candidature for failure to comply with the:

(a) statutes, regulations, policies and processes of the University;

(b) lawful instructions of officers of the University; or

(c) conditions of admission, enrolment or examination in their course.

4.48 A dean may impose a range of conditions on candidates including:

(a) required levels of achievement and milestones;

(b) engagement with support services; and/or

(c) expected behaviour.

Additional coursework

4.49 Candidates may undertake additional coursework subjects to assist in the completion of their course:

- (a) with their supervisors' and the subject co-ordinator's approval; and
- (b) where undertaking the subjects will not cause a candidate to exceed the maximum coursework allowed, that is one-third of the usual course duration.

Leave

4.50 Periods of leave may be granted in accordance with the [Enrolment and Timetabling Policy](#), but must not conflict with the candidature entitlement period, the expected course duration for the relevant course, the maximum submission date for examination, or any relevant scholarship requirements.

Study away from the University

4.51 Candidates who spend a period of time away from the University on research-related activities must comply with all relevant legislation, this policy and the [Student Travel and Transport Policy](#).

4.52 Time spent studying away from the University is counted towards the candidature entitlement period.

4.53 Candidates who are studying away must meet all candidature related requirements including progress reviews and submission deadlines.

4.54 The dean must assign an external supervisor located near the candidate for periods of study away of three months or more. Where that is not possible the candidate and their supervisors must maintain sufficient contact to support the candidate.

Other variations to candidature

4.55 Candidates may apply to vary a condition of their candidature after commencement in their course, including:

- (a) change between full and part-time enrolment;
- (b) change supervisor
- (c) change of department
- (d) convert from one graduate research course to another; or
- (e) change of research project.

4.56 The candidate or their supervisor(s) may request a change in supervisory arrangements at any time. Any changes must be approved by the head(s) of department(s) of the candidate and the supervisor(s).

4.57 If the dean of the candidate forms the view that the supervisory arrangements are unsatisfactory they may, at any time, assign new or additional supervisor(s) in consultation with the candidate. For avoidance of doubt, consultation does not mean the candidate's approval is required.

4.58 When making decisions on any variation to candidature applications, factors that the dean considers include:

- (a) course specific requirements;
- (b) academic progress to date;
- (c) supervisor availability
- (d) the candidate's prospects of success and capacity to complete in a timely manner;
- (e) scholarship requirements;
- (f) funding for any program of research;
- (g) University resources and capacity;
- (h) regulatory requirements; and/or
- (i) compassionate or compelling circumstances.

4.59 The dean does not have to approve requested changes.

Lapsed candidature

4.60 Lapsed candidature is only available to candidates who reach their maximum course duration (exhaust their maximum RTP entitlement) before 1 January 2018.

4.61 Lapsed candidature is a status intended to allow candidates to submit their thesis for examination following the expiration of their candidature entitlement and any approved extensions.

4.62 Lapsed candidature may be granted:

- (a) for masters candidate up to one calendar year; or
- (b) for doctoral candidates up to two calendar years.

Withdrawal from course

4.61 A candidate may permanently withdraw from their course at any time in accordance with the [Enrolment and Timetabling Policy](#) but not after they have:

- (a) submitted a thesis or its creative equivalent for examination; or
- (b) had their candidature terminated for unsatisfactory progress; or
- (c) had their candidature terminated for misconduct; or

(d) had their candidature terminated for failure to submit for examination by the maximum submission date; or

(e) while excluded from the University for health reasons.

Theses

4.64 The thesis must address a significant research question and be primarily the candidate's own work. For candidates enrolled in a time-based course, the work must be conducted substantially during the period of candidature.

4.65 If approved by the dean or the advisory committee, the thesis may include a component of creative works including a performance, musical composition, exhibition, writing (poetry, fiction, script or other written literary forms), design, film, video, multimedia or other new media technologies and modes of presentation.

4.66 If the thesis contains a performance or exhibition, a durable record of the performance or exhibition must be provided.

4.67 A thesis presented in fulfilment of the Doctor of Philosophy or Master of Philosophy may include published material in place of one or more results chapters in the thesis. A thesis presented in fulfilment of another Doctoral Degree (Research) or Masters Degree (Research) may include published material in place of one or more results chapters in the thesis at the discretion of the dean. Published material may only be used to form a thesis chapter if:

- (a) the candidate's advisory committee has given its approval for the inclusion of the material;
- (b) it is placed in context with the research topic of the thesis and pertains directly to the thesis topic;
- (c) it is a primary publication that reports on original research conducted by the student during their candidature;
- (d) it was accepted into a peer-reviewed journal, proceedings or book prior to submission of the thesis;
- (e) the candidate was primarily responsible for the planning, execution and preparation of the work for publication;
- (f) the candidate wrote the first draft of the publication and contributed more than 50% of the content of the publication;
- (g) the candidate performed subsequent editing of the publication in response to co-authors' and editors' review;
- (h) the candidate's co-authors provide their consent for the publication to be included in the thesis and declare that the work meets the requirements in sections (e), (f) and (g) above; and
- (i) it is not subject to any obligations or contractual agreements with a third party that constrain its inclusion in the thesis.

4.68 The text of a review written predominantly by the candidate may be included within the candidate's thesis, subject to inclusion of analysis of any relevant papers published between the time of

publication of the review and the submission of the thesis, and declaration of any contributions made by any coauthors of the review.

4.69 The thesis must be submitted in accordance with the requirements approved by the Board and set out on the Graduate Research Hub.

Language of the thesis

4.70 The thesis must be written in English unless approval to submit in another language has been granted by the chair of RHDC on commencement.

4.71 A thesis written in a language other than English must contain an English language summary of the thesis including an introduction, chapter outline and conclusion. The length of the English language summary should be 5000 – 10 000 words for a Doctoral Degree (Research) thesis; or 2500 – 5000 words for a Master Degree (Research) thesis.

4.72 The language of a thesis for a jointly awarded PhD program must be written in a language of a country of the awarding institutions and the language of the thesis must be agreed on commencement of the degree.

4.73 Where the language of the countries of the awarding institutions is different, the thesis must include a summary of 5000 – 10 000 words comprised of an introduction, brief chapter outline and conclusion in the language of the partner institution.

Thesis word limits

4.74 The thesis should not exceed the word limit stipulated for the course in the [Handbook](#). If a word limit is not specified the maximum word limits below apply. Word limits include footnotes but exclude tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices:

- (a) Masters Degree (Research): 50 000 words; or
- (b) Doctoral Degree (Research): 100 000 words.

4.75 If a course requires submission of creative works with the thesis and the proportion of the creative works is not stipulated in the course [Handbook](#), the form of the creative work and the inclusion of documentation of the creative work must be determined at the time of confirmation and approved by the head of department.

4.76 A thesis that exceeds the specified word limit is only to be accepted for examination if:

- (a) prior approval has been granted by the chair of RHDC; and
- (b) the nominated examiners have agreed to examine the over-length thesis.

Editing of theses by third parties

4.77 The candidate's supervisors are to critique the draft thesis prior to approving its submission.

4.78 Supervisors may only provide direct editorial intervention in accordance with [The Australian Standards for Editing Practice](#) as follows:

- (a) Standard C: Substance and Structure;

- (b) Standard D: Language and Illustrations; and
- (c) Standard E: Completeness and Consistency.

4.79 Assistance from third parties, whether paid or voluntary, is only permitted in exceptional circumstances and must be limited to editorial intervention in accordance [The Australian Standards for Editing Practice](#) as follows:

- (a) Standard D: Language and Illustrations; and
- (b) Standard E: Completeness and Consistency.

4.80 Any third-party assistance provided to a candidate must be declared in the preface.

Compilation

4.81 Candidates submitting a compilation in fulfilment of course requirements may include work that is original, either published or unpublished, and has been approved by the relevant faculty as appropriate for submission.

