

GRADUATE RESEARCH CANDIDATURE MANAGEMENT POLICY

This policy is in effect from 30 April 2024.

Prior to 30 April 2024, refer to the [Graduate Research Progress Management Policy](#) and [Graduate Research Thesis Examination Policy](#) and the additional [graduate research policy suites](#).

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Monash University graduate research courses.

For the purpose of this policy:

- references to 'the University' include the activities of Monash University Australia, Monash University Malaysia, Monash University Indonesia, Monash Suzhou, and the Monash Suzhou Research Institute, unless indicated otherwise; and
- references to 'graduate research students' and 'students' have the same meaning unless specified otherwise.

For students at Monash University Indonesia, this policy has been translated into the Indonesian language (Bahasa) and can be accessed on the University's [Policy Bank](#).

POLICY STATEMENT

The University is committed to providing a high-quality experience for all graduate research students and support through to the completion of graduate research courses. This policy sets out all candidature management matters, including progress management, termination of enrolment, industry engagement (research internships), and thesis examination.

Graduate research students must refer to the [Graduate Research Enrolment Procedure](#) for information relating to student administration matters.

1. General principles

- 1.1. The University supports students in meeting the requirements of their graduate research course (course) by:
 - providing supervision and support during candidature in accordance with the [Graduate Research Student Supervision Policy](#);
 - continuously monitoring academic progress and identifying at-risk students early;
 - offering targeted support strategies and academic advice; and
 - preserving the independence and integrity of the thesis examination process.
- 1.2. Unsatisfactory progress, or a failure to meet the academic progress requirements, will be managed in an impartial and fair manner, taking into account the student's best interests.

2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. All students, staff and examiners are responsible for upholding the integrity of the candidature process, maintaining the rich research culture fostered by the University in alignment with the requirements of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#) and other national codes of research conduct where relevant, and approaching interactions collaboratively and respectfully towards completion of all formal requirements and addressing all emerging challenges and opportunities.
- 2.2. In the event of identification of an actual, perceived or potential [conflict of interest](#), notably in relation to the appointment of supervisors, milestone panel members, thesis examiners and members of disciplinary panels, all students, staff, supervisors and examiners have a responsibility to declare the conflict with the relevant authority and remove themselves from the responsibilities or duties to which the conflict relates.

Students

2.3. Students are required to:

- 2.3.1. comply with the University's regulations, policies and procedures relevant to their enrolment;
- 2.3.2. treat fellow students, staff, supervisors and examiners with courtesy and respect at all stages of the candidature lifecycle;
- 2.3.3. complete all course and program requirements as outlined in the [University Handbook](#), and accepted as part of the course letter of offer;
- 2.3.4. observe and acknowledge the importance of the Progress Management Framework as part of the course requirements and work towards preparation and fulfilment of each milestone to the best of their ability; and
- 2.3.5. cooperate with all reasonable requirements from a panel convened to assess progress, or to determine if a student is meeting the requirements of their course.

2.4. Students are responsible for:

- 2.4.1. where applicable and directed, complying with the responsibilities and requirements applicable to their enrolment, under a legal agreement with a third party (e.g. joint award agreement; research internship agreement or collaborative research agreement);
- 2.4.2. ensuring all works produced throughout their candidature are original and in compliance with the University's policies on intellectual property, academic and research integrity, ethics, and authorship;
- 2.4.3. ensuring that generative artificial intelligence tools are utilised in a manner permitted by the University and the relevant codes, in a way that upholds the integrity of the research, and does not infringe upon any intellectual property rights (including copyright);
- 2.4.4. ensuring that all research included in the thesis has been conducted during the enrolment period;
- 2.4.5. respecting the confidentiality of the examination process and complying with thesis examination requirements as specified under this policy and its supporting procedures; and
- 2.4.6. complying with any conditions that must be met prior to the awarding of their degree in a timely manner.

