

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 graduate research courses, including any courses developed in partnership with other institutions

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 is responsible for making recommendations to the Academic Board 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) The Graduate Research School will own all graduate research courses at the University and is responsible for:

- a. initiating new university-wide course proposals and amendments for graduate research courses aligned with the University's strategic directions
- b. coordinating the regular review of graduate research courses

(6) Colleges and schools are responsible for:

- a. initiating and endorsing new discipline-specific course proposals and amendments that are aligned with the University's strategic directions. Discipline-specific courses are courses which are not offered university wide
- b. ensuring the academic values and integrity of the research undertaken by candidates and
- c. managing the governance and delivery of coursework subjects that form part of the graduate research courses

(7) 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 2018](#) 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.

(8) 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

(9) 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.

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

- a. College Coursework Committee endorsement (discipline-specific courses only)
- b. Board of Graduate Research endorsement (and approval of minor amendments)
- c. University Coursework Committee endorsement (university-wide courses only)
- d. Approval by Academic Board

(11) The requirement for University Coursework Committee consideration/endorsement of new course proposals etc will be met by the Board of Graduate Research co-opting the Chair of the University Coursework Committee and the Executive Director, Quality and Standards to its membership.

Development of Proposals to Establish or Close Graduate Research Courses

(12) Proposals to establish or close a discipline-specific graduate research course will be completed by a proposer within a School or College. Proposals to establish or close a university-wide graduate research course will be completed by the Graduate Research School.

(13) 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 Chair of the Board of Graduate Research, develop a full course proposal, including a business case.

(14) 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.

(15) All proposals to establish or close graduate research courses are submitted to university committees as follows:

- a. the College Coursework Committee for endorsement (discipline-specific courses only)
- b. the Board of Graduate Research for endorsement
- c. University Coursework Committee (university-wide courses only)
- d. Academic Board for approval

Minor and Major Amendments to Graduate Research Courses

(16) Proposals to amend a graduate research course may be completed by a proposer within a School or College or by the Graduate Research School.

(17) 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

(18) 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 course can be met).

(19) All proposals for minor amendments to discipline-specific graduate research courses must be endorsed by the College Coursework Committee prior to approval by the Board of Graduate Research.

Major Amendments

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

- a. The introduction of core coursework to any research course
- 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
- f. Any change which involves joint enrolment with another institution

(21) All proposals for major amendments to graduate research courses are submitted to university committees as follows:

- a. the College Coursework Committee for endorsement (discipline-specific courses only)
- b. the Board of Graduate Research for endorsement
- c. University Coursework Committee (university-wide courses only)
- d. Academic Board for approval

Implementation and Promulgation

(22) 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.

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

(24) 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

(25) 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.

(26) 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 course 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

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

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

(29) 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, and the profile of all graduate research courses at the University. The comprehensive review will take into account student feedback on educational experiences and will consider the design and content of each course of study, the expected learning outcomes, the methods for assessment of those outcomes, the extent of students' achievement of learning outcomes, and will also take account of emerging developments in relevant fields of education, modes of delivery, the changing needs of students and identified risks to the quality of the course of study.

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

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

(31) Review recommendations for discipline-specific graduate research courses must be endorsed by the College Coursework Committee prior to endorsement by the Board of Graduate Research and approval by Academic Board.

(32) 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

(33) 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.

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| Unit Head | Chris Pakes Dean of Graduate Studies +61 3 9479 1485 |
| Author | Yetty Daramola Senior Governance and Policy Co-ordinator |
| Enquiries Contact | Graduate Research School |