



## Conditions for Award of Professional Doctorates Policy

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date
1.1	Director of Governance and University Secretary	19 March 2025	19 March 2025
Policy Statement			
Purpose	This policy specifies the requirements for qualifications, progression, examination and award of a Professional Doctorate. It must be read in association with the policy and procedures concerning higher degree research candidatures.		
Scope	This policy applies to all Professional Doctorate candidates.		
Policy Provisions			

### 1. Introduction

The Professional Doctoral (Prof Doc) combines doctoral research and coursework components with professional practice. The Prof Doc may be awarded to a candidate who completes a structured program of coursework and research that demonstrates a significant and original contribution to a field of professional practice.

### 2. Qualifications, Admissions 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 Professional Doctorate. These include the [Admissions Policy](#), [Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure](#) and [Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy](#).

- 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 approved location.

### 3. Candidate and Progression

The progress of a Prof Doc 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. Candidates must complete 48 Units of Credit of advanced coursework typically within the first year of enrolment. The School may choose to vary the timing of the coursework component which must be communicated to candidates at enrolment. The coursework must be passed at first attempt at a level prescribed by the Faculty Higher Degree Committee (the Committee) or equivalent.
- 3.2. All coursework must comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework relating to research degree definitions for Level 10 qualifications.
- 3.3. Approval for extension to candidatures beyond the maximum time of four years full-time equivalent must be obtained via the Committee.

### 4. Thesis

For an award of a Professional doctorate, the thesis must represent an original and significant contribution to a field of professional practice.

- 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.
- 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 jointly 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. 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.
- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. 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.
- 5.4. 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.
- 5.5. For examinations where recommendations of 5.4 (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 approver which of the recommendations specified in 5.4 should be implemented.
- 5.6. For all examinations including recommendations 5.4 (c), (d) or (e), the Committee must consider the examiners' recommendations and written reports and advise the approver which of the recommendations specified in 5.4 should be implemented.
- 5.7. In the case of a decision that the revised thesis should be the subject of re-examination as specified under 5.4 (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.
- 5.8. In the case of a recommendation not to award the degree as specified under 5.4 (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 University and specified in the [Student Fee Policy](#) and [Student Fee Procedure](#).

Accountabilities				
Responsible Officer		Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise		
Contact Officer		Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Training & Entrepreneurship and Dean of Graduate Research		
Supporting Information				
Legislative Compliance		This Policy supports the University’s compliance with the following legislation: <a href="#">Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth)</a> <a href="#">Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (Cth)</a> <a href="#">Australian Qualifications Framework (Cth)</a>		
Supporting Documents		Nil		
Related Documents		<a href="#">Admissions Policy</a> <a href="#">Delegations Policy</a> <a href="#">Register of Delegations</a> <a href="#">Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure</a> <a href="#">Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy</a> <a href="#">Research Progress Review and Confirmation of Research Candidature Procedure</a> <a href="#">Student Complaint Procedure</a> <a href="#">Student Fee Policy</a> <a href="#">Student Fee Procedure</a> <a href="#">Thesis Examination Procedure</a> <a href="#">Variation of Candidature Procedure</a>		
Superseded Documents		Conditions for Award of Professional Doctorates Policy 1.0		
Definitions and Acronyms				
Prof Doc		Professional Doctorate		
Revision History				
Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
1.0	President and Vice-Chancellor	20 July 2022	20 July 2022	New Policy
1.1	Director of Governance	19 March 2025	19 March 2025	Administrative update to align with UNSW Delegation Policy, Procedure and Schedules.