Graduate Research Variations to Candidature Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy specifies the University's requirements for Graduate Research (Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Philosophy, and Master of Research) students who are seeking a variation to their candidature as a result of a change in project, 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. Graduate Research students are expected to complete within the standard period of candidature. It is however recognised that students may experience circumstances affecting the standard period of candidature. This Policy and the information available on the Graduate Research Changes to Candidature Website specify the requirements to manage such circumstances.

Scope

(3) This Policy applies to all Graduate Research students as well as to University staff engaged in the provision and support of Graduate Research supervision. This Policy does not apply to students who have already submitted their thesis for examination and who are subsequently required to revise and re-submit their thesis. These students 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 - Change of Project/Thesis Title

(5) A change of project must be discussed with the Principal Supervisor and Head of School/Department (or nominee) prior to commencement of the work.

(6) International students must check their visa conditions and where applicable seek advice and obtain approval from the Department of Home Affairs before commencing any work on a new project area.

(7) Should a change of project result in a change to the thesis title, a student must submit the applicable form to the Graduate Research Academy.

Part B - Continuation of Candidature/Out of Time Candidature

(8) A student whose consumed EFTSL is less than the standard EFTSL for their Graduate Research program 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 student has reached the maximum consumable EFTSL for their candidature, their enrolment will cease (i.e. there will be no automatic extension of enrolment).

(9) Out-of-time (OOT) students 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 School/Department (or nominee).

Part C - Change of Attendance

(10) Students are enrolled full-time unless otherwise approved, as defined in the Graduate Research Rule.

(11) Students 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.

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

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

(14) 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 as outlined in Schedule 1 - Graduate Research Supporting Evidence Requirements. 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 D - Leave Entitlements

General Leave Provisions

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

(16) Periods of leave less than 5 working days will not be considered, and students 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.

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

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

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

(20) Leave requests must be supported by relevant documentary evidence as outlined in Schedule 1 - Graduate

Research Supporting Evidence Requirements.

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

(22) 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.

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

(24) At the end of a period of leave, students will be automatically re-enrolled subject to the payment of any outstanding fees.

(25) Under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000, suspension of study for international research students on a student visa are not allowed unless in exceptional circumstances where it may be granted, primarily on compassionate or compelling grounds. If an international student is granted a period of Leave, a variation will be made on the Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE). Students 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.

(26) International research students 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 student) within 31 days.

Annual Leave

(27) Students 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.

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

Sick Leave

(29) Sick leave is defined as serious illness or injury.

(30) Full time and part time students are entitled to up to 10 working days sick leave per year, credited at the commencement of each year of candidature.

(31) Unused sick leave accrues and can be rolled over to subsequent years.

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

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

Parental Leave

(34) MPhil and PhD students are entitled to a maximum of 20 weeks parental leave for each child they will be the primary carer of, on the birth or adoption of the child. This provision is the same for both full time and part time students.

(35) MPhil and PhD students who are partners of a primary carer are entitled to a maximum of 60 working days of parental leave for each child, on the birth or adoption of the child. This provision is the same for both full time and part time students.

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

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

Internship Leave

(38) In accordance with the Guiding Principles for Research Internships, students may apply for a period of Internship Leave to engage in an internship with a research end user.

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

a. 120 working days for a PhD student; or
b. 60 working days for an MPhil or MRes student.

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

Other Personal Leave

(41) 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 student has exhausted their Sick Leave provisions;
b. a major political upheaval or natural disaster in the student's home country requiring emergency travel and where this has affected the student's studies;
c. a traumatic experience – for example involvement in or witnessing a serious crime or accident which has serious impacts on a student's physical or mental health;
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 to 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.

(42) Other Personal Leave may be approved only when other leave entitlements are exhausted.

a. Full-time MPhil/PhD students 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 students.
b. MRes students 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 students.

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

Part E - Extensions

(44) Students 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.

(45) Students 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.

(46) Extension requests must be supported by relevant evidence as outlined in Schedule 1 - Graduate Research Supporting Evidence Requirements.

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

a. PhD – a maximum of six (6) months at a time for full-time students and 12 months at a time for part-time students. 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 students and 12 months for part-time students. 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 students and six (6) months at a time for part-time students. Multiple extensions may be allowed up to a maximum cumulative EFTSL of 1.5.

(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. Only in situations which are considered to be compassionate or compelling are grounds for an extension request. If an international student is granted an extension, a variation will be made on the Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE). With the change in the duration of study program, students may need to extend their student visa and should contact the Department of Home Affairs for visa advice.

Part F - Tuition Fee

(49) The University reserves the right to charge a tuition fee to all Graduate Research students beyond 3.0 EFTSL for Doctoral level degrees, 2.0 EFTSL for Master of Philosophy and 1.0 EFTSL for Master of Research degrees who request and have approved an extension to the period of their candidature.

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

Part G - Cessation of Candidature

(51) Enrolment will cease automatically if:

a. the student 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 student does not submit their thesis at the end of the approved extension period.

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

a. the student 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 student 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.

(53) Enrolment may be ceased upon recommendation by the Graduate Research Academy if the student 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.

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

(55) 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. Students 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 students should consult the Department of Home Affairs for visa advice.

Part H - Withdrawal

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

(57) 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. Students 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 students should consult the Department of Home Affairs on the impact to their Student Visa.

Part I - Re-admission

(58) Where a student's enrolment has ceased, they must apply for re-admission within two (2) years if they wish to return. Where a student 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.

(59) The period of re-enrolment will not exceed 3 months when a student's prior attempt at the ceased graduate research course had reached is maximum consumable EFTSL.

(60) Students who are re-admitted under clause 59 are not entitled to leave or extension provisions.

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

Part J - Review and Appeals

(62) Students may informally 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.

(63) Students may formally appeal some decisions and should do so in accordance with the Appeals Policy noting time limits to appeal apply.

Section 3 - Procedures

(64) Nil.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(65) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(66) 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 Graduate Research student for one (1) year attracts a consumable EFTSL of 1.0 and a part-time student attracts a consumable EFTSL of 0.5.
b. Expected Work Submission (EWS) Date means a student'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. Onshore Cotutelle students means students enrolled and on-campus at Macquarie University under cotutelle arrangements.
d. Offshore Cotutelle students means students enrolled and off-campus at Macquarie University under cotutelle arrangements.
e. Out-of-time (OOT) means students who have consumed the standard Equivalent Full-Time Study Load (EFTSL) but not yet submitted their thesis for examination.

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