

PROCEDURE FOR CONVERTING FROM A PhD DEGREE TO A MASTER'S THESIS DEGREE

Policy references: *Doctoral Policy: for PhDs and other doctorates with a thesis.*
4.4.3 Variation to enrolment and registration; 4.13 Examination outcome

Introduction:

Conversion is intended primarily for those candidates who due to a change in their life circumstances are unable to complete the PhD degree, rather than as compensation for unsatisfactory progress. However, in exceptional circumstances, a candidate who fails to make sustained satisfactory progress towards the PhD may be able to convert to a Master's thesis. Equally, such conversion may be available as the outcome of an examination. Candidates whose personal circumstances make it impossible to continue within the PhD should discuss their options with appropriate staff. In those cases where the conversion is as a consequence of unsatisfactory performance, the following will apply:

1. Conversion where a candidate is provisionally registered

- Conversion may be recommended by the School Research Committee (SRC) to the Associate Dean (PGR) as an outcome of the assessment of the candidate's research proposal and their suitability for doctoral study. This option is only available if a body of work already exists that is very nearly suitable for examination as a Master's thesis.
- The SRC should determine and document what (if any) additional work is required in order for the candidate to present an examinable Master's thesis. Submission of the Master's thesis is still expected to occur within 12 months of initial enrolment for the PhD.
- In exceptional circumstances an additional three months may be approved by the Dean FGR in order for the candidate to complete any required work and to submit a Master's thesis. An application for an extension of time must be accompanied by a work plan/timeline for completion.
- Provided the timeframe from initial enrolment for the doctoral degree until submission of the thesis for examination as a Master's thesis does not exceed 15 months, the thesis will be graded.
- The option to convert may not be viable for an international student for the following reasons:
 - International fees will apply. *Note: Domestic tuition fees currently range from \$58 to \$68 per point. International tuition fees for a Master's thesis vary from \$228 to \$292 per point. One month = 10 points.*
 - A study visa specifies the course of study; applications for study to work visas must match the degree awarded.
 - A change of visa will incur additional costs. The student will also need to show that they have sufficient funds for their living costs for any additional time they require in order to submit the Master's thesis.
 - There may be implications for family members who are in NZ on the basis of the candidate's visa status.

- Scholarship holders will be required to relinquish their doctoral scholarship and must advise the Scholarships Office (or in the case of an external scholarship, their scholarship provider) of their change in status.
- Prior to the confirmation event a provisionally registered candidate, with the support of their supervisor/s, may apply to the Associate Dean (PGR) to convert to a Master's thesis. The usual timeframes for a Master's thesis will apply. International students will be liable for international fees from the date the conversion is approved and will need to change their visa status.

2. Conversion where a candidate is already fully registered

- When it is identified in the Candidate Development Plan that a fully registered candidate is not making sufficient progress to continue at doctoral level, this should be referred to the Associate Dean (PGR).
- The candidate will be advised that their progress is under review and a decision about their candidature will be made when their next registration is due. The option of converting to a Master's degree may be explored during this period.
- The option for a fully registered candidate to convert to a Master's degree is not automatic and will be considered on a case by case basis.
- A recommendation to convert to a Master's degree will only be approved if the student has a body of work that can be submitted for examination within a specified timeframe.
- The option to convert is not normally available to a candidate who has upgraded from a Master's to a PhD.
- The thesis will not be graded.
- From the date the conversion is approved, international students will be liable for fees at the international rate and they must change their visa.
- Scholarship holders will be required to relinquish their doctoral scholarship and must advise the Scholarships Office (or in the case of an external scholarship, their scholarship provider) of their change in status.

3. Award of a Master's degree as an outcome of the doctoral examination process

- This is a recommendation from the examiners to the Dean FGR.
- The offer of a Master's may be subject to meeting conditions (if any) that are required in the examination report, or an amended version of the report; and whether or not an appropriate Master's qualification is available.
- This option is only available if the additional work can be completed within one month.
- The degree is awarded with an ungraded pass.
- The outcome of the PhD is recorded as a fail and the student is registered (zero fees) for one month for the Master's degree.