Examination and requirements for completion

4.82 All candidates enrolled in a graduate research course must submit a thesis or its creative equivalent for examination in partial or total fulfilment of the award of the course.

4.83 Candidates in a course that does not require a time-based period of enrolment must submit a compilation of papers in total fulfilment of the award of the course.

4.84 To complete the requirements of a graduate research course all candidates must:

- (a) achieve a pass grade in the examination of the thesis or its creative equivalent;
- (b) meet any specific course requirements as stated in the [Handbook](#);
- (c) provide an electronic copy of the final thesis for deposit in the University Repository; and
- (d) provide a citation of the required length.

Eligibility to submit for examination

4.85 Candidates can only submit a compilation if they are admitted to the relevant course.

4.86 Candidates can only submit a thesis or its creative equivalent for examination if they have been enrolled in the course for the minimum period as follows:

- (a) Masters Degree (Research) with coursework - 12 months full-time equivalent; or
- (b) Masters Degree (Research) without coursework - 6 months full-time equivalent; or
- (c) Doctoral Degree (Research) - 24 months full-time equivalent; and
- (d) have satisfied all of the following requirements:

- (i) had their candidature confirmed;
- (ii) met the relevant residency requirement;
- (iii) presented their research findings at a public completion seminar attended by their advisory committees in accordance with this policy; and,
- (iv) be enrolled or have approval from the head of department to be placed under examination.

4.87 RHDC permission is required to submit a thesis before the minimum period and may only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

4.88 All candidates submitting a thesis or compilation must:

- (a) make all necessary declarations as described in the preparation of theses rules published on the Graduate Research Hub; and,
- (b) prepare the thesis or compilation in accordance with the rules published on the Graduate Research Hub.

4.89 A thesis or compilation may not be submitted for examination if:

- (a) it is substantially similar to a thesis or work previously examined or assessed and rejected unless the Board has given approval;
- (b) it is substantially similar to a thesis or work upon which the candidate student has qualified in whole or in part for any other qualification obtained at a tertiary educational institution anywhere in the world;
- (c) it is substantially similar to a thesis or work that is under examination or assessment for any other qualification of a tertiary educational institution anywhere in the world, except where the thesis is being submitted jointly to the University of Melbourne and another institution for a jointly awarded qualification; or
- (d) the candidate's candidature has been terminated.

4.90 A candidate who has been granted a late submission, or lapsed, or is absent without leave and wishes to submit their thesis for examination must meet the requirements of sections 4.85, 4.86 and 4.87, and:

- (a) if the candidate's supervisors are no longer associated with the University, the candidate must obtain support from a University registered supervisor in their department; and
- (b) if the department no longer exists, approval to submit must be obtained from the head of the department nearest in discipline to the former department.

Approval to proceed to examination

4.91 On submission of the thesis, a candidate's principal supervisor and the head of department must advise the Academic Registrar whether the thesis should proceed to examination.

4.92 If the advice is that the thesis should not proceed to examination, the thesis is to be reviewed by a subcommittee of RHDC.

4.93 The RHDC subcommittee may either allow the thesis to proceed or require a candidate to make changes to the thesis before it is accepted for examination.

4.94 If a student is dissatisfied with the decision of the RHDC subcommittee, they may appeal the decision in accordance with the [Student Appeals to the Academic Board Policy](#).

Examination

4.95 The Academic Registrar is responsible for administering the examination of all Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) under the direction of the chair of RHDC, except for the examination of music recitals, which are administered by the relevant dean.

4.96 Each examination is overseen by a chair of examiners and the chair of RHDC and conducted by a minimum of two independent examiners in accordance with this policy.

4.97 The relevant dean is responsible for administering the examination of all higher doctorates.

4.98 A candidate undertaking a jointly awarded degree must meet the examination requirements of the University of Melbourne and the partner university. Any additional examination requirements, such as participation in an oral examination or defence of the thesis, must be agreed between the University of Melbourne and the partner university at the time the candidate is admitted to the course.

Chair of examiners

4.99 The chair of examiners (CoE) is the head of department of the candidate, or a person nominated by the head of department, and must:

- (a) be an academic member of staff in the candidate's department;
- (b) be registered as a principal supervisor at the University of Melbourne; and
- (c) not be a supervisor of the candidate under examination.

4.100 The CoE must:

- (a) nominate appropriately qualified, eligible examiners in consultation with the candidate's supervisors;
- (b) review the examiners' reports and recommend the overall outcome of the examination to the chair of RHDC;
- (c) recommend additional or replacement examiners where necessary; and
- (d) certify that the candidate has satisfactorily addressed examiners' comments and complied with any conditions that must be met prior to the award of the degree.

4.101 If the CoE is unavailable for a period such that the progress of the examination would be delayed, the head of the department must appoint a new CoE. The previous CoE has no further role in the examination.

Examiners

4.102 Examiners must:

- (a) be of good international standing in the research topic of the thesis or compilation;
- (b) be qualified to at least the same level as the award they are examining or have equivalent research experience;
- (c) have previous experience as a supervisor or examiner at the AQF level at which they examine; and
- (d) be from different institutions.

4.103 If an examiner's unique experience is considered essential to the examination but they do not meet the criteria at 4.104 (b) or (c) the CoE may seek a waiver of the requirements which may only be given by the chair of RHDC.

4.104 At least one examiner must, within the last five years:

- (a) be actively associated with a university or an institution of higher learning, or
- (b) a research institution, or
- (c) hold equivalent demonstrable research expertise.

4.105 At least one examiner for a Doctoral Degree (Research) must be resident outside Australia, unless the thesis includes a performance or exhibition of creative works, in which case at least one examiner must be resident outside the state of Victoria.

4.106 At least one examiner for a Master Degree (Research) must be resident outside the state of Victoria, unless the thesis includes a performance or exhibition of creative works, in which case both examiners may be resident in the state of Victoria.

4.107 A person is ineligible to serve as an examiner if they:

- (a) have a pending appointment with, are currently employed, or have been employed by the University of Melbourne in any capacity within the last five years;
- (b) have a pending appointment with, currently hold, or have within the past five years held an honorary position with the University of Melbourne;
- (c) are employed by an Approved Outside Institution;
- (d) are a supervisor or advisory committee member of the candidate under examination;
- (e) have had direct involvement with the thesis through reading drafts or discussing the research;
- (f) have been a collaborator or co-author of the candidate under examination within the last five years;
- (g) have been a collaborator or co-author of the candidate's supervisors within the last five years;

(h) have a real or perceived conflict of interest with the candidate, the supervisors or the institution, of a personal, professional or commercial nature.

4.108 A person is ineligible to serve as an examiner for a jointly awarded degree if any of the conditions listed at 4.105 apply or if they are currently, or have within the past five years been employed by or affiliated with the partner institution of the jointly awarded degree.

4.109 Failure by the supervisors or CoE to disclose a conflict of interest, or cases where a conflict of interest might reasonably be perceived to exist, may be considered grounds for research misconduct, as outlined in the [Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy](#).

Replacement of examiners

4.110 The chair of RHDC may excuse any examiner and/or annul their report if:

- (a) the examiner fails to return a completed examination report within the requested time;
- (b) unauthorised contact with that examiner is found to have occurred during the examination;
- (c) the examiner has made contact with the candidate or their supervisors;
- (d) a conflict of interest is discovered during or after the examination; and/or
- (e) they have reason to believe that the examination has not been properly conducted.

Examination confidentiality

4.111 Potential examiners are only given the name of the candidate, the course type, and the title and short summary of the thesis or compilation.

4.112 Candidates must not be told the identity of any examiners nominated or appointed until a final 'pass' grade has been awarded and with the examiner's written permission.

