

POLICIES AND ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES

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| POLICY NUMBER: | POA081216000 |
| POLICY NAME: | Postgraduate Research Student Facilities and Infrastructure Support |
| DATE APPROVED: | 16 December 2008 |
| POLICY TYPE AND CATEGORY: | Academic and Educational |
| RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Region |

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the minimum expected levels of access to facilities and infrastructure support for postgraduate research students during the research component of their research degree at Victoria University.

2.0 BACKGROUND

As part of its scholarly contribution to society, Victoria University (VU) offers a range of Masters by research and Doctoral research programs of study. The University is committed to the provision of high quality postgraduate research education and recognises the importance of the contribution of its postgraduate research students to its mission to create and transfer knowledge through research, locally and globally.

The Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations has developed guidelines for the minimum resources for research postgraduate study - *2004 Statement of Minimum Resources for Postgraduate Study*. The 2004 CAPA standards are now widely adopted across Australian universities, and are widely accepted as codifying the base level of access to facilities and infrastructure to support postgraduate research students.

Following consideration of support for postgraduate research students at Education and Research Board on 13 February, 2008 when the Board resolved (Resolution 435-22-2008 Support for Postgraduate Students):

The Education and Research Board resolved to endorse the Deputy Vice Chancellor's [Research and Region] undertaking to provide the Board with a report on the measures taken and to be taken to ensure adequate support is provided to VU's postgraduate students.

the Office for Postgraduate Research oversaw the conduct of a survey of schools and current students to about the level of support currently provided to postgraduate research students and collated data on the level of support provided at other universities.

To date VU has not had any explicit statement of the minimum standards of facilities and infrastructure support it is undertaking to provide to postgraduate research students. A recent survey of schools and students has revealed considerable variability in the level of support currently being provided across schools. This policy has been developed to ensure that there is a level of consistency and transparency in access to facilities and infrastructural support for postgraduate research students and to promote a shared understanding across the university community of the minimum level of expected support and infrastructure required for research students. The policy proposes minimum standards, but does this in the context of recognising that there needs to be an element of

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flexibility in what is provided to each student, recognising differences in enrolment status, discipline and course funding and specific project requirements.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

GPPS – Governance, Policy and Planning Services

PRC – Postgraduate Research Committee

Masters by Research Programs

- Master of Arts
- Master of Education
- Master of Science
- Master of Engineering
- Master of Business

Doctoral Programs:

- DBA– Doctor of Business Administration
- DEd – Doctor of Education
- DEngSc – Doctor of Engineering Science
- DSW – Doctor of Social Work
- PhD – Doctor of Philosophy
- SJD – Doctor of Juridical Science

4.0 KEY WORDS

postgraduate research; facilities; infrastructure; research degree

5.0 POLICY

Victoria University is committed to the provision of a high quality research education environment that supports high rates of completions. The University will provide services and facilities that will enable students to complete high quality research in a timely manner.

For postgraduate research students admitted to candidature for the research component of their studies within a research degree this policy details the minimum standards for provision of the following aspects of facilities and infrastructure support:

- University facilities
- study environment
- other general resources and facilities
- research support funding
- other research support infrastructure

The minimum standards are outlined in Appendix 1: Schedule of Minimum Standards.

6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1 As part of the candidature confirmation process the capacity and feasibility of the School/Institute and Faculty to provide the requested project-specific infrastructure and research support funding is endorsed and this agreement forms the basis of the agreed project-specific support provided to the student's project.

6.2 In order to ensure appropriate provision and utilisation of postgraduate research support facilities and infrastructure, the Associate Dean Research and Research Training of each faculty should nominate an administrative officer/s who is/are responsible for coordinating, liaising, monitoring, and reporting on this aspect of postgraduate research student support.

6.3 The School/Centre/Institute in which the student is enrolled is responsible for maintaining accurate records and a running total of the amount of research support available to each of their eligible students.

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- 6.4 Access to research support funding is subject to a student making satisfactory progress in their research program as certified by the Principal Supervisor at the time that access to the approved funding is being sought.
- 6.5 The expenditure of funds are subject to standard University, Faculty and School policies and regulations, including those included in the Student Charter, the Travel Policy and the Research Code of Conduct.
- 6.6 All equipment purchased by students through the provision of research support funding remains at all times the property of the University and must be returned to the Faculty who provided the funding.
- 6.7 Access to specialised facilities and infrastructure, including study space, post submission of the thesis, but prior to classification and graduation is at the discretion of the School and Faculty that the student is enrolled in and subject to availability of resources at that time and the demonstrated need for access in order to finalise the thesis and generate outputs from it (eg. publications).
- 6.8 As part of the annual postgraduate student experience survey (PREQ) the Quality, Information and Planning Branch in conjunction with the Office for Postgraduate Research will survey all research masters and doctoral students to determine their satisfaction with their research training experience, including the facilities and infrastructure provided to support them in their research program. A report on the survey will be presented to the Postgraduate Research Committee and referred to Faculty Postgraduate Research Committees for information and action.

7.0 CONGRUENCE WITH LEGISLATION AND RELATED POLICIES

Guide to Research Degrees **POA041108000**
Working Alone or in Isolation **POH060822001**
Travel **POF060531000**

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

POU051121000 Guide to University Policy Development and Review

9.0 CONSULTATION

The following universities standards and policies were consulted and drawn on in the development of this policy: Edith Cowan University, University of South Australia, University of New South Wales, University of Canberra, Griffith University, University of New England, University of Western Australia, University of Southern Queensland.

