

Higher Degree by Research Policy - Enrolment and Progress

Section 1 - Scope and Definitions

(1) This Policy applies to the categories of examinable work that are submitted as the results of the research undertaken in a Higher Degree by Research program.

Higher Degrees by Research

(2) Higher Degrees by Research are programs containing a research component which is 66% or more of the whole program:

- a. Doctor of Philosophy;
- b. Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication;
- c. Research Professional Doctorate;
- d. Master by Research.

(3) The object and descriptors of these programs are published in the [Course Accreditation Policy](#), clauses 64-73.

(4) The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. The AQF provides a comprehensive framework which includes standards and descriptors for Australian qualifications.

Examinable Works

(5) The categories of examinable work relating to Higher Degrees by Research are:

- a. Thesis (print and non-print);
- b. Portfolio and exegesis; and
- c. Other examinable works.

(6) Detailed requirements for examinable works are published in the [Higher Degree by Research — Examinable Works and Examination](#).

Candidature

(7) Candidature is the period of enrolment undertaken as a candidate for a Higher Degree by Research. Periods of approved Leave of Absence are not included in the calculation of the duration of candidature (refer to section 5 below).

Section 2 - Admission to Higher Degree by Research

Programs

(8) The Policy governing admission to Higher Degree by Research programs are as published in the [Admissions Policy](#).

Section 3 - Credit in Higher Degree by Research Programs

(9) The Policy governing credit towards Higher Degree by Research programs are as published in the [Credit Policy](#).

Section 4 - Enrolment in Higher Degree by Research Programs

(10) The Policy governing general enrolment matters during Higher Degree by Research programs are as published in the [Enrolment Policy](#).

(11) Higher Degree by Research candidates are required to be formally enrolled for two academic sessions per calendar year for each year of their candidature, excepting where a specified period of Leave of Absence has been approved (refer to clauses 14-31 below).

Recreation Leave

(12) All Higher Degree by Research candidates are entitled to twenty days recreation leave in each full-time equivalent year of enrolment. This is not deemed to be Leave of Absence for the purpose of calculating consumed candidature load.

(13) The timing of annual recreation leave should be agreed between the candidate and the supervisory team.

Leave of Absence

(14) Any single period of leave in excess of four weeks may be considered for approval as a Leave of Absence. Periods of approved Leave of Absence do not contribute to the calculated duration of candidature.

(15) During periods of approved Leave of Absence, candidates are expected not to be working towards their higher degree qualification and support from the Supervisory Team will be limited.

(16) Scholarship recipients need to check the conditions of their award regarding the scholarship payments during a Leave of Absence; typically payments would be suspended for the period.

(17) International student visa holders are advised that Leave of Absence from a program of study is generally not permitted under the conditions of that visa. It is the responsibility of International candidates to monitor and comply with the conditions of the visa.

Reasons for a Leave of Absence

(18) Reasons for a Leave of Absence include maternity leave, extended periods of other leave due to sickness or carer responsibilities and other personal leave, for example to meet employment requirements or for personal financial reasons.

(19) An administrative Leave of Absence may be applied for up to six months in circumstances where candidature progress is being impeded for reasons such as change of supervision or approval of change to the program of

research. Limited supervisory support will be available during this period.

Limits to Leave

(20) A Higher Degree by Research candidate may apply for a Leave of Absence after enrolling, but not before confirmation of candidature has occurred (refer to section 7 below), unless there are exceptional circumstances.

(21) Normally, a Leave of Absence will not be approved for a Higher Degree by Research candidate who has exceeded the maximum duration of candidature (refer to clauses 37-40 below).

(22) A Leave of Absence will normally only be approved for a maximum of six calendar months at any one time.

(23) Normally, the total leave of absence accumulated in a given candidature will not exceed one year unless the Research Committee deems the circumstances to be exceptional.

Applications for Leave

(24) Prior to commencing the leave, a request for leave of absence should be made on the appropriate form and submitted to the Research Office. The application shall include a statement relating to the grounds for the leave, endorsement by and any additional comments from the Principal Supervisor(s) and, where appropriate, be accompanied by supporting documentation such as written confirmation of the leave requirement from a medical practitioner, employer, or counsellor.

(25) Where the period of leave will result in a reduced requirement for enrolment (refer to clause 27-28 below), the application for Leave of Absence must be received by the Research Office a minimum of two weeks before the relevant census date (refer to the Academic Calendar Policy: [Principal Dates for Session and Census Dates](#)).

(26) Retrospective leave will not be approved, other than in exceptional circumstances and where supporting evidence is provided. Retrospective leave will normally only be approved where:

- a. there has been an administrative error by the University; or
- b. due to exceptional circumstances, the Higher Degree by Research candidate was unable to apply for a leave of absence at the time it was required.

Enrolment Requirements and Leave of Absence

(27) Full-time and part-time Higher Degree by Research candidates are normally required to be formally enrolled for two academic sessions per calendar year in every year of their candidature, in accordance with the [Enrolment Policy](#). The exception is where a Leave of Absence of specific duration, as below, has been approved.

(28) An approved Leave of Absence of between 18 and 26 weeks duration reduces the requirement for enrolment in that calendar year by one academic session.

Deciding Applications and Notifications

(29) A nominee of the Research Committee shall decide applications for leave.

(30) The following applications require a supporting statement from the Principal Supervisor(s) and the endorsement of the relevant Executive Dean:

- a. Applications from candidates prior to confirmation of their candidature (refer to section 7 below);
- b. Applications that would result in accumulated leave in excess of one year;
- c. Applications from candidates who have exceeded the maximum allocated candidature (refer to clauses 37-40 below).

(31) The decision with respect to an application for leave will be notified in writing by the Research Office.

