

Doctorates Policy - Draft

Sections

- Application
- Purpose
- Contents
- Policy
- Definitions
- Key relevant documents
- Document management and control

Application

This policy applies to all applicants and candidates for any University of Auckland doctoral programme, excluding higher doctorates (see Higher Doctorates Procedure). It also applies to all staff and associates involved in the delivery of doctoral programmes.

Purpose

This Policy explains the principles under which the University offers doctoral programmes, excluding higher doctorates.

The Policy is aligned with the requirements established by the University of Auckland Doctorates Statute and is supported by the procedures and guidelines listed in Key Relevant Documents below. It does not address Doctoral Supervision (see Doctoral Supervision Policy).

Contents

- Admissions
- Enrolments – General Requirements
- Enrolments – Extensions and Suspensions
- Provisional Year Review and Confirmation of Candidature
- Continuation of Candidature and Candidature Conditions
- Candidate Support and Resources
- Termination and Expiration of Candidature
- Research Outcomes and Thesis
- Examination
- Examiners
- Complaints, Concerns and Appeals

Policy

Admissions

1. To be admitted to the PhD programme or a Named Doctorate programme, applicants must satisfy the University's Admission Regulations, the Doctorates Statute, and the specific criteria and requirements outlined in the Doctorate Admissions Procedure.

2. Applicants must be able to demonstrate appropriate research capacity, which encompasses research experience and ability, disciplinary training and suitability to proposed research project.
3. In exceptional circumstances, a person may be admitted to the PhD programme despite not meeting all the requirements of the Procedure.
 - a. Research capacity must still be demonstrated and will be assessed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Global and Graduate Research (PVC GGR) in accordance with relevant Practice Notes.
4. An offer of admission to the PhD programme is valid for up to six months (or a maximum of 12 months in exceptional circumstances) from the date of notification of admission to the programme.
 - a. Where enrolment in the programme does not occur within that time, re-application for admission to the programme is required.
5. Concurrent enrolment in another programme at the University of Auckland or at another institution is not permitted, except as approved by the PVC GGR in exceptional circumstances, or as permitted in the context of a dual or joint PhD.

Enrolment – Requirements

6. All doctoral candidates must comply with all relevant regulations, policy and procedures throughout their enrolment.
7. Doctoral candidates must be enrolled with the University throughout the entirety of their candidature.
 - a. A full-time doctoral student is enrolled in 10 points each month and is expected to work on their doctorate for 40 hours a week.
 - b. A part-time doctoral student is enrolled in 5 points each month and is expected to work on their doctorate for 20 hours a week.
8. Full-time and part-time enrolled doctoral candidates are expected to take 5 weeks of holiday each year (which includes statutory and University holidays).
9. Candidates who are required to revise and resubmit their thesis for examination are required to re-enrol within 2 calendar months and be enrolled for the duration of the period of revision of the thesis.
 - a. The maximum duration of enrolment for revision and resubmission of a thesis is 12 months full-time equivalent.
10. Doctoral candidates may change their enrolment from full-time to part-time status, or from part-time to full-time status. Status changes must be made in accordance with the Doctoral Enrolment Procedures, and can only occur where explicitly permitted in the relevant doctoral programme regulations.
 - a. A doctoral candidate must request a return to full-time status if the grounds for part-time enrolment no longer apply.
11. Doctoral candidates are expected to undertake their programme at a University of Auckland campus. Where this is not the case, enrolment is considered to be off-campus. Any period of off-campus research of one month or more during doctoral candidature requires approval as outlined in relevant procedures.
12. Approval for off-campus research may be rescinded as outlined in the Doctoral Enrolments Procedure.

