

Graduate Research Candidature Policy

Section 1 - Key Information

Policy Type and Approval Body	Academic - Academic Board
Accountable Executive - Policy	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate and Global Research)
Responsible Manager - Policy	Senior Manager, Graduate and Global Research
Review Date	23 May 2027

Section 2 - Purpose

(1) This Policy sets out the University's requirements for undertaking candidature in a higher degree by research at La Trobe University in accordance with Section 4.2 of the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) and the procedures for variations to candidature.

Section 3 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to:

- a. all campuses
- b. all higher degrees by research
- c. all staff of the University
- d. all candidates for a higher degree by research

Section 4 - Key Decisions

Key Decisions	Role
Approval of variations to candidature (within the provisions of this Policy and Procedures)	As detailed below
Review and approve exceptional variations to candidature	Chair, Board of Graduate Research (BGR) (or delegate)

Section 5 - Policy Statement

(3) La Trobe University is committed to providing a quality experience for all graduate research candidates to facilitate the completion of quality research projects within the maximum allowable candidature period.

(4) The Board of Graduate Research determines all requirements for graduate research candidature in accordance

with relevant standards and codes including the [Higher Education Threshold Standards](#), and the [National Code 2018](#).

(5) Candidates enrolled in a joint degree program who wish to vary their candidature arrangements may need to follow different application processes and/ or meet different provisions due to the requirements of the partner institution. The partnership agreement between the University and the partner organisation will stipulate how candidature variation requests will be managed.

(6) Any exceptions to the provisions in this Policy and associated procedures will be made only with the approval of the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research or authorised delegate.

Section 6 - Procedures

(7) All timeframes are given in calendar weeks/months/years and are not adjusted for part-time candidates unless stated otherwise.

Part A - Period of Candidature

(8) All higher degrees by research at La Trobe University have a prescribed minimum, expected and maximum periods of candidature.

(9) The minimum, expected and maximum periods of candidature for the respective higher degrees by research are as stated in the table below.

Degree	Minimum period (calendar months irrespective of study rate)	Expected period (EFT)	Maximum period (EFT)
Masters by research	12 months*	20 months	24 months
Doctoral degrees	24 months	39 months	48 months

(10) *The minimum period of candidature of a Masters by Research Degree may be longer depending on the educational background of the candidate (as specified in volume of learning guidelines in the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#)).

(11) Candidates transferring to a masters by research degree from an approved Bachelor (Honours) or Masters by coursework degree at La Trobe will be enrolled for a maximum period of 12 months (EFT).

(12) Candidates are expected to submit their thesis and any other required components for examination by their expected work submission date, which coincides with their expected period of candidature. Candidates and supervisors should design research projects so that thesis submission is achievable within the expected period of candidature.

(13) In order to maximise a candidate's chances of completing their degree within the expected period of candidature, candidates should commit to an average of 35 hours per week if enrolled full-time and 17 hours per week if enrolled part-time.

(14) Expected work submission and maximum completion dates will be affected by some variations to candidature as outlined in relevant sections of this procedure.

(15) The expected work submission date for individual candidates may be extended up to the maximum completion date where variations to candidature are approved, including postponements to progress reporting dates as outlined

in the [Graduate Research Progress Policy](#).

(16) Candidates who do not submit their thesis by the expected work submission date, or by the end of the grace period where applicable, may be placed 'at risk' and asked to complete a Progress Support Plan as described in the [Graduate Research Progress Policy](#).

(17) The elapsed time for enrolment in any degree will not normally exceed the maximum period of candidature for that degree. Approval to extend candidature beyond the maximum completion date will only be given in exceptional circumstances as outlined in the section on variations to periods of candidature below.

(18) All candidates must normally complete their higher degree by research within ten years of the date of commencement, including any periods of leave of absence, extensions and periods of lapsed candidature, whether they are enrolled on a full- or part-time basis.

Part B - Induction

(19) All candidates will be offered induction to graduate research, through face-to-face and/or online programs, at university level and through their department, discipline or school.