Section 5 - Minimum and Maximum Periods of Candidature

Minimum Time

Doctor of Philosophy

(32) A candidate for a Doctoral degree shall not normally be permitted to submit a thesis for examination within the first three years (full-time equivalent) of candidature.

(33) Students who have started their studies at another university and then move to Charles Sturt University may not submit their thesis within the first year (full-time equivalent) of enrolment and prior to having been enrolled for a PhD degree at either institution for three years (full-time equivalent).

Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication

(34) A candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication shall normally not be permitted to submit a thesis for examination within the first six months (full-time equivalent) of candidature.

Master by Research

(35) A candidate for a Master by Research degree shall not normally be permitted to submit a thesis for examination within the first year (full-time equivalent) of candidature

Research Professional Doctorate

(36) A candidate for a research professional doctoral program shall not normally be permitted to submit a thesis or portfolio for examination before three years (full-time equivalent) enrolment.

Maximum Time

Doctor of Philosophy

(37) A candidate will be expected to present for examination his or her thesis within four years (full-time equivalent) of the date of commencement of candidature.

Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication

(38) A candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication will be expected to present for examination his or her thesis within one year (full-time equivalent) of the date of commencement of candidature.

Master by Research

(39) A candidate will be expected to present for examination his or her thesis within two years (full-time equivalent) of the date of commencement of candidature.

Research Professional Doctorate

(40) A candidate will be expected to submit for examination his or her thesis or portfolio within four years (full-time equivalent) of the date of commencement of candidature.

Variations to Candidature Duration Requirements

(41) Variations to these requirements may be approved by the Research Committee if exceptional circumstances apply, but only on the recommendation of the Executive Dean of the Faculty in which the candidate is enrolled.

Section 6 - Probationary Candidature

Probationary Period

(42) Admission to candidature for any Higher Degree by Research program shall, initially, be on a probationary basis unless otherwise determined by the Research Committee.

(43) Probationary candidature shall normally last for a period of one year (full-time equivalent).

(44) The Faculty Sub-Dean (Graduate Studies) shall, in consultation with the principal supervisor, specify the conditions of the probationary period on the appropriate form at the time of admission.

(45) Candidates for the Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication shall not be subject to a probationary period.

Conditions of the Probationary Period

(46) All Higher Degree by Research candidates, with the exception of candidates for the Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication, shall develop a Research Proposal that is to be approved during the probationary period.

(47) The Sub-Dean shall specify any additional conditions of probation (see clause 42-45 above).

(48) The conditions shall depend upon the background of the candidate and Faculty and research program requirements.

(49) These conditions may include any or all of the following components:

- a. attendance/participation at induction;
- b. successful completion of any specified coursework subjects;
- c. completion of a literature review/ synopsis of literature;
- d. presentation of a seminar; or
- e. other additional conditions specified by the Faculty and approved by the Research Committee.

(50) Compliance with the Conditions of Probation specified by the Faculty for each candidate shall be recorded by the Research Office.

Section 7 - Confirmation of Candidature

(51) The Sub-Dean, in consultation with the candidate and Principal Supervisor(s), shall consider the candidate's progress during the probationary period.

(52) Upon the completion of probationary period, the Sub-Dean shall recommend to the Executive Dean of Faculty, and then to the Research Committee, that:

- a. the candidature be confirmed; or
- b. the candidature be terminated.

(53) If the candidature is confirmed, then the period of candidature will normally be deemed to have begun from the date of commencement of study.

(54) If the progress is considered unsatisfactory, the Faculty shall provide clear reasons to the candidate and to the Research Committee for the recommendation to terminate the candidature.

Section 8 - Progress Reports

(55) The progress of candidates in Doctor of Philosophy, Research Professional Doctorate and Master by Research programs shall be reviewed by the Research Committee at least every six months.

(56) A progress report is not required from candidates enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication.

(57) As a result of the review of progress reports, the Research Committee may endorse continuation of the candidature, seek to terminate the candidature (in accordance with section 11 below) or take such other action as it considers appropriate.

Section 9 - Change of Research Focus

(58) Once a Research Proposal has been approved (either within the admission process for candidates in the Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication program or as a probation condition preceding Confirmation of Candidature for all other candidates), the research focus may only be changed with the Executive Dean's approval on the recommendation of the Sub-Dean or delegated authority.

(59) Minor title changes shall only require notification to the Research Office by the Principal Supervisor(s).

Section 10 - Additional Subjects

(60) During the program, a candidate may be required to study additional subjects and pass such examinations as the Research Committee may prescribe on the recommendation of the Executive Dean. Typically these subjects would be undertaken during the probationary period, in accordance with clauses 46-50 above.

(61) Higher Degree Research candidates are able to complete up to two relevant coursework subjects as part of their degree at no additional cost. These may be undertaken as a condition of probation or during the first 2.5 years (full-time equivalent) of enrolment. These subjects must be approved by the Faculty Sub-Dean (Graduate Studies).

Section 11 - Termination of Candidature

(62) If the Research Committee, acting upon the advice of such qualified persons as it chooses, is of the opinion that a candidate enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research program is not making satisfactory progress or that a candidate has failed to comply with the provisions of the Academic Policies. The candidate shall be given one month's notice in writing of the University's intention to terminate the candidature, or to make changes in the conditions of the candidature. Before making such a determination the Research Committee shall give the candidate an opportunity to respond and 'show cause' as to why the candidature should be allowed to continue.

(63) If a candidature is terminated, it may be reinstated with or without conditions by the Research Committee in response to a recommendation by the Executive Dean of Faculty.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	5th September 2014
Review Date	31st October 2018
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	28th August 2014
Expiry Date	10th August 2017
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