
Master's Thesis Regulations

1. Purpose

- a) The purpose of these regulations is to state the University's position regarding the enrolment, supervision and examination of candidates for Master's theses, where the thesis has a value of 90 points or more.
- b) These regulations should be read in conjunction with the Personal Courses of Study Regulations and the relevant Master's degree Statutes.

2. Application of Regulations

- a) These regulations apply to staff members and students.
- b) Compliance with these regulations is overseen by the Faculty of Graduate Research.

Regulations Content

3. Entry Requirements

3.1 The entry requirements are set out in the regulations for the relevant degrees.

3.2 The Head of School approves the enrolment, having established that:

- a) the general area of study is appropriate, taking account of the general research strategy of the School, and can be supported by the School; and
- b) the School can provide an appropriate academic supervisor.

Note: Where the School has approval to offer the option of a research portfolio, the Head of School determines which type of thesis the student may enrol in.

4. Course of study

- a) A thesis or research portfolio is the outcome of independent research, scholarship or creative activity conducted under supervision.
- b) The length of a 120-point thesis or research portfolio will be appropriate to the discipline and must not exceed 40,000 words, including bibliography, footnotes or endnotes and essential appendices, unless specific permission has been granted by the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Research (Dean FGR). The length of a 90-point thesis must not exceed 30,000 words.
- c) Theses may be submitted and assessed in te reo Māori provided the candidate has sought and been granted prior approval from the Dean FGR. Theses submitted in te reo Māori are not to be translated for the purposes of examination.
- d) Candidates may submit a thesis in a language other than English or Māori only after permission has been granted by the Dean FGR. Such permission should be sought at the earliest opportunity and must be determined within one month of initial registration; permission will only be given if the use of the language is an essential element of the research and examiners can be appointed who will examine in that language.

- e) For works of design, creation or performance, the candidate should include a written commentary on the work which is appropriately balanced with the creative component.
- f) A candidate pursuing a course of study for a thesis or research portfolio is expected to complete the work and submit it for examination within twelve months of full-time registration (or equivalent), unless an extension has been approved (see s7.5).
- g) Where there are cogent and compelling reasons why a thesis or research portfolio should not be publicly available for a given limited period, and where these are known at any time before submission of the work for examination, the candidate should apply to the Dean FGR for permission to have access withheld at the outset of the research or as soon as the need for an embargo is apparent. The work may be withheld for a maximum of two years. (Refer to the [Withholding of Theses Procedure](#).)

5. Research proposal

- 5.1 Within one month of registration the candidate must submit a research proposal which details the aim of the thesis project, methods of study, ethical considerations and resource requirements.
 - a) If a thesis is to be submitted in other than a standard print format the research proposal should indicate the proposed format.

Note: Guidelines setting out the standard print formats for theses are available on the Library website <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/library/research/thesis-guide/thesis-formatting-guide>
 - b) If the candidate is enrolled in a research portfolio and the research portfolio outline provides for significant group work, the research proposal should detail the candidate's involvement.
- 5.2 The research proposal will not normally exceed five pages or 2,500 words. If a School routinely requires a longer proposal, this must be approved by the Faculty of Graduate Research Board.
- 5.3 The School Research Committee will scrutinise the research proposal and make a recommendation to the Head of School as to whether:
 - a) the designated supervisor is appropriately experienced in the field of research;
 - b) the scope of the proposed research is appropriate for the thesis; and
 - c) any proposed non-standard format is appropriate, and has been discussed with the University Librarian.
- 5.4 The Head of School is also required to ensure that adequate resources are available to support the research.
- 5.5 The Head of School (or nominee) will provide written feedback on the research proposal to the candidate advising one of the following outcomes:
 - a) approval of the proposal; or
 - b) conditional approval with a timeframe for meeting the specified conditions for modifying the proposal; or
 - c) proposal not approved.
- 5.6 If the research proposal is approved with a non-standard format, the Head of School will provide the candidate with a written authorisation that must be submitted to the University Library with the thesis.

6. Research portfolio outline

- a) All candidates enrolled in a research portfolio must be provided with a research portfolio outline prior to the commencement of their registration.

Note: Research portfolio candidates are identified by the course code under which they are enrolled.