(20) After three months of candidature, candidates and their principal supervisor will complete a Graduate Research Induction Form/Checklist to ensure that the following matters have been, or are being, addressed:

- a. The candidate is developing a research project plan with a design and scope that maximises their chances of completing their research within the expected period of candidature.
- b. The candidate understands the requirement to interact regularly with their supervisory team, to undertake progress milestones and complete Progress Reports.
- c. The candidate's Progress Committee has been appointed.
- d. The candidate is aware of research education and other university resources that are available to them.
- e. The candidate has an understanding of research integrity, including the need to conduct research responsibly, to observe proper authorship and citation conventions, apply for ethics or other approvals for their project and to ensure that their choice of topic does not breach any relevant legislation.
- f. The candidate understands the requirement to comply with all graduate research training policies.
- g. Any specific resources required for the successful completion of the project within the expected period of candidature have been discussed.
- h. The candidate is aware of any requirements of their discipline, department or school, including any requirement for a safety induction.

Part C - Study Rate

(21) Candidates may enrol either full or part-time in any higher degree by research, and may apply to change their study rate during their candidature.

(22) Candidates who are seeking to change their study rate from full-time to part-time are required to provide:

- a. reasons for their request; and
- b. a statement describing how they will maintain contact with their supervisory team and meet the weekly time commitment for their studies.

(23) International students on a student visa are normally required to maintain a full-time enrolment while studying in

Australia. An international student seeking to vary their study rate must check the requirements of their visa and consult Recruitment & International Operations for provisions applicable to their candidature.

(24) Scholarship recipients should check the conditions of their scholarship before applying to enrol part time.

Applications and Approvals

(25) Candidates seeking to change their study rate during their candidature must follow the instructions on the [Graduate Research School website](#).

(26) A change to study rate will be actioned by the Graduate Research School following the approval of:

- a. the Principal Supervisor; and
- b. Recruitment & International Operations, in the case of international students.

Part D - Coursework in Higher Degrees by Research

Compulsory Coursework

(27) The requirements for the completion of compulsory coursework are outlined in the University Handbook. Supervisors and Progress Committees may also require individual candidates to undertake specified coursework to support their research.

(28) The entire coursework enrolment for any higher degree by research may not exceed the amount permitted under the Commonwealth Research Training Program.

(29) The Principal Supervisor, Course Coordinator or Graduate Research Coordinator will confirm any coursework or clinical placement(s) that are compulsory for candidates prior to enrolment.

(30) Candidates may seek an exemption for any required coursework on the basis of any equivalent work or study completed prior to or during candidature, where they meet the following criteria:

- a. Candidates have completed cognate subjects in a previous degree - which may have also been the basis for admission.
- b. Candidates have demonstrated sufficient research experience relevant to their program to warrant an exemption.

(31) Requests for exemption must be assessed by the relevant course coordinator, endorsed by the School Director of Graduate Research, and approved by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research.

(32) Candidates who have compulsory coursework in their higher degree by research may normally only undertake the confirmation milestone after such coursework has been successfully completed with the required grades, where these are specified in the University Handbook.

(33) Candidates who do not achieve required grades in compulsory coursework will be subject to the steps outlined in the [Graduate Research Progress Policy](#).

Clinical Placements

(34) Where clinical placement(s) are a compulsory requirement of a particular higher degree by research these must be satisfactorily completed prior to the candidate undertaking their final pre-submission milestone or submitting their thesis for examination.

(35) Where candidates fail to satisfactorily meet the requirements of any clinical placements they will be subject to the steps outlined in the [Graduate Research Progress Policy](#).

Elective Coursework

(36) Candidates may also seek to undertake additional subjects during their candidature to support their research through applying to either formally enrol in, or audit, such additional subjects.

(37) A student who audits a subject attends lectures for that subject but does not formally enrol or attempt assessment. Candidates who audit subjects can apply for access to the Learning Management System (LMS) through their subject coordinator.

(38) Candidates who enrol in additional subjects without approval may incur additional tuition fees.

