

Graduate Research Admission Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) This Policy outlines the principles governing the eligibility and selection of applicants to the University's graduate research degrees.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to both domestic and international applicants for graduate research degrees at all campuses, including courses undertaken jointly with other institutions and in all study modes.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(3) The University's graduate research application processes are transparent, equitable and clearly communicated to prospective applicants.

(4) The University admits applicants based on merit and makes offers of a place to applicants assessed as having a reasonable expectation of success in their chosen research degree and only where appropriate supervisory experience and resources are available.

(5) Academic Board approves minimum entry requirements and English language requirements for University courses including graduate research degrees.

(6) The University supports pathways between AQF qualification levels and/or degree courses and reserves the right to establish targeted admission arrangements for La Trobe University students.

(7) The University does not permit transfer from a masters degree to a doctoral research degree.

(8) Course entry requirements, including the University's [English Language Requirements](#), are published on the University's website.

(9) Applicants who meet the entry requirements will be considered for selection, but are not guaranteed admission to graduate research degrees.

(10) The Board of Graduate Research, reporting to the Research and Graduate Studies Committee (RGSC), a sub-committee of Academic Board, makes the final decision on selection for admission to graduate research degrees.

(11) Admission to a graduate research degree does not guarantee award of a graduate research scholarship. For information on scholarship eligibility see the [Graduate Research and RTP Scholarships Policy](#).

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Application Requirements

(12) To be eligible for consideration for selection into a graduate research degree course, an applicant must:

- a. meet the entry requirements for the course, including [English Language Requirements](#), as published on the University's website;
- b. complete and submit the relevant application form as prescribed by the Board of Graduate Research and published on the University's website;
- c. supply any other documents requested by the University and/or School to determine an applicant's suitability for admission to candidature, including (but not limited to) academic transcripts for current or past studies, academic reference(s), evidence of meeting the University's [English Language Requirements](#), a curriculum vitae, and evidence of time spent enrolled in any prior higher degree by research; and
- d. agree to the terms and conditions specified by the University and complete all declarations required in the application process.

(13) To be eligible to undertake a jointly awarded Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), whereby a student is enrolled to undertake the course jointly at the University and a nominated partner institution, an applicant must:

- a. meet the entry requirements for the course, including any language requirements, of both institutions; and
- b. agree to the terms and conditions of enrolment as described in the inter-institutional Joint PhD Program Agreement between La Trobe University and the partner institution and complete all declarations required in the agreement.

Part B - Academic Entry Requirements

(14) The minimum academic requirement for entry to a PhD at La Trobe University is a Masters by research degree in a relevant discipline completed within the last ten years assessed at a La Trobe Masters by research standard of 70 or above.

(15) An applicant with a Bachelor (Honours), Masters by coursework or ungraded Masters by research degree completed within the last ten years may be eligible for direct entry to the PhD where a weighted average mark of 70 or above has been achieved across any coursework subjects in their qualifying degree and:

- a. their qualifying degree includes a research thesis of typically 15,000-20,000 words assessed at a La Trobe Masters by research standard of 70 or above; OR
- b. their qualifying degree includes a written research component comprising at least 3/8 of one year of their qualifying degree assessed at a La Trobe Masters by research standard of 70 or above; OR
- c. they are the lead author of a peer-reviewed publication or other research published within the last ten years assessed at a La Trobe Masters by research standard of 70 or above.

(16) [Schedule A - Masters by Research Thesis Grading Schema](#) should be referenced in determining whether a Bachelor (Honours), Masters by coursework or ungraded Masters by research degree meets the La Trobe Masters by research standard.

(17) The minimum academic requirement for entry to a Masters by research at La Trobe is a three year Bachelor degree in a relevant discipline completed within the last ten years with a weighted average mark in the final year of 65 or above.

(18) The minimum academic requirement for transfer to a Masters by research degree from a Bachelor (Honours) or Masters by coursework degree at La Trobe is a weighted average mark of 65 or above in the degree from which they are transferring.

(19) The minimum academic requirement for entry to a Professional Doctorate degree at La Trobe is four-years of study with a degree qualification or a Masters degree with a weighted average mark in the final year of 65 or above completed within the last ten years; and eligibility for registration for professional practice in Australia (where applicable); and at least two years professional practice.

(20) Graduate Research Coordinators will nominate an appropriately qualified assessor independent of the proposed supervisory team to assess the written research component of the application at the La Trobe Masters by research standard on a template provided by the Graduate Research School. The assessor may be external to La Trobe if required.

(21) Schools may require higher academic requirements for entry to graduate research degrees; may specify particular research requirements for entry to graduate research degrees; or may specify how applicants may otherwise demonstrate their equivalence to the academic entry requirements with the approval of the Board of Graduate Research. All discipline-specific requirements will be published in a Schedule to the Graduate Research Admissions Policy.