Academic staff and Supervisors

2.5. Supervisors are responsible for:

- 2.5.1. carrying out their duties as set out in the [Graduate Research Student Supervision Policy](#) and [Procedure](#), including throughout the duration of any research internship;
- 2.5.2. ensuring that generative artificial intelligence tools are utilised in a manner permitted by the University and the relevant codes, in a way that upholds the integrity of the candidature process, and does not infringe upon any intellectual property rights (including copyright);
- 2.5.3. monitoring and supporting student progress, ensuring compliance with the Progress Management Framework, and intervening where a student is at-risk of not progressing;
- 2.5.4. ensuring students are aware of the requirements of each milestone, and have been provided with sufficient, timely and appropriate feedback prior to each milestone date;
- 2.5.5. nominating appropriately qualified examiners in line with the [Examiner Conflict of Interest Guidelines](#), for consideration by the Chair of Examiners and approval by the Graduate Research Committee (GRC) (or delegate);
- 2.5.6. certifying a student's thesis meets the requirements for examination;
- 2.5.7. confirming, to the best of their knowledge, that a thesis:
 - has not been previously presented for any other award, either at Monash University or any other institution; and
 - conforms with University regulations, policies and procedures as they apply to intellectual property, academic integrity and research integrity, ethics and authorship; and
- 2.5.8. ensuring that they do not communicate with examiners until the examination process has been completed.

2.6. Where academic staff are appointed to a panel, they must:

- 2.6.1. make reasonable inquiries or investigations before making a decision, and act in good faith. Decisions must be free from any bias or the appearance of bias, and be based on a balanced and considered assessment of the information and evidence placed before it; and

- 2.6.2. ensure that where a decision is made to give the student an opportunity to improve their performance, an appropriate and proportionate amount of time is provided.

Chair of Examiners

- 2.7. The Chair of Examiners is responsible for:

- 2.7.1. ensuring the examiners nominated by the supervisor are compliant with this policy, the [Graduate Research Thesis Examination Procedure](#), and the [Examiner Conflict of Interest Guidelines](#), prior to endorsing the examiners for approval by the GRC;
- 2.7.2. confirming the thesis meets the requirements, including faculty or institute specific requirements, for examination and approving dispatch;
- 2.7.3. recommending additional or replacement examiners where required;
- 2.7.4. certifying that the student has satisfactorily addressed examiners' comments and met all examination requirements; and
- 2.7.5. reviewing the student's examiners' reports and making the recommendation to award a degree to the GRC.

Examiners

- 2.8. Examiners are responsible for:

- 2.8.1. declaring and eliminating any conflict of interest in line with the [Examiner Conflict of Interest Guidelines](#);
- 2.8.2. ensuring that generative artificial intelligence tools are utilised in a manner permitted by the University and the relevant codes, in a way that upholds the integrity of the candidature process, and does not infringe upon any intellectual property rights (including copyright);
- 2.8.3. submitting a formal assessment outcome and report on the examination of a thesis within the specified time frame. Failure to submit a report within the agreed time frame will forfeit an examiner's right to examine the thesis;
- 2.8.4. providing detailed, expert and professional comments on the strengths and/or weaknesses of a thesis, whether the report is favourable or not; and
- 2.8.5. complying with any examination requirements as specified by the University, including attending an oral defence or viva voce where required.

Graduate Research Committee

- 2.9. The Graduate Research Committee (or delegate):

- 2.9.1. determines whether or not a thesis or alternative research component is to be examined;
- 2.9.2. approves the appointment of examiners; and
- 2.9.3. determines whether or not the student has met the requirements for the awarding of the degree.

3. Progress Management Framework

- 3.1. The Progress Management Framework supports and facilitates a student's progress to timely thesis submission through formal and informal milestones and provides mechanisms to support student's progress outside the Milestone Framework.
- 3.2. Milestones support and facilitate a student's progress towards their timely thesis submission, providing an opportunity to receive structured feedback on their progress and to highlight any issues affecting progress.
- 3.3. The Milestone Framework comprises three formal milestones: Confirmation, Progress Review, and Final Review.
 - 3.3.1. For doctoral courses, each of the three milestones must be completed.
 - 3.3.2. For research master's courses, Confirmation and Progress Review must be completed. There is no Final Review.
- 3.4. The key purpose of each milestone is to:
 - 3.4.1. review and provide students with structured feedback from an independent academic panel on their research progress, comprehension, and academic writing, ensuring adequate resources (including supervision and facilities), sound direction, and appropriate methodologies are in place to enable timely submission of their thesis;
 - 3.4.2. ensure the research and program progress is on track, make recommendations and appropriate intervention can be implemented where required; and
 - 3.4.3. provide students with a formal opportunity to raise any issues and concerns affecting their progress for appropriate resolution.

