

### **2.1.5 Choosing a Topic**

Initially, you should speak to the Head of School/Centre/Institute, the School Postgraduate Research Coordinator or the Associate Dean (Research and Research Training) who will help you to identify staff with interests similar to your own. Some Schools/Centres/Institutes will provide a list of possible projects on offer at this time. These are sometimes quite broad and you may be encouraged to select your own topic, with the help of potential supervisors in the area. If deciding upon a particular topic from the outset, you need to be aware that the topic of your choice may not be able to be accommodated, either because staff may not have the expertise or interest, or because your topic is not consistent with School/Centre/Institute priorities.

Students expect their supervisor to be competent in the research field. Ways in which you can make this judgement can include examining the supervisor's publication record and, if possible, by talking to some of their research students. You also need to assess your compatibility with the potential supervisor before enrolling. It is important to recognise your own strengths and weaknesses and identify the characteristics you are seeking in a supervisor. Common sense should tell us that it is naïve to expect that any research student should be able to work with any supervisor. Just as there are different teaching styles, there are different types of learning – from independent to dependent.

Therefore, it is important that you ask yourself, once you have found someone prepared to supervise you, "Can I work with this person"? You will need to discuss the various styles, approaches and preferences for working and interacting. By taking time to discuss these issues at the outset you are clarifying expectations and laying down the foundations for open discussion, should problems arise in the future.

## **2.2 Application Procedures**

### **2.2.1 Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents**

The Research Training Scheme (RTS) is a major initiative introduced by the Federal Government in 2001. DEST now provides funding for RTS load to each University. Funding is based on performance and is formula driven. The formula takes into account higher degree by research completions (50%), research income (40%) and research publications (10%).

The introduction of the RTS has resulted in significant changes to the ways in which the University enrolls, manages and reports on its new and continuing research students. All students who enrolled after 1 September 2000, have done so under the RTS.

Each year, the University enrolls students in a priority order, with stipend scholarship holders being enrolled first. Each Faculty will then rank their remaining, non-stipend applicants for the remaining available places. All students wishing to enrol at Victoria University must complete and submit the *Application for Admission to a Master by Research or Doctorate* form to the Faculty Student Advice Officer.

Standard duration under the RTS is 24 months for a Masters degree with no possibility for an extension of candidature. A research doctorate degree has a standard duration of 36 months with a maximum of two, six month EFT extensions possible. Any questions regarding this issue should be directed to the RTS Coordinator on (03) 9919 4659.

### **2.2.2 International Students**

An international student is a student who undertakes study after entering Australia on a student or temporary resident visa. Holders of student visas must study on a full-time basis. Applicants who are not permanent residents of Australia must apply through Victoria University International (03 9919 1164).

Applicants complete an *International Student Application for Postgraduate Admission* form. Two referees' forms also need to be completed by persons who are familiar with your work style and research ability. Applicants must append to their application:

- Their provisional thesis title;
- A 1 – 2 page outline of their intended research;
- Their CV.

You should attach certified copies of all academic transcripts and/or work experience. If documents are in a language other than English then an official, certified translation must be provided.

In addition to completing the *International Student Application for Postgraduate Admission* form, prospective students will also need to complete the *Application for Admission to a Master by Research or Doctorate* form, which is available from the website – [www.vu.edu.au/postgrad](http://www.vu.edu.au/postgrad). A non refundable application fee of \$50 should be made payable to Victoria University and accompany the application.

Your application will be considered by the academic School/Centre/Institute and you will receive written notification of the outcome of your application. If successful you will receive a Letter of Offer from the University stating the course that you have been accepted into, course fees to be paid, and the Overseas Student Health Cover charges. In order to be granted a student visa, applicants must carefully check the individual visa requirements relevant to their country of origin, and the education sector for which you are applying. For further information on country assessment levels and education subclass visit the immigration website - [www.immi.gov.au/students/assess\\_levels.pdf](http://www.immi.gov.au/students/assess_levels.pdf)

To accept the offer the applicant must complete the *Acceptance of Offer* form, enclose a bank draft made out to Victoria University for course fees for one semester and another bank draft to cover Overseas Student Health Cover charges. The *Acceptance of Offer* form and fees should be returned to Victoria University International.

After receiving this documentation, the University will issue you with a Confirmation of Enrolment (COE). You must present this form to an Australian Embassy or High Commission to obtain a Student Visa.

### **2.2.3 Application for Admission to a Master by Research or Doctorate**

Applications for admission must be submitted on the *Application for Admission to a Master by Research or Doctorate* form. Before completing the application form you must choose a study area and a supervisor (see Choosing a Supervisor, section 2.1.4).

The application form requires that you describe your research proposal in general terms. You must discuss your proposal with your intended Principal Supervisor, whose support is required for the project. You should discuss the amount of time you can commit per week to pursue your research studies.

If you intend to conduct your studies using facilities through your employment or some other type of research body, you will need evidence of the organisation's agreement. As these arrangements require University approval, any approach to outside organisations should be made in conjunction with your supervisor. You should organise a letter from the organisation stating their agreement to the research being conducted and the degree of support and facilities available. In addition, the organisation must be given a copy of the Code of Conduct for Research at Victoria University and agree to abide by the code. Documentation of agreement should be attached to the proposal. Original or certified copies of your academic transcript must be attached to the form.

Your supervisor will discuss the proposed area of research with the Head of School/Centre/Institute, who will sign the form if they are satisfied that the resources are available and that the proposed study is consistent with School/Centre/Institute objectives.

The form should then be lodged with the Faculty Student Advice Officer for ranking. The Faculty Student Advice Officer will advise you of when you will be notified of the Committee's decision.

The application form is available from the website – [www.vu.edu.au/postgrad](http://www.vu.edu.au/postgrad), the OPR and the Faculty Student Advice Officers.

## **2.3 Enrolment**

Research students must enrol and re-enrol on a semester basis. Enrolment must take place before the census date. This means that for Semester One commencement you must enrol before 31 March. After this date you must enrol in Semester Two. The last date for enrolment in Semester Two is 31 August.

### **2.3.1 Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents**

*Please read section 2.2.1*

Following the Faculty's ranking process, you will be contacted by the Faculty Student Advice Officer who will inform you if you have been successful in obtaining a commencing place at Victoria University either as an RTS place or a fee-paying or fee-exempt place. If you are successful in obtaining a commencing place, the Faculty Student Advice Officer will advise you of the procedures for enrolment and re-enrolment.