
Guideline for enrolment of international doctoral students who wish to undertake a doctorate offshore

1. Purpose

Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington (the University) does not normally allow international doctoral students to undertake a doctorate outside New Zealand ([Doctoral Regulations](#) 4.5(a)). The purpose of this Guideline is to provide guidance on the special conditions of enrolment that pertain to international doctoral students who wish to undertake a doctorate outside New Zealand.

2. Application of Guideline

- 2.1 This Guideline applies exclusively to international doctoral students who wish to undertake a doctorate outside New Zealand and only in cases either where the time outside New Zealand will be more than 12 months FTE of the total time registered on the doctorate or where the provisions of [Doctoral Regulations](#) 4.5 (d) do not apply.
- 2.2 This Guideline does not apply to domestic or international students who are studying at a location outside New Zealand under the provisions of [Doctoral Regulations](#) 4.5(d), for which there is a separate application process. International students studying outside New Zealand under those provisions are limited to a maximum of 12 months FTE outside New Zealand during their doctorate and must spend the rest of their time in New Zealand.
- 2.3 Domestic students who wish to study outside New Zealand for more than 12 months may apply to do so under the provisions of [Doctoral Regulations](#) 4.5(d). Because of the challenges of an extended period outside New Zealand, it is recommended that such students (and their supervisors), although not covered by these Guidelines, nevertheless consider the points in Sections 3 and 5 of these Guidelines before making an application.

Guideline Content

3. Assessment of Applications

- 3.1 Applications to enrol as an offshore international doctorate student are considered on a case-by-case basis. There is no guarantee that any particular application will be approved.
- 3.2 The University believes that a student benefits enormously from meeting supervisors face-to-face and being physically co-located with other researchers, both staff and students, in the same discipline and to participate in the wider intellectual life of the University, hence the normal expectation is that students will be physically present in Wellington for the majority of their study (see [Doctoral Regulations](#) 4.5).
- 3.3 The University therefore expects there to be a compelling reason to justify studying for a doctorate outside New Zealand.
- 3.4 In considering an application, the University will assess whether appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the student is able to receive quality supervision, thesis resources, and pastoral support. It will also consider whether the student will have opportunities to engage with other researchers in their chosen study location.
- 3.5 Without limitation on other reasons, the University may decide not to approve an application where it reaches the conclusion that the applicant's research would not be suitable to be carried

out from offshore for a substantial period of time or where it reaches the conclusion that it could not support the applicant to the standard required by the [Education \(Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners\) Code of Practice 2021](#).

- 3.6 Applications to study by distance must be submitted using the International doctoral student offshore study application form. All questions on that form must be answered and only completed applications will be considered. This form must expressly confirm that the applicant's research can be undertaken outside New Zealand and be signed by the student, primary supervisor, and Head of School (or their delegate).

Note: Students or supervisors can request this form by emailing fgr-postgrads@vuw.ac.nz

- 3.7 Approval to Study Offshore is given by the Dean of the Wellington Faculty of Graduate School on the recommendation of the Associate Dean (PGR) in the relevant Faculty.

4. Relationship between an application to study offshore and the application for admission to a doctoral degree.

- 4.1 Submitting an application to study offshore is a separate process from submitting an application to study for a doctoral degree, and it happens after a student has been successful in their application to study for a doctoral degree. A successful application to study for a doctoral degree results in the applicant being sent a letter giving a formal Offer of Place. International doctoral applicants who have received a formal Offer of Place from the University may then apply to study offshore, through the process described in these Guidelines. To be enrolled for study offshore, a student must both fully meet the conditions set out in their Offer of Place letter and also be approved for study offshore.

- 4.2 As a general rule, the University requires sighting of original documents before enrolling students. It may, however, also accept electronic versions for the provisional enrolment process to proceed from outside New Zealand. The University shall use its judgement in how best to verify the authenticity of the documents used in the application, which may include the requirement for the student to send physical copies to the University.