- b) The format of a research portfolio is specified by the Head of School, and communicated to candidates in the portfolio outline. The format must be appropriate to the discipline and to the points value involved. It may comprise one or more projects. Where non-text-based material is included, the Librarian should be consulted on arrangements for lodging a record of the work in the Library before the required format is finalised.
- c) Up to 15% of the assessment within a research portfolio may be based on group work where students work collaboratively to explore and develop ideas and solutions to problems, but submit individual work. In exceptional circumstances, where justified by the nature of the discipline, the Dean FGR may approve up to 75% of the work being undertaken in a group context if satisfied that the level of dependency between the candidates' work will not jeopardise individual candidate's success. Such approval must be obtained prior to approval of the research portfolio outline.
- d) Up to 15% of the assessment within a research portfolio may be group assessment where all members of the group contribute to a single piece of assessed work, and all receive the same assessment outcome.
- e) Within a research portfolio, specified mandatory requirements may be associated with the evaluation of progress (see s12).

Note: Failure to satisfy mandatory requirements may be grounds for termination of enrolment (s7.7).

- f) The portfolio outline must detail all aspects of the management and delivery of the programme that diverge from the normal thesis processes and requirements and must detail all procedures that pertain to the examination of the research portfolio.
- g) The portfolio outline must be endorsed by the Head of School and the relevant Associate Dean, and approved by the Dean FGR. Copies must be lodged with the FGR.
- h) Any changes to the portfolio outline after it has been distributed to enrolled candidates require consultation with candidates and approval by the Associate Dean. Any significant changes must also be approved by the Dean FGR. An updated version must be lodged with the FGR.
- i) A copy of the portfolio outline must be made available to all examiners.

7. Enrolment and registration

7.1 Duration of enrolment

- a) Except as permitted in section 7.5, the minimum and maximum periods from the time of first enrolment until submission of the thesis for examination shall be as follows:
 - i. The minimum period of registration is nine months full-time or 18 months half-time.
 - ii. The maximum period of registration is 12 months full-time or two years half-time.
 - iii. For candidates permitted to enrol half-time for part of their programme, the minimum and maximum periods of registration shall be calculated on a pro rata basis.
- b) The calculation of the total period of registration will exclude any periods of suspension.

7.2 Conditions of enrolment

- a) A candidate must be enrolled continuously in the thesis until:

- i. the completed thesis is lodged in the University Library; or
 - ii. the candidate withdraws; or
 - iii. the University terminates the candidate's enrolment; or
 - iv. the candidate fails the examination.
- b) Continued enrolment is conditional upon satisfactory progress being made as set out in s12.
- c) If a candidate has been neither registered nor suspended for a period of three consecutive months, they are deemed to have withdrawn. In exceptional circumstances such a withdrawal may be appealed in writing to the Dean FGR.

7.3 Variations to enrolment or registration

- a) Variations may include: suspension of study; extension of time; change of status from full-time to half-time and half-time to full-time; termination of candidature; withdrawal from the programme.
- b) An application for a variation of registration should be made on the appropriate form available from the [FGR website](#) and accompanied by appropriate evidence as noted on the relevant form. Applications will require a statement from the supervisor and the approval of the Associate Dean (PGR) in the home Faculty. Copies of Master's thesis academic progress reports may also be required.
- c) Scholarship holders must inform the Scholarships Office of any changes in their registration or enrolment status.

Note 1: Variations to registration may not be possible in some structured cohort-based programmes.

Note 2: Visa conditions may exclude international students from the provisions in this section.

Note 3: Additional tuition fees and student levies will apply to extensions of registration.

7.4 Suspension of study

- a) On application from a candidate, the Associate Dean (PGR) may grant a period of suspension measured in monthly increments up to a total of three months. During a suspension a candidate will pay no tuition fees and will have no access to academic supervision.
- b) Suspensions beyond a total of three months must also be approved by the Dean FGR.
- c) The total period of suspension shall not usually exceed twelve months.

Note: The visa conditions for international students do not permit a suspension of study.

- d) Retrospective suspensions are granted only in exceptional circumstances and must be approved by the Dean FGR. Applications should be made within two months of the event which gives rise to the claim for a retrospective suspension.
- e) There is no pro-rata adjustment applied to the calculation of periods of suspension for candidates who are enrolled half-time.