Withdrawing from Individual Subjects

(39) Penalties, both academic and financial, may apply when candidates withdraw from an individual subject, or take a leave of absence from a course in which there are coursework requirements. The application of any such penalties will depend on the timing of the leave or withdrawal and the applicable census dates.

Applications and Approvals

(40) Candidates seeking to enrol in elective coursework or vary their enrolment in any coursework must follow the instructions on the [Graduate Research School website](#).

(41) A request to enrol in or vary elective coursework will be actioned by the Graduate Research School following the approval of:

- a. the Principal Supervisor; and
- b. the Subject Coordinator.

(42) A request to enrol in or vary compulsory coursework (ie enrolling or changing a core choice subject or changing the enrolment period for a core subject) will be actioned by the Graduate Research School following the approval of:

- a. the Principal Supervisor; and
- b. the Course Coordinator

Part E - Types of Leave

Recreation Leave and Personal Leave

(43) All candidates are entitled to:

- a. 20 working days (EFT) recreation leave per calendar year
- b. 10 working days (EFT) personal leave, per calendar year

(44) Candidates may access personal leave to attend to personal illness or injury; to provide care to a family member who is ill or injured, or in the case of an unexpected emergency in relation to that person. A supervisor may also grant personal leave as a result of special or exceptional circumstances.

(45) The candidate must arrange recreation leave and personal leave with their supervisor, and their Graduate Research Coordinator if required. The entitlement to recreation leave and personal leave does not affect the timing of progress milestones, the period of candidature or, for international students, their student visa.

(46) Candidates who are in receipt of a scholarship will continue to receive their scholarship during periods of recreation and personal leave.

Leave of Absence

(47) Leave of absence is a period of non-enrolment for factors which prevent candidates from engaging in coursework or research. Insurance and other protections such as ethics approvals do not apply to the candidate during a period of non-enrolment. Candidates on leave of absence must cease their research due to the legal, ethical and insurance risks of continuing their research when not enrolled.

(48) Candidates are normally entitled to an aggregated total of 12 months leave of absence for the purposes outlined below. For domestic candidates parental and partner leave are separate entitlements (see section on parental and partner leave below).

Extended Personal Leave

(49) Candidates prevented from undertaking their studies due to the illness or injury of themselves or a family member, beyond the normal provision of 10 days Personal Leave per annum, may apply for leave of absence on the provision of appropriate evidence.

Jury Service Leave

(50) Candidates may be approved for jury service leave where:

- a. their supervisor attests that their research will not be adversely affected by the estimated period of absence
- b. a copy of the notice from the Juries Commissioner is provided with their application

Defence Reserve Service Leave

(51) Candidates may be approved for Defence Reserve Service Leave where a copy of the notice from the Defence Reserve Service is provided with their application.

Parental and Partner Leave

(52) Domestic candidates may apply for up to 12 months leave per birth where they are the primary carer of their new-born child or of a newly adopted child under 16 years of age. Such leave should commence no earlier than six weeks prior to the expected birth date, unless medical evidence is provided to the contrary, or from the date of the placement of an adopted child.

(53) Candidates who are partners of primary carers of a newly born or adopted child may apply for up to eight weeks partner leave per birth from the date of birth or placement of an adopted child.

(54) Any period of parental or partner leave will not diminish a candidate's entitlements to other forms of leave.

International Students on a Student Visa

(55) International students on a student visa in these circumstances must check the conditions of their visa and consult with Recruitment & International Operations.

Part F - Applying for Leave of Absence

(56) Candidates must normally apply for leave of absence at least 10 working days in advance of the intended period of leave. Candidates seeking an extension to a period of approved leave of absence must apply at least 10 working days prior to their approved return date.

(57) Applications must be for a minimum period of two weeks and a maximum period of 12 months and are not normally approved during the first six months of candidature.

(58) When a candidate takes leave they do not consume candidature. The Graduate Research School will adjust progress reporting dates, expected work submission dates and maximum completion dates accordingly.