3.5. At a minimum, each milestone will consist of:

- 3.5.1. an oral presentation at a forum open to the public, where all members of the review panel and the student's main supervisor must be in attendance;
 - 3.5.2. a written submission from the student provided to the panel prior to the review event;
 - 3.5.3. an interview with the review panel;
 - the student and supervisors must meet independently with the review panel;
 - while a supervisor does not have a formal vote in the milestone review decision, they are expected and must be given the opportunity to contribute to the review panel's discussion on the student's progress and the future phases of the research project. Where appropriate, such contributions should be made in the presence of the student;
 - 3.5.4. an opportunity for students to raise any issues that are affecting progress; and
 - 3.5.5. written feedback (in a prescribed panel report format) to the student.
- 3.6. Each milestone requirement is defined by the student's stage of research and may include requirements specific to their discipline or course.
- 3.7. Milestone review events must be conducted by a review panel consisting of academic members who are independent from the student's research, and:
- 3.7.1. the Head of Academic Unit (or nominee) must convene and chair the panel;
 - 3.7.2. in addition to the Panel Chair, each panel must comprise at least two further panel members, where:
 - at least one member is a University academic staff member; and
 - at least one member is conversant with the student's general area of research;
 - 3.7.3. panel composition may be augmented through additional panel members (as deemed necessary) and must consider appropriate technical expertise and the University's diversity and inclusion principles; and
 - 3.7.4. all panel members must be appropriately qualified and be independent from the student's research.

4. Research Internships

- 4.1. To be eligible to undertake a research internship, a student must:
- 4.1.1. be enrolled in a University graduate research course, and remain actively enrolled for the duration of the research internship;
 - 4.1.2. commence and complete the research internship within the maximum course duration;
 - 4.1.3. not have submitted their thesis for examination; and
 - 4.1.4. apply for and be approved to undertake the research internship by the main supervisor and academic unit.
- 4.2. A valid and fully executed agreement for the research internship must also be in place.

5. Examinations

- 5.1. Each thesis must be examined by at least two examiners. All examiners must be external to the University and appointed in line with the [Examiner Conflict of Interest Guidelines](#).
- 5.2. A thesis will be dispatched for examination only where the GRC (or delegate) has determined:
- 5.2.1. the student is eligible to submit a thesis for examination as outlined in the [Graduate Research Thesis Examination Procedure](#);
 - 5.2.2. the submitted thesis meets the examination requirements as outlined in the [Graduate Research Thesis Examination Procedure](#); and
 - 5.2.3. eligible examiners have been appointed to examine the thesis.
- 5.3. Students and supervisors must not make direct contact with examiners during the examination process.
- 5.4. Two valid examiner reports must be received to determine an examination outcome.
- 5.5. Where an examiner is excused and/or their report is annulled in accordance with the grounds outlined in the [Graduate Research Thesis Examination Procedure](#), a replacement examiner must be appointed. Replacement examiners have the same role and responsibility as the other examiners.