7.5 Extension beyond 12 months total registration

- a) On application from a candidate, the Associate Dean (PGR) may grant an extension of time for completion of the thesis of up to three months full-time (or equivalent). The request must be well justified and be accompanied by a detailed plan for completion of the thesis within the time requested.
- b) In exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of the Head of School and Associate Dean (PGR), an extension beyond three months full-time (or equivalent) may be granted by the Dean

FGR, who may determine that should the thesis merit a pass it will be eligible only for an ungraded pass.

7.6 Change of status from full-time to half-time and half-time to full-time

- a) Applications must be approved by the Associate Dean (PGR) who may require supporting documentation and confirmation from the Head of School that resources remain available.
- b) A change of status from full-time to half-time that occurs in tandem with an application for an extension without sufficient justification may be declined.

Note 1: Scholarship holders who are contemplating a change to half-time status must consider the conditions of their scholarship.

Note 2: Visa conditions for international candidates may not permit half-time study.

7.7 Termination of enrolment

- a) The Associate Dean (PGR) may, on the recommendation of the School Research Committee, terminate a candidate's enrolment in the following circumstances:
 - i. If the candidate has not had a research proposal approved by the School Research Committee within three months of registration for the thesis (see s5.3);
 - ii. If the candidate fails to make satisfactory progress during the programme, including failure to satisfy any mandatory requirements within a research portfolio (see s6 (e) and s12); or
 - iii. If the candidate does not submit the thesis for examination within the specified timeframe.
- b) A candidate who has been notified of termination on the grounds in (a) above may appeal against termination, or to pre-empt termination, to the Dean FGR. Applications must be made in writing within 20 working days and must show that extraordinary circumstances apply.
- c) A candidate whose enrolment is terminated may apply for a fees reconsideration.

7.8 Withdrawal from the programme

A candidate may withdraw from a Master's thesis before submitting the work for examination by informing the Faculty of Graduate Research in writing of the intention to withdraw.

8. Research Memorandum and Assessment of Resources

- a) Where the required resources for the approved research project exceed those specified in the [Resource Agreement for Thesis Students \(RAfTS\)](#) a specific memorandum should be signed by all parties.
- b) The research memorandum is an agreement between the student, the supervisor and the Head of School about the resources to be provided by the University, including laboratory and experimental apparatus, fieldwork support, particular library resources, information technology services, and any other special arrangements.
- c) The research memorandum commits the School to providing the agreed resources and shall form part of the candidate's record in the School.

9. Attendance at the University

- a) The Master's degree is awarded for work done under direct supervision and it is expected that candidates will attend the University on a regular basis and participate in the intellectual life of the School and the wider University.

- b) In some circumstances, however, approval may be given for candidates who do not reside locally to enrol for a Master's degree and undertake their programme of study as a distance candidate provided they meet any conditions stipulated by the Associate Dean (PGR).
- c) Irrespective of whether a candidate is attending the University or has approval for distance study, from time to time there may be a legitimate need to undertake a period of research at some other location. In all such situations a written agreement is required and must be approved by the Associate Dean (PGR). Arrangements for maintaining regular contact with, and reporting to, the supervisor during approved periods away from the University must be agreed and clearly documented.

10. External party involvement

Where an external party is involved in the candidature:

- a) the relationship must be made the subject of an agreement between the University, the student and the external party. This agreement will address issues relevant to the relationship and having a bearing on the expectation and obligations of the parties concerned. It will also establish the terms and conditions under which it is intended that the project proceed and will normally be agreed before the project commences;
- b) any agreement must comply with the [Management of External Research Consultancy and Related Contracts Policy](#) or any policy that supersedes that document, and the [Intellectual Property Policy](#);
- c) the agreement should include provision for revisiting the agreed terms during the project;
- d) the agreement and any revision of it should be monitored as part of the process for evaluation and monitoring progress set out in s12.

Note: If supervisory arrangements involve an external party, refer to s11.2 (c) below.

11. Supervision and support of candidates

11.1 Oversight of candidature

The Head of School (or nominee) has oversight of all Master's thesis candidates in the School, may be involved in the School Research Committee's consideration of research proposals and will review candidates' academic progress reports.