(59) Candidates who apply for leave of absence while enrolled in coursework subjects will need to liaise with their Subject Coordinator to discuss completing the requirements for those subjects (see section on coursework above concerning consequences of untimely withdrawal).

(60) Scholarship recipients should check the conditions of their scholarship before requesting paid leave. International sponsored students must consult with the Recruitment & International Operations Sponsor Team to discuss any application for leave of absence.

Standard Applications and Approvals

(61) Candidates applying for leave of absence must follow the instructions on the [Graduate Research School website](#).

(62) Applications for leave of absence under the normal provisions described above will be actioned by the Graduate Research School following the approval of:

- a. the Principal Supervisor
- b. the Graduate Research Coordinator; and
- c. Recruitment & International Operations, in the case of student visa holders

Applications in Exceptional Circumstances

(63) Where a candidate is prevented from lodging a timely application for leave of absence due to medical or exceptional compassionate grounds they must supply appropriate evidence as to the circumstances leading to the application. The extent to which a leave of absence may be backdated may be constrained by government census dates.

(64) Candidates may be approved for leave for other circumstances that will prevent them from undertaking their studies, other than those outlined in the section on Leave of Absence above, on presentation of a case with appropriate evidence.

(65) Applications for leave beyond the normal provisions will only be considered on medical or compelling grounds. In such circumstances a candidate may be granted more than the normal maximum of 12 months (but not more than 24 months in total). Parental and partner leave is a separate entitlement.

(66) Applications for leave of absence in the exceptional circumstances described above, or for leave to be taken in the first six months of candidature, must be approved by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research in addition to the normal approvals outlined above.

(67) The University may elect to put candidates on leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

Part G - Resumption of Candidature After Leave of Absence

(68) Candidature will be automatically resumed when a candidate's leave of absence has expired.

(69) Candidates who do not resume their research or have regular interaction with their supervisory team following their approved return date, and who do not respond to reasonable attempts to communicate from the University, will be considered absent without leave (AWOL) from candidature (see section below on Cessation of Candidature).

International Students on a Student Visa

(70) Under the provisions of the [National Code 2018](#) the University must notify the [Department of Home Affairs \(DHA\)](#) if students breach their visa conditions. Failure to return from leave of absence on the approved resumption date constitutes such a breach and following notification to [Department of Home Affairs \(DHA\)](#), is likely to result in the cancellation of the student visa.

Part H - Change of Topic

(71) Candidates may change their research direction or topic under the conditions outlined below.

(72) Where a candidate seeks to make a change in their research topic (minor or major), the candidature consumed will continue to be calculated from their original commencement date.

Applications and Approval

(73) Candidates and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that any change of research topic does not breach any legislation.

(74) Candidates seeking to make a change to their thesis title – either minor or major must follow the instructions on the [Graduate Research School website](#).

(75) A minor change to a research topic will be actioned by the Graduate Research School following the approval of the Principal Supervisor.

(76) A major change to a research topic, and any associated changes in enrolment, will be actioned by the Graduate Research School following the approval of:

- a. the Principal Supervisor, and
- b. the School Director of Graduate Research, and
- c. Recruitment & International Operations, in the case of international students

(77) Where an international candidate from a sanctioned country seeks to make a substantive change in topic, assessment of the topic will need to be undertaken according to the [Autonomous Sanctions Policy](#).

(78) Where a change in research direction involves the appointment of a principal supervisor in another school, the Graduate Research Coordinator in the new department/discipline must seek the approval of the relevant School Directors of Graduate Research in both the original and new schools.

(79) In these circumstances the respective Heads of School or School Directors of Graduate Research are responsible for negotiating any redistribution of resources for the candidate and any funds for completion.

Part I - Transfers Between Research Degrees

(80) Transfer from one higher degree by research to another at the same AQF level or to a degree at a lower AQF level may occur as a result of either a candidate request, or a Progress Committee recommendation.

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

(82) Candidates may initiate a request to transfer to another research degree at a scheduled milestone, or at a specially convened meeting of the Progress Committee. It is generally beneficial for the candidate to transfer earlier in candidature.

