

**GUIDE**  
**TO RESEARCH**  
**DEGREES**  
**ADVICE TO ENROLLED**  
**STUDENTS AND**  
**SUPERVISORS**  
OFFICE FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH 2011



**VICTORIA**  
**UNIVERSITY**

MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

**GUIDE TO**  
**RESEARCH DEGREES**  
**ADVICE TO ENROLLED**  
**STUDENTS AND**  
**SUPERVISORS**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The original Guide to Research Degrees was published in 1995. Eight years later, in 2003, a major rework of the original document was undertaken. This updated version was first published by the Office for Postgraduate Research (OPR) at the beginning of 2004. At this time, the OPR made a commitment to update the Guide every two years. The present 2011 version is the fifth of these published updates. Each version of the Guide has been compiled and reviewed by Natalie Gloster. The past few years have seen major changes to the administration of research degrees as well as to the Faculty structures.

Major thanks are given to Natalie Gloster for her commitment to the careful execution and timely completion of this challenging task. Thanks are also given to Lesley Birch, Sue Davies, Tina Jeggo, Grace Schirripa, and Elizabeth Smith for proofreading and editing. Acknowledgements are also gratefully given to the staff that participated in the development of this reviewed 2011 manual and previous editions. In particular, we acknowledge Professor Michelle Towstoles for her contribution to the original edition of the Guide and to Professor Greg Baxter, Professor Michelle Towstoles and Associate Professor Colleen Vale for their continued support in their roles as sequential Chairs of the Postgraduate Research Committee and to the Associate Deans, Research and Research Training.

Information in this manual is correct at the time of compilation (March 2011). The information in this manual is derived from Victoria University's Higher Degrees by Research policy available online at <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

This Guide is a supplementary document to the policy. In addition, Faculties may have additional guidelines for some processes. The policy and schedules take precedence over any information contained in the Guide.

Professor Helen Borland,  
Director of Postgraduate Research  
Office for Postgraduate Research

## INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed for postgraduate research students and their supervisors at Victoria University (VU). It aims to:

- Clarify procedures required for the completion of postgraduate research studies;
- Provide guidelines to students and their supervisors about how to proceed through the system;
- Provide information about services available to students and staff;
- Address issues of interest to staff and students involved in the area of postgraduate research studies.

The manual is intended as the first reference point for students and staff. Further enquiries regarding the administration of research degrees should be directed to either the Faculty Student Advice Officers or the OPR. The *VU Higher Degrees by Research Policy* is quoted in this manual and can be obtained from the VU Central Policy Register -

<http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>. Other resources of importance include the 'Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research' (<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/r39syn.htm>), and the 'VU Code of Conduct for Research' (<http://research.vu.edu.au/ordsite/rcc.php>)

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**SECTION 1**  
**INTRODUCTION**  
**TO RESEARCH**  
**DEGREES AT**  
**VICTORIA UNIVERSITY**

## 1.1 ADMINISTRATION - UNIVERSITY AND FACULTY COMMITTEES

It is essential that students, supervisors and staff are aware of the policies, procedures and committees governing research degrees at Victoria University. University policies can be downloaded from the central policy register - <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>. All research students should familiarise themselves with the following policies:

- Higher Degrees by Research;
- Joint Supervision of Higher Degrees by Research Students;
- Postgraduate Research Student Facilities and Infrastructure Support;
- Intellectual Property;
- Registration of Higher Degrees by Research Supervisors;
- External Supervision of Higher Degrees by Research Students;
- Classification and Conferral of Higher Degrees.

This part of the manual provides an overview of the relationship between the University Committees and Faculties dealing with the administration of research degrees. Admission and enrolment of a research student is the joint responsibility of the Office for Postgraduate Research (OPR) and the Faculty/Institute where the student wishes to enrol. Once enrolled a number of committees and administrative sections within the University also accept various administrative responsibilities for the student.

There are two main committees within the University that are responsible for the administration of research students. These are the University Postgraduate Research Committee (PRC) and the Faculty Postgraduate Research Committees (FPRC) of each of the three Faculties.