4.113 Nominations of examiners are submitted to the Academic Registrar. Following submission only the Academic Registrar, the CoE or the Chair of RHDC may correspond with the examiners about the examination.

4.114 An examiner must not be told the identity of the other examiners.

4.115 A candidate, their supervisors or the head of the department may request that a thesis be examined under a confidentiality agreement if the thesis contains material that is commercial-in-confidence, may give rise to a patent, or may be legally or culturally sensitive.

4.116 If the chair of RHDC agrees that the thesis or compilation should be examined under a confidentiality agreement, the thesis or compilation must not be sent to an examiner until they have signed a confidentiality agreement.

4.117 Approval of a request for a confidential examination does not confer any automatic or legal right to restriction of public access to the thesis or compilation after the examination is complete.

Examination result

4.118 A result cannot be confirmed until two valid examiners' reports have been received.

4.119 A candidate who is awarded a result of 'pass with minor amendments', or 'pass with revisions', may only make changes to their thesis or compilation specified or implied by the examiners.

4.120 If a candidate does not return their corrected thesis or compilation within three months of the required date following the result at 4.117, they are awarded a fail result.

4.121 If a candidate is required to revise and resubmit their thesis, they have one opportunity to ensure the thesis meets the requirements for the award of the degree on second examination.

4.122 A candidate must submit the revised thesis for second examination within 12 months for a Doctoral Degree (Research) thesis and within six months for a Master Degree (Research) thesis. One final extension to the deadline, of no more than six months may be granted. In exceptional circumstances, the chair of RHDC may grant a further extension.

4.123 If a candidate does not submit their revised thesis by the expiration of the final deadline detailed at 4.120 they are awarded a fail result.

4.124 The result of the second examination of any thesis is final.

Grading scheme and marking

4.125 To be awarded a pass grade, a Doctoral Degree (Research) thesis or compilation must:

- (a) demonstrate authority in the candidate's field and show evidence of command of knowledge in relevant fields;
- (b) demonstrate a thorough grasp of the appropriate methodological techniques and an awareness of their limitations;
- (c) make a contribution to knowledge that rests on originality of approach and/or interpretation of the findings and, in some cases, the discovery of new facts;
- (d) demonstrate the candidate's ability to communicate research findings effectively in the professional arena and in an international context;
- (e) demonstrate an understanding of, and commitment to, research ethics and integrity; and
- (f) be a careful, rigorous and sustained piece of work demonstrating that a research apprenticeship is complete and the holder is admitted to the community of scholars in the discipline.

4.126 To be awarded a pass grade, a Master Degree (Research) thesis or compilation must:

- (a) demonstrate advanced learning in research skills and mastery of appropriate techniques, such as the use of archival or primary evidence, analysis of data, judgement of conflicting evidence;
- (b) demonstrate specialist knowledge in the area of their research;
- (c) demonstrate an understanding of, and commitment to, research ethics and integrity; and

(d) be given an average numerical mark of 65% or greater as defined in the table - Grading Scale for Masters Degrees (Research).

4.127 To be awarded a pass grade, a Master Degree (Research) course undertaken entirely in a creative form must meet the examination criteria published by the awarding faculty.

Thesis modifications

4.128 No part of the thesis or compilation may be modified once a 'pass' result has been awarded.

4.129 If serious errors are discovered subsequent to the award of the degree, the student or person discovering the error should advise the Academic Registrar.

4.130 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate & International Research) in consultation with the relevant dean must determine whether a full retraction, partial redaction or corrigendum is required and advise the University Library accordingly.

Restricted access to a thesis

4.131 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate & International Research), in consultation with the relevant dean, may direct that any thesis or work be withheld from access, or placed on restricted access for a specified time.

5. Procedural principles

Approval of outside institutions

5.1 The Board approves institutions for the placement of graduate research course candidates on the recommendation of RHDC.

5.2 In evaluating institutions the following criteria are considered:

- (a) the academic environment and standard of research at the institution is of a similar standard to that of an internationally recognised university;
- (b) the staff of the institution are able to provide supervision in accordance with this policy;
- (c) the institution is willing to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the University to formalise the placement of students at the institution; and
- (d) placement of the institution on the approved list will not unduly disadvantage students in the selection of examiners for University graduate research theses.

5.3 The Academic Secretary maintains a list of approved outside institutions.

Supervisor availability

5.4 If it is expected that the principal supervisor will not be available to provide supervision for the normal duration of the course, suitable arrangements for ongoing supervision must be agreed before the candidate commences.

5.5 If a principal supervisor ceases their employment or appointment before the candidate completes their course the dean must appoint a new principal supervisor, in consultation with the candidate. For avoidance of doubt, consultation does not mean the candidate's approval is required.

5.6 If the principal supervisor is unavailable for two or more consecutive months during the candidature period an interim principal supervisor must be appointed in consultation with the student.

Role of the supervisor

5.7 Supervisors must ensure the candidate is aware of any restrictions on publication rights due to confidentiality or other intellectual property protection requirements prior to commencement.

5.8 At commencement, supervisors must:

- (a) alert the candidate to commonly encountered tasks, processes and the standards expected of graduates in their field of research;
- (b) assist the candidate to formulate a framework for the research and time estimates for its completion; and
- (c) ensure satisfactory arrangements are made regarding the ethical conduct of the research, intellectual property (including patents) and authorship of any publications arising from the candidate's work. These arrangements must be recorded and signed by the candidate and the principal supervisor, and placed on the candidate's student record.

5.9 Early in the first year of their candidature, supervisors must assess the candidate's written work. If improvements in their writing skills are required, assist the candidate and if appropriate, refer them to relevant writing skills training programs.

5.10 Supervisors must:

- (a) agree a schedule of at least monthly meetings with the candidate;
- (b) meet with the candidate as agreed to exchange ideas, check progress and assist the candidate to develop the graduate attributes for their qualification;
- (c) conduct a major review of the candidate's progress at least six monthly;
- (d) advise the candidate on the format and preparation of their thesis;
- (e) within reason, read any written work thoroughly, in advance of meetings, and provide regular feedback;
- (f) include the candidate in the academic life of the department;
- (g) encourage the candidate to publish their work; and
- (h) review restrictions on publication rights due to confidentiality or other intellectual property protection requirements as appropriate.

Confirmation of candidature

5.11 The chair of the advisory committee must convene a confirmation meeting between the candidate and their advisory committee prior to the expiration of the candidate's probationary period.

5.12 The head of department may nominate an additional person, such as a graduate research program director or coordinator, to attend confirmation meetings to ensure consistency in the evaluation of candidates' progress.

5.13 The principal supervisor must advise the candidate on the membership of the committee and who will be in attendance.

5.14 The candidate must:

- (a) provide a written report in accordance with departmental requirements;
- (b) make an oral presentation on the project;
- (c) verbally defend their research project; and
- (d) complete any other confirmation requirements that were specified on enrolment.

5.15 The advisory committee recommends one of three outcomes; that the candidate be:

- (a) admitted to confirmed candidature;
- (b) granted an extension to probationary candidature, by which time the student must achieve the confirmation requirements; or
- (c) advised that their academic progress is unsatisfactory.

5.16 If the outcome is unsatisfactory progress the candidate's advisory committee must follow the academic progress review requirements of this policy.

Progress review meetings

5.17 The principal supervisor and the advisory committee monitor the candidate's progress and assess whether satisfactory academic progress is being made.

5.18 Candidates must attend academic progress reviews with their advisory committee. At the meetings the advisory committee must formally review the candidate's academic progress and record the outcome in a prescribed progress review form.

5.19 The head of department may nominate an additional person, such as a graduate research program director or coordinator, to attend academic progress reviews to ensure consistency in the evaluation of candidates' progress.