(83) Candidates seeking to transfer to another degree at a milestone will need to meet the milestone and any coursework requirements at the level described for the appropriate milestone for their target degree.

(84) A Progress Committee may also recommend that a candidate be considered for a transfer as an outcome of a finding of unsatisfactory progress, as outlined in the [Graduate Research Progress Policy](#) and [Graduate Research Show Cause Procedure](#).

(85) When a candidate transfers from one higher degree by research to another the candidature consumed will continue to be counted from the commencement date of the original enrolment. The expected and maximum completion dates will be adjusted where the new degree is at a different level.

(86) If a candidate has no remaining candidature entitlement when they apply to transfer to another research degree, they may enrol for up to three months full-time or equivalent to write up and submit their thesis.

(87) A Graduate Research Advisory Panel may recommend that a candidate who has submitted a doctoral thesis for examination be awarded a Masters of Research Degree, under the circumstances outlined in the [Graduate Research Examinations Policy](#).

Applications and Approvals

(88) Candidates seeking to transfer to another research degree must follow the instructions on the [Graduate Research School website](#).

(89) International students who hold a student visa who seek to, or have been recommended to, transfer to another degree may be subject to the approval of their sponsors (where applicable) or may be required to apply for a new student visa. Candidates may only transfer to a CRICOS-approved course. Candidates in this situation should contact Recruitment & International Operations before seeking to transfer.

(90) The Graduate Research School will action a transfer to another degree following the approval of:

- a. the Principal Supervisor
- b. the School Director of Graduate Research
- c. the Chair of the Progress Committee (where relevant)
- d. the Course Coordinator (where the degree transferring into includes compulsory coursework)
- e. Recruitment & International Operations, in the case of international students on a student visa
- f. the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research

Part J - Outside Research

(91) Candidates are expected to attend a La Trobe campus regularly unless an application for outside research has been approved.

(92) Candidates may be approved to pursue part or all of their higher degree by research away from their approved campus or location at La Trobe as long as:

- a. appropriate facilities and resources are available to support the candidature;
- b. the activities planned during the off-site research will support the candidate's research project or professional development;
- c. arrangements are made for regular contact between the candidate and their supervisory team; and
- d. the candidate complies with all relevant policies and procedures and completes all progress milestones.

(93) All forms of outside research are considered part of candidature and do not result in any adjustment to progress

reporting, or expected work submission and maximum completion dates.

(94) All candidates undertaking outside research must adhere to the [Travel Management Policy](#).

Short-Term Study Away

(95) Candidates may normally spend up to twelve months away from their approved campus or location during candidature for any research-related purpose, such as participation in conferences, field work or an exchange program.

(96) Candidates should seek information through their principal supervisor and Graduate Research Coordinator for possible sources of funding for study away.

(97) Candidates who seek to spend more than three months on study away must ensure that arrangements for continued supervision are in place, which may include temporary supervision at their destination.

Applications and Approvals

(98) Candidates applying for study away must follow the instructions on the [Graduate Research School website](#).

(99) The Graduate Research School will action the study away variation following the approval of:

- a. the Principal Supervisor
- b. the Director, Risk Management where travel includes an overseas destination classified at Level 4 by the [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#)

(100) Candidates who seek to have more than 12 months study away will require approval from the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research in addition to the approvals in the clause above.

(101) Where a candidate seeks to extend an approved period of study away they must lodge a fresh application 20 working days prior to the expiry of the previously approved study away period. Candidates must be aware that they risk the loss of appropriate insurance cover if they overstay the originally approved period of study away without an approved extension.

(102) International students on a student visa who wish to apply for study away are advised to check the conditions of their visa to ensure that they may travel in and out of Australia. Students from UN sanctioned countries may require additional approvals.

Internships

(103) Candidates who have successfully confirmed their candidature and who are making satisfactory progress may apply to participate in an internship at least one month before they submit their thesis.

(104) Full-time candidates may participate in an internship on a full-time basis or on a part-time basis if they are also engaged in their studies up to a full-time study load.