Enrolment – Extensions and Suspensions

13. It is the University's expectation that candidates will submit their doctoral theses within 3.5 years Full Time Equivalent (FTE) of first enrolment.
14. In some circumstances, a candidate may be approved for:
 - a. an extension to a candidate's doctoral enrolment; or
 - b. a retrospective extension to a former candidate's doctoral enrolment.
15. A (former) doctoral candidate may apply for an extension of time, of not less than one month (FTE), and not more than 6 months (FTE), on grounds including but not limited to the following:
 - a. whānau /family responsibilities
 - b. mental health challenges
 - c. disability/disabilities
 - c. illness, accident or injury
 - d. bereavement
 - e. financial hardship
 - f. delays in research beyond the candidate's control
16. Factors relevant to the consideration of extension applications may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. candidate circumstances
 - b. academic progress
 - c. proposed submission plan
 - d. supervisor endorsement
17. Extensions of candidature beyond 4 years FTE (excluding any periods of approved suspension) will be considered only in exceptional circumstances, and requires approval of the PVC GGR.
18. In exceptional circumstances, a candidate may be approved for a suspension of their enrolment.
19. Subject to programme regulations, a doctoral candidate may apply to suspend their candidature, for periods of not normally less than two months and not more than 12 months at one time, on grounds including but not limited to the following:
 - a. whānau/family responsibilities
 - b. mental health challenges
 - c. disability/disabilities
 - d. illness, accident or injury
 - e. bereavement
 - f. professional development opportunities (confirmed candidates only)
 - g. financial hardship
20. Factors relevant to the consideration of suspension applications may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. candidate circumstances
 - b. academic progress
 - c. impact of the proposed suspension on the viability of the research
 - d. supervisor endorsement.
21. The maximum total elapsed time allowed for suspension within a candidature is 2 years.
22. The approval of a period of suspension may be subject to conditions.

Provisional Year Review and Confirmation of Candidature

23. Candidature is provisional until confirmed, and is subject to the Doctoral Candidate and Progress Procedure.
24. The time limit for provisional candidature is 12 months of full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolment (plus no more than 1 month administrative allowance). It may be extended by up to 3 months in accordance with the Doctoral Candidature and Progress Procedures.
25. For a candidate to be confirmed in the programme, they must achieve:
 - a. Prescribed general confirmation milestones; and
 - b. Any additional prescribed candidate- or programme-specific confirmation milestones.

Continuation of Candidature and Candidature Conditions

26. Confirmed candidature must be reviewed at least every 12 months after confirmation date (excluding any approved periods of suspension).
27. A final review must take place at 36 months (FTE) of enrolment, excluding any periods of suspension, and not earlier than 30 months (FTE).
28. Where progress concerns arise during candidature, either as part of continuation reviews or at any other time, conditions may be imposed on a candidate's continuation in the programme. Such conditions may be configured as additional milestones that must be satisfied.

Candidate Support and Resources

29. The University enrolls doctoral candidates on the basis that adequate research resources and facilities are available. However:
 - a. The University carries no responsibility where anticipated research resources, other than those explicitly identified in policy or procedure, do not materialise.
 - b. There are no circumstances in which the University is responsible for the provision of research funding and/or specialist equipment.
30. Other services available to candidates are detailed in the Candidate Resources and Support Procedure.

Termination and Expiration of Candidature

31. Doctoral candidature or registration may be terminated on any of the grounds specified in the Doctorates Statute, the relevant doctoral programme regulations or the Doctoral Candidature and Progress Procedure as relevant.
32. Where doctoral termination proceedings are commencing, candidates will be given notice.
33. The full description of the processes undertaken to terminate candidature is provided in the Candidature and Progress Procedure.
34. Candidature expires when the research project is not submitted for examination by the date required.
35. Where candidature has expired, it may be reinstated only:
 - a. as the outcome of a successful application for a (retrospective) extension of enrolment, or
 - b. by successful appeal of a decision to decline an extension of enrolment (retrospective or otherwise).

36. Termination of candidature is also termination of enrolment in the PhD programme for enrolled candidates.

Research Outcomes and Thesis

37. Doctoral candidates are expected to complete a programme of research that results in a coherent outcome or coherent suite of outcomes, which is placed in its scholarly context and presented for examination as an archival artefact: the thesis.
38. Responsibility for the quality of work ultimately rests with the candidate.
39. The thesis must make an original and significant contribution to knowledge and/or understanding in the relevant field(s) of study.
40. The research programme, which may include creative practice, must involve enquiry that is experimental and/or critical in nature and be driven by an intellectual hypothesis, position, problem or question(s) capable of being rigorously explored.
41. The research programme must be conducted under supervision and over the period of enrolment in the PhD programme, and must be conducted in accordance with the Research Integrity Policy.
42. The written requirement for the thesis is satisfied by a coherent document, which must not normally exceed 100,000 words in length but may be shorter where other work (such as creative work or inventive work) forms part of the overall inquiry. It must be completed in accordance with the Doctoral Thesis Procedure.

Examination

43. The examination for the doctorate degree must be conducted in accordance with the Doctoral Examination Procedures.
44. Except where a candidate is exempted according to the relevant section of the Doctoral Examination Procedures, the doctorate degree cannot be awarded where an oral examination has not taken place.
45. Where a candidate advances to oral examination, the oral examination proceeds in accordance with the Doctoral Examination Procedures and the Oral Examination Guidelines
46. All examination reports and recommendations will be considered in determining the outcome of the examination.

