

# Higher Degree Research Variations to Candidature Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy specifies the University's requirements for Higher Degree Research (Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Philosophy, and Master of Research) candidates who are seeking a variation to their candidature as a result of changing attendance, taking a period of leave, requiring an extension, or not having submitted their thesis for examination within the standard period of candidature.

### Background

(2) The standard period of candidature for a Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Philosophy, or Master of Research is defined in the [Higher Degree Research Rules](#). Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidates are expected to complete within the standard period of candidature. It is however recognised that candidates may experience circumstances affecting the standard period of candidature. This Policy and the following Procedures specify the requirements to manage such circumstances:

- a. the Change of Attendance Procedure, which specifies the actions required for change of attendance, including part-time and full-time;
- b. the Leave Procedure, which specifies the actions required for HDR candidates to request a period of leave under the provisions of this Policy;
- c. the Extension Procedure, which specifies the actions required for extensions to candidature under the provisions of this Policy; and
- d. the Cessation Procedure, which specifies the actions required for cessation of candidature under the provisions of this Policy.

### Scope

(3) This Policy applies to all HDR candidates as well as to University staff engaged in the provision and support of HDR supervision. This Policy does not apply to HDR candidates who have already submitted their thesis for examination and who are subsequently required to revise and re-submit their thesis. These candidates are not entitled to leave provisions during the period of re-enrolment and must submit a revised thesis within the specified period of re-enrolment.

(4) This Policy covers the research (thesis) component of the following degrees:

- a. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and all other doctorates by research;
- b. Master of Philosophy (MPhil); and
- c. Master of Research (MRes).

# Section 2 - Policy

## Part A - Continuation of Candidature / out of Time Candidature

(5) A candidate whose consumed EFTSL is less than the standard HDR EFTSL will continue to be automatically re-enrolled from year to year subject to satisfactory Annual Progress Reports and payment of any outstanding fees. When a candidate has reached the maximum consumable EFTSL for their candidature, their enrolment will cease (i.e. there will be no automatic extension of enrolment).

(6) Out-of-time (OOT) candidates are required to formally apply for approval in order to be re-enrolled. The application requires the support of the Principal Supervisor and Head of Department.

## Part B - Change of Attendance

(7) Candidates are enrolled full-time unless otherwise approved, as defined in the [Higher Degree Research Rules](#).

(8) Candidates may apply to change from full-time to part-time at any point in their candidature, but must do so before the relevant census date for the enrolment period and be supported by the Faculty.

(9) Conversion between full-time and part-time is considered a permanent conversion until the candidate re-applies to change enrolment mode.

## Part C - Leave Entitlements

### General Leave Provisions

(10) For MPhil / PhD Candidates, no leave will be granted in the first six (6) months of candidature.

(11) For MRes candidates, no leave will be granted in the first three (3) months of candidature.

(12) Leave will not be approved with an outstanding candidature milestone (for example an incomplete Annual Progress Report).

(13) Candidates who apply for leave in the last six (6) months of candidature (PhD / MPhil) or three (3) months of candidature (MRes Year 2) may be asked to apply for an extension to Expected Work Submission (EWS) date instead of a period of leave.

(14) A candidate receiving stipend and / or tuition fee support from the University may be entitled to paid leave in accordance with their scholarship conditions.

### Annual Leave

(15) Candidates are entitled to up to 20 working days annual leave per year accrued on a fortnightly basis. The supervisor's agreement must be obtained before leave is taken.

(16) Approved annual leave does not extend the EWS Date.

### Sick Leave

(17) Sick leave is defined as:

- a. serious illness or injury (a medical certificate stating that the candidate is unfit for work or study for a substantial amount of time must be provided); or

- b. bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (supporting documentation must be provided).

(18) Candidates are entitled to up to 20 working days sick leave per year accrued on a fortnightly basis. Sick leave must be approved by the Faculty. Candidates taking approved sick leave must inform the Higher Degree Research Office (HDRO) at the start of absence or as soon as practicable.

(19) Approved sick leave extends the EWS Date by the equivalent period.

## **Parental Leave**

(20) Candidates applying for parental leave should do so at least four (4) weeks prior to the expected date of birth.