11.2 Appointment of Supervisors

- a) Each candidate will work under the guidance of at least one supervisor appointed on behalf of the University by the Head of School. At least one supervisor must be a professor or lecturer of the University in the sense of the [Victoria University of Wellington Act 1961](#), which should be understood as including senior lecturers, readers and associate professors. Emeritus professors are also eligible to be appointed.
- b) Exceptionally, people holding appointments such as research fellows or research associates may act as supervisors provided that they have been approved by the Associate Dean (PGR) to supervise a specific thesis.
- c) If it is appropriate for a scholar or senior practitioner from outside the University to be involved in the supervisory team they will be appointed, on the recommendation of the Head of School, as an Honorary Research Associate by the Dean FGR.
- d) Except with permission of the Dean FGR, members of the supervisory team must not have any conflicts of interest as defined by the [University's Conflicts of Interest Statute](#). Disclosure of

conflicts of interest with regard to Master's thesis candidates must be made to the Associate Dean (PGR).

- e) The Head of School should ensure that appropriate supervision arrangements are in place if the primary supervisor is absent from the University for any period longer than one month.

11.3 Qualifications and Training of Supervisors

- a) Only those academic staff with a postgraduate research degree in an appropriate subject area, or evidence of an established research record, should undertake the primary supervision of students and then only if they have appropriate experience or training and have completed the University's Orientation to Postgraduate Research Supervision workshop. Heads of School have responsibility for ensuring that only qualified staff members are appointed as thesis supervisors.
- b) Heads of School have responsibility for ensuring newly appointed staff receive appropriate training which may include an initial appointment as a co-supervisor or as a secondary supervisor.
- c) External supervisors may be invited to participate in an appropriate professional development programme as part of their appointment.

11.4 Supervisors' Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of supervisors is to assist candidates to complete the research within the agreed time frame (see s4 (f)). This includes taking reasonable steps, consistent with available resources, to:

- a) provide a framework within which the academic work can take place;
- b) provide academic guidance;
- c) provide appropriate and timely feedback;
- d) assess progress;
- e) facilitate administrative compliance;
- f) act as a guide to University facilities;
- g) guide the candidate to identify other relevant expertise to progress the research;
- h) encourage the candidate to participate in University intellectual life and develop professional contacts outside the University; and
- i) identify potential examiners and recommend their appointment to the Head of School well in advance of the thesis being submitted for examination.

Note: Refer to [Supervisors' Responsibilities](#) for additional information.

11.5 Candidates' Responsibilities

Completing a Master's thesis programme requires progressive development of skills, competence and confidence. Candidates must take responsibility for independently pursuing their studies with the guidance of their supervisor in a manner which develops their own intellectual independence. This includes taking reasonable steps, consistent with available resources, to:

- a) plan and actively pursue the research;
- b) identify and deal with any research-related problems;
- c) comply with administrative requirements;

- d) meet ethical guidelines;
- e) except as set out in the relevant portfolio outline (see s6), give at least one month's notice to their supervisor of their intention to submit;

Note: The submission date for research portfolios may be set by the School.

- f) take responsibility for the final form of the thesis; and
- g) participate in the intellectual life of the University.

Note: Refer to [Candidates' Responsibilities](#) for additional information.

12. Evaluating and Monitoring Progress

- a) Supervisors are responsible for evaluating and monitoring a candidate's academic progress. They should provide adequate and timely written feedback on all submitted work. If any doubt arises as to the ability of a candidate to complete the research, this must be raised and dealt with as soon as is practicable for the benefit of both the candidate and the University.
- b) Supervisors must ensure a record is kept of formal supervisory meetings and of any significant advice or transactions that are not dealt with in the academic progress reports.
- c) Except as provided for in (d) and (e) below, a Master's thesis academic progress report will be completed at the end of the third month of registration to ensure that the candidate is making adequate progress, and that the supervisory relationship and any external party arrangements are working well. Any issues or concerns will be addressed by the Head of School or nominee. At eight months a more substantial academic progress report will be completed, reviewed by the Head of School and forwarded to the Associate Dean (PGR).
- d) On the recommendation of the Head of School, and the Associate Dean (PGR), the Dean FGR may approve an alternative arrangement to the three-month and eight-month reports for candidates enrolled in a 90 point thesis or for candidates undertaking a research portfolio.
- e) Alternative progress reporting arrangements for candidates undertaking a research portfolio must:
 - i. be detailed in the portfolio outline;
 - ii. provide at least an equivalent level of monitoring, evaluation and documentation of the candidate's progress; and
 - iii. include an opportunity for the candidate to provide comment and/or raise any concerns.