5.20 The principal supervisor must advise the candidate in writing of:

- (a) any information they need to present to the committee; and
- (b) who will attend the meeting.

5.21 For full-time candidates the first academic progress review is usually the confirmation meeting.

5.22 Part-time candidates must attend an academic progress review meeting prior to confirmation as follows:

- (a) Master Degree (Research) candidates – within six months of commencement; and,
- (b) Doctoral Degree (Research) candidates – within 12 months of commencement.

5.23 After confirmation candidates must attend academic progress reviews annually, except for full-time research masters candidates, who must attend academic progress reviews every six months.

5.24 Academic progress review due dates are adjusted to take account of any approved leave of absence, changes between full and part-time candidature, and approved extensions to candidature.

5.25 Where an academic progress review is only required annually, supervisors must discuss a candidate's performance with them at the intervening half year and maintain a record of that discussion.

5.26 If a candidate fails to attend an academic progress review, and fails to respond to a reasonable request to attend subsequently, they are deemed to be in breach of the conditions of candidature and their enrolment may be terminated.

5.27 Candidates must complete any additional reports required as a condition of their scholarship or sponsorship.

Identifying candidates at risk of making unsatisfactory progress

5.28 Candidates are classified as at risk of making unsatisfactory progress (“at risk”) if any of the academic progress expectations have not been met.

5.29 The supervisors and advisory committee of a candidate at risk must:

- (a) notify the candidate in writing that they are at risk of making unsatisfactory progress;
- (b) provide appropriate support to assist the candidate;
- (c) discuss with the candidate why they are at risk of making unsatisfactory progress and advise them in writing of a progress plan and a reasonable deadline by which to demonstrate satisfactory progress; and,
- (d) alert the candidate to the potential outcome if satisfactory progress has not been made by the deadline, that is, a formal warning of unsatisfactory progress may be issued.

Show Cause Notice - Notification of a formal warning of unsatisfactory progress

5.30 Candidates are classified as making unsatisfactory progress if any of the progress requirements continue to have not been met.

5.31 The supervisors and advisory committee of a candidate who is making unsatisfactory progress in the research component of their graduate research course must report the unsatisfactory progress to the relevant dean.

5.32 The dean must issue a show cause notice (written formal warning notice) to the candidate who has not made satisfactory academic progress, as follows:

- (a) the notification is sent to their University email account;
- (b) the notification is in a form approved by the Board
- (c) the notification must include a warning to the student stating that, unless certain conditions as specified in the written warning are fulfilled, at the expiration of three months from the date of issue of the warning if dean intends to:
 - i. terminate the student's candidature; or
 - ii. make such changes to the student's candidature as are specified in the warning.

Request to be heard in relation to a formal warning of unsatisfactory progress

5.33 A candidate may request to be heard in relation to a show cause notice.

5.34 If the candidate wishes to be heard, they must provide the reason and a full written response to the show cause notice to the relevant dean within the timeframe included in the notice.

Request to be heard meeting

5.35 The dean must convene an unsatisfactory progress committee (“the committee”) to hear the case before the expiration of the period of three months from the date of the issue of the warning. The committee:

- (a) must consist of three academic staff members who are registered supervisors at the University,
- (b) not include any members of the candidate’s advisory committee; and
- (c) may be a member of the RHDC, but not the chair of RHDC.

5.36 The committee must be gender balanced wherever possible.

5.37 The chair must send formal notification of the hearing and meeting papers to the student, supervisors and advisory committee such that the candidate receives the notice five business days’ before the hearing. The notice must:

- (a) be sent to the candidate’s University email address;
- (b) advise the candidate of their right to bring a support person, who may not be a legal practitioner, to the hearing; and,
- (c) include the documentation relating to the candidate’s progress including matters discussed with supervisors and their advisory committee about their academic progress; and
- (d) include the written response to the formal warning of unsatisfactory progress provided by the candidate.

5.38 The committee may only make a decision if:

- (a) at least half of the members present are of the rank of senior lecturer or above; and

(b) at least three members are present.

5.39 Where a candidate declines to appear or fails to present to the committee, the matter may be heard and decided in their absence.

5.40 The committee must decide to:

(a) withdraw the warning

(b) confirm the warning; or

(c) make changes to the warning as deemed appropriate, which may include:

i. recommending the candidate meet specific progress requirements within a three-month period; or

ii. recommending the candidate be given the opportunity of a late submission.

5.41 A committee must not:

(a) comment on a candidate's personal circumstances outside of the context of their unsatisfactory academic progress;

(b) attempt to counsel a candidate on any matters other than their unsatisfactory academic progress; or

(c) make assumptions about a candidate's motivation for study either at University generally or within a specific course or discipline.

5.42 The committee must not inform a candidate of the outcome of their deliberations during the hearing.

5.43 The chair of the committee must advise the candidate of the committee's decision in writing to their University email address within five business days of the hearing, including:

(a) any changes made to the warning; and,

(b) their right to appeal any decision to the Academic Board.

Changes to candidature

5.44 Changes to a candidate's enrolment must be approved by their supervisors and, as required, the head of the department.

5.45 Where a change of enrolment involves another department, the head of the other department and the dean of the respective faculties must also approve the change.

5.46 Supervisors and heads of departments must take the following factors into account when considering a request to vary enrolment:

(a) the candidate has made, or has potential to make, satisfactory progress;

- (b) sufficient time is available to complete the research project within the remaining enrolment entitlement;
- (c) the requested change complies with all relevant legislation;
- (d) appropriate facilities and resources are available for the remainder of the candidature as described in the [Principles for Infrastructure Support for Graduate Research Students](#); and
- (e) appropriate supervision can be provided for the remainder of the candidature.

Leave entitlements and candidature

5.47 Supervisors must assess and approve, or not approve, applications for leave in accordance with the [Enrolment and Timetabling Policy](#).

5.48 For all categories of approved leave other than recreational leave:

- (a) enrolment in the course is suspended for the duration of the leave;
- (b) time spent on leave is not included in the enrolment entitlement;
- (c) candidates are provided with access to University services such as a student email account, library and student advising system;
- (d) candidates are not provided with access to University facilities; and
- (e) progression milestone dates are adjusted to reflect periods of leave.

5.49 No adjustments to candidature entitlements or milestone dates are made for recreational leave, whether the leave is taken or not.

5.50 Time spent on unapproved leave is included in the maximum enrolment entitlement. The expected work submission date is not adjusted for unapproved leave.

Lapsed candidature applications and approvals

5.51 Applications to lapse are only available to candidates who reach their maximum time to submit (4 years consumed EFTSL/maximum RTP entitlement) before 1 January 2018.

5.52 Applications to lapse must be approved by the dean.

5.53 Approval to lapse may only be granted if, in the opinion of the candidate's advisory committee the:

- (a) candidate has demonstrated sufficient understanding of the research topic to make completion likely;
- (b) candidate has provided a credible plan for completion; and
- (c) candidate's personal circumstances are such that completion is likely.

5.54 If a candidate's application is rejected, the candidate is regarded as making unsatisfactory academic progress and the dean will issue a formal warning of unsatisfactory progress.

5.55 Candidates who are permitted to lapse:

- (a) are provided with access to University services such as a student email account, library and student advising system;
- (b) may be provided with access to University facilities, such as laboratory or studio space, at the discretion of the head of department; and
- (c) are only provided with access to an advisory committee or ongoing supervision with the permission of the relevant dean.

5.56 A dean may only approve an extension to lapse where compelling personal, medical or compassionate grounds exist and if the conditions at section 5.52 are satisfied.

5.57 If a candidate does not submit their thesis or its creative equivalent within the agreed period of lapse their enrolment is considered abandoned and the [Enrolment and Timetabling Policy](#) penalties apply.