(21) Approved parental leave extends the EWS Date by the equivalent period.

(22) PhD candidates who have completed less than 12 months candidature, MPhil / MRes candidates who have completed less than six (6) months candidature, or any candidate needing more than 60 days parental leave will need to apply for a Leave of Absence.

## **PhD**

(23) Candidates who have completed 12 months candidature are entitled to a maximum of 60 working days parental leave.

(24) Candidates who have completed 12 months candidature and who have adopted a child are entitled to a maximum of 60 working days parental leave.

(25) Candidates who have completed 12 months candidature and who are partners of women giving birth are entitled to a maximum of 60 working days parental leave.

(26) Candidates who have completed 12 months candidature and who are the primary care giver of a newborn child are entitled to a maximum of 60 working days parental leave.

## **MPhil / MRes**

(27) Candidates who have completed six (6) months candidature are entitled to a maximum of 60 working days parental leave.

(28) Candidates who have completed six (6) months candidature and who have adopted a child are entitled to a maximum of 60 working days parental leave.

(29) Candidates who have completed six (6) months candidature and who are partners of women giving birth are entitled to a maximum of 60 working days parental leave.

(30) Candidates who have completed six (6) months candidature and who are the primary care giver of a newborn child are entitled to a maximum of 60 working days parental leave.

## **Leave of Absence (LOA)**

(31) Leave of Absence (LOA) is leave from candidature that is not paid.

(32) Approved Leave of Absence extends the EWS Date by the equivalent period.

(33) LOA may be granted in circumstances that have had an impact on candidature progress or personal wellbeing and can include:

- a. a significant health event meaning a candidate is unable to work or study. Supporting documentary evidence must be provided, e.g. medical certificate, a statement from the relevant authority as evidence for the necessity of leave. If a candidate's leave has been approved on medical grounds and they wish to return early (i.e. before the approved end date of leave), their request must be supported by a medical certificate confirming their fitness to return to study.
- b. a major political upheaval or natural disaster in the candidate's home country requiring emergency travel and where this has affected the candidate's studies.
- c. a traumatic experience – for example involvement in or witnessing a serious crime or accident which has serious impacts on a candidate's physical or mental health (documentary evidence such as a police report for the event must be provided).
- d. on a case by case basis - University-approved Internships with documentary evidence
- e. other family responsibility commitments.

(34) Leave of Absence may be approved only when other leave entitlements are exhausted.

- a. Full-time MPhil / PhD candidates are eligible to apply for a period of leave of between four (4) weeks and six (6) months, to a cumulative total of up to 12 months over the course of their candidature. The same provision will apply on a pro rata basis for part-time candidates.
- b. MRes candidates are eligible to apply for up to two (2) periods of leave, each between two (2) weeks and three (3) months, to a cumulative total of up to six (6) months over the course of their candidature. The same provision will apply on a pro rata basis for part-time candidates.

(35) Continuous leave periods will only be approved in exceptional circumstances (e.g. serious illness of the candidate or direct family member).

(36) LOA is a period of non-enrolment and the candidate will immediately lose their right to access the Library, information and communication technology (ICT) resources, Faculty research facilities and supervisory support.

(37) Candidates must lodge their LOA request at least four (4) weeks in advance of the date of leave requested. Applications for retrospective LOA will not be considered.

(38) LOA must be supported by the Principal Supervisor and formally requested through the Faculty and the HDRO.

(39) At the end of a period of LOA, candidates will be automatically re-enrolled subject to the payment of any outstanding fees.

(40) Under the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#), suspension of study for international candidates on a student visa is not allowed unless in exceptional circumstance where it may be granted, primarily on medical or compassionate grounds. Once international candidates are granted approved leave of absence, they will be reported to the [Department of Home Affairs](#) (DHA). They will normally have to leave Australia for the approved LOA period. If research candidates on a student visa wish to stay in Australia during an approved leave period, they need to get approval from DHA, in writing, to do so.

(41) International research candidates should also note that it is their responsibility to notify their Department / Faculty about their intention to apply for Leave of Absence (LOA) as soon as practicable. This is because the University is required by Law to report to the Government any event affecting the enrolment of an overseas student (international candidate) within 14 days.

