
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Statute

Research Policy Group

1 Purpose

The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Statute sets out the regulations governing the admission, enrolment, registration, supervision, and examination of candidates for the PhD degree at Victoria University of Wellington (the University). It also stipulates the criteria on which the award of the degree will be based. This statute must be read in conjunction with the [Doctoral Policy](#).

2 Organisational Scope

This is a University-wide statute. It applies to all PhD candidates.

3 Definitions

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

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.
Enrolment:	The period for which fees are paid to the University. Refer to the definition of registration below.
Faculty of Graduate Research:	The body charged with having general responsibility for and oversight of the University's postgraduate research degree programmes.
Full-time PhD Candidate:	Candidates are deemed to be full-time when they are able to devote a minimum of 30 hours per week to the thesis, on average, per year. This workload excludes statutory holiday periods. Note: Regulations for a Victoria scholarship require more than this minimum.
Half-time PhD Candidate:	Candidates who cannot work on the thesis for the minimum amount of 30 hours per week are deemed to be half-time students.
PGR:	Postgraduate Research.
Registration:	Registration begins with first enrolment and ends when the candidate completes the degree, withdraws from study or has their registration terminated. Candidates remain registered during periods of suspension and between submission of the thesis for examination and completion of the degree.

School Research Committee:	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:	A supervisor is a person who is appointed to provide academic and administrative guidance to the candidate during their enrolment for the degree.

4 Statute Content and Guidelines

4.1 Entry requirements

- (a) A candidate for the PhD shall, before enrolment:
 - (i) have completed a Bachelor's or Master's degree with First or Second Class Honours or a Master's degree at an equivalent standard to First or Second class honours at a university in New Zealand; or
 - (ii) be currently enrolled in a Master's thesis at the Victoria University of Wellington and meet the requirements for conversion to a PhD (refer to the PhD Procedures); or
 - (iii) produce evidence to the satisfaction of the Associate Dean (PGR) of adequate training and ability to proceed with the proposed course for the degree.
- (b) Candidates must not only show themselves to be qualified but must also be accepted by the Head of School and the relevant Associate Dean (PGR).
- (c) Where a candidate is accepted under clause 4.1 (a) (ii), the candidate will be deemed to have first enrolled for the PhD on the date of first enrolment for the Master's degree.

4.2 General requirements

- (a) The course of study for a PhD consists of a programme of research and the completion of a thesis carried out under supervision. During the period of provisional registration, the course of study may include enrolment in courses relating to and/or necessary for the development of a full research proposal, but the courses taken shall not normally exceed 60 points in total. These courses may be selected from the schedule to this statute or the schedules to any other degree statute of this University, but must be approved by the Associate Dean (PGR).
- (b) The research will normally be conducted at the Victoria University of Wellington, but with permission of the Associate Dean (PGR), part of the research programme may be carried out at other locations.
- (c) The thesis must be a body of work that demonstrates the candidate's ability to carry out independent research, and constitutes a significant and original contribution to knowledge or understanding. This contribution may include critical, experimental, theoretical or creative components, but the end result must be a single integrated study.
- (d) The thesis may include the candidate's previously published work or material based on the candidate's previous research, if the work has not been submitted for another qualification at the Victoria University of Wellington or any other university and the thesis is written under supervision during the period of registration.
- (e) The thesis shall not exceed a total of 100,000 words in length (including scholarly apparatus). In exceptional circumstances the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Research may grant permission for a longer thesis to be submitted for examination.

- (f) Any application for withholding of the thesis from publication should be made as early as possible in the research project and well before submission. Note: Refer to the [Withholding of Theses Procedure](#).
- (g) The format of the thesis is as determined by the [Library Statute](#).

