

## POLICIES AND ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES

<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b>	<b>POA081219000</b>
<b>POLICY NAME:</b>	<b>Classification and Conferral of Doctoral Degrees</b>
<b>DATE APPROVED:</b>	<b>9 January 2009</b>
<b>POLICY TYPE AND CATEGORY:</b>	<b>Academic and Educational</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Region</b>

### 1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define requirements and processes for the consistent, appropriate and timely classification and conferral of doctoral degrees at Victoria University.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND

As part of its scholarly contribution to society, and as a means for research training and/or professional practice development, Victoria University offers a range of doctoral programs of study which include a thesis component.

Theses which are deemed by the examiners to have satisfied the requirements for the award of doctoral degree without further examination or following amendment are subject to formal University approval processes.

Existing University committee approval processes can delay the issuing of Letters of Course Completion to doctoral candidates by up to three months. In addition, there may be a further five month period between formal completion and the conferral of doctoral degrees at graduation. There has been a level of dissatisfaction with these delays as well as adverse implications for professional accreditation, career progression, and immigration requirements.

To address this issue, and following consideration of the matter at the Postgraduate Research Committee, in March 2008, the Education and Research Board approved the following resolution:

*The Education and Research Board supported the Postgraduate Research Committee's request to delegate the classification of thesis in accordance with the Committee's minute 19.4.2 and invites the Chair of the Postgraduate Research Committee, Deputy Vice Chancellor [Research and Region], Pro Vice Chancellor [Students] and Pro Vice Chancellor [Institutional Services to undertake the necessary steps to accommodate the devolution of the Classification of Thesis subject to first obtaining Council approval.*

The Education and Research Board Chair, the Postgraduate Research Committee Chair, the Pro Vice Chancellor Students and the Pro Vice Chancellor Institutional Services agreed a streamlined process where the separate endorsements of the Education Research Board and Council are exercised by delegated authority. University General Counsel has advised that this process meets the existing statutory framework of the University under Statute 6.1- Academic Awards, Programs, Courses and Subjects.

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Section 2.2(a) of that Statute states that: *The Council or the Vice Chancellor may:*

*make such policies and procedures with respect to any Academic award, program or course of the University; ...as the Council or the Vice-Chancellor thinks are necessary or appropriate after considering any advice, opinions or recommendations in relation to any such policy, procedure or declaration as the relevant board thinks fit to provide.*

Further, Statute 6.5 - Admission to Academic Awards after Examination states, in Section 4:

(1) *Subject to section 5 a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy shall be presented at a conferring ceremony by the Vice-Chancellor or a deputy vice-chancellor, pro-vice-chancellor or dean nominated by the Vice-Chancellor who shall certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions prescribed for admission to the degree.*

(2) *Subject to section 5 a candidate for any academic award other than the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, shall be presented at a conferring ceremony by the dean of the faculty or the head of the school to which the academic award pertains after the Secretary has certified that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions prescribed for admission to the academic award.*

This policy details those processes and any changes in approval authorisation and process that differs in this policy replaces and overrides **2.12.2 - Classification of Thesis** and **2.12.5 - Permanent Binding** in the existing guidelines in the *Guide to Research Degrees* POA041108000

### 3.0 DEFINITIONS

ERB – Education and Research Board

Council – Victoria University Council

GPPS – Governance, Policy and Planning Services

PRC – Post Graduate Research Committee

Doctoral Programs:

- o DBA– Doctor of Business Administration
- o DEd – Doctor of Education
- o DAppPsych – Doctor of Applied Psychology
- o DPsych – Doctor of Psychology
- o DSW – Doctor of Social Work
- o PhD – Doctor of Philosophy
- o SJD – Doctor of Juridical Science
- o DEngSc – Doctor of Engineering Science

### 4.0 KEY WORDS

Assessment, classification, DAppPsych, DEd, delegated authority, DBA, DPsych, doctoral, DSW, PhD, SJD, DEngSc theses; thesis, research.

### 5.0 POLICY

5.1 The University offers a range of doctoral programs of study. In order to expedite conferral of doctoral awards, this policy identifies procedures to be followed to secure conferral of these awards to eligible candidates without having to wait for conferral at a formal University graduation ceremony.

### 6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1 For those doctoral programs which contain an element or elements of coursework, this policy presumes satisfactory completion of all of the coursework component(s) before examination of the thesis.

6.2 The Chair of Examiners completes the *Recommendation on Classification of Thesis* form when a candidate has satisfied the requirements for the award and forwards this to the Office for Postgraduate Research.

6.3 Following checking that all required paperwork (as outlined in the Guide to Research Degrees POA41108000) is in order the Office for Postgraduate Research passes this onto the members of the designated sub-committee of the Postgraduate Research Committee for confirmation of the

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recommendation.

