



Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date
3.1	Director of Governance	15 August 2023	15 August 2023
Policy Statement			
Purpose	This policy specifies the requirements for qualifications, progression, examination and award of a PhD. It must be read in association with the policy and procedures concerning research candidatures.		
Scope	This policy applies to all PhD candidates.		
Policy Provisions			

1. Introduction

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) may be awarded to a candidate who completes a piece of research that demonstrates a significant and original contribution to knowledge in their field of study.

2. Qualifications, Admission and Enrolment

Only candidates enrolled in accordance with the University's policy and procedures concerning research candidates will be eligible to proceed to the award of a PhD. These include the [Admissions Policy](#), [Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure](#), [Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy](#), [Joint PhD Program Policy](#) and [Joint PhD Program Procedure](#).

- 2.1. All candidates must be enrolled in a School or an approved unit within the Faculty authorised to enrol research candidates and under the control of the Faculty Dean or equivalent.
- 2.2. All candidates must undertake the research at a UNSW affiliated location such as a UNSW campus, teaching hospital, or other research facility of the University as listed on the Research website.

3. Candidature and Progression

The progress of a PhD candidate must be managed in accordance with the University's [Variation of Candidature Procedure](#) and [Research Progress Review and Confirmation of Research Candidatures Procedure](#).

- 3.1. Inclusion of any coursework within the PhD must be approved by the Faculty Higher Degree Committee (the Committee) and must comply with the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) relating to research degree definitions.
- 3.2. Approval for extension to candidatures beyond the maximum time of four years full-time equivalent must be obtained via the Committee.

4. Thesis Content

For an award of a PhD, the thesis must represent an original and significant contribution to knowledge of the subject.

- 4.1. The research described must have been completed during the period of enrolment for the degree.
- 4.2. The thesis must be written in English. The exception to this is for candidates in the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences who may be permitted by the Committee to write a thesis in an appropriate language as specified in Faculty specific guidelines.
- 4.3. The writing must have a satisfactory standard of expression and presentation.

- 4.4. The thesis must consist of an account of the candidate's own research. All research performed conjointly with other persons must be fully acknowledged and include a statement of the candidate's contribution to the conjoint research. Any editorial assistance in the preparation of the thesis must also be acknowledged.

5. Examination and Award

Theses shall be submitted in accordance with the [Thesis Examination Procedure](#).

- 5.1. Candidates who commenced from 1 January 2023 must have an oral examination. Candidates who commenced in previous years may opt in for an oral examination.
- 5.2. A candidate shall present a thesis for examination embodying the results of the investigation no earlier than three years full-time equivalent and no later than four years full-time equivalent from the first term of enrolment.
- 5.3. Where the research has a substantial studio/production/exhibition component, the length of the written thesis may be proportionally reduced from the appropriate length of the thesis in the discipline.
- 5.4. The candidate must not submit any work or material that has previously been submitted for a university degree or other similar award as the main content of the thesis.
- 5.5. The thesis must be examined by two external examiners. Examiners are expected to be fair, independent and expert. Examiners must not have a conflict of interest and not have been an employee of the University within the past 5 years.
- 5.6. Each examiner must submit to the University a concise written report on the thesis and must recommend one of the following:
- a) **Award** - The thesis merits the award of the degree.
 - b) **Minor Corrections** - The thesis merits the award of the degree subject to minor corrections as listed being made to the satisfaction of the Dean of Graduate Research.
 - c) **Further Work** - The thesis requires further work on matters detailed in the report to the satisfaction of the Dean of Graduate Research.
 - d) **Revise and re-examine** - The thesis in its present form does not merit the award of the degree and further work as described in the report is required. The revised thesis should be subject to re-examination.
 - e) **Non-Award** - The thesis does not merit the award of the degree and does not demonstrate sufficient merit to warrant resubmission.
- 5.7. For examinations where recommendations of 5.5 (a) and (b) only are received, written reports will be released to the Postgraduate Research Coordinator (PGC), or Head of School where the PGC is the supervisor, who must consider them and advise the Dean of Graduate Research which of the recommendations specified in 5.5 should be implemented.
- 5.8. For all examinations including recommendations 5.5 (c), (d) or (e), the Committee must consider the examiners' recommendations and written reports and advise the Dean of Graduate Research which of the recommendations specified in 5.5 should be implemented.
- 5.9. In the case of a decision that the revised thesis should be the subject of re-examination as specified under 5.5 (d), the examiners who recommended re-examination must be appointed to re-examine the thesis. The examiner may not recommend option (d) for a re-examined thesis.
- 5.10. In the case of a recommendation not to award the degree as specified under 5.5 (e), the candidate must be given written notification of the reasons for this recommendation. The candidate has a right to appeal the decision on the basis of procedural fairness. The appeal process is outlined in the [Student Complaint Procedure](#).

6. Fees

A candidate must pay such fees as determined by the Vice-Chancellor.

Accountabilities				
Responsible Officer	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research			
Contact Officer	Dean of Graduate Research			
Supporting Information				
Legislative Compliance	This Policy supports the University's compliance with the following legislation: Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (Cth) Australian Qualifications Framework			
Supporting Documents	Nil			
Related Documents	Register of Delegations Admissions Policy Admission to Higher Degree Research Program Procedure Joint PhD Program Policy Joint PhD Program Procedure Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy Research Progress Review and Confirmation of Research Candidature Procedure Student Complaint Procedure Thesis Examination Procedure Variation of Candidature Procedure			
Superseded Documents	Conditions for Award of Doctor of Philosophy Policy, v3.0			
File Number	2020/011755			
Definitions and Acronyms				
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy			
PGC	Postgraduate Research Coordinator			
Revision History				
Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
This Policy replaced the <i>Conditions for Award of Degrees: Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)</i> , published in the Handbook with no version control.				
1.0	Vice-Chancellor	27 March 2012	1 April 2012	Transferred to Policy template, change at 4.4.3, other minor revisions
1.1	Administrative update by the Director of Governance	20 December 2016	20 December 2016	Administrative update
2.0	President and Vice-Chancellor	17 October 2017	17 October 2017	Full review
2.1	President and Vice-Chancellor	5 November 2018	1 January 2019	Minor amendment to accommodate 3+ academic calendar
3.0	President and Vice-Chancellor	28 August 2020	28 August 2020	Full review resulting in minor amendments
3.1	Director of Governance	15 August 2023	15 August 2023	Administrative update to section 5.1 regarding oral examination.