### 1.1.1 University Postgraduate Research Committee

The University Postgraduate Research Committee (PRC) is a standing committee of the Education and Research Board. The duties of the Committee include monitoring and approving practices and procedures for the registration of supervisors and the satisfactory progress of candidates. The University PRC is responsible for: the award of graduate scholarships and prizes; the overseeing and implementation of strategic policy; and quality assurance procedures relating to postgraduate research training, including skills training for supervisors and research students.

The Committee also recommends the classification of theses to the Education and Research Board, which reports to the Victoria University Council.

The Committee meets monthly, except for January, July and December when an executive committee operates if required. The terms of reference and a timetable of meeting dates throughout the year is available on the OPR website ([www.vu.edu.au/research/office-for-postgraduate-research](http://www.vu.edu.au/research/office-for-postgraduate-research))

### **1.1.2 Faculty Postgraduate Research Committees**

Each Faculty has a committee responsible for postgraduate research studies. The committees are known by slightly different names within the Faculty. For the purpose of clarity, these committees will be referred to as the Faculty Postgraduate Research Committees (FPRC) within this document. These committees approve applications for Doctoral and Master by Research degree candidature, organise oral presentations, monitor student progress, deal with leave and other applications, develop guidelines and training programs, and generally coordinate ways to support the student's research experience leading up to thesis assessment. They also develop and recommend, to the Faculty Board of Studies and the University PRC, policy matters relating to postgraduate research within the Faculty and the University. Membership of these committees includes student representation. The terms of reference for the Faculty committees are available from the Faculty Student Advice Officer (see below for contact details). A timetable of meeting dates of the FPRC are available online at [www.vu.edu.au/research/office-for-postgraduate-research](http://www.vu.edu.au/research/office-for-postgraduate-research)

#### **1.1.2.1 Faculty Student Advice Officers**

The FPRC are serviced by the Faculty Student Advice Officer who receives papers or applications to be submitted to the committee and acts as the minute taker providing a high level of administrative support. As a consequence, the Faculty Student Advice Officer is usually the best contact for student and staff advice on postgraduate research matters within the Faculty. The Faculty Student Advice Officers can be contacted on the following numbers:

**Faculty of Arts, Education and Human Development**

(03) 9919 2127

**Faculty of Business and Law**

(03) 9919 1549

### 1.1.3 Ethics Committees

Research projects that involve the use of humans or animals as subjects or involve a potential bio-hazard require approval from an appropriate ethics committee. There are three University Ethics Committees that ensure that the University meets the legislative requirements for research:

- Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee;
- Human Research Ethics Committee;
- Institutional Biosafety Committee.

All of these committees report to the University Research Committee. For further information about these committees, please visit

<http://research.vu.edu.au/index.php>

## 1.2 OFFICE FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH (OPR)

The OPR, located at Footscray Park Campus, was established in 1995 to provide support for the conduct of the University's programs of research training through higher degrees by research. Since that time the Office has taken on major responsibilities for the training and development of research students and their supervisors.

The overall role of the Director of Postgraduate Research is to lead and direct research education within the University. For a detailed description of the OPR functions and a full listing of the staff currently employed by the OPR, please visit the website – [www.vu.edu.au/research/office-for-postgraduate-research](http://www.vu.edu.au/research/office-for-postgraduate-research)

The OPR responsibilities include:

- Oversight of admissions, enrolment, candidature, progress and thesis examination of postgraduate research students;
- Management of allocating postgraduate awards and scholarships;
- Provision of advice, assistance and support for research students and supervisors;
- Oversight of the operation of all of the research degree programs and the development and operation of quality assurance mechanisms;

- Maintenance of the research student database;
- Development and delivery of central training programs for research students and supervisors;
- Development and implementation of policies and procedures and collating/reporting on data relating to postgraduate research;
- Management of Examination for Doctoral Degrees and the Registration of Supervisors.

The OPR is required to provide reports to the University PRC and to assist the Committee in its functions. The Office also works collaboratively with the Faculties, Office for Research, Student Services, Victoria University International and Governance, Policy and Planning Services.

