
Awarding of Qualifications Posthumously Policy

Academic Policy

1 Purpose

The Victoria University of Wellington ('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 that 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 that 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 s4.13(a) of the *Doctoral 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 s4.1.1(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 s4.1.1(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 s15(c) of the *Doctoral 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 s4.1.1(a) or (b), the relevant procedures set out for a PhD thesis in s4.1.2 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 s4.2.1, 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 Convenor 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 Convenor 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 is:

Victoria University of Wellington Act (1961)

Education Act (1989)

6 References

[Academic Transcripts and Certificates Policy](#)

[Qualifications Statute](#)

[Library Statute](#)

[Master's Thesis Policy](#)

[Doctoral Policy](#)

[PhD Procedures](#)

[Proof-Reading and Editorial Advice Policy](#)

Personal Courses of Study Statute, available in the [Victoria University of Wellington Calendar](#)

Previous version: [Awarding of Qualifications Posthumously Policy](#)

7 Appendices

None

8 Approval Agency

Academic Board

9 Approval Dates

This policy was originally approved on: 14 March 2002

This version was approved on: 28 April 2011

This version takes effect from: 1 October 2014

Minor changes (contact details) made on: 8 March 2017

10 Policy Sponsor

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

Provost, in relation to the award of other qualifications.

11 Contact Persons

The following persons may be approached in relation to this policy:

For queries relating to PhDs and masters' degrees by thesis:

Judith Bagley

Manager, Postgraduate Research Student Academic Services, Faculty of Graduate Research

Ext: 7801

For queries relating to the award of other qualifications:

Martin Boswell

Senior Academic Quality Advisor

Ext: 6830