(105) Part-time candidates may participate in an internship on a part-time basis or may apply to change their study rate to full-time for the duration of the internship.

(106) Internships will be approved subject to the availability of:

- a. a host organisation and a suitably qualified supervisor and/or mentor in that organisation; and
- b. a research project in the organisation that is of relevance to the candidate's research topic and professional development.

(107) Internship arrangements must be governed by written agreements between all parties including candidates, the University and the host organisation.

Applications and Approvals

(108) Candidates will apply separately to participate in an internship through a process detailed on the [Graduate Research School website](#).

(109) Participation in an internship will be subject to the approval of:

- a. the Principal Supervisor
- b. the Graduate Research Coordinator
- c. Recruitment & International Operations, in the case of international students on a student visa; and
- d. the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research

Partnerships

(110) Candidates who complete their degree externally under a collaborative agreement between La Trobe University and another educational or other external organisation will be subject to La Trobe University policies, procedures and relevant legislation as may be amended from time to time, and the conditions specified in the respective agreements.

(111) The partnership agreement between the University and the external organisation will document how the requirements for supervision, support, progress monitoring, candidature management, appropriate intellectual climate and other resources will be facilitated.

Applications and Approvals

(112) Candidates will apply separately for such degrees as a normal part of the admissions process.

External Candidature

(113) Candidates may apply to enrol as an external candidate independently of a collaborative agreement with another educational or other external organisation where the conditions for outside research that are outlined in the Candidature Policy can be met and where:

- a. they do not reside within reasonable commuting distance of a La Trobe University campus; and/or
- b. the requirements of the research project are better served at another location, for example clinical settings.

(114) While the University will support all candidates to successfully complete their higher degree by research it may not be possible for external candidates to receive the same level of support that is provided to on-campus candidates.

(115) Where an application for external candidature is approved, an agreement must be signed by the candidate and all approvers (see below) that documents how the requirements for supervision, progress milestones, appropriate intellectual climate and other resources will be met.

(116) External candidates must normally attend the relevant campus of the University for a minimum of 10 working days (or equivalent) per year of candidature. This attendance should be planned to coincide where possible with progress milestones and appropriate development opportunities.

(117) Where external candidates are based off shore the principal supervisor must normally be a member of staff of the University. A co-supervisor from a university local to the candidate should also be appointed where possible.

Applications and Approvals

(118) Prospective candidates seeking to be considered for external candidature must indicate that this is the case when applying for admission to a higher degree by research.

(119) Candidates who accept an offer of candidature at a La Trobe University campus may not normally transfer to external candidature within the first 12 months after enrolling, except where the grounds for seeking a transfer could not reasonably be foreseen at the time of admission.

(120) Candidates enrolled at a La Trobe University Campus who seek to change their status to external candidature more than 12 months after enrolling must complete the appropriate form available on the [Graduate Research School website](#).

(121) The Graduate Research School will action the variation to external candidature following the approval of:

- a. the Principal Supervisor
- b. the Director of Graduate Research
- c. Recruitment & International Operations, in the case of international students on a student visa
- d. the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research

Part K - Concurrent Enrolment

(122) Full-time candidates may only enrol in another degree or diploma, concurrently with their higher degree by research, in exceptional circumstances, such as where:

- a. enrolment in a professional qualification is sought in the final stages of the higher degree by research, or
- b. a case can be made for complementary training.

Applications and Approvals

(123) Candidates seeking concurrent enrolment in another degree or diploma must apply in writing to the Graduate Research School.

(124) The Graduate Research School will action the concurrent enrolment following the approval of:

- a. the Principal Supervisor
- b. the Graduate Research Coordinator
- c. Recruitment & International Operations, in the case of international students on a student visa; and
- d. the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research

Part L - Variations to Periods of Candidature

Submission of Thesis Prior to Minimum Candidature

(125) Where a candidate and supervisor are satisfied that the quality of a thesis meets the requirements for the relevant degree, prior to the minimum period of candidature specified for that degree, they may seek an early submission of thesis.