Late submission applications and approvals

5.58 This section applies to all candidates from 1 January 2018.

5.59 Late submission must be approved by the dean.

5.60 The candidate's advisory committee must submit an application for late submission within 5 business days of the unsatisfactory progress committee's recommendation.

5.61 Approval for late submission may only be granted if, in the opinion of the dean, as recommended by the candidate's advisory committee:

- (a) the candidate has demonstrated sufficient understanding of the research topic to make completion likely; and
- (b) the candidate has provided a credible plan for completion.

5.62 An application for late submission will only be granted if the criteria at 5.61 are satisfied, and the delay in submission is due to research-related reasons beyond the candidates' control. Research related reasons beyond the candidate's control may include:

- (a) delays to ethics approval;
- (b) unexpected change of direction of research due to external or other factors (for example, legislative requirements);
- (c) delays to experimental work;
- (d) delayed access to, or loss of, a research site(s);
- (e) delays in being granted visa approval to travel to another country/countries to access research sites and/or archival repositories;

- (f) delays in accessing archival, museum or other research sites due to delays in getting approval to access such sites;
- (g) loss of data;
- (h) equipment breakdown;
- (i) loss of access to equipment.

5.64 Candidates who are permitted to make a late submission are not enrolled.

5.65 If candidates are granted late submission and require access to University facilities for research related reasons, such as laboratory or studio space, they must be enrolled.

5.66 Candidates who have been granted a late submission will be issued with a reminder to submit their thesis three months prior to the maximum submission date.

5.67 If a candidate does not submit their thesis or its creative equivalent by the maximum submission date, their candidature is terminated.

Examination - completion seminar

5.68 Candidates enrolled in a time-based course must present their research findings at a public completion seminar in the six months prior to submitting their thesis for examination. The seminar must:

- (a) be attended by a panel of at least three persons including the candidate's advisory committee;
- (b) be at least one hour's duration including time for questions and feedback from the panel and the audience; and
- (c) be promoted at least one week prior to the seminar through appropriate University and/or research institute media.

5.69 The panel:

- (a) must complete a report of the seminar that notes the strengths and weaknesses of the work as presented and may recommend to the candidate how the thesis might be improved; and
- (b) may require the student to remain in closed session at the end of the seminar for further discussion.

5.70 The chair of the panel must not be a supervisor of the candidate.

5.71 At least two weeks prior to the seminar the candidate must provide to the chair of the panel:

- (a) an abstract of no more than 100 words to facilitate publicity of the seminar; and
- (b) a thesis summary and chapter outline of no more than 2000 words.

5.72 The advisory panel may allow a candidate who is not resident at the University within six months of submission, to present an equivalent progress seminar prior to departing Melbourne or to present their seminar via video-conference.

Thesis or compilation submission

5.73 Candidates must submit their thesis or compilation in accordance with the Board approved instructions on the Graduate Research Hub. These instructions include the requirements of:

- (a) materials for submission of the thesis or compilation;
- (b) thesis format;
- (c) compilation format; and
- (d) final copy of the thesis or compilation.

Nomination of examiners

5.74 The CoE, in consultation with the principal supervisor of the student and the head of department, shall nominate three examiners who meet the eligibility requirements of this policy. The examiners must:

- (a) agree to examine the thesis or compilation within 6 weeks of its receipt;
- (b) declare that they have no real or perceived conflict of interest with the student, or the supervisors, or the institution, of a personal, professional, or commercial nature;
- (c) agree to maintain confidentiality throughout the examination process; and
- (d) where required, agree to sign a confidentiality agreement.

5.75 A candidate may submit to the chair of the examiners, through their supervisors, the names of up to two persons they believe are unsuitable to serve as an examiner, along with substantiated reasons for that belief. In exceptional circumstances candidates may nominate further individuals for exclusion as examiners.

5.76 The CoE considers the candidate's requests for exclusion of potential examiners. Substantiated and reasonable requests for exclusion should be granted.

5.77 The nominations must:

- (a) be submitted to the chair of RHDC;
- (b) include the name, field of expertise and full contact details of the examiners;
- (c) be accompanied by the curriculum vitae of the examiner if a waiver of the examiner eligibility requirements is being sought;
- (d) be endorsed by the candidate's supervisor(s); and
- (e) not be disclosed to the candidate or to any other person not involved in the examination.

5.78 The chair of RHDC may reject nominations that do not meet the requirements for examiners or require further evidence of the suitability of the nominees.

Appointment of examiners

5.79 The Academic Registrar formally invites the examiners to act, with the exception of examiners of music recitals who are appointed by the dean of the relevant faculty.

5.80 Any dispute about the appointment of examiners must be referred to the chair of RHDC.

Examination criteria

5.81 Examiners must consider the thesis or compilation solely on its merits and must consider whether it meets the following criteria:

- (a) the candidate has demonstrated sufficient familiarity with, and understanding and critical appraisal of, the relevant literature;
- (b) it is a sufficiently comprehensive investigation of the topic;
- (c) methods and techniques adopted are appropriate, properly justified and applied;
- (d) results are suitably set out and accompanied by adequate exposition and interpretation;
- (e) conclusions and implications are appropriately developed and clearly linked to the nature and content of the research framework and findings;
- (f) research questions have been tested or explored according to disciplinary norms;
- (g) literary quality and general presentation of the thesis is of an appropriate high standard; and,
- (h) the thesis or compilation as a whole constitutes an original contribution to knowledge in its subject area.

5.82 For theses containing creative works or compilations containing creative works, the examiners must also consider whether they meet the following criteria:

- (a) demonstration of a professional level of familiarity with and understanding of contemporary work in the field;
- (b) demonstration of a sufficiently comprehensive investigation of the artistic form and creative content;
- (c) the methods and techniques applied in the execution of the work are appropriate to the subject matter and are original and/or aesthetically effective;
- (d) it is presented in a sufficiently professional manner;
- (e) demonstration of a sufficiently high standard of literary, visual, digital, musical or performance literacy and quality;
- (f) the research questions have been identified and tested through the creative work;

(g) documentation of the work, (including catalogue/program material where appropriate) is sufficiently thorough and is of a standard that ensures the work provides a reference for subsequent researchers;

(h) the creative work and the dissertation together constitute a substantive original contribution to knowledge in the subject area; and,

(i) the interface between the creative work and the dissertation is appropriate and substantiated.

5.83 For work submitted entirely in a creative form for a Master Degree (Research), the examiners must consider whether the works meet the criteria published by the relevant faculty.

Examination of the thesis or compilation

5.84 Each examiner independently examines the thesis or its creative equivalent against the criteria and makes a report in writing, containing a recommended result of:

- (a) pass;
- (b) pass with minor amendments;
- (c) pass with revision;
- (d) revise and resubmit; or
- (e) fail.

5.85 An examiner may request that a candidate:

- (a) make changes to or clarify any part of the thesis;
- (b) provide written answers to questions about the thesis or work;
- (c) re-presents or re-documents creative works if they do not meet the examination criteria; or
- (d) in exceptional circumstances, undertake an oral examination.

5.86 Each examiner independently examines the compilation against the criteria and makes a report in writing, containing a recommended result of:

- (a) pass;
- (b) pass with minor amendments; or
- (c) fail.

5.87 Examiners of all Masters Degree (Research) must also award a numeric mark out of 100, in accordance with the grading scale at section 5.130.

5.88 If an examiner fails to return a completed report within 12 weeks of dispatch of the materials for examination, they may be replaced and a new examiner appointed.

5.89 Where a replacement examiner has been appointed, any report subsequently received from the examiner who has been replaced is not considered.

Examination of a performance or exhibition of creative works

5.90 The CoE and at least two further examiners must attend either a private or public performance or exhibition of the creative work.

