

Higher Degree Research Admissions Policy

Section 1 - PURPOSE

(1) This Policy specifies the principles that govern the admission of students to an approved higher degree research (HDR) course of study.

Background

(2) Macquarie University offers a range of courses of study and programs and is committed to principles of social inclusion and equity when admitting students.

(3) This Policy complies with the following legislation, regulations, and instruments:

- a. [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#);
- b. [Higher Education Support Amendment \(Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students\) Act 2020](#);
- c. [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#);
- d. [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#); and
- e. [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#).

Scope

(4) This Policy applies to all prospective students (applicants) applying for admission to, and current students admitted to, Macquarie University HDR courses of study or programs, including completed Master of Research students who intend to progress to another HDR course, including:

- a. Doctor of Philosophy;
- b. Master of Philosophy;
- c. Bachelor of Philosophy/Master of Research; and
- d. Cotutelle and Joint Research Degrees with approved Partner Universities.

(5) This Policy does not apply to:

- a. HDR students who are returning to study after a leave of absence (see [Higher Degree Research Variations to Candidature Policy](#));
- b. applicants for the University's other coursework undergraduate and postgraduate courses of study (see [Admission Policy](#));
- c. HDR students of Macquarie University seeking internal transfer from one course of study to another (see [Higher Degree Research Degree Transfer Policy](#)); or
- d. students enrolled at other institutions seeking to undertake exchange, study abroad or cross-institutional study (see [Enrolment Policy](#)).

Section 2 - POLICY

Part A - General Admission Principles

(6) The University will assess all applicants based on academic merit and/or capacity to participate in their intended study through fair, equitable and transparent policies and procedures that comply with all legislative and regulatory requirements.

(7) Admission offers are only made to applicants who meet the admission criteria and are therefore judged to have the background and research capability to have a reasonable expectation of success in the program to which they are made an offer.

(8) Admission offers are made broadly on merit and based on demonstrated achievement, especially academic achievement, but may also take account of other factors that demonstrate research preparedness in an area relevant to the intended higher degree research.

(9) Admission offers are made only where there is an appropriate fit between the applicant, research environment, available resources and supervision. Therefore applicants who meet the admission criteria are not guaranteed an offer of admission to a course.

(10) Applicants for admission to cotutelle and Joint Research Degree courses must be approved for admission to the equivalent course by the partner institution.

(11) Joint Research Degree (Joint PhD) agreements with the partner university must be approved by the Academic Senate and the equivalent approval authority of the partner university prior to admission of a student to the program.

(12) The admission systems will be administered in accordance with clear responsibilities and accountabilities. All decisions will be made fairly and transparently by University staff with the requisite skills, knowledge, and training and in accordance with the University [Delegations of Authority Register](#).

(13) Applicants for HDR courses should acquaint themselves of, and act in accordance with all relevant University Rules, regulations, Policies and Procedures, including, but not limited to:

- a. the [Graduate Research Rules](#);
- b. the [Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#);
- c. the [Student Code of Conduct](#); and
- d. the [Intellectual Property Policy](#).

(14) The University will assess Prior Learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) when determining whether an applicant meets specific requirements for entry into a course or program, in accordance with the [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#) and the [Assessing Recognition of Prior Learning Applications Procedure](#).

(15) International applicants who meet admission requirements are also required to meet any criteria imposed under Australian Commonwealth or State legislation or regulation.

(16) Admission to the University will be either:

- a. by a direct application to the University to a specified course of study, program or other academic offering; or
- b. indirectly via an authorised agent (see [International Education Agent Policy](#)).

(17) The University may charge an application fee.

(18) The University reserves the right to withdraw an offer or cancel the enrolment of a student:

- a. where an offer is made on the basis of incomplete, inaccurate, fraudulent or misleading information supplied by the applicant or certifying authority; or
- b. where the applicant has previously been suspended or excluded from the University or any other tertiary institution for academic reasons, including but not limited to academic dishonesty or unsatisfactory academic progress; or
- c. an international student has failed to meet any criteria imposed under Australian Commonwealth or State legislation or regulation in accordance with clause 15; or
- d. where an international student who would normally require a student visa for the purposes of admission to the HDR course is denied a student visa; and
- e. in the case of a) - d), any fees paid may be forfeited as per the [Higher Degree Research International Fee Refund Policy](#). Where it is found that an applicant or certifying authority may have provided fraudulent or misleading information, it is to be reported in accordance with the [Macquarie University Research Code Complaints, Breaches and Investigation Procedure](#).