Note: Templates for the three-month academic progress report and the eight-month report are available on the FGR website <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/fgr/policies-and-resources/forms>

- f) The Head of School has overall responsibility for compliance with the academic progress reporting process, but the writing of the report is the joint responsibility of the supervisor and the candidate. The candidate and supervisor will see and acknowledge each other's comments in the reports. Any identified problems and proposed methods of addressing them should be discussed with the candidate before the report is finalised. A copy must be provided to the candidate and the original report held on their file.
- g) The Master's thesis academic progress reports provide an opportunity for candidates to comment on the quality of their supervision. Candidates can raise any issue in confidence with the Postgraduate Coordinator, Head of School or Associate Dean (PGR) at any time.

13. Examination

13.1 Appointment of Examiners

- a) A thesis or research portfolio is examined by at least two examiners who must be in a position to provide a fair and impartial assessment of the work and who will:
 - i. have expertise and standing in the field of the thesis being examined; and
 - ii. normally have had previous experience of Master's thesis supervision or examination; and
 - iii. have no conflict of interest or any other significant personal, professional or contractual relationship with the candidate; and
 - iv. not have been at any time the primary or co-supervisor of the thesis.
- b) At least one examiner must be an external examiner, usually a member of the academic staff of another university or similar institution. For a research portfolio the external examiner may be selected on the basis of extensive experience in the relevant profession at a senior level.
- c) The other examiner (the internal examiner) will normally be a member of the Victoria University of Wellington staff.
- d) Prospective examiners should be approached informally by the supervisor or Head of School well in advance of the expected submission of the work. This is to confirm that they are willing and able to complete the examination in the expected timeframe. Candidates can be consulted on potential examiners; unless undertaking a research portfolio, they must not be told which examiners have been nominated or appointed.
- e) The Head of School or delegate, after appropriate consultation, shall recommend examiners to the Associate Dean (PGR) who will, if satisfied, endorse this recommendation. The Head of School is required to provide to the Associate Dean (PGR) a brief curriculum vitae for the external examiner.
- f) In situations where the most suitable examiner would be excluded by the conditions in (a) above, the Dean FGR may approve exceptions.

13.2 Thesis submission

Note: See s13.5 for provisions relating to the submission of a research portfolio.

- a) A candidate must be registered for at least one month immediately preceding submission.
- b) When the candidate indicates the thesis is ready to be submitted it should be reviewed by the supervisor before application is made for examination. This review period should not usually exceed two weeks.
- c) The candidate shall submit copies of the thesis together with the relevant forms as specified in the procedures to the Faculty of Graduate Research and apply for examination.
- d) The University has an obligation to examiners to take reasonable steps to ensure that any thesis sent for examination is complete and otherwise suitable for examination. The Faculty of Graduate Research, on the recommendation of the Associate Dean (PGR), may determine not to send out for an examination any thesis which fails to meet the conditions in (e) below. The Associate Dean (PGR) will notify the candidate if this is the case.
- e) To be considered complete, a thesis must:
 - i. constitute an independent scholarly work inclusive of all scholarly apparatus usual in the discipline; and

- ii. be presented in a form regarded as suitable for examination in the discipline concerned, including being expressed in appropriate and accurate language; and
- iii. conform to all other formal requirements of the University for the presentation of a thesis, including word limits (see s4 (b)).

13.3 Thesis Examination Process

Note: See s13.5 for provisions relating to the examination of a research portfolio.

- a) The Faculty of Graduate Research Office will ensure that a copy of the thesis is sent to each examiner together with a required timeframe for the return of the examination reports.
- b) Each examiner must submit a written report to the Associate Dean (PGR). The report must:
 - i. be submitted within the specified timeframe; and
 - ii. provide comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis; and
 - iii. include a recommended grade - the possible grades and the associated percentage ranges are set out in the Assessment Handbook; and
 - iv. include the examiner's name and be suitable for release to the candidate and supervisor after the grade is finalised. If an examiner wishes to make confidential comments, these should be contained in a separate document.
- c) Except as provided for in 13.4 (c), consultation between examiners, or between an examiner and the candidate or the supervisor, is prohibited until the reports have been submitted to the Associate Dean (PGR).
- d) The grade for the thesis is for the document as it is submitted for examination. A requirement for editorial changes (as defined in the appendix to the Editorial Advice Policy) may be a condition of deposit of the thesis in the University Library but has no effect on the grade awarded.
- e) Where the thesis does not meet the requisite standards, the examiners may recommend that the thesis be revised and resubmitted for a second examination (see s13.6).
- f) The Associate Dean (PGR) will forward the examiners' reports to the Convener of the School Research Committee for a recommendation as to the outcome of the process.