5.91 If the performance or exhibition is held prior to submission of the thesis, the candidate must submit an extended abstract of the thesis no less than one week prior to the performance or exhibition. The extended abstract should be between 1000 – 3000 words for a Doctoral Degree (Research), and 500- 1500 words for a Master Degree (Research).

5.92 The CoE must schedule and select the venue of a private performance or exhibition, to maintain the confidentiality of the examination.

5.93 The CoE may recommend that the examiners attend a public performance or exhibition at different times to maintain confidentiality.

5.94 If the public performance or exhibition involves audience participation or interaction with the candidate, the CoE must ensure the candidate cannot inappropriately influence the examiners' assessment of the creative work.

5.95 Where the examination is primarily by performance of a music recital, the CoE, after considering the examiners' comments, may order a re-presentation of nominated sections of the recital program where a fail result would otherwise have been the outcome. In these cases the recital is private.

5.96 The thesis must be submitted within six months of the public performance or exhibition and no later than the maximum course duration.

5.97 A durable record of the performance or exhibition must be submitted within six weeks of submission of the thesis for examination.

5.98 The creative work and dissertation must be examined as an integrated whole in accordance with the examination criteria.

5.99 Sections 5.91, 5.95, 5.96 and 5.97 do not apply to candidates who submit a creative equivalent to the thesis in total fulfilment of the requirements for their award.

Oral examination

5.100 An oral examination may be held:

- (a) if it is a requirement of a jointly awarded degree; or,
- (b) in exceptional circumstances at the request of the examiners.

5.101 The oral examination is conducted as described in accordance with this policy unless otherwise agreed by the University of Melbourne and the partner institution for a jointly awarded degree.

5.102 Only one oral examination is conducted.

5.103 The candidate and the examiners are provided with copies of the examiners' reports prior to the oral examination.

5.104 The CoE arranges the oral examination and acts as chair of the oral examination panel.

5.105 The oral examination may only be held after all examiners have submitted their initial report.

5.106 If the original examiners differ widely in their assessment and a third examiner is required, the report of the third examiner must be received prior to the oral examination.

5.107 The examination panel for the oral examination must be all examiners of the thesis.

5.108 A candidate's supervisors may attend the oral examination, but do not participate in the decision of the examination panel.

5.109 Subject to the agreement governing a jointly awarded degree, if the language of the partner institutions of a jointly awarded degree is different, the candidate must present their thesis defence in one of the languages of the institutions, and may be required to present an oral summary of the defence in the other language.

5.110 At the conclusion of the oral examination, the examiners may recommend a decision of:

- (a) pass;
- (b) pass with minor amendments;
- (c) pass with revision;
- (d) revise and resubmit; or
- (e) fail.

5.111 At the conclusion of the examination, the candidate is told the result of the examination and any amendments required to the thesis.

Examination Result

5.112 The CoE reviews the examiners' reports and consults with the candidate's principal supervisor about the examiners' comments.

5.113 The overall result of the first examination with the Table 1 as follows –

Table 1 - outcome of the first examination – figures in parentheses represent a numerical equivalent for the examination outcome.

		Examiner 1 Recommendation					
		Pass (1)	Pass with minor amendments (2)	Pass with revision (CoE) (3a)	Pass with revision (Examiner) (3b)	Revise and resubmit (4)	Fail (5)

Examiner 2 Recommendation	Pass (1)	Pass	Pass with minor amendments	Pass with revision (CoE)	Pass with revision (Examiner 1)	Appoint third examiner	Appoint third examiner
	Pass with minor amendments (2)	Pass with minor amendments	Pass with minor amendments	Pass with revision (CoE)	Pass with revision (Examiner 1)	Appoint third examiner	Appoint third examiner
	Pass with revision (CoE) (3a)	Pass with revision (CoE)	Pass with revision (CoE)	Pass with revision (CoE)	Pass with revision (Examiner 1)	Resubmission to Examiners 1 & 2	Appoint third examiner
	Pass with revision (Examiner) (3b)	Pass with revision (Examiner 2)	Pass with revision (Examiner 2)	Pass with revision (Examiner 2)	Pass with revision (Examiner 1 & 2)	Resubmission to Examiners 1 & 2	Appoint third examiner
	Revise and resubmit (4)	Appoint third examiner	Appoint third examiner	Resubmission to Examiners 1 & 2	Resubmission to Examiners 1 & 2	Resubmission to Examiners 1 & 2	Appoint third examiner
	Fail (5)	Appoint third examiner	Appoint third examiner	Appoint third examiner	Appoint third examiner	Appoint third examiner	Fail

5.114 If the CoE and the chair of RHDC jointly judge that the examiners are unable to agree or that the result is undetermined, a third examiner is appointed.

5.115 The third examiner examines the thesis or compilation independently and is not given the reports of the co-examiners.

5.116 The final result of the examination is determined in accordance with the majority recommendation of the examiners, as described in Tables 2 and 3 following receipt of examiners' recommendations as follows:

Table 2 - outcome of the first examination after a third examiner is appointed, due to an initial examiner recommending 'Revise and resubmit' – figures in parentheses represent a numerical equivalent for the examination outcome.

		Examiner 1 Recommendation		
		Pass (1)	Pass with minor amendments (2)	Fail (5)
Exam. 2	Revise and resubmit (4)	Third examiner appointed	Third examiner appointed	Third examiner appointed
Examiner 3 Recommendation	Pass (1)	Pass	Pass with minor amendments	Resubmission to all examiners
	Pass with minor amendments (2)	Pass with minor amendments	Pass with minor amendments	Resubmission to all examiners
	Pass with revision (CoE) (3a)	Pass with revision (CoE) or resubmission to all examiners	Pass with revision (CoE) or resubmission to all examiners	Resubmission to all examiners

	Pass with revision (Examiner) (3b)	Pass with revision (Examiner 3) or resubmission to all examiners	Pass with revision (Examiner 3) or resubmission to all examiners	Resubmission to all examiners
	Revise and resubmit (4)	Resubmission to all examiners	Resubmission to all examiners	Resubmission to all examiners
	Fail (5)	Resubmission to all examiners	Resubmission to all examiners	Fail

Table 3 – Outcome of the first examination after a third examiner is appointed, due to an initial examiner recommending ‘Fail’ – figures in parentheses represent a numerical equivalent for the examination outcome.

		Examiner 1 Recommendation				
		Pass (1)	Pass with minor amendments (2)	Pass with revision (CoE) (3a)	Pass with revision (Examiner) (3b)	Revise and resubmit (4)
Exam. 2	Fail (5)	Third examiner appointed	Third examiner appointed	Third examiner appointed	Third examiner appointed	Third examiner appointed
Examiner 3 Recommendation	Pass (1)	Pass	Pass with minor amendments	Pass with revision (CoE)	Pass with revision (Examiner 1)	Resubmission to all examiners
	Pass with minor amendments (2)	Pass with minor amendments	Pass with minor amendments	Pass with revision (CoE)	Pass with revision (Examiner 1)	Resubmission to all examiners
	Pass with revision (CoE) (3a)	Pass with revision (CoE)	Pass with revision (CoE)	Pass with revision (CoE)	Pass with revision (Examiner 1)	Resubmission to all examiners
	Pass with revision (Examiner) (3b)	Pass with revision (Examiner 3)	Pass with revision (Examiner 3)	Pass with revision (Examiner 3)	Pass with revision (Examiners 1 & 3)	Resubmission to all examiners
	Revise and resubmit (4)	Resubmission to all examiners	Resubmission to all examiners	Resubmission to all examiners	Resubmission to all examiners	Resubmission to all examiners
	Fail (5)	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail

5.117 If the result of the first examination is ‘revise and resubmit’, the candidate is invited to write a response to the examiners’ reports.