Applications and Approval

(126) Candidates must advise of their intention to seek early submission through the appropriate notification of intent to submit form available from the [Graduate Research School website](#).

(127) The confirmation that the thesis is ready for submission prior to the minimum period of candidature will be made on the Authority to Submit form available from the [Graduate Research School website](#), as required by the [Graduate Research Thesis Requirements, Submission and Retention Procedure](#).

(128) The Graduate Research School will action an early submission of thesis following the approval of:

- a. the Principal Supervisor; and
- b. the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research

Requests for Extension Beyond Expected Candidature Period

(129) The Graduate Research School will adjust the expected work submission dates (and therefore the expected period of candidature) of candidates under conditions outlined in the [Graduate Research Progress Policy](#).

Requests for Extension Beyond Maximum Candidature

(130) Candidates who do not submit their thesis within their maximum period of candidature will normally have their enrolment lapsed (see lapsed candidature section below).

(131) Candidates will only be given an extension to their candidature beyond their maximum completion date in exceptional circumstances. The period of extension will be at the discretion of the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research.

(132) The University reserves the right to charge tuition fees to any candidate who is given an extension of candidature beyond the maximum completion date. Candidates who are granted extensions beyond their maximum period of candidature will be liable for further student amenities fees, and tuition fees where relevant, for the extended period.

Applications and Approval

(133) Candidates seeking to apply for extensions beyond the maximum period of candidature must follow the instructions on the [Graduate Research School website](#). Applications must be completed at least 20 working days prior to the maximum completion date.

(134) International students on a student visa will be required to extend their student visa and Overseas Student Health Cover where an application to extend candidature beyond the maximum period of candidature is approved by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research. Sponsored international students must also consult Recruitment & International Operations concerning a request to extend with their sponsor in these circumstances.

(135) The Graduate Research School will action an extension to candidature beyond the maximum period of candidature following approval from:

- a. the Principal Supervisor
- b. Graduate Research Coordinator
- c. the School Director of Graduate Research
- d. Recruitment & International Operations, in the case of international students on a student visa
- e. the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research

Part M - Cessation of Candidature

(136) Candidates may cease to be enrolled in their higher degree by research through normal course completion or the following mechanisms.

Withdrawal

(137) A candidate may withdraw from their higher degree by research at any time, unless the Board of Graduate Research has decided to terminate a candidate's enrolment as per clause 147 below. It is recommended that candidates discuss any intention to withdraw with members of their supervisory team, Graduate Research Coordinator and/or Progress Committee prior to taking such action.

(138) Where international students on a student visa withdraw from their degree the University is required to notify the [Department of Home Affairs \(DHA\)](#) of the discontinuation of their studies. Students are advised that this is likely to result in the cancellation of their student visa.

(139) The Graduate Research School will arrange for any scholarship payments or further fee liabilities to cease upon withdrawal from candidature. Candidates intending to withdraw must do so in advance as a late application may result in overpayment of funds that must be recovered.

(140) Candidates who withdraw from their higher degree by research prior to their maximum candidature date, who subsequently seek to re-enrol within three years of that withdrawal, may apply to revive their candidature (see section on Revival below).

(141) Candidates who seek to re-enrol in a higher degree by research after three years has elapsed from their date of withdrawal must reapply for admission in the normal way and the candidature is considered to be new.

Applications and Approvals

(142) Candidates seeking to withdraw from their course must follow the instructions on the [Graduate Research School website](#).

(143) The Graduate Research School will action the withdrawal following receipt of the form. In the case of international students on a student visa, advice must first be sought from Recruitment & International Operations.

Absent Without Leave (AWOL)

(144) Candidates may be considered absent without leave where they fail:

- a. to return to their studies after a period of approved leave of absence; or
- b. to attend a campus of the University on a regular basis when no application for outside research has been approved; or
- c. to maintain regular interaction with their supervisory team (see clause below), and to respond to reasonable attempts by the University to contact them.

