

Graduate 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 [Graduate Research Rule](#). 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 information available on the HDR Variations to Candidature Website specify the requirements to manage such circumstances.

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 or extension of EWS 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 [Graduate Research Rule](#).

(8) Candidates may apply to change from full-time to part-time at any point in their candidature (or vice versa). In the final enrolment period the request to convert enrolment mode must be made prior to the census date of the enrolment period.

(9) Changes of attendance are subject to appropriate approval from the Faculty.

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

(11) Under the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#), International students holding a Student Visa are not permitted to change to part-time enrolment and are required to complete their course within a set period, as indicated by their eCoE. An application to change to part-time enrolment will only be considered where there are compassionate or compelling circumstances and must be supported by documentary evidence. International students on a student visa are required to comply with the provisions of their visa when seeking a change of enrolment and should obtain visa advice from the [Department of Home Affairs](#).

Part C - Leave Entitlements

General Leave Provisions

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

(13) Periods of leave of 10 working days or less will not be considered, and candidates should work with their supervisory panel to make up the time, or document shorter periods of disruptions which can be used as justification for an extension of EWS date if required.

(14) 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.

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

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

(17) Leave is a period of non-enrolment and the candidate should not access the Library or expect information and communication technology (ICT) resources, Faculty research facilities or supervisory support.

(18) Applications for leave should be made as soon as practically possible. Retrospective Leave will only be considered in highly exceptional circumstances, noting that consideration is at the discretion of the University and that time limits may apply due to University and Statutory reporting.

(19) Leave must be supported by the Principal Supervisor and formally requested via the Leave form.

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

(21) Under the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#), suspension of study for international research

candidates on a student visa is not allowed unless in exceptional circumstance where it may be granted, primarily on compassionate or compelling grounds. If an international candidate is granted a period of Leave, a variation will be made on the Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE). Candidates will be required to contact the [Department of Home Affairs](#) on how this will impact their visa and whether they are able to remain in Australia during the leave period.

(22) International research candidates should also note that it is their responsibility to notify the University about their intention to apply for Leave 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 31 days.

Annual Leave

(23) 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.

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

Sick Leave

(25) Sick leave is defined as 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).

(26) Full time and part time candidates are entitled to up to 20 working days sick leave per year, credited at the commencement of each year of candidature. Candidates who are granted an extension of EWS date beyond the standard period of candidature for their course will not be credited additional leave.

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

(28) All candidates requiring sick leave must inform the Graduate Research Academy at the start of absence or as soon as practicable.

Parental Leave

(29) MRes Y2, MPhil and PhD candidates are entitled to a maximum of 60 working days parental leave over the duration of their candidature. This provision is the same for both full time and part time candidates.

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

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

Internship Leave

(32) In accordance with the [Guiding Principles for Research Internships](#) candidates may apply for a period of Internship Leave to engage in an internship with a research end user.

(33) Internship leave may be approved for up to:

- a. 120 working days for a PhD candidate; or
- b. 60 working days for an MPhil or MRes Year 2 candidate.

(34) Approved Internship Leave extends the EWS Date by the equivalent period.

Other Personal Leave

(35) Other Personal Leave may be granted in circumstances that have had an impact on candidature progress or

personal wellbeing and can include:

- a. medically substantiated periods of illness over the course of candidature where the candidate has exhausted the yearly Sick Leave provision;
- 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. family/caring responsibilities which may include caring for a family member who is ill or incapacitated; temporary and unexpected absence of the usual carer; or an unexpected emergency;
- e. compassionate or bereavement leave (maximum 20 working days) - Where a family member has a serious illness, injury or dies, personal leave may be accessed to attend the person, make arrangements for and/or attend the funeral, and attend to arrangements after the funeral. For the purpose of bereavement leave, Family Member will include aunt, uncle and siblings-in-law including siblings of same sex defacto partners; and
- f. Family and Domestic Violence leave (maximum 20 working days) which may include emergency situations arising from family or domestic violence or homelessness and is required for attending medical appointments, organising alternative accommodation, care and/or education arrangements, attending court hearings and/or police appointments, or accessing legal advice.

(36) Other Personal Leave 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 (250 working days) 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 (125 working days) over the course of their candidature. The same provision will apply on a pro rata basis for part-time candidates.

(37) Approved Personal Leave extends the EWS Date by the equivalent period.

Part D - Extensions

(38) 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.

(39) 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.

(40) 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.

(41) Under the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#), International students holding a Student Visa are expected to complete their course within a set period, indicated by their eCoE. Only in situations which are considered to be compassionate or compelling are grounds for an extension request. If an international candidate is granted an extension, a variation will be made on the Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE). With the change in the duration of study program, candidates may need to extend their student visa and should contact the [Department of Home Affairs](#) for visa advice.

Part E - Tuition Fee

(42) 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.

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

Part F - Cessation of Candidature

(44) Enrolment will cease automatically if:

- a. the candidate does not submit their thesis by their original EWS date, and no application for extension is received by the Graduate Research Academy; or
- b. the candidate does not submit their thesis at the end of the approved extension period.

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

- a. the candidate has not submitted a Graduate Research Candidature Milestone or engaged with a review process as required by the [Graduate Research Continuation Policy](#) and [Graduate Research Continuation Procedure](#);
- b. the candidate is no longer communicating effectively with their Supervisor(s), or Departmental or Faculty academic staff responsible for candidature matters; and/or
- c. supervision is no longer available, in accordance with the [Graduate Research Supervision Policy](#) and [Graduate Research Supervision Procedure](#).

(46) Enrolment may be ceased upon recommendation by the Graduate Research Academy if the candidate is a Cotutelle/Joint PhD and can no longer fulfill the operational requirements of the program as outlined in the Cotutelle/Joint PhD Agreement and/or Guiding Principles for Cotutelle and Joint PhD Enrolment.

(47) 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.

(48) Under the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#), International students holding a Student Visa are expected to complete their course within a set period, indicated by their eCoE. If your enrolment is ceased, you are able to appeal. Candidates who do not appeal, or who are not successful in their appeal, are reported to the [Department of Home Affairs](#). This may result in the cancellation of your visa and candidates should consult the [Department of Home Affairs](#) for visa advice.

Part G - Withdrawal

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

(50) Under the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#), International students holding a Student Visa, who have studied with Macquarie University for more than six calendar months are able to stop their studies by notifying

the GRA using the relevant online form. Candidates who have not studied for more than six calendar months must request permission to be released from their studies. A release will only be granted as outlined in the [Transfer and Release for International Students Policy](#). Withdrawals will be reported on the CoE and candidates should consult the [Department of Home Affairs](#) on the impact to their Student Visa.

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 Graduate Research Academy on recommendation of the Faculty Associate Dean, Research Training and Performance, and will not exceed 3 months.

(52) Candidates who are re-admitted under clause (55) are not entitled to leave or extension provisions.

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

Part I - Review and Appeals

(54) Candidates may request a review of decisions relating to change of attendance, leave, and extensions of candidature. Requests on this basis are limited to procedural grounds only. Students have 20 working days to submit a request for review of a decision following notification of the decision. A request is to be lodged by email to gr.candidatesupport@mq.edu.au.

(55) Candidate may appeal a decision relating to cessation of candidature, and should do so in accordance with the [Appeals Policy](#) noting time limits to appeal apply.

Section 3 - Procedures

(56) Nil.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(57) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(58) 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

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