5.118 The examiners who originally examined the thesis are asked to examine the resubmitted thesis. If required, a replacement examiner may be appointed to examine a resubmitted thesis.

5.119 The original and any replacement examiners of a revised and resubmitted thesis are provided with:

- (a) the revised thesis;
- (b) the candidate’s response to examiners’ reports, if provided; and,
- (c) the de-identified co-examiners’ reports on the original thesis to determine if the revisions have been made satisfactorily.

5.120 Examiners of a revised and resubmitted thesis are asked to provide a recommendation of pass, pass with minor amendments, or fail. The outcome of the examination is in accordance with Table 4 as follows

Table 4 - Outcome of the second examination following resubmission to Examiners 1 and 2 – figures in parentheses represent a numerical equivalent for the examination outcome.

		Examiner 1 Recommendation		
		Pass (1)	Pass with minor amendments (2)	Fail (5)
Examiner 2 Recommendation	Pass (1)	Pass	Pass with minor amendments	Appoint third examiner
	Pass with minor amendments (2)	Pass with minor amendments	Pass with minor amendments	Appoint third examiner
	Fail (5)	Appoint third examiner	Appoint third examiner	Fail

5.121 If the examiners of a revised and resubmitted thesis are unable to agree, or the result of the second examination is undetermined, a further examiner is appointed:

- (a) the examiner examines the thesis or compilation independently and is not provided with the reports of their co-examiners; and,
- (b) the outcome of the examination is in accordance with Table 5 following receipt of examiners’ recommendations, as follows:

Table 5 - Outcome of the second examination after a third examiner is appointed, due to an initial examiner recommending ‘Fail’ - Figures in parentheses represent a numerical equivalent for the examination outcome.

		Examiner 1 Recommendation	
		Pass (1)	Pass with minor amendments (2)
Exam . 2	Fail (5)		
Examiner 3 Recommendation	Pass (1)	Pass	Pass with minor amendments
	Pass with minor amendments (2)	Pass with minor amendments	Pass with minor amendments
	Fail (5)	Fail	Fail

5.122 If the result of a Doctoral Degree (Research) thesis is Fail, the thesis may be resubmitted for a Masters Degree (Research) qualification, subject to the approval of the CoE, the head of the department and the chair of RHDC.

Award of a numeric mark for Masters Degrees (Research)

5.123 Examiners are asked to provide comments and a numeric mark in the range 0-100.

5.124 If the numeric marks are both at H1 (80 or above), the average of the examiners' marks are recorded as the final mark.

5.125 If the examiners' numeric marks differ by 10 or more and one or more marks are outside the Honours First Class grade (H1) (80 or above), each examiner is sent their co-examiner's report de-identified and asked to reconsider their mark. If after this process the difference in numeric mark:

- (a) remains 10 or more and one or more marks are outside the H1 grade, a third examiner is appointed; or,
- (b) is less than 10, the final mark is the average of the two adjusted marks.

5.126 When a third examiner is appointed they are not informed of the other two marks, nor provided with the written comments of those two examiners.

5.127 After a third mark and comments have been received, the final mark is the rounded three-way average of the third examiner's mark and the two moderated marks provided by the first two examiners.

5.128 If the result of the first examination is 'revise and resubmit', examiners are not asked to provide a numerical mark on second examination of the thesis. The numeric marks provided at the first examination is used in the calculation of the final result.

5.129 If the result of the second examination is pass or pass with amendments, the average of the examiners' original marks is recorded as the final mark, unless the average mark is below 65%, in which case a pass mark of 65% is awarded.

5.130 If the result of the examination is fail, a result of Fail is recorded and the mark awarded for the thesis or compilation is 64%.

Grading scale for Masters Degrees (Research)

Numeric mark	Grade	Description
90-100%	Outstanding (H1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the student has demonstrated a very high level of competence with respect to the criteria for examination • there is clear evidence of considerable original work of high quality, including analysis or other evaluation • the implementation and experimentation phases of the discovery have been substantially completed • the thesis is worthy of publication with only a small amount of revision and/or editing required.

85–89%	Excellent (H1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student has demonstrated a high level of competence with respect to the criteria for examination there is clear evidence of considerable original work of high quality, including analysis or other evaluation the implementation and experimentation phases of the discovery have been substantially completed the thesis is worthy of publication with a small amount of further research and/or analysis
80–84%	Very good (H1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student has demonstrated more than adequate level of competence with respect to the criteria for examination the thesis provides evidence of the student’s ability to synthesise and organise existing information in a useful and critical manner and is well written and free of error <p><i>OR</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is evidence of original work, including analysis or other evaluation the implementation and experimentation phases of the discovery have been substantially completed the thesis is worthy of publication with a small amount of further research and/or analysis
75–79%	Good (H2A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student has demonstrated a minimum level of competence with respect to the criteria for examination the thesis provides evidence of the student’s ability to synthesise and organise existing information in a useful and critical manner and is well-written and largely free of error <p><i>OR</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is evidence of original work, including analysis or other evaluation and some amount of research with further research and/or analysis the thesis might be worthy of publication.
70–74%	Satisfactory (H2B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student has demonstrated a minimum level of competence with respect to the criteria for examination the thesis is judged to be more than adequate in at least one of the examination criteria <p><i>OR</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is evidence of original work, including

		some analysis or other evaluation of the proposal, even if not fully implemented or tested.
65–69%	Adequate (H3)	The student has demonstrated a minimum level of competence with respect to the criteria for examination
50–64%	Inadequate	The thesis is deficient with respect to one or more of the criteria for examination and resubmission of the thesis in a revised form is required for re-examination.
0–49%	Failed	The thesis is so deficient with respect to one or more of the criteria for examination that revision and resubmission cannot be considered as an option.

Re-examination after a finding of academic misconduct

5.131 Where an allegation of academic misconduct has been upheld and the examination has been allowed to proceed the candidate must:

- (a) make any changes requested by the examiners;
- (b) where appropriate, remove all unoriginal text from the thesis or correctly cite it; and
- (c) submit the revised thesis and an index of revisions made to the CoE and the student academic misconduct committee for approval.

5.132 The CoE and the student academic misconduct committee must review the changes made to the thesis. If they agree that the candidate has adequately addressed the examiners' comments and concerns, the examination of the thesis or compilation may proceed. If they do not believe the candidate has adequately addressed the examiners comments and concerns they may recommend a fail result, or that the student be given one final opportunity to revise and resubmit.

5.133 The revised thesis is sent to the original examiners for a second examination:

- (a) the examiners are not provided with the reports from their co-examiners;
- (b) examiners who are unaware of the allegation of academic misconduct are not informed of the allegation; and,
- (c) the candidate is not permitted to submit a response to the examiners comments from the first examination.

5.134 Except for the provisions in section 5.122, the second examination is undertaken in accordance with the standard procedures for second examination of a thesis.

Complaints and Grievances

5.135 Candidates may submit a complaint or grievance in relation to the application of this policy in accordance with the [Student Complaints and Grievances Policy](#) and supporting processes except for matters relating to academic progress.

Appeals

5.136 The Academic Board can decide any dispute or question arising under this policy other than a decision by an examiner or examination board in relation to the academic performance which is based solely on academic judgement.

5.137 Appeals against a decision made under this policy must be made in writing to the Academic Secretary within 20 working days of the deemed receipt of any decision or outcome, in accordance with the [Student Appeals to the Academic Board Policy](#).

