

Graduate Research Course Accreditation Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) This Policy describes the framework for the proposal of new graduate research courses and the amendment, review and closure of existing graduate research courses.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to:

- a. All campuses
- b. All graduate research courses, including any degrees developed in partnership with other institutions
- c. All staff

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(3) The University will provide consistent principles and procedures to guide the University community in the design, approval, delivery, review, amendment and closure of graduate research courses.

(4) The Board of Graduate Research will own all graduate research courses at the University and is responsible for making recommendations to the Research and Graduate Studies Committee on all matters in relation to the profile of graduate research courses across the University and the structure of individual courses. Final accreditation is executed by Academic Board.

(5) Schools and Colleges are responsible for:

- a. initiating new course proposals and amendments that are aligned with the University's strategic directions, and
- b. ensuring the academic values and integrity of the research and any coursework undertaken by candidates.

(6) The University seeks to offer graduate research courses of the highest quality and relevance. Graduate research courses will be:

- a. designed consistent with best practice in the national and international higher education sectors for higher degrees by research
- b. developed to meet the needs of existing and future candidates and professions in accordance with the University's strategic directions
- c. designed to comply with the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007](#) and the [Higher Education Standards \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#)
- d. approved based on consistency with the qualification categories defined in the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) as well as other criteria outlined in these Procedures

e. subjected to regular strategic and academic review.

(7) The University will ensure that no candidate is disadvantaged by the amendment or closure of a graduate research course.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Accreditation of Graduate Research Courses

Process Summary

(8) The key steps in the accreditation of graduate research courses are:

- a. Endorsement of an outline for the development of a new course, or initiation of a proposal for amendment or closure of an existing course
- b. Development of a full proposal, including full consultation with identified stakeholders and a business plan where a new course is proposed
- c. Endorsement and approval
- d. Course implementation/amendment/closure and promulgation.

(9) Endorsement and approval of full proposals will consist of the following major stages:

- a. College Pro Vice-Chancellor endorsement
- b. Board of Graduate Research endorsement (and approval of minor amendments)
- c. Research and Graduate Studies Committee endorsement
- d. Approval by Academic Board.

Development of Proposals to Establish or Close Graduate Research Courses

(10) Proposals to establish or close a graduate research course will be completed by a proposer within a School or College.

(11) Where a new course is proposed the proposer will:

- a. develop a brief outline of the proposed course for endorsement
- b. following endorsement of the course outline by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor(s) (Research) and Chair of the Board of Graduate Research, develop a full course proposal, including a business case.

(12) The proposers of new courses, and courses to be closed, will consult with key stakeholders identified in the required form, and any others as appropriate, before finalising the course proposal/closure for academic endorsement and approval.

College Endorsement of Full Proposals

(13) All proposals for establishing or closing graduate research courses originating from a School or College must be endorsed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor(s) of the relevant College.

(14) The Pro Vice-Chancellor(s) will consult with the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor(s) Research and with other College staff or committees as appropriate. Where the course that is to be established or closed includes any coursework, the proposal must be submitted to the relevant College Coursework Committee(s) prior to Pro Vice-Chancellor(s) endorsement.

University Endorsements and Approvals

(15) Following Pro Vice-Chancellor endorsement all proposals to establish or close graduate research courses are submitted to university committees as follows:

- a. the Board of Graduate Research for endorsement
- b. the Research and Graduate Studies Committee for endorsement
- c. Academic Board for approval.

Minor and Major Amendments to Graduate Research Courses

(16) Where amendments to existing courses are proposed the approval pathway will depend on whether the amendments are classified as minor or major changes.

Minor Amendments

(17) A minor amendment to a graduate research course will include the following:

- a. Any changes to subject names, codes, campus or mode of delivery for any coursework within a research course
- b. Any changes to two or less existing core or core choice subjects within a research course
- c. Any changes to elective subjects that may be taken within a research course
- d. A change of campus or site at which a research course can be offered (a research course can be offered on any campus of the University, or at an external site, where supervision and appropriate resources are available and the core requirements of the degree can be met).