(19) The University reserves the right to withdraw an offer of admission if the course or program ceases to be offered prior to commencement.

(20) Admission requirements, admission pathways and entry schemes will undergo quality assurance, enhancement and improvement through regular monitoring and review in accordance with the [Quality Assurance Framework Policy](#), the [Course of Study Annual Monitoring and Review Policy](#), and the [Course of Study Reaccreditation Policy](#).

(21) Admission requirements will reflect the academic preparation and proficiency in English needed to participate in the intended study and should reflect the University's commitment to diversity, inclusion and belonging by encouraging broad access to qualified students from diverse backgrounds.

(22) The Graduate Research Academy will work with Walanga Muru and relevant units to support the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in HDR programs, and as well as international Indigenous communities.

(23) Applicants will be admitted to the current curriculum of an approved course or program, unless there are extenuating circumstances which will be considered on a case-by-case basis and approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or their authorised agent as prescribed in the [Delegations of Authority Register](#).

Part B - Capability to undertake a HDR course of study

(24) Applicants may provide evidence of research capability in order to demonstrate they meet the admission criteria for HDR courses through research undertaken in an academic qualification or research activities through professional experience.

(25) Research undertaken in an academic qualification means the applicant has undertaken a scholarly investigation resulting in related outputs which typically includes a supervised research dissertation as a component of the qualification sufficient to assess research potential in the discipline. This includes a research project, dissertation or thesis produced for assessment in an academic qualification, which demonstrates:

- a. the applicant has undertaken research comprising design and conduct of a scholarly investigation in an existing body of knowledge; and
- b. has critically analysed and evaluated the outcome in that body of knowledge and effectively communicated this work.

(26) Research from professional experience means the applicant has professional/industry experience such as

employment in an innovation/development or research position or practice in a clinical or creative discipline. They must be able to demonstrate how this experience and outputs can be considered equivalent to research training within an academic qualification.

(27) Overseas qualifications will be assessed for comparability to Australian qualifications with reference to the Australian Department of Education Qualification Recognition Service.

Part C - Minimum Academic Requirements for Admission to HDR Courses

(28) All applicants for HDR courses must meet the minimum English Language Requirements described in [Schedule 1 - English Language Admission Requirements for Graduate Research Courses](#).

(29) To be admitted to candidature for any HDR course of the University, the applicant must meet:

- a. the relevant degree qualification requirements under clauses 30, 31, 32, 33 or 34; and
- b. any additional requirements imposed under clause 35.

(30) An applicant for a Doctoral Degree must have qualified for an award from Macquarie University or another tertiary institution being:

- a. a Master of Research (MRes) with a grade of at least a Distinction (75% or greater) in second year;
- b. a Master of Philosophy;
- c. a two-year Masters degree with a major research component at Distinction level (75% or greater); or
- d. from another tertiary institution and approved as equivalent to those in clauses 30(a), 30(b), or 30(c) by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the recommendation of the Executive Dean of the relevant Faculty in which the applicant seeks to be admitted.

(31) An applicant for a Doctor of Philosophy combined with the Master of Clinical Psychology, the Master of Clinical Neuropsychology or the Master of Organisational Psychology must:

- a. have a qualification for admission to the Doctoral Degree under clause 30; or
- b. have a first-class Honours (H1) degree in Psychology from a recognised Australian institution accredited by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council; and
- c. be accepted for admission to candidature to the:
 - i. Master of Clinical Psychology;
 - ii. Master of Clinical Neuropsychology; or
 - iii. Master of Organisational Psychology.

(32) An applicant for a Joint Research Degree - Doctor of Philosophy must have:

- a. qualified for admission to candidature for a Doctor of Philosophy or equivalent degree in the partner university; and
- b. be qualified for entry to a Doctoral Degree under clause 30.

(33) An applicant for a Master of Philosophy must have qualified for an award from Macquarie University or another tertiary institution being:

- a. a Master of Research (MRes) with at least 65% in second year; or
- b. a two-year Master's degree with a major research component at Credit level (65% or greater); or

- c. from another tertiary institution and approved as equivalent to those in clauses 33(a) or 33(b) by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the recommendation of the Executive Dean of the Faculty in which the applicant seeks to be admitted.