### **1.2.1 Student Research Training Program**

The research training support offered by the OPR focuses on:

- A program of workshops that support research related professional development including for new research students to come together, learn new skills in research development and build a supportive and informed research community;
- Programs to help research students develop as researchers and writers of research;
- Workshops and more informal seminars for supervisors and research students to pursue research issues of mutual interest;
- A number of sessions with relevant staff that deal with process issues, which all research students need to attend.

The majority of the program is offered from April - November each year, with a number of sessions offered outside of the semester. The program is released at Induction in mid-April and is followed by e-mail release to the research community. All research students will receive notification of the training schedule and regular updates via the Announcements for Research Students email list. To view the current training program, please visit [www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/research-training-program](http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/research-training-program)

You must register online for all workshops that you wish to attend by going to [www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/research-training-program](http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/research-training-program). This website is accessible only to research students and research supervisors. Numbers permitting, others are also welcome to attend these sessions.

Once you have registered for a program you will receive email confirmation and a reminder email within the week of the scheduled session. If your timetable changes and you no longer can attend, please ensure you cancel yourself out of the program by logging back into the website and clicking onto the modify button and tick the cancel button. You will receive a cancellation email. This will allow another student to attend the session. Registration opens once you receive notification via your University @ live email account. Sessions will be released online either individually or in blocks of sessions. For instructions on how to register, please visit <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/PostgraduateTraining/PDF/HowToRegisterProgram.pdf>

### **1.2.2 Academic Support**

The OPR provides a broad program of workshops, seminars and support for research students. Issues covered include the nature and practice of University research, the structures that support research students, understanding and using qualitative and quantitative methods, writing in a scholarly manner, writing for publication and effectively managing your research program. Whilst much of this support is offered through formal seminars that involve groups of students and staff, students and supervisors may wish to seek assistance on a more personalised or individual basis in order to discuss matters of a sensitive or confidential nature. In this regard, contact should be made in the first instance with the Director of Postgraduate Research on (03) 9919 4587.

Further academic support is provided through the Student Learning Support Centres - <http://tls.vu.edu.au/vucollege/learninghub/englishskills/englishskills.html>. To make an appointment for an individual consultation, please phone (03) 9919 4744.

### **1.2.3 Writing Support**

VU recognises the needs of students who may require additional assistance if English is not their first language. Writing support for NESB students is available from the OPR, which runs individual consultations to discuss, for example, the research process, research proposals, literature reviews, the structure of academic argumentation, aspects of thesis preparation, appropriate forms of referencing and citation, plagiarism, and so on. To make an appointment, please email [angela.rojter@vu.edu.au](mailto:angela.rojter@vu.edu.au) anytime to make a booking or phone (03) 9919 4671 (Tuesdays only).

### 1.2.4 Editing and Proofreading

There is a need for professional editors to be clear about the extent and nature of help they offer in the editing of research students' theses. There is also a need for supervisors to be clear about the role of the professional editor as well as their own editorial role and any editing or proofreading undertaken in finalising a thesis must be approved by the supervisor and duly acknowledged within the thesis. For further information, please view <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students> or the Australian Standards for Editing Practice - [www.case-editors.org](http://www.case-editors.org). For a list of editors and proofreaders, please contact the OPR on (03) 9919 4522.

The cost of hiring a professional editor or proofreader to assist with finalisation of the thesis is normally borne by the student or sourced from Faculty funds. In cases of hardship, students should request assistance from the School, Faculty, Research Centre or Institute in which they are enrolled.

### 1.2.5 Secomb Conference and Travel Fund

This fund is designed to assist postgraduate research students to attend a conference either within Victoria, interstate or overseas for the purpose of presenting a research paper. Applicants must be:

- Enrolled in a research Doctorate or Masters by Research at VU at the time that the application is lodged and also at the time that the conference is held;
- Attending the conference for the purpose of presenting a paper at the conference. Poster presentations will not receive funding.