- 5.6. Where one or both examiners require further work to be undertaken prior to a pass or re-examination, the greater requirement will be met.
- 5.7. In awarding a pass grade for a doctoral thesis, examiners must be satisfied that the graduate research student:
- 5.7.1. makes an original and substantial contribution to the discipline or area of professional practice;
 - 5.7.2. is able to critically reflect on, and engage with, complex ideas to create new knowledge and understanding; and
 - 5.7.3. has presented a thesis which, in format and presentation, is appropriate to the standard expected of the degree.
- 5.8. In awarding a pass grade for a research master's thesis, examiners must be satisfied that the graduate research student:
- 5.8.1. makes a contribution to knowledge and understanding of the discipline or area of professional practice;
 - 5.8.2. demonstrates a thorough understanding of the subject matter with which it deals; and
 - 5.8.3. has presented a thesis which, in format and presentation, is appropriate to the standard expected of the degree and contains a coherent and sustained argument.
- 5.9. The Research Master's examinations will be awarded a numerical mark in accordance with the grading schema provided in the [Graduate Research Thesis Examination Procedure](#).
- 5.10. An adjudicator must be appointed where:
- 5.10.1. there is a significant difference between the recommendations of the two examiners in the assessment outcomes provided by the two examiners; and/or
 - 5.10.2. in the case of research master's numerical grading, where marks differ by 15 marks or more.
- 5.11. The adjudicator must assess and determine which examiner's report more accurately reflects the assessment against the criteria and thus be adopted as the examination outcome.

6. Thesis archival

- 6.1. All graduate research theses or alternative research components must be archived in the University repository and are expected to be made publicly available.
- 6.2. Requests for an embargo on a thesis may only be approved by the GRC (or delegate) in limited circumstances.
- 6.2.1. If approved, the thesis or work deposited in the University Library will be withheld from access to library users, or placed on restricted access for a specified time period only. The thesis will be made available to the public following expiry of the approved period.

7. Degree conferral

- 7.1. A graduate research degree will be conferred by the Monash University Council upon confirmation by the GRC that the student has satisfactorily completed all course requirements.
- 7.2. In the case of students enrolled in a joint doctorate or research master's course, the decision to confer a degree will be made following confirmation from both the GRC and the partner university that the student has satisfactorily met all requirements of the program in which they are enrolled.

Modifications to thesis following conferral

- 7.3. The thesis or alternative research component cannot be modified once a degree has been conferred.
- 7.4. If errors are discovered following the award of the degree, this should be reported to the Academic Director, Research Training, or a referral made to the Provost in accordance with Part 8 of the [Monash University \(Council\) Regulations](#).

DEFINITIONS

Academic Unit	As defined by the Monash University (Academic Board) Regulations, includes a sub-faculty, school, department, centre, institute or other unit into which a faculty is divided; or a school, department, centre or institute established as a separate entity from a faculty. Typically, is the organisational unit in which the student is enrolled.
Adjudicator	An experienced examiner whose role is to review the reports and examinable material and determine which report best reflects the quality of the thesis and presents the most appropriate examination outcome recommendation. The appointment of an adjudicator

	follows the same conflict of interest (COI) and approval process as that of an examiner or replacement examiner.
Milestone Framework	A fundamental component of progress management as outlined under Section 1 of the Graduate Research Progress Management Procedure .
Student	<p>A person who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> is admitted to a course of study at the University; is enrolled at the University in a non-award study or one or more units of study on an assessed or non-assessed basis and without admission to a course of study; is pursuing a course of study or unit of study at the University through an exchange or study program or other arrangement between the University and another educational institution; is engaged in a student mobility program involving the University, whether or not the program is credited towards a course of study or unit of study; has completed a course of study but on or to whom the relevant degree or award has not been conferred or awarded; has deferred, or has intermitted, or has been suspended from, a course of study; is enrolled in a course of study or one or more units of study offered by the University through another educational institution; or has consented in writing to be bound as a student by the University statutes and University regulations. <p>The following terms are used to identify groups of students that are subject to different requirements (as defined below):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> domestic student; international student; and international student subject to Education and Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) requirements.
Thesis	A written thesis or approved alternative research component as specified in the course Handbook.
Unsatisfactory progress	When a student does not successfully achieve a milestone or is determined to have not satisfactorily progressed in their study program outside the Milestone Framework, and which may result in termination of enrolment.

GOVERNANCE

Supporting procedures	Graduate Research Internship Procedure Graduate Research Progress Management Procedure Graduate Research Thesis Examination Procedure
Supporting schedules	N/A
Associated policies	Enrolment and Timetable Policy Graduate Research Student Supervision Policy Student Complaints Policy
Related legislation	Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth) (ESOS) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth) Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth) Ombudsman Act 1973 (Vic) Ombudsman Act 1976 (Cth) National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Cth) (National Code) Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)
Category	Academic

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