(34) An applicant for a Master of Research must:

- a. have qualified for the award of a Bachelor or higher award with a Credit average (at least 65%); or
- b. have satisfied requirements for the Bachelor of Philosophy offered by the University; or
- c. hold qualifications approved as equivalent to those in clauses 34(a) or 34(b) by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the recommendation of the Executive Dean of the Faculty in which the applicant seeks to be registered; and
- d. satisfy any admission requirements such as a higher level of performance in an appropriate area or areas of study as specified in [Schedule 2 - Additional Entry Requirements to Master of Research and Master of Research Courses](#).

(35) The University may specify other mandatory requirements that demonstrate an applicant's capability for success in the program. Examples of additional requirements may include relevant professional or industry experience, a portfolio of creative works, an audition or relevant competency in a language other than English.

(36) In exceptional cases an applicant may be deemed to have met the admission requirements if:

- a. the applicant submits evidence of research experience from academic qualifications and/or professional activities, in an appropriate discipline or disciplines, deemed equivalent to that of the academic qualification requirements and which demonstrates capability of success in the course in which they have applied for admission; and
- b. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) deems any such submissions under clause 36(a) to be acceptable for the purpose of proceeding to the degree.

Section 3 - PROCEDURES

Part D - Admission Requirements

(37) Academic Senate determines and approves admission requirements for all award courses.

(38) Academic Senate will approve the minimum English language requirements and the accepted forms of evidence of English language proficiency for all award courses (see [Schedule 1 - English Language Admission Requirements for Graduate Research Courses](#)).

(39) Admission requirements will be monitored by the analysis of student performance, retention, and any other relevant factors through processes outlined in the [Course of Study Annual Monitoring and Review Policy](#), and reviewed in-depth at least once every seven (7) years as part of the reaccreditation process as outlined within the [Course of Study Reaccreditation Policy](#).

(40) Any change to admission requirements will not be applied to an applicant who has received an existing unconditional offer from the University.

Part E - Admission to HDR Courses of Study

(41) An applicant must be admitted to an HDR course as a:

- a. Full-time student; or
- b. Part-time student; based on an assessment of the extent of the applicant's commitments other than those related to the degree.

(42) International HDR students studying in Australia on a student visa must enrol on a full-time basis in accordance with the requirements of the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) (ESOS Act).

(43) Upon admission, HDR students must ensure that they are aware of and take responsibility for their own adherence to:

- a. the [Student Code of Conduct](#);
- b. the [Graduate Research Rules](#);
- c. The [Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#), including taking responsibility for ensuring that all necessary approvals from ethics and other committees have been obtained prior to commencement of research that requires approval;
- d. assign their Intellectual Property to the University in accordance with the [Intellectual Property Policy](#);
- e. The [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#); and
- f. for HDR students admitted to cotutelle or Joint Research Degrees, the [MQ Guiding Principles for Cotutelle and Joint PhD Enrolment](#).

(44) HDR students are expected to enrol on an Onsite basis. The University will consider a request to enrol on an Offsite basis in accordance with the [Offsite Research Enrolment Policy](#).

(45) Upon admission, HDR students are required to complete the Central Commencement Program and any mandatory training requirements in the time frames prescribed by the Department or Faculty.

(46) Upon admission HDR students are deemed to have "provisional candidature" until such time as they have satisfied the requirements of confirmation of candidature as specified in the [Graduate Research Continuation Policy](#) and [Graduate Research Continuation Procedure](#), or as prescribed by the relevant Department and/or Faculty authority. Having satisfied the requirements a student will be identified as "confirmed".

(47) An applicant who has completed a period of candidature for a research degree in another university may count the whole or any part of the period of this enrolment, as a period completed in a HDR course at the same level at this University, provided that:

- a. the period of advanced study and research has been carried out while enrolled in the equivalent course, and in accordance with required ethics legislation;
- b. is directly related to the student's proposed research course at this University;
- c. the student shall have formally withdrawn from enrolment in the higher degree of the other university for which the previous tenure is applicable, except in the case of cotutelle or Joint research degree students; and
- d. the student will meet, on completion of the course, the minimum requirement that at least half of the student's work to have been completed whilst an enrolled student in a research degree at Macquarie University.

Part F - Offers of Admission to HDR Courses

(48) After assessment of an application for entry to a HDR course of study the University will make one of the following decisions:

- a. make an unconditional offer;
- b. make a conditional offer with a clearly specified date by which the conditions need to be met;

- c. make a packaged offer that will permit a student entry to their desired course after the successful completion of a qualifying award or program;
- d. make an offer to an alternative course of study where the student meets admission requirements for that course; or
- e. decline to make an offer.

(49) All decisions will be made in writing and in accordance with all relevant University rules, resolutions, policies and procedures.