6. Roles and responsibilities

<i>Role/Decision/Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Approving deferral of commencement	Dean of the relevant faculty or an associate dean (research training) or equivalent act.
Imposition of conditions on candidature	Dean of the relevant faculty or an associate dean (research training) or equivalent act.
Approval of leave	Principal supervisor
Approval of exceptional leave	Dean or head of department or equivalent authorised by the dean to act
Approval of transfer of candidature	Dean of the relevant faculty or an associate dean (research training) or equivalent act.
Permission to study full-time or part-time or to change rate of study	Principal supervisor, authorised by the dean to act.
Grant an extension of candidature	Dean of the relevant faculty or Head of department authorised by the dean to act
Confirmation of supervisory arrangements	Supervisor and head of department
Approval of change of supervisor	Head of department, authorised by the dean to act
Agreeing schedule of supervisory meetings	Candidates and supervisors
Clarifying the requirements of satisfactory academic progress and confirmation	Supervisors and advisory committees
Monitor and report candidates academic progress	Supervisors and advisory committees
Issue notice to candidates at risk	Dean of the relevant faculty or an associate dean (research training) or equivalent act.
Provide formal advice to candidates at risk	Supervisors and advisory committees
Issue formal notice to candidates making unsatisfactory progress	Dean of the relevant faculty or the Academic Registrar or person authorised by the dean to act.
Approval of change of department for candidature	Dean of the relevant faculty or an associate dean (research training) or head of department authorised by the dean to act.
Extend probationary period	Dean of the relevant faculty or an associate dean (research training) or equivalent act.
Approval of additional coursework	Supervisors and subject coordinator
Placement of candidates at outside institutions	Dean of the relevant faculty or an associate dean (research training) or equivalent act.

Approval of outside institutions	Academic Board
Approval of study away from the University	Head of department, authorised by the dean to act.
Assign an external supervisor to candidates who have approval to study away from the University	Head of department, authorised by the dean to act.
Permission to lapse	Dean of the relevant faculty or senior academic staff authorised by the dean to act.
Permission to make a late submission	Dean of the relevant faculty or senior academic staff authorised by the dean to act.
Ensure supervisors meet the University's registration requirements	Dean of the relevant faculty or an associate dean (research training) or equivalent.
Permission to submit before the minimum enrolment period expires	RHDC, or the chair of RHDC on its behalf
Approval for thesis to proceed to examination	Candidate's supervisors and head of department and/or chair of examiners
Administering the examination	Academic Registrar or a person authorised by the Academic Registrar to act
Nomination of examiners	Chair of examiners
Examining the thesis or equivalent	Examiners
Administering oral examination	Chair of examiners
Managing and administering a re-examination after a finding of academic misconduct	Chair of examiners
Approve restricted access to theses	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate and International Research)

7. Definitions

"absent without leave" means a student who is not enrolled for a period of twelve months, and who has not had any status changes to their study plan for a period of twelve months and who has not been granted leave of absence, is 'absent without leave'.

"advisory committee" is a committee appointed by the head of department in which the candidate is enrolled.

"award course" means a program of study formally approved/accredited by the Board which leads to an academic award granted by the University.

"Board" means the Academic Board of the University of Melbourne.

"candidate" means any person admitted to and enrolled in a planned course of research leading to a graduate research course at the University of Melbourne. A candidate is a student of the University.

“candidature” means the period of study towards the graduate research course being the period from the date of commencement until the end of enrolment based on successful completion of all coursework and mandatory training completed satisfactorily leading to lodgement for thesis examination (after which time the candidate holds the status of 'Under Examination') or until the candidature is terminated or the candidate withdraws, but excludes periods spent on leave of absence or lapsed.

“chair of examiners” means a member of academic staff in the candidate’s department appointed to oversee the results of the examination of a graduate research thesis.

“compilation” means a collection of prior work, either published or unpublished, submitted for examination of a non-time based course.

“commercial-in-confidence” means material of a sensitive or confidential nature which has possible patent, trademarks or intellectual property implications.

“course” means a degree, diploma or other award.

“creative equivalent” means creative works submitted in complete fulfilment of the requirements for a graduate research degree, that is, where no dissertation is required.

“creative work” means performance, musical composition, exhibition, writing (poetry, fiction, script or other written literary forms), design, film, video, multimedia or other new media technologies and modes of presentation.

“department” means the academic department, school or research centre that has responsibility for the candidate.

“expected course duration” means the expected time for completion of a course expressed in full-time years.

“Handbook” means the official University publication of all current course and subject information.

“Late submission” is a period of up to two years beyond the maximum course duration granted by a dean to a student under specific circumstances.

“Maximum course duration” for graduate research courses is expressed in full time years, and is calculated based on the expected course duration, allowing for part time enrolment in coursework degrees and RTP in research degrees. In research degrees it is also adjusted to take account of periods of leave.

“maximum submission date” also referred to as the maximum time to submit, means the maximum number of years allowed to submit a thesis or dissertation for examination, and to undertake any other examination components, for graduate research courses taking into account an allowance for late submission.

“Pass with revision (CoE)” means the thesis may be passed, subject to the corrections being made to the Chair of Examiner’s satisfaction.

“Pass with revision (Examiner)” means the thesis may be passed, subject to the corrections being made to the examiner’s satisfaction.

“residency requirement”- all candidates, including those who transfer from a graduate research course at another institution, must complete a minimum amount of study at the University of Melbourne unless studying at an approved outside institution - the requirement is 12 months for a doctoral candidate and 6 months for a masters candidate.

“supervisor” means an appropriately qualified person who is responsible for the academic supervision of a graduate research course candidate.

“thesis” means a dissertation embodying the results of original research and especially substantiating a specific view.

“University” means the University of Melbourne.

POLICY APPROVER

Academic Board

POLICY STEWARD

Academic Secretary

REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed by 22 June 2022.

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified
1	President of the Academic Board	20 July 2016	21 July 2016	New policy arising from the revised Regulatory Framework and the Policy Consolidation Project (incorporating the former Statute 11.4 Unsatisfactory Progress as well as matters previously contained in the Examination of Graduate Research Students Policy MPF1207, Examination of Graduate Research Students Procedure MPF1262, Preparation of Graduate Research Theses Procedure MPF1263, Graduate Research Candidature Policy MPF1280, Graduate Research Candidature Procedure MPF1281, Graduate Research Progress Procedure MPF1264 and some matters previously in the Supervision of Research Higher Degree Students Policy MPF1244.
2	Academic Secretary	27 Jul 2016	27 Jul 2016	Correction of error in section 5.48(c).
3	Academic Board	8 Dec 2016	1 Jan 2017	Change to number of supervisors required (to 2) comply with TEQSA standards. Change to include secondary/review publications in a thesis (4.66)
4	Academic Board	7 Dec 2015	1 Jan 2017	Delete 4.82(c) requirement to submit a hard copy bound thesis. Amend wording at 4.129 to reflect different arrangements for restricting access.
5	Academic	22 Jun	22 Jun	Amendment to 3(h) change to correct name of the code; 4.8

	Board	2017	2017	and 4.32– changes to reflect change to name of funding scheme; Changes to reflect removal of lapsed category availability from 1 January 2018 and introduction of a late submission category at: 4.23(a); 4.49; delete 4.59 and 4.60 and consequent renumbering; add 4.59 (d) and consequent renumbering; 5.40(c); 5.51; 5.52; 5.54; 5.56; 5.88 and consequent renumbering; inclusion of a definition of maximum submission date. Addition of “permanently” at 4.61. Amendment to 3(h) change to correct name of the code;4.8 and 4.32– changes to reflect change to name of funding scheme;Changes to reflect removal of lapsed category availability from 1 January 2018 and introduction of a late submission category at: 4.23(a); 4.49; delete 4.59 and 4.60 and consequent renumbering; add 4.59 (d) and consequent renumbering; 5.40(c); 5.51; 5.52; 5.54; 5.56; 5.88 and consequent renumbering; inclusion of a definition of maximum submission date. Addition of “permanently” at 4.61.
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