Internal to VU consultation has included:
Deputy Vice Chancellor - Research and Region
Research and Research Training Management Advisory Committee
Director, Governance, Policy and Planning Services
University Librarian
Education and Research Board
Postgraduate Research Committee
Faculty Postgraduate Research Committees

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, Postgraduate Research, and the Chair, Postgraduate Research Committee.

11.2 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

To be implemented following the consultation period.

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11.3 TRAINING PLAN

Executive Deans, Associate Deans Research and Research Training, Heads of School, Directors of Research Centres and Institutes and School Postgraduate Research Coordinators will be advised of the minimum standards and supported in planning for the implementation where this involves changes to their current practice.

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 research students to the Annual Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire.

12.0 POLICY ADVISOR

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

13.0 FORMS

Not applicable

14.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Schedule of Minimum Standards Proposed for 2009-10

Appendix 1: Schedule of Minimum Standards – Standards Proposed for 2009-10

Outlined below are the minimum standards to apply to research students once their research candidature has been confirmed. These standards are expected to apply to all commencing students from 2009.

University Facilities

Each student shall have access to the following university facilities to assist them with the conduct of their thesis research:

1. photocopying and printing facilities
2. information technology support and departmental technical support (if required and available for their project)
3. library and information services, including e-research online resources, Australian and overseas interlibrary loans, and access to subject librarians and other library staff
4. computer and laboratory facilities, as required for their research program
5. tea room
6. washroom

Access to these services shall cater to the needs of on and off campus, and full and part-time students across the year excluding public holidays. Where possible in terms of operating hours and if specifically required for the approved project, access to facilities on campus may be provided on a 24 hour access basis, subject to compliance with other relevant University OHS policies.

Study Environment

Research students who are full-time on campus shall have exclusive access to an adequate open plan study space (normally no less than 3 square metres in floor space), preferably located near the academic staff with whom they work, and proximate to toilets and other amenities. Part-time on campus research students should have access to a similar level of quality of study space in a shared open-access area.

Each student study space shall contain:

- an ergonomically sound chair and desk (no smaller than 0.5 sq m)
- a lockable filing cabinet.
- a personal computer equipped with the standard software provided through University license agreements, email and on-line Internet access
- access to an office telephone

Study spaces should have adequate air conditioning, lighting, security and privacy.

Access to study spaces shall reflect the needs of full and part-time students and should, where practically possible and required for the approved project, be provided on a 24 hour access basis across the year, excluding public holidays (subject to compliance with other relevant University OHS policies).

Where possible, the University should provide some private study spaces for students engaged in research of a confidential or sensitive nature, and should maintain some private study offices for research students in the writing-up stage of their degrees

Students who are normally studying off campus/overseas shall have access to a shared study space when they are spending an agreed period of time on campus in Melbourne.

Other General Resources and Facilities

The following resources shall also be provided through the student's School/Centre/Institute:

- Access to a scanner (and fax machine, if required)
- Postage and courier for research-related needs

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- On campus mailing address
- Stationery, including, on request, provision of a VU business card identifying the student as a Masters or Doctoral candidate (to be used strictly in relation to the student's research)

To support fully off campus and/or overseas based students in their access to University services financial assistance may be provided for computer and internet access.

Research support funding

Funding to support student research is available to all RTS and individual full-fee paying students (international or local) at a level determined by the Faculty in which the student is enrolled according to the Faculty's published policy and the nature of the discipline and the specific project that the student is engaged in. There are two types of funding available: 1) towards the student's project specific costs, such as the purchase of approved equipment and/or consumables and/or costs associated with data collection, and 2) to assist with generic research support costs, such as conference attendance, specialised professional development needs, office consumables, thesis production and binding and/or other research-related activities approved by the student's Faculty and School/Centre/Institute.

Each Faculty will publish guidelines about the minimum and maximum levels of funding that are available in each category, and will specify what is eligible for inclusion as research funding support.

Any research students who are enrolled as part of group-based, offshore or fee-discounted programs are only eligible for research support funding if this service was specified in the contract for the programme.

Doctoral and Masters by research students can only apply to access research support funding after their research candidature has been formally approved by their Faculty. Normally, the research budget for the activities directly associated with the conduct of the student's research must be approved as part of the Faculty supervised candidature approval process.

As part of their research support funding research students can expect to get assistance towards conference participation/presentation costs at conference/s relevant to their program of research. Normally a Masters/Professional doctorate student can expect support towards 1 conference and PhD students, 2 conferences (including one international conference) across the period of their candidature. Each Faculty will publish guidelines about their available conference support schemes and application processes.

Other Research Support Infrastructure

The following support infrastructure shall also be provided to students through some or all of the following organisational units - Faculty, School/Centre/Institute, OPR:

- Access to School/Centre/Institute research staff (in addition to the nominated supervisors)
- Access to an induction programme
- Access to training to assist with preparation of the candidature proposal, and the conduct and dissemination of the research
- Access to regular Faculty/School/Centre/Institute seminars relevant to the field of research
- Access to professional and/or social networking opportunities
- Opportunity to make regular internal seminar presentations
- Access to training and mentoring in getting published
- Annual opportunity to provide feedback on the postgraduate experience and support provided by VU through a confidential evaluation process.