4.3 **Enrolment and registration**

- (a) A candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy will enrol in accordance with the [Personal Courses of Study Statute](#) and the [Fees Statute](#).
- (b) A candidate shall in the first instance be provisionally registered.
 - (i) Full registration is conditional on satisfactory progress during the provisional period, and must be confirmed by the Associate Dean (PGR) on the advice of the School Research Committee within 15 months of first enrolment, otherwise the candidate's registration will be terminated.
 - (ii) Any coursework undertaken in accordance with section 4.2 (a) must normally be completed before full registration.
 - (iii) When full registration is confirmed, the period of provisional registration is counted as part of the time of enrolment for the degree.
- (c) Except as permitted in 4.3 (f) the minimum and maximum periods of enrolment (excluding any approved period(s) of suspension) shall be as follows:
 - (i) The minimum period is two years full-time or three years half-time.
 - (ii) The maximum period is four years full-time or six years half-time.
 - (iii) For candidates permitted to enrol half-time for part of their programme, the minimum and maximum periods of enrolment shall be calculated on a pro rata basis.
- (d) On application from a candidate, the Associate Dean (PGR) may approve a suspension of enrolment, measured in monthly increments, for a period of not less than one month. During a student's candidature, the total period of suspension shall not usually exceed twelve months. During suspension of enrolment the candidate will pay no fees and will have no access to University services.
- (e) Except for approved periods of suspension a candidate shall be continuously enrolled until the submission of the thesis for examination.
- (f) Extensions to the maximum period of enrolment may be granted, on application to the Dean FGR through the Associate Dean (PGR) and shall not usually exceed twelve months. Consideration of extensions shall take account of the candidate's personal circumstances and the nature of the research project and consent shall neither be unreasonably withheld nor given without good cause. All calculations will exclude any periods of approved suspension.
- (g) A report on the progress of the candidate shall be completed twice-yearly and submitted to the Associate Dean (PGR). If progress is unsatisfactory, the candidate's registration may be terminated.
- (h) The Associate Dean (PGR) may on the application of the candidate or the supervisors at any time before the submission of the thesis, or on the recommendation of the examiners after the submission of the thesis, approve the enrolment of the candidate in a subject for an appropriate Master's degree instead of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, where the statute for such Master's degree provides that the degree may be

taken by thesis and where the candidate does not already hold that degree in the same subject in the Victoria University of Wellington.

- (i) Where any thesis has been submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy that thesis may be accepted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Master's degree, notwithstanding any other provision in the statute for that Master's degree.
- (ii) In any other case the candidate shall be deemed to have been enrolled in and to have followed a course of study for that Master's degree for the appropriate minimum period, provided that the candidate has been enrolled for the degree of the Doctor of Philosophy for that period.

4.4 Examination

- (a) At any time after the minimum period of enrolment, a candidate may submit their thesis and apply for examination.
- (b) Where any work relevant to the thesis has been published, or accepted for publication at the time of submission, a statement shall be included showing how the published work relates to the thesis.
- (c) Where any of the published material included in 4.4 (b) is co-authored, the candidate must provide a detailed statement of each author's contribution to such work, and contact details of co-authors. Note: Refer to the [Recognition of Authorship Policy](#).
- (d) The application for examination shall be accompanied by a statement from the supervisors that the candidate has pursued the course in accordance with the requirements of this statute.
- (e) The thesis shall be examined by three examiners, appointed by the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Research (FGR). One of the examiners will normally be from outside New Zealand. The primary supervisor or co-supervisor must not be an examiner or be the Chair of the oral examination.
- (f) The Dean FGR shall, on the basis of the examiners' reports and the recommendation of the Chair of the oral, determine whether the degree be awarded.
- (g) Where the decision has been made to award the degree, it will be awarded upon the deposit of copies of the final thesis in the University Library in accordance with the [Library Statute](#).

5 Legislative Compliance

There is no specific legislation directing this statute.

6 References

[Doctoral Policy](#)

[Library Statute](#)

[PhD Procedures](#)

[Recognition of Authorship Policy](#)

[Withholding of Theses Procedure](#)

Previous version: [Doctor of Philosophy Statute](#)

7 Appendices

None

8 Approval Agency

University Council

9 Approval Dates

This statute was originally approved: Pre 1990
This version was approved on: 31 October 2011
This version takes effect from: 31 October 2011
This statute will be reviewed by: 31 October 2013

10 Statute Sponsor

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)

11 Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this statute:

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