Deferring an Offer of Admission to a HDR Course

(50) The University will determine the grounds upon which a commencing HDR student may defer their offer. The University may permit a student to defer commencing their studies for up to 12 months from the intake included on their original offer with a further one (1) year (12 months) deferment permitted under certain circumstances (see [Higher Degree Research Deferment of a Course Offer Procedure](#)).

(51) Students taking up their deferred offer will be admitted to the current curriculum of their course or program, provided that the course or program has not been discontinued or is currently inactive in which case they will be offered admission to a comparable course or program where they meet the admission requirements, and in accordance with this Policy.

(52) The University will advise international students whose deferment of offer has been approved of the need to seek advice from the [Department of Home Affairs](#) on the potential impact on their student visa. The University will report the change to the international student's enrolment under Section 19 of the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#).

Expiration of HDR Offers

(53) The University reserves the right to set expiry dates on offers. Expiry dates for offers are explicitly stated in the Letter of Offer for courses and are:

- a. applied if a student does not meet the specified conditions in a conditional offer by the date specified the Letter of Offer; or
- b. applied if a student does not accept the offer by the expiry date specified in the Letter of Offer; and
- c. has not requested a deferral of an offer of admission in accordance with the [Higher Degree Research Deferment of a Course Offer Procedure](#).

Part G - Appeals

(54) Appeals against an unsuccessful application for admission will be considered in accordance with the [Academic Appeals Policy](#).

Part H - Readmission After Discontinuation

(55) In exceptional circumstances where a student has withdrawn from or discontinued their course, the University may authorise a period of enrolment (not more than three months full time equivalent) suitable for the thesis to be submitted, within two years of withdrawal.

(56) Students seeking readmission to a HDR course following withdrawal to their incomplete course must reapply in accordance with this Policy. If offered admission, students will be admitted to the current curriculum of their course.

Section 4 - GUIDELINES

(57) Nil.

Section 5 - DEFINITIONS

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

- a. Award means the qualification resulting from the satisfactory completion of a specific Course of Study. Also known as qualification or degree.
- b. Cotutelle means joint enrolment by a student in a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the University and an overseas partner university. A student has supervisors at both universities, spends time at both universities, and submits a single thesis for examination by each university.
- c. Course or Course of study means the minimum sequence of required study which would enable a student to qualify for an award, including both the general requirements of a specific award and the specific requirements of a qualifying major or specialisation where applicable.
- d. Offer Expiry Date means the date on which the offer of admission to a HDR course is expired and is no longer valid. This may be referred to in the Letter of Offer as the Deadline to Accept.
- e. Full-time means at least an average weekly commitment by a HDR student of 40 hours per week throughout the year on a program of research and advanced study.
- f. Joint Research Degree means joint enrolment by a student in a program at Macquarie University and selected international partner universities. A student has supervisors at both universities and spends time at both universities. The final thesis is jointly examined and the two universities may jointly award a degree. Also called a Joint PhD.
- g. Onsite Research Enrolment (onsite enrolment): is a mode of enrolment where the student lives within reasonable commuting distance from the University's Wallumattagal campus. This does not mean daily attendance at campus, but students and supervisors will have frequent contact, which may be online, with an agreed, regular attendance schedule on campus to enable the student to be embedded in the campus environment and research culture.
 - i. Students who reside within a reasonable commute of the University's Wallumattagal campus but who are permanently (less than six (6) months) carrying out research, or research related travel, fieldwork or collaboration activities at a location outside that campus (such as students who are employed by industry and carrying out research for their HDR in the course of their employment at an industry location) are considered to be 'onsite', and expected to have frequent contact with their University supervisor, with an agreed, regular attendance schedule on campus to enable the student to be embedded in the campus environment and research culture.
- h. Offsite Research Enrolment (offsite enrolment): is a mode of enrolment where the student lives permanently (greater than 6 months) outside reasonable commuting distance to the University's Wallumattagal campus. Students and Supervisors will have frequent contact via online or other digital means.
 - i. Offsite Research Enrolment does not apply to students undertaking research related travel, fieldwork or collaboration activities away from campus for less than six (6) months. Approval of short term (less than six (6) months) HDR research related activities away from the Wallumattagal campus should be approved via the relevant Faculty processes, with notification to the Graduate Research Academy.
- i. Partner University means an institution which has entered into a formal written agreement with Macquarie University to facilitate HDR programs.
- j. Part-time means at least an average weekly commitment by a HDR student of 20 hours per week throughout

the year on a program of research and advanced study.

Status and Details

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