Examiners

47. For each candidate, two examiners will be appointed, at least one of whom must be based outside New Zealand.
48. Examiner nominations will support an examination process that is rigorous, fair, impartial and timely.
49. Examiners must meet the requirements outlined in the Doctoral Examination Procedures, and must be free of conflicts of interest as described in the Guidelines for Conflict of Interest in Doctoral Supervision and Examination.
50. Each examiner must examine, and provide a written report on, the submitted work in relation to criteria outlined in the relevant Regulations, policies and procedures.

51. The examiners must include with their reports one of the following recommendations:
- a. That the candidate proceeds to oral examination, and that the degree be awarded subject to satisfactory performance at that oral examination.
 - b. That the candidate proceeds to oral examination, and that the degree be awarded subject to satisfactory performance at that oral examination and the satisfactory completion of revisions to the submitted work post oral examination.
 - c. That the candidate does not proceed to oral examination but that the candidate be permitted to:
 - a. re-enrol for a period of up to 12 months (full-time equivalent) to revise the work and resubmit it for examination
 - or
 - b. request consideration of the award of an MPhil degree.
 - d. That the candidate does not proceed to oral examination, and that the submitted work be referred for consideration of the award of an MPhil degree.
 - e. That the candidate does not proceed to oral examination, and that no degree be awarded.
52. Examination reports, excluding evaluative material and any confidential sections, will be released to the candidate when they receive notification of the decision regarding oral examination.
53. The candidate must not be informed of the names of, or other identifying information relating to, their examiners unless this is specifically agreed to by the individual examiner at the time of, or after, submission of their examination report.

Complaints, Concerns and Appeals

54. Complaints are subject to the Student Academic Complaints Statute and the Student Academic Complaints Procedures.
55. Informal complaint resolution should be pursued through the Academic Head and Associate Dean/Director (Postgraduate Research).
56. Some decisions may be subject to appeal in accordance with clause 23 of the Doctorates Statute. This includes decisions regarding:
- a. Suspension and extension of enrolment
 - b. Termination of candidature
 - c. The outcome of a doctoral examination
57. The grounds for appeal, and the processes followed, are outlined in the Doctoral Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this document:

- **Academic Head** is the head of the academic unit in which the applicant wishes to enrol, or their nominee.
- **Associate Dean/Director (Postgraduate Research)** normally refers to the person holding the appointment of Associate Dean/Director (Postgraduate Research) (or equivalent) in the faculty or Large Scale Research Institute (LSRI) in which the candidate is enrolled, or to that person's nominee in the case of an LSRI or one-department faculty, but the role may also be carried out by a person holding that appointment (or equivalent) in another faculty or LSRI or by a person holding the appointment of Assistant Dean Postgraduate Research (or equivalent) or another Associate Dean/Director role within the same faculty or LSRI.
- **Candidature** refers to a person's status as a candidate for a doctoral degree at the University.
- **Confirmation milestones** are the activities that a candidate must complete, to the satisfaction of the named party or at the required standard, in order to be confirmed in their doctoral programme.
- **Doctoral candidates** are people who are currently enrolled or currently intermitted from enrolment in a doctoral programme at the University.
- **Extensions** are periods of time beyond the regulatory maximum enrolment period for the degree.
- **Full Time Equivalent** is a unit of measurement used to convert the working hours of part-time, temporary, or contract employees into the number of full-time workers.
- **Former doctoral candidates** refers only to people whose candidature has expired under the relevant programme regulations.
- **Suspensions** are periods of time during which a candidate's enrolment is put on hold.
- **Thesis** is a substantial presentation of the outcome of an original and coherent doctoral research programme. It situates the research in the broader framework of the disciplinary field(s) and entails a cohesive written document.
- **University** means Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland and includes all subsidiaries.

Key relevant documents

- Doctorates Statute
- Supervision Policy
- Doctoral Admissions Procedure
- Doctoral Enrolments Procedure
- Doctoral Candidature and Progress Procedure
- Doctoral Resources and Support Procedure
- Doctoral Thesis Procedure
- Doctoral Examinations Procedure
- Doctoral Disputes and Appeals Procedure
- Doctoral Oral Examinations Guideline
- Doctoral Conflict of Interest Guideline

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