## Part D - Extensions

(42) Candidates are expected to plan their research so they can meet their EWS Date at the same time as other

obligations they might have, both inside and outside the University.

(43) Candidates can apply for extensions only in exceptional circumstances, where serious and unavoidable circumstances arise after enrolment that have affected their ability to commit fully to their studies.

(44) If approved, extension of candidature will be granted for:

- a. PhD – a maximum of six (6) months at a time for full-time candidates (this includes onshore Cotutelle) and 12 months at a time for part-time candidates (this includes offshore Cotutelle). Multiple extensions may be allowed up to a maximum cumulative EFTSL of 4.0 for the degree, or 5.0 for combined Master of Psychology and PhD programs.
- b. MPhil – six (6) months for full-time candidates and 12 months for part-time candidates. Multiple extensions may be allowed up to a maximum cumulative EFTSL of 2.5.
- c. MRes – three (3) months at a time for full-time candidates and six (6) months at a time for part-time candidates. Multiple extensions may be allowed up to a maximum cumulative EFTSL of 1.5.

## **Part E - Tuition Fee**

(45) The University reserves the right to charge a tuition fee to all HDR candidates beyond 3.0 EFTSL for Doctoral level degrees and 2.0 EFTSL for Master of Philosophy and Master of Research degrees who request and have approved an extension to the period of their candidature.

(46) The University may vary the tuition fee for Extensions at its discretion at any time in the future.

## **Part F - Cessation of Candidature**

(47) Enrolment will cease automatically if:

- a. an extension of candidature is not approved; or
- b. the candidate is unable to submit their thesis at the end of the approved extension period.

(48) Enrolment will be ceased upon recommendation by the Faculty if:

- a. the candidate has not completed their Annual Progress Report (APR); and / or
- b. the candidate is no longer communicating effectively with their Supervisor(s), or Departmental or Faculty academic staff responsible for candidature matters.

(49) On cessation of enrolment, the candidate will immediately lose their right to access the Library, information and communication technology (ICT) resources, Faculty research facilities and supervisory support.

## **Part G - Withdrawal**

(50) Withdrawal from candidature is a complete discontinuation of studies. Candidates may withdraw from their program at any point in their candidature.

## **Part H - Re-admission**

(51) Where a candidate's enrolment has ceased, they must apply for re-admission within two (2) years if they wish to return. Where a candidate is re-admitted after withdrawal or discontinuance, a period of enrolment sufficient for satisfactory completion of the thesis and submission will be determined by the Faculty Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research.

(52) Re-admitted international candidates will be required to pay the relevant tuition fees for the additional period of candidature.

## Part I - Appeals

(53) Candidates may appeal decisions relating to cessation of candidature, change of attendance, leave and extensions of candidature. Appeals on this basis are limited to procedural grounds only. Students have 20 working days to submit an appeal following notification of the decision. An appeal is to be lodged by email to [hdrcurrent@mq.edu.au](mailto:hdrcurrent@mq.edu.au).

## Section 3 - Procedures

(54) Nil.

## Section 4 - Guidelines

(55) Nil.

## Section 5 - Definitions

(56) Commonly defined terms are located in the University Glossary. The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

- a. Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFTSL) means a measure of the study load, for a year, of a student undertaking a course of study on a full-time basis. Note: a full-time HDR candidate for one (1) year attracts a consumable EFTSL of 1.0 and a part-time candidate attracts a consumable EFTSL of 0.5.
- b. Expected Work Submission (EWS) Date means a candidate's thesis submission deadline. The original EWS Date is based on their enrolment date. The EWS Date may be adjusted if there are variations to candidature.
- c. Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidates means students enrolled in the research (thesis) component of the following degrees:
  - i. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and all other doctorates by research;
  - ii. Master of Philosophy (MPhil); and
  - iii. Master of Research (MRes).
- d. Onshore Cotutelle candidates means students enrolled and on-campus at Macquarie University under cotutelle arrangements.
- e. Offshore Cotutelle candidates means students enrolled and off campus at Macquarie University under cotutelle arrangements.
- f. Out-of-time (OOT) means candidates who have consumed the standard HDR Equivalent Full-Time Study Load (EFTSL) but not yet submitted their thesis for examination.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
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