13.4 Determining the Final Grade for a Thesis

Note: See s13.5 for provisions relating to a research portfolio.

- a) The School Research Committee (SRC) will review the examiners' reports and recommend an outcome of the examination to the Associate Dean (PGR).
- b) Where the examiners are in agreement the SRC will accept their recommendation unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- c) Where the examiners are not in agreement the SRC will discuss the grade and consult with the examiners inviting them to come to an agreement as to the final grade.
- d) If the examiners are unable to reach agreement the SRC should consult with the Associate Dean (PGR) to agree on a process for arriving at a decision which may involve:
 - i. requesting a report from the supervisor(s); or
 - ii. appointing a third examiner who will independently examine the thesis; or
 - iii. appointing a referee from outside the University who will be provided with a copy of the examiners' reports together with a report from the supervisor.

- e) The SRC will make a recommendation to the Associate Dean (PGR) as to the final grade for the examination.
- f) Where the final grade is not obviously explained by the original examiners' reports, the SRC must provide a written explanation suitable for distribution to the student of the process undertaken in order to arrive at the final outcome.
- g) Where examiners have recommended editorial changes to the thesis prior to deposit in the University Library, the SRC may make the completion of such changes a condition for the awarding of the degree, and shall arrange for the changes to be checked and approved by an appropriate person. Editorial changes will have no impact on the grade awarded (see s13.3 (d)).
- h) On the basis of the SRC's recommendation the Associate Dean (PGR) determines the final grade for the thesis and will:
 - i. communicate the result to the candidate, and send the candidate copies of the examiners' reports and/or any additional report as in (d) above; and
 - ii. send copies of the examiners' reports (if these have not already been distributed) and /or any additional report as in (d) above, and the result to the supervisor(s); and
 - iii. inform the examiners of the outcome of the examination.
- i) Candidates who wish to appeal the grade they have received should do so in writing to the Associate Dean (PGR), within 20 working days of being advised of the grade, detailing why they believe the grade to be unjust.
- j) The Associate Dean will request the SRC to reconsider the examination reports, and the recommendations from the examiners in the light of the issues raised by the candidate. If a written report from the supervisor(s) was not provided in (d) above, then the SRC must also request a written report from the supervisor(s).
- k) The SRC makes a recommendation to the Associate Dean (PGR) on whether or not there should be any change to the grade. Alternatively the SRC may recommend that the thesis be sent out to a referee. The basis for the SRC recommendation should be set out in writing.
- l) The Associate Dean (PGR) makes the final decision on the appeal and informs the candidate, supervisor(s) and examiners.
- m) A candidate who is dissatisfied with the manner in which the examination or any appeal under (i) above was conducted may make a further appeal, in writing, and within 10 working days of being advised of the outcome, to the Dean FGR. The Dean can consider only matters of procedure.

13.5 Research Portfolio Submission and Examination Process

- a) The Faculty of Graduate Research is responsible for overseeing the submission and examination of a research portfolio as detailed within the research portfolio outline.
- b) As detailed in the research portfolio outline, FGR may delegate responsibility for management of aspects of assessment to the Head of School.
- c) The majority of the work must be assessed by at least two examiners, including at least one external examiner.

Note: All examiners must be provided with a copy of the portfolio outline (see s6).

- d) Examiners may assess the work independently and provide separate reports and recommended grades, or the examiners may function as a panel to assess the work and provide a single report and an agreed recommended grade.

- e) The School Research Committee (SRC) will review all examiners' reports and recommended grades as set out in s13.4 (b)–(g), and recommend an overall grade for the research portfolio to the Associate Dean (PGR).
 - i. The possible grades and the associated percentage ranges are set out in the Assessment Handbook.
 - ii. Where examiners have recommended editorial changes to the work prior to deposit in the University Library, the SRC may make the completion of such changes a condition for the awarding of the degree, and shall arrange for the changes to be checked and approved by an appropriate person.
 - iii. Where the work does not meet the requisite standards, the examiners may recommend that aspects of it be revised and resubmitted for a second examination (see s13.6)
- f) On the basis of the SRC's recommendation the Associate Dean (PGR) determines the final grade for the research portfolio. The Associate Dean (or nominee) will:
 - i. communicate the result to the candidate, the examiners and the supervisor; and
 - ii. except where these have already been distributed, provide the candidate and the supervisor with copies of the examiners' reports and/or any additional reports considered or developed by SRC.
- g) Appeal processes, which are only available after the determination of the final grade, are as for a thesis (see s13.4 (i) and (m)).