Part C - Conditions for Approval

(22) The Board of Graduate Research will normally approve admission to candidature if it is satisfied that:

- a. the applicant is eligible for admission to candidature;
- b. the proposed program of research is suitable for the degree;
- c. the necessary supervision and research facilities will be available to the applicant to pursue the proposed program of research;
- d. the application is supported by the Principal Supervisor, the Director of Graduate Research, and where applicable, the Course Coordinator; and
- e. any additional requirements necessary to support the project for the case of external candidature are in place.

(23) Admission to candidature is also contingent on compliance with the [Autonomous Sanctions Policy](#) and other factors relating to the regulatory environment.

(24) Applicants who enrolled in a higher degree by research at another institution in Australia and withdrew without having completed that degree within three years prior to their proposed commencement date at La Trobe will normally have the length of time for which they were previously enrolled deducted from their maximum period of candidature at La Trobe. Such deductions will be on a one-to-one basis for every day of full-time candidature, or half the period for part-time candidature. The period of maximum candidature for applicants who were previously enrolled overseas will be considered on a case by case basis. The maximum period of candidature for each degree is detailed in the [Graduate Research Candidature Policy](#).

Part D - Advice of Outcome

(25) An applicant who is made an offer of candidature by the University will be advised in writing of the following:

- a. the degree to which the admission relates;
- b. if candidature is full-time or part-time;
- c. the title of the thesis topic approved by the Board of Graduate Research;
- d. any courses, seminars or other work required as a condition of candidature;

- e. the names of the supervisors;
- f. the date of commencement of candidature and the latest date for completion of the requirement(s) for the degree;
- g. any location approved by Board of Graduate Research at which the candidate may pursue studies for the degree;
- h. whether candidature is being undertaken as part of a joint PhD or other form of partnership arrangement and any associated additional requirements; and
- i. any special conditions determined by the Board of Graduate Research to be attached to candidature.

(26) An applicant who is not made an offer of candidature by the University will be advised in writing of the outcome.

(27) An applicant who is not made an offer of candidature by the University may re-apply for entry to a graduate research degree.

Part E - Deferral of an Offer of Candidature

(28) An applicant may apply to defer an offer of candidature for up to 12 calendar months from the original proposed commencement date with the approval of their proposed Principal Supervisor and Director of Graduate Research.

(29) Applications to defer up to 3 months must be approved by the applicant's proposed Principal Supervisor and the School Director of Graduate Research. Applications to defer an offer of candidature between 3 and 12 calendar months will also require approval from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate and Global Research).

(30) Applicants who wish to defer their offer by more than 12 calendar months from the original proposed commencement date will normally need to reapply for candidature.

Part F - Withdrawal of an Application or Offer of Candidature

(31) The University may withdraw an application or an offer of candidature where:

- a. an applicant requests that their application be withdrawn;
- b. an applicant does not provide information requested to assess the application within ten working days of the request or by the deadline specified;
- c. an applicant declines an offer of candidature;
- d. an applicant does not respond to an offer of candidature within the specified time frame;
- e. the course for which the offer has been made cannot be offered;
- f. supervision and resources for the proposed project are no longer available; or
- g. it is determined that an application contains fraudulent or misleading information.

Part G - Right of Review

(32) Applicants wishing to appeal a decision in relation to an application for graduate research candidature must do so in writing to the Board of Graduate Research within 20 working days of the date of the written notice of the decision.

(33) The appeal will be considered by members of the Board who were not involved in the original decision.

(34) Applicants not satisfied with the outcome of any review may seek a review from the University Ombudsman.

Section 5 - Definitions

(35) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. Applicant: A person who has made a formal application to undertake a course of study at La Trobe University but who has not yet enrolled in that course.
- b. Collaborative PhD: A Doctor of Philosophy degree jointly supervised by staff at La Trobe University and at a Partner Institution where the student is enrolled at both institutions.
- c. Entry requirement: The minimum evidence of competency necessary for admission to an individual course of study at La Trobe University.
- d. Graduate Research Degree: Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), professional doctorates by research, and masters by research.
- e. Home Institution: La Trobe University.
- f. Host Institution: Partner Institution that the student attends while studying abroad.
- g. Joint PhD: A doctoral degree awarded by La Trobe University and nominated Partner Institution, who share the responsibilities of supervising, coordinating and examining a researcher's work towards a PhD degree.
- h. Selection principles: The principles that govern selection into graduate research degrees of La Trobe University.
- i. Student: A person enrolled in a course of study at La Trobe University who has completed all the requirements for enrolment.

Status and Details

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