(18) Where a minor amendment includes any change to coursework the proposer must submit the amendment proposal for endorsement to the relevant College Coursework Committee.

(19) All proposals for minor amendments to graduate research courses, following College Coursework Committee endorsement where appropriate, are to be submitted to the relevant Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) and then to the Board of Graduate Research for approval.

Major Amendments

(20) A major amendment to a graduate research course will include the following:

- a. The introduction of core coursework to any research degree
- b. Changes to more than two existing core or core choice subjects
- c. A change to the name of the research course
- d. Any changes in admission criteria
- e. Any changes in examination requirements.

(21) Where a major amendment includes any change to coursework the proposer must submit the amendment proposal for endorsement to the relevant College Coursework Committee.

(22) All proposals for major amendments to graduate research courses, following College Coursework Committee endorsement where appropriate, are to be submitted to the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the relevant College for endorsement.

(23) The Pro Vice-Chancellor will consult with the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) and other College staff or committees as appropriate. Following Pro Vice-Chancellor endorsement the proposal will be submitted to the Board of Graduate Research.

(24) Following endorsement by the Board of Graduate Research the proposal will be submitted to the Research and Graduate Studies Committee for endorsement, and then Academic Board for approval.

Implementation and Promulgation

(25) Following approval from Academic Board (or the Board of Graduate Research in the case of minor changes) Student Services will take all necessary steps to establish, amend or close the course on university course and student databases. College Education Teams will take any necessary steps to establish, close or amend any coursework.

(26) The Graduate Research School will be responsible for making any required applications for, or changes to, CRICOS codes.

(27) The Graduate Research School will arrange for the publication of new courses, or changes to existing courses, in appropriate publications and websites.

Rights of Candidates When Graduate Research Courses are Changed

(28) Candidates must be provided with written notice of all changes to graduate research courses. The notice normally should be provided at least one semester prior to the semester in which the change is to take effect. The Graduate Research School will advise all candidates affected by the change.

(29) Where there is a major change to a graduate research course that affects currently enrolled candidates, the Graduate Research School will give candidates the option of completing their degree under either the original conditions or the changed conditions. Candidates' decisions must be:

- a. in writing;
- b. by voluntary informed consent; and
- c. registered with the Graduate Research School, which will ensure that they form the basis for assessment of candidates' progress and completion.

Part B - Course Review

(30) Graduate research courses will be subject to an annual and five-yearly review.

(31) Performance data, including load, completion times, research outputs and student survey outcomes for each graduate research course will be submitted annually to the Research and Graduate Studies Committee.

(32) Every five years the Board of Graduate Research will establish a panel to conduct a review of all research courses. The review will consider all annual performance data for all courses for the previous five years, benchmarked against the sector; the strategic value of individual courses and the profile of all graduate research courses at the University.

(33) The recommendation of the review panel for individual courses may be:

- a. Re-accreditation
- b. Re-accreditation with amendments
- c. No re-accreditation

(34) Review recommendations will be submitted to the Board of Graduate Research and the Research and Graduate Studies Committee for endorsement, and to Academic Board for approval.

(35) Following endorsement of review recommendations the Board of Graduate Research will work with Colleges to initiate any required proposals under Part A of this Procedure.

Section 5 - Definitions

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

- a. Graduate Research Course (or Higher degree by research): A degree at Level 9 or 10 of the Australian Qualifications Framework, which is comprised of at least two-thirds research and no more than one-third coursework, namely Doctoral Degree (Research), Doctoral Degree (Professional); and Masters by research degrees.

Section 6 - Stakeholders

Responsibility for implementation – Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor(s) Research; Pro Vice Chancellor (Research); Chairs College Coursework Committees; Manager, Graduate Research School.

Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – Manager, Graduate Research School; Chair, Board of Graduate Research.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	22nd March 2017
Review Date	22nd March 2020
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	8th March 2017
Expiry Date	To Be Advised
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