13.6 Resubmission for second examination

- a) The candidate will be informed of the extent of the necessary corrections and revisions, and given a timeframe for resubmitting the work for examination. This will not normally exceed four months full-time (or equivalent).
- b) Resubmission entails a further period of supervision and registration. Except with the permission of the Dean FGR, a candidate must be registered within two months of being notified of the examination decision and must be registered until they submit the work for second examination.
- c) The work will be examined by the same examiners unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- d) If a thesis is resubmitted for second examination the highest grade that may be awarded is a C minus.
- e) Either component of a two-part research portfolio may be resubmitted for second examination. The highest grade that may be awarded for that component is a C minus. The final overall grade will reflect the relative weighting of the components.
- f) If both components of a two-part research portfolio are resubmitted the highest grade that may be awarded for the degree is a C minus.
- g) Examiners marking resubmitted work (whether of a single thesis or either component of a research portfolio) must be advised that the work has been resubmitted and they are not permitted to recommend a further resubmission.
- h) No candidate may gain first or second class honours or distinction or merit (as appropriate for the degree for which the work has been submitted) for any degree for which the thesis or research portfolio has been resubmitted.

14. Deposit of the Thesis or Research Portfolio in the Library

- a) When the decision has been made that the degree is to be awarded, a copy of the final work is lodged in the University Library in accordance with the Library Statute.
- b) The Faculty of Graduate Research is responsible for ensuring that the candidate has deposited the required copy in the Library. A copy of the receipt for this must be forwarded to the Faculty of Graduate Research before the degree can be conferred.

Note: See s5.1 (a) and s5.6 for the approval process for a non-standard format.

15. Conversion from a Master's Thesis Degree to a PhD Degree

Note: A Research Portfolio cannot normally be converted to a PhD. Any such conversion must be approved by the Dean FGR – see (g) below.

- a) An application to convert the thesis must be made prior to the thesis being submitted for examination and normally within 9 months full-time (or equivalent) of initial enrolment.
- b) Applications should be finalised within 11 months of registration for the Master's thesis; exceptions require the approval of the relevant Associate Dean (PGR).
- c) The supervisor/s must:
 - i. indicate that the topic can be extended in a manner suitable to provide a PhD project; and
 - ii. confirm that the candidate has demonstrated the aptitude and level of competence required for PhD study, including proficiency in English or in te reo Māori (as appropriate).
- d) The supervisor/s and the candidate must agree in writing any additional work to be undertaken in order to achieve full registration and this document must be submitted with the application.
- e) The School Research Committee (SRC) must also approve the application. It must, in consultation with the Head of School, confirm:
 - i. that the candidate is a suitable candidate to be transferred to a PhD; and
 - ii. that the project can be extended in a manner suitable to provide a PhD project; and
 - iii. that adequate supervision is available, with an indication of who the new supervisory team will be (the supervisor/s of the Master's thesis will not necessarily remain on the PhD supervisory team); and
 - iv. that adequate resources to support the proposed PhD research project are available.
- f) If the SRC is unable to recommend acceptance of the application for conversion, the application cannot proceed. An SRC decision not to support an application is final.
- g) Final approval of a conversion is by the Associate Dean (PGR), except that conversion from a research portfolio also requires approval by the Dean FGR.
- h) The candidate is not required to apply online for admission to the University. Application information and approvals are recorded on the School/Faculty PhD Approval Form – Upgrade from Master's form. Applications may be considered outside of the three standard application rounds for doctoral study.
- i) Candidates wishing to be considered for a Wellington Doctoral Scholarship must submit an application for consideration in a subsequent scholarship round.

- j) The date of first enrolment for the Master's degree becomes the date of provisional registration for the PhD.
- k) Candidates who convert from a Master's degree to a PhD degree are required to satisfy all requirements for full registration, including the submission of a full proposal for the PhD.