(145) Candidates and supervisory teams will establish agreed ways of working and frequency of meetings or interaction, although a minimum of fortnightly interaction for full-time students and monthly for part-time students is recommended throughout candidature. The determination that a candidate may be absent without leave will depend on these agreed ways of working, however it is recommended that action be taken no later than two months following last contact with the candidate.

(146) Where a Principal Supervisor has had no response from a candidate after reasonable attempts at communication they will notify their Graduate Research Coordinator.

(147) Where the Graduate Research Coordinator is satisfied that no member of the supervisory team has had recent contact with the candidate, they will notify the Graduate Research School of the candidate's potential AWOL status and any relevant background.

(148) The Graduate Research School will write to the candidate advising that their candidature will be withdrawn if they do not respond within 20 working days of the official advice. Where the candidate is an international student Recruitment & International Operations will receive a copy of the communication.

Lapsed Candidature

(149) Candidates who do not submit their thesis prior to their maximum completion date, and who have not received an approved extension, will have their enrolment lapsed for a period of 12 months.

(150) International students on a student visa whose candidature has lapsed must be aware that the University is required to notify the [Department of Home Affairs \(DHA\)](#) of the discontinuation of their studies. Students are advised that this is likely to result in the cancellation of their student visa.

(151) All lapsed candidates may continue to access Information Services and Library services during a period of lapsed candidature. However lapsed candidates have no entitlement to access supervision or other University resources, and are not covered by the University's insurance arrangements.

(152) Candidates may submit their thesis at any time prior to the expiry of the 12-month lapsing period under the conditions of the [Graduate Research Examinations Policy](#).

(153) Lapsed candidature may not be extended beyond 12 months. Candidates who have not submitted their thesis after 12 months of lapsed candidature will normally be withdrawn.

Termination

(154) The Board of Graduate Research may terminate a candidate's enrolment:

- a. where a candidate has failed to show cause as to why their candidature should not be terminated, as outlined in the Show Cause Procedure;
- b. through the application of a penalty under the [Academic Integrity Statute 2015](#) or [General Misconduct Statute 2009](#)

(155) A termination will be actioned by the Graduate Research School following the conclusion of any applicable appeal procedures.

(156) Where an international student on a student visa receives a written notice of termination the University is obliged to report the student's change in status to the [Department of Home Affairs \(DHA\)](#). This may lead to cancellation of the student's visa.

(157) A candidate who has been terminated may not revive their candidature and may not normally reapply for the same degree until three years after the date of the termination.

Revival of Candidature

(158) Candidates who have withdrawn from candidature who seek to return less than three years since their withdrawal may apply to revive their candidature.

(159) Candidates applying to revive will need to detail any change of research project and supervision arrangements at the time of their application. Any prior period of candidature will be deducted from the period of candidature for the current enrolment.

(160) Candidates will be liable for any applicable fees for the remaining period of candidature once their enrolment is revived.

(161) Candidates whose enrolment has been withdrawn for failing to submit their thesis within the maximum allowable lapsed period will only be allowed to revive their candidature under exceptional circumstances.

Applications and Approvals

(162) Candidates seeking to revive must follow the instructions on the [Graduate Research School website](#).

(163) The Graduate Research School will action the revival following approval from:

- a. the Principal Supervisor
- b. the School Director of Graduate Research
- c. Recruitment & International Operations, in the case of any international student (whether or not they are student visa holders); and
- d. Chair of the Board of Graduate Research

Part N - Review of Decisions

(164) A candidate who is dissatisfied with an outcome or decision in relation to the procedures outlined in this document, or who believes that university policies or procedures have not been correctly followed, may in the first instance approach the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research for a review.

(165) Where a candidate is dissatisfied with a decision made by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research they may pursue a complaint through the steps outlined in the [Student Complaints Management Policy](#) or through the office of the University Ombudsman.

Section 7 - Definitions

(166) Nil.

Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(167) This Policy is made under the [La Trobe University Act 2009](#).

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	21st June 2022
Review Date	23rd May 2027
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Approval Date	21st June 2022
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Manager - Policy	Chris Pakes Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate and Global Research) +61 3 9479 1485
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