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## Awarding of Qualifications Posthumously Policy

### Academic Policy

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#### 1 Purpose

The University may wish to award a posthumous qualification to a student who has died when close to completion of their programme. This policy sets out procedures and criteria to ensure that these cases are dealt with in a consistent and appropriate manner.

#### 2 Organisational Scope

This is a University-wide policy.

#### 3 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

PhD degree	A degree awarded for a course of study which consists of a programme of research and the writing of a thesis carried out under supervision. For the purposes of this policy the term 'PhD degree' shall also refer to other named doctorates which require theses.
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#### 4 Policy Content and Guidelines

##### 4.1 *The Posthumous award of a PhD or Master's degree by thesis*

PhD and Master's theses are usually accessible to the public, and it is important that appropriate standards are maintained.

##### 4.1.1 **When the posthumous award of a PhD should be considered**

The Faculty of Graduate Research (FGR) may give consideration to the awarding of a PhD posthumously under the following circumstances:

- (a) If an almost completed draft of the thesis is available and any missing content can be readily derived from what the candidate has already written.
- (b) If a penultimate draft of the thesis is completed and only routine editing is required.
- (c) If the thesis has been submitted for examination.
- (d) If the thesis has been examined, but the oral defence has not been held.
- (e) If the oral defence has been held with outcomes (i) or (ii) from section 4.13 (a) of the PhD Policy, but the thesis is not yet deposited in the University Library.

##### 4.1.2 **Process for consideration of the award**

- (a) The Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Research ('Dean FGR') will establish a Committee comprising the relevant Associate Dean (Postgraduate Students and/or Research), the

Victoria supervisor and the primary supervisor (if this is not the same person as the Victoria supervisor), and one other member of the FGR Board to consider whether the thesis can be submitted for examination.

- (b) Where the thesis is not yet complete, as in 4.1.1 (a) or (b), the Committee may recommend to the Dean FGR:
  - (i) that the thesis go forward for examination in its existing form; or
  - (ii) that a third party be requested to proof-read or edit the thesis, according to guidelines established by the Committee, prior to the thesis going forward for examination; or
  - (iii) that the thesis is not sufficiently advanced to allow it to go forward for examination for the PhD.
- (c) With a recommendation that the thesis should proceed to examination, the Committee will arrange for a suitable version of the thesis to be submitted for examination.
- (d) Where the thesis has already been submitted for examination as in 4.1.1 (c) and (d) above, the Committee will receive and consider the examiners' reports. The Committee may consult with the New Zealand examiner and the internal examiner to determine the outcome.
- (e) The Committee may recommend to the Dean FGR:
  - (i) that the degree be awarded without any modifications to the thesis and with the oral defence being waived (as per section 15 (c) of the PhD Policy); or
  - (ii) that the degree be awarded subject to proof-reading or editing by a third party according to guidelines set out by the committee and with the oral defence being waived; or
  - (iii) that a Master's degree be awarded instead, under conditions which the Committee determines; or
  - (iv) that no degree be awarded.
- (f) Where the recommendation is that proof-reading or editing of the thesis be undertaken by a third party, the Dean FGR will arrange this in consultation with the Committee. Where the thesis is completed by a third party, this should be noted in the copy of the thesis that is deposited in the University Library.
- (g) Where the Dean FGR approves the award of the degree the thesis must be deposited in the University Library in accordance with the Library Statute.

#### **4.1.3 Process for award of the Master's degree by thesis**

- (a) Where the thesis is not yet ready for submission as in 4.1.1 (a) or (b) the relevant procedures set out for a PhD thesis in 4.1.2 above will be followed.
- (b) If the thesis has already been submitted for examination, the examination will proceed as usual and the result will apply. No editing of the thesis, beyond minor corrections or amendments, should be necessary.
- (c) If the thesis has already been examined, the result from the examination will stand and the thesis should be deposited in the University Library in the normal manner.
- (d) Where the outcome is that the degree should be awarded the thesis must be deposited in the University Library in accordance with the Library Statute.

## **4.2 The posthumous award of other qualifications**

### **4.2.1 Criteria**

- (a) The posthumous award of a qualification is to be considered if:
- (i) the student required no more than the lesser of 60 points or one sixth of the points required for the qualification; and
  - (ii) in the case of a Bachelor's degree, had passed at least one of the of the 300-level courses required for their major.

The student need not have been enrolled in the courses required to complete the qualification.

- (b) In exceptional circumstances consideration may be given to the posthumous awarding of a qualification that is less complete than specified above, but where the qualification is still deemed to be substantially complete.

### **4.2.2 Requirements**

Subject to section 4.2.1, a qualification will be awarded posthumously if the student's level of academic performance to date suggests that, had they continued, they would have passed the courses required to complete the qualification. Any degree of impairment should be taken into account.

### **4.2.3 Deciding authority**

The relevant Head of School shall consult with staff as appropriate and advise the relevant Associate Dean. The Associate Dean shall make a recommendation to the Convener of the Academic Committee, who shall decide whether the qualification should be awarded.

## **4.3 Reporting and communication**

### **4.3.1 Student's representative**

For the purposes of this policy, all communication is to be with the student's next of kin.

### **4.3.2 Reporting of decision**

Upon deciding that a posthumous qualification is to be awarded, the Dean FGR or the Convener of the Academic Committee (as appropriate) is responsible for ensuring the following persons are advised:

- (a) The student's next of kin
- (b) The relevant Faculty Administration Manager
- (c) The Manager, Graduation

## **5 Legislative Compliance**

The University is required to manage its policy documentation within a legislative framework. The legislation directing this policy, available at [www.legislation.govt.nz](http://www.legislation.govt.nz) is the:

Victoria University of Wellington Act (1961)

Education Act (1989)

## **6 References**

Academic Transcripts and Certificates Policy

Degrees Statute

Library Statute

Master's Thesis Policy

PhD Policy

PhD Procedures

Proof-Reading and Editorial Advice Policy

All the above are available at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy)

[Personal Courses of Study Statute](#) (Victoria University of Wellington Calendar, Section C)

Previous version: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/academic/archive/archive-awarding-of-qualifications-posthumously-policy-20110530.pdf>

## 7 Appendices

None

## 8 Approval Agency

Academic Board

## 9 Approval Dates

This policy was originally approved on: 14 March 2002  
(in respect of PhDs only)

An amended version (including provisions for all qualifications) was approved on: 5 August 2004

This version was approved on: 28 April 2011

This version takes effect from: 30 May 2011

This policy will be reviewed by: 30 May 2014

## 10 Policy Sponsor

Dean, Faculty of Graduate Research – in relation to the award of PhDs and Master's degrees by thesis.

Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) – in relation to the award of other qualifications.

## 11 Contact Person

The following persons may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy:

For queries relating to PhDs and Master's degrees by thesis:

Theresa Sawicka

Manager, Research and Faculty of Graduate Research

Ext: 5190

For queries relating to the award of other qualifications:

Martin Boswell

Team Leader, Academic Quality and Policy

Ext: 6830