16. Powers of the Dean FGR in respect of this policy

- a) Where the Dean FGR is convinced that any regulation or procedure would lead to injustice for a particular candidate, the Dean may, after consultation with appropriate parties, modify the application of the relevant clause for the individual case.
- b) Where the examination process is compromised the Dean FGR has the right to declare an examination null and void and recommence the examination process.

17. Academic Grievance

Any concerns relating to academic disadvantage regarding a candidate's Master's thesis or research portfolio programme are dealt with under the [Academic Grievance Policy](#).

18. Definitions

In these Regulations, unless the context otherwise requires:

Associate Dean (PGR):	The person in each faculty who is responsible for the approval of all administrative decisions and for all academic matters related to the postgraduate research degree programmes of candidates within their faculty.
Enrolled:	The status acquired by a candidate that starts when they meet all enrolment conditions and ends when the candidate lodges the completed thesis in the University library, withdraws from or fails the qualification, or the University terminates the candidature.
External parties:	External parties include other universities, research institutions e.g. Crown Research Institutes, government entities e.g. Earthquake Commission, or private sector organisations,
External supervisor:	A person who is appointed to the role of supervisor but who is not a member of Victoria University of Wellington's academic staff.
Faculty of Graduate Research:	The body charged with general responsibility for and oversight of the University's postgraduate research degree programmes.
Full-time candidate:	Candidates are deemed to be full-time when they are able to devote, on average, a minimum of 30 hours per week to the thesis throughout the period of enrolment for the thesis. This workload excludes statutory holiday periods. Note: Regulations for a Wellington scholarship may require more than this minimum.
Half-time candidate:	Candidates who cannot work on the thesis for the minimum amount of 30 hours per week are deemed to be half-time.
Home faculty:	The faculty responsible for the Master's degree programme in which the candidate is enrolled.
Honorary Research Associate (HRA)	The appointment title given to an external supervisor.

Postgraduate Coordinator:	A person within the school to whom the relevant Head of School has delegated the authority for postgraduate matters.
Period of Registration:	The period for which candidates are under supervision. Registration excludes periods of suspension and the period following submission of the thesis for examination, unless the candidate is required to undergo a further period of supervision. Fees are charged for periods of registration.
Research Portfolio:	A particular type of thesis offered in some disciplines. A coherent body of research-based work comprising one or more projects involving independent scholarship, and/or creative activity conducted under supervision, organised around a central research theme or subject and having a value of 90 points or more. The provisions set out in this policy for a thesis apply equally to a research portfolio except where otherwise stated.
Research Portfolio Outline	A procedural document issued to all students undertaking a research portfolio. The document must detail all aspects of the management and delivery of the programme that diverge from normal thesis processes and requirements, and all details that pertain to the examination of the research portfolio. The research portfolio outline must be approved by the Dean FGR and provided to all candidates prior to the commencement of their registration.
School Research Committee (SRC):	A committee established in each school with responsibility for advising the Head of School on research and postgraduate matters. In some schools called the Postgraduate Committee.
Supervisor:	The person who is appointed to provide academic and administrative guidance to the candidate during their registration for the thesis.
Suspension:	An approved period of time during which a candidate pays no tuition fees and receives no academic supervision.
Termination:	Action the University may take to end a candidate's enrolment.
Thesis:	The outcome of independent research, scholarship, and/or creative activity conducted under academic supervision and having a value of 90 points or more. For works of design, creation or performance, the work should include a written commentary.

Related Documents and Information

19. Related Documents

[Academic Grievance Policy](#)

[Animal Ethics Policy](#)

[Assessment Handbook](#)

[Awarding of Qualifications Posthumously Policy](#)

[Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Statute](#) (in the University Calendar)

[Details of Candidates' Responsibilities](#)

[Details of Supervisors' Responsibilities](#)

[Editorial Advice Policy](#)

[Fees Statute](#) (in the University Calendar)

[Human Ethics Policy](#)

[Intellectual Property Policy](#)

[Library Statute](#)

[Management of External Research Consultancy and Related Contracts Policy](#)

[Master's Thesis Academic Progress Report Templates](#)

[Personal Courses of Study Statute](#) (in the University Calendar)

[Recognition of Authorship Policy](#)

[Research Proposal Template](#)

[Resource Agreement for Thesis Students \(RAfTS\)](#)

[Withholding of Theses Procedure](#)

Previous version: [Master's Thesis Policy](#)

20. Document Management and Control

Approver	Academic Board
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