- 6.4 For this policy, the designated sub-committee of the Postgraduate Research Committee will normally comprise three members, including the Associate Dean (Research and Research Training) of the Faculty in which the student is enrolled and two other representatives drawn from the membership of the PRC.
- 6.5 Once the sub-committee has certified that the candidate has satisfied all academic requirements for the award of a doctoral degree, it confirms this to the Director of the Office for Postgraduate Research.
- 6.6 The Postgraduate Research Committee (PRC) is advised in writing at each of its meetings of the doctoral awards considered by sub-committees since its previous meeting and progress in finalising recommendations for classification for each, including those recommended for classification as passed to the Education and Research Board since the previous meeting.
- 6.7 The Director of the Office for Postgraduate Research sends confirmation to the approved delegate of the Education and Research Board (ERB) that the candidate has satisfied the requirements for the award of the degree.
- 6.8 On behalf of the Postgraduate Research Committee, the Office for Postgraduate Research notifies the candidate of the requirement to supply two (2) bound and one (1) electronic copies of the thesis in order to receive a Letter of Completion and be eligible to graduate.
- 6.9 The delegate of ERB then recommends conferral to the University Council by the Council or an approved delegate of Council.
- 6.10 Through PRC, ERB is advised, in writing, at each of its meetings of all doctoral awards recommended for conferral since the previous meeting.
- 6.11 On receipt of the bound and electronic copies of the thesis and approval by the University Council, a Letter of Completion is generated and forwarded to the graduate. From this point the candidate is eligible to use the title of Doctor. University Council will be advised at its next meeting of students who have been issued a Letter of Completion. Following the next scheduled Council meeting the award will be recorded as having been conferred and the graduate is eligible to receive their testamur.
- 6.12 The graduate is invited to participate in the next round of Graduation ceremonies. Graduates who choose to attend the next round of Graduation ceremonies will be presented to the Presiding Officer and have details of their thesis announced during the presentation.
- 6.13 In the classification and conferral process no individual may be involved in dual or multiple roles. Where the potential for a conflict of roles exists the following alternate delegations will normally apply:
  - I. For Head of School as Chair of Examiners - Associate Dean (Research and Research Training)
  - II. For Associate Dean (Research and Research Training) of the Faculty in which the student is enrolled – Associate Dean (Research and Research Training) of another Faculty.
  - III. For the Director of the Office for Postgraduate Research - Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Region.

## **7.0 CONGRUENCE WITH LEGISLATION AND RELATED POLICIES**

*Guide to Research Degrees (POA041108000).*

*Australasian Digital Theses (ADT) Program and Submission of Victoria University Theses (POA051109000)*

Statute 6.1- Academic Awards, Programs, Courses and Subjects.

## **8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

POU051121000 Guide to University Policy Development and Review

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## **9.0 CONSULTATION**

Assessment and Graduations  
Chancellor's Committee  
Deputy Vice Chancellor - Research and Region  
Research and Research Training Management Advisory Committee  
Education and Research Board  
Postgraduate Research Committee  
Senior Policy Advisors, GPPS  
University General Counsel

## **10.0 REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed no later than 3 years from commencement.

## **11.0 ACCOUNTABILITIES**

### **11.1 RESPONSIBILITY**

Responsibility for the policy rests with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Region, the Director, Office for Postgraduate Research, and the Chair, Postgraduate Research Committee.

### **11.2 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

To be implemented following consultation period.

### **11.3 TRAINING PLAN**

Executive Deans, Associate Deans (Research and Research Training), Heads of School (as the normally nominated Chairs of Examiners) and newly appointed delegated officers will be advised of the processes. Staff in the Graduations unit will be advised of the changed process.

### **11.4 COMPLIANCE**

Following consideration by the Postgraduate Research Committee and the Education and Research Board the policy will be displayed for the 14 day consultation period. The policy will then be considered by Chancellor's Committee and University Council.

### **11.5 EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS POLICY**

The effectiveness of the policy will be assessed on the basis of responses of doctoral graduates to Postgraduate Research Student Annual Survey and the Graduation Ceremony Survey.

## **12.0 POLICY ADVISOR**

Senior Policy Officer, GPPS  
Postgraduate Research Co-ordinator, OPR

## **13.0 FORMS**

Recommendation on Classification of Thesis  
[www.vu.edu.au/postgrad](http://www.vu.edu.au/postgrad)

## **14.0 APPENDICES**

[Appendix 1: Statute 6.1 Academic Awards, Programs, Courses and Subjects](#)

[Appendix 2: Guide to Research Degrees POA41108000](#)