In addition, applicants must have satisfactorily completed at least six months EFT enrolment from the date of approved candidature at the time of lodging the application.

Full-time staff members are ineligible to apply for this scheme. The travel fund usually covers up to one-third of the cost of travel and conference registration fees. Applications are usually considered triannually and can be submitted six months prior to each closing date. Applications for retrospective funding will not be considered. The rounds are as follows:

Round	Open	Close
Round 1	1 October	31 March
Round 2	1 February	31 July
Round 3	1 May	31 October

### 1.2.6 Funds for Conference Attendance

Students may contact their School Postgraduate Research Coordinator or the Faculty Student Advice Officer to ascertain whether additional funding support is available from the School and/or the Faculty. Each Faculty has guidelines about accessing Faculty or School conference support.

## 1.3 LIBRARY

Located at all campuses, the Library provides resources and information retrieval and management training to students and staff to support your research needs. The VU Library has in excess of 540,853 books and audio visual items, 167,000 e-books and more than 61,479 journals, mostly electronic. The BONUS borrowing system also facilitates easy access to books from other university libraries that are part of the BONUS system. The Library website <http://library.vu.edu.au> provides access to:

- Research resources including theses and style guides;
- An extensive range of databases and e-journals;
- Library catalogue;
- Electronic subject guides;
- Help using resources;
- Other library catalogues and document delivery services.

Special collections exist in areas including Australian History, Literature and Art, Outer Urban and Social Policy, Australian Left Wing Political Groups, Papua New Guinea, Light and Lighting Union of Australia, Women, Multicultural Studies and Refugee and Immigration Issues. The Library offers individual and group study spaces, computers, photocopying and printing facilities.

The Library website (<http://library.vu.edu.au>) includes a comprehensive overview of services. Visit the website and click Library Information – for information on library hours, borrowing and campus library contacts. The Library also has Faculty Liaison staff on each campus. A list of Library contacts by Faculty/Campus can be obtained at the following link: [http://w2.vu.edu.au/library/contacts/faculty\\_school.htm](http://w2.vu.edu.au/library/contacts/faculty_school.htm). Facilities are also available for students with a disability. For further information on the services provided, please view the following link: <http://w2.vu.edu.au/library/info/disabled.html>

The Footscray Park Learning Commons has just undergone a \$62.5 million upgrade to create 1300 learning spaces and 7 large scale collaborative teaching spaces. Additionally a great, new Postgraduate Study Lounge is open to all higher degree by research students. To gain access to the lounge you must apply for a security FOB through the Library.

#### **1.4 VICTORIA UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL**

Victoria University International (VUI) is available to assist international postgraduate research students with all aspects of application and enrolment processes. Responsibilities of VUI staff include: assistance with the issuance and renewal of visas and immigration matters; providing advice on enrolment; course information; and payment of tuition and overseas student health cover fees. For further information, please email [international@vu.edu.au](mailto:international@vu.edu.au)

#### **1.5 FEES**

##### **1.5.1 Full-Fee Local Students**

Full-fee paying students who are Australian citizens or permanent residents who withdraw or take leave of absence prior to the census dates may be entitled to a refund. Please see the following website for information on fee refunds:

[http://www.vu.edu.au/Current\\_Students/Student\\_Administration/Fees/index.aspx](http://www.vu.edu.au/Current_Students/Student_Administration/Fees/index.aspx)

##### **1.5.2 International Students**

VUI will advise you of the fees due in your Letter of Offer. The fees do not cover textbooks and materials, travel costs or living expenses. The fee quoted in your Letter of Offer will remain unchanged for the first year of your course. Fees for subsequent years will be changed as per the indexation set by the university administration. International students should note that the due dates for payment and time frame for refunds differ from those of Australian citizens and permanent residents. International students who are applying for a refund need to complete the International Students Refund form, which is available from VUI. For further information on refunds, please refer to your International Course Guide.

You will receive an invoice with the amount and due date for the first payment of your tuition fees. Generally, payment of your tuition fees must be made before the commencement of semester. International students are also required to provide proof to immigration that they have adequate health cover for themselves and/or family members. Generally, visa applications also require you to provide proof that you have adequate funds to support yourself through your course. Further information on applying for your student visa is available online:

<http://www.vu.edu.au/international-students/visa-and-enrolment-variations/visa-applications>

#### **1.5.2.1 Overseas Student Health Cover and Fees**

In addition to your tuition fees, you must also pay the Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC). It is compulsory for all international students holding student visas, and their dependants in Australia, to maintain adequate OSHC throughout their course of study. It is a requirement at Victoria University that you purchase cover for the duration of the program. This is a once-only payment which provides rate protection for the length of the cover. This means that you are protected from paying more if the OSHC premiums increase. If your program of study is extended, it is your responsibility to arrange for your OSHC cover to be extended. Further information on student health cover is available online: <http://www.vu.edu.au/international-students/frequently-asked-questions>

Your electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE) will detail your tuition and OSHC fees. You must take the eCOE, sponsor letter/financial guarantee (if applicable) and passport with you to your Faculty Student Advice Officer when you arrive and they will organise your enrolment.

#### **1.5.2.2 Student Visa Requirements and Legal Obligations**

VU has obligations under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 and National Code of Practice 2007 to ensure that courses and services provided to students meet minimum standards. VU is also responsible for ensuring that students are enrolled in accordance with their visa conditions, which includes the requirement to inform government agencies of changes to your enrolment and/or breaches of student visa conditions.

For up to date information on student visa requirements see the Department of Immigration and Citizenship website ([www.immi.gov.au/](http://www.immi.gov.au/)). For further

information on ESOS / National Code obligations see  
<http://www.aei.gov.au/AEI/ESOS/>. You can also discuss ESOS / National  
Code matters with VUI ( <http://www.vu.edu.au/international-students>)

# **SECTION 2**

## **PROCEDURES**

This section details all the milestones associated with completing a research degree at Victoria University, from initial enrolment through to graduation. These milestones will require you to complete a form to have the change made/milestone accomplished. Most forms will need to be signed by yourself, your principal supervisor and your Head of School/Centre/Institute. If your principal supervisor is also your Head of School/Centre/Institute, they are unable to sign any of the standard forms as both supervisor and Head of School. In this instance, the Head of School/Centre/Institute nominee will normally be the Faculty Associate Dean (Research and Research Training (R&RT)).

## 2.1 ENROLMENT AND RE-ENROLMENT

Research students must 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. All students are required to re-enrol in each calendar year. Throughout your program you must remain enrolled, unless you are on approved leave of absence. If you fail to re-enrol by the census date or you do not pay your fees, your enrolment will lapse and you may be discontinued from your course. **It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that you have a continuous enrolment.**

### 2.1.1 University Email Account

Research students are given a University @ live email account at the time that they enrol. It is crucial that you access this account regularly as most correspondence from the OPR and the Faculties is sent via email. If you are not accessing this account, you will miss out on pertinent information such as workshops on offer, progress reports, committee outcomes and submission timelines. If you wish, you may redirect your @ live student email to an existing hotmail or Windows Live Custom Domain account. It is possible to access your @ live emails from Outlook using the Outlook Connector – refer to <http://office.microsoft.com/en-au/outlook/HA102225181033.aspx> for instructions. However, please note that you must access your @ live account once every nine months for it to remain active, If you are experiencing difficulties accessing this account or have any questions, please contact the University Help Desk on (03) 9919 2777 or view the student email guide available at <http://w2.vu.edu.au/library/info/ITSLibStudGuide/guide/vulogin.htm>

### 2.1.2 Mode of Study

Research degrees can be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis. International students must be enrolled full-time. In addition, scholarship holders can only be enrolled full-time except for specific extenuating circumstances. Please contact the Admissions and Scholarships Coordinator on (03) 9919 4659 for further information.

### 2.1.2.1 Full-time Enrolment

Normally a full-time student should be able to commit the equivalent of a full working week (eg. 37.5 hours) on average to their study. Holders of scholarships are restricted in the amount of employment they can undertake during the working week. The restriction usually placed is that no more than fifteen hours can be undertaken between the hours 9-5, Monday to Friday. Restrictions may vary according to award, so check the conditions of your award. The guidelines for employment for scholarship holders should act as a guide to all full-time students as to the time commitment expected for full-time study. In addition, in taking on paid employment additional to full-time study, you need to take into account other family and life commitments during the week. Please refer to the following link for further information - <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/scholarships-for-research-students>. Students should note that where sessional teaching is concerned, one hour of classes equates to three hours of work. This is due to the pay scale incorporating two hours of preparation and assessment time for every hour of your classes.

### 2.1.2.2 Part-time Enrolment

Candidates who are unable to commit the time required for full-time study ought to enrol on a part-time basis. Applicants considering part-time candidature should be aware that part-time candidates tend to experience more difficulties with their study than those experienced by full-time candidates. Difficulties such as conflict between study and work and/or family commitments, isolation from peers and academic life, often lead to a higher attrition rate among part-time students than among full-time students. Although there are support services available at the University for part-timers, before undertaking this mode of study students should seriously consider the demands of the degree program. You should discuss time commitments frankly with supervisors and where relevant your employer and family. Ideally, if studying on a part-time basis, you should attend the campus on a regular basis during normal working hours in order to derive benefit from, and interact with, the University community.

International students are not normally permitted under the terms of their entry visas to undertake part-time candidature. Consult VUI (03 9919 1060) for further advice if there are extenuating circumstances that prevent you from studying on a full-time basis.

### 2.1.2.3 Change to Mode of Study

If you wish to change your enrolment status from full-time to part-time or vice versa, you will need to talk with your supervisors. Once you have spoken to your supervisors, please contact (03) 9919 4659 to ascertain if you are eligible to alter your enrolment status. If you are eligible, you will be required to complete a *Unit of Study Enrolment Amendment HE* form, available online at <http://www.vu.edu.au/current-students/student-essentials/commonly-used-forms>

**Scholarship holders** must be aware that changing your enrolment status may jeopardise any scholarship that you may hold. Holders of living allowance scholarships are usually required to be enrolled on a full-time basis. In most cases changing from full-time to part-time study results in termination of the scholarship, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Scholarship holders are usually permitted to suspend their awards for a period up to twelve months providing one month's notice is given to the Admissions and Scholarships Coordinator. Periods of study undertaken while on suspension are deducted from the period of tenure remaining of the award.

### 2.1.3 Auditing/Enrolling in a Single Unit of Study

A student may enrol in a single unit of study that is not mandatory to their course. This unit will appear on the student's transcript as a non-award unit of study. In order to enrol in a single unit, a student must complete a *Non Award Unit of Study Application HE* form and a separate enrolment form. Students will incur a separate fee for that unit. In cases where a unit is agreed to be a required 'enabling' unit for the student's preparation to undertake their research degree, it may be possible for a fee-waiver to be granted.

A student may audit a single unit of study to gain further knowledge to assist with their research (E.g. research methodology). The student must consult with their supervisors before deciding to audit a unit, and agreement to any arrangements for the auditing must be negotiated by the supervisors with the unit coordinator. Audited units do not appear on academic transcripts.

### 2.1.4 Student Identification Card

A student identity card (ID) with your student number and photograph will be issued to you at the time of your initial enrolment once all applicable fees have been paid. This card should be carried with you at all times. Your card is required in the following instances:

- Re-enrolment;
- Library services;
- Computer centre services;
- Travel and other concessions.

University student ID cards may be used to operate photocopiers and access other services and facilities on a debit account basis. You may purchase credits from machines available within University libraries. Your ID number is a unique number and should be quoted on all VU correspondence.

## 2.2 MAKING CHANGES TO ENROLMENT

### 2.2.1 Personal Details

If changes are made to your name or address or other personal information such as emergency contact, you must complete and submit a *Personal Details Amendment* form to Enrolment and Fees. Please note that phone numbers and addresses can be updated online via the MYVU portal - <http://myvu.vu.edu.au/myVU/index.jsp>

If you are a scholarship holder you will also need to advise the Admissions and Scholarships Coordinator on (03) 9919 4659 of any changes. You should also advise your supervisors of such changes as a matter of courtesy.

### 2.2.2 Annual Leave

Although research students are enrolled on an annual, two semester basis, they do not study according to the standard University semester system. Students are expected to work through the semester breaks unless on approved annual leave. Research students are entitled to take up to 20 working days of annual leave per year. Annual leave should be discussed with your supervisors in advance of leave being taken. Periods of annual leave do not alter the duration of candidature. If you wish to take a substantial period of annual leave you are advised to consider taking intermission (Leave of Absence).

You are entitled to take sick leave as required. Periods of sick leave do not alter the duration of candidature. If a substantial period of sick leave is required or becomes necessary, students should consider taking intermission (see section 2.2.3).

**Scholarship holders** may be granted up to ten days sick leave per annum. Periods of illness exceeding two weeks may be added to the period of tenure of award, where a medical certificate is provided. Scholarship holders may claim a period of up to three months paid maternity leave. Award holders must have completed one year of candidature under the award before maternity leave may be claimed. This period of time is added to your period of candidature. Applications for maternity leave must be made in writing to the Admissions and Scholarships Coordinator at the earliest opportunity.

All scholarship holders should refer to their conditions of award as their leave entitlements may vary depending on the scholarship.

### **2.2.3 Intermission (Leave of Absence)**

Intermission ensures that the clock stops ticking temporarily on the calculation of your duration of candidature. Please note that research students are entitled to twelve months intermission throughout the entire research degree irrespective of mode of study. If intermission is required prior to candidature approval, your application must be approved by the FPRC. If you need to take intermission in excess of twelve months, please refer to section 2.2.4.

If you are temporarily unable to continue with your candidature due to circumstances such as illness, family difficulties or financial hardship, you should apply for intermission. If you are experiencing problems with your research that can only be remedied by waiting a period of time for a problem to be resolved, you should also consider intermission. You should advise your supervisors as soon as possible if you are experiencing such difficulties. The University may be able to assist in some way. It is advisable to contact your Faculty Student Advice Officer early, to ensure that you are aware of all options. You should check your leave entitlements before deciding upon intermission.

**Scholarship holders** of most stipend scholarships are permitted to suspend their awards for any reason whatsoever for a period up to twelve months. One month's notice must be given to the Admissions and Scholarships Coordinator. Periods of study undertaken while on suspension are deducted from the period of tenure remaining of the award. Certain scholarships only allow intermission for pursuit of industry experience in the research area. Intermission suspends scholarship payments. If inadequate notice of leave is given, a student may be overpaid. Overpayments are required to be repaid within 30 days. Scholarship holders are required to contact the Admissions and Scholarship Coordinator on (03) 9919 4659 on their return to ensure that payment is re-activated.

### 2.2.3.1 Applying for Intermission (Leave of Absence)

If you decide upon intermission, you will be required to complete an *Application for Intermission* form. You must state the specific dates for the period for which you require leave. The maximum amount of leave allowed is normally 12 months. Completed forms are to be lodged prior to the leave start date to the Faculty Student Advice Officer for approval.

Applications for intermission may be lodged before the relevant semester census dates to avoid incurring liability for that particular semester. If you have already made a payment, you may also be entitled to receive a refund. Your Faculty Student Advice Officer will be able to advise whether you are eligible for a refund. These forms can be downloaded at <http://intranet.vu.edu.au/student-services/resources/Forms.asp>

If you take leave during the November to March period you must ensure that your enrolment for the following semester is confirmed during the re-enrolment period. You may wish to ask someone to enrol for you by proxy. This will ensure that your candidature does not lapse.

International students have visa restrictions which limit their ability to take intermission whilst still resident in Australia. Any international student who requires leave must discuss this with VUI and obtain approval from them before an intermission form can be processed.

Whilst a student on leave may