- 4.3 If a student is enrolled, all requirements set out in the Confirmation of PhD Provisional Registration form must be completed within the initial month (full-time equivalent) of enrolment.

- 4.4 As stated in the University's Doctoral Regulations, completing a doctorate will normally take at least 36 months of full-time (or equivalent) study with a period of provisional registration during the first 12 months.

- 4.5 Owing to visa regulations, international doctoral students who are based in New Zealand can enrol on a full-time basis only. International doctoral students who are based outside New Zealand are not bound by visa regulations and are given the additional option of enrolling on a part-time basis if they are not able to work full-time on their research. Part-time enrolment counts as 0.5 month of full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolment for each calendar month registered and fees are charged at a rate of 0.5 during part-time enrolment.

- 4.6 International doctoral students registered as part-time while outside New Zealand who subsequently enter New Zealand on a student visa will be required to shift to full-time registration and pay any adjusted fees from the first day of the month in which they arrive in New Zealand.

5. General Requirements and Supervision Arrangements

- 5.1 Students must ensure that their internet connection is of good enough quality to support video conferencing with their supervisors, and that their connection enables access to the material

they need for their research using the University's Library and other online resources.

Note: a reliable, high-quality internet connection is vital – modern research is practically impossible without such a connection. It must be able to support regular teleconferencing between the student and the supervisor and good access to online resources.

Note: the University cannot guarantee remote access rights to its Library resources from certain countries – both student and supervisor should check this before applying

- 5.2 Supervisors shall commit to being the main point of contact for both academic and pastoral care of the students. They shall commit to regular, scheduled, online meetings (at least monthly, as required in the guidelines on [Supervisors' Responsibilities](#)) with students via platforms approved by the University.
- 5.3 The student and supervisor must keep a record that documents research progress and highlights any current or future concerns. These records must be made available on request to the Head of School or their delegate, the Associate Dean (PGR), and the Dean of the Wellington Faculty of Graduate Research.
- 5.4 As with students enrolled on site, the requirement is that the student will achieve full registration status before the end of 12 months (FTE) registration. The supervisor and school shall make their best efforts to guide the student through the provisional to full registration process.
- 5.5 Supervisors, research groups and schools shall develop ways to incorporate offshore students into the academic life of the University and work to form peer-to-peer support where possible.
- 5.6 Students enrolled outside New Zealand have access to a range of support services provided by the University but, owing to their professional clinical staff not being able to practice outside New Zealand, students enrolled outside New Zealand do not have access to Mauri Ora – Student Health and Counselling.

6. Financial Implications (Fee Payments)

- 6.1 International doctoral students who choose to study outside New Zealand will be charged tuition fees at the international rate.

Note: The international rate is approximately four times the domestic rate. The latest information about [tuition fees and compulsory levies](#) can be accessed from the University's website.

- 6.2 If a student subsequently chooses to move to New Zealand on a student visa for part of the doctorate, the University may choose to charge tuition fees at the domestic rate.
- 6.3 All international doctoral students applying to study outside New Zealand are required to pay their tuition fees and compulsory levies. These students are expected to financially support themselves through their course of chosen study.

7. Scholarships

- 7.1 The University is normally unable to pay scholarships to students who are based outside New Zealand, therefore students studying outside New Zealand are not normally able to access the University's scholarships.
- 7.2 Other scholarships will have different rules about fees and/or stipend payments for students who reside outside New Zealand. Students must check with their funding providers regarding these arrangements.

Related Documents and Information

8. Related Documents

[Education \(Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners\) Code of Practice 2021](#)

[Doctoral Regulations: for PhD and other Doctorates with Theses](#)

[Fees Policy](#) (see also [information on tuition fees and compulsory levies](#))

[Guidelines on cotutelle degrees and other doctoral study offshore](#)

[Scholarships Policy – Externally Funded](#)

[Scholarships Policy – Internally Funded](#)

[Student Service Levy Procedure](#)

[Student's Responsibilities](#) (FGR guidelines)

[Supervisor's Responsibilities](#) (FGR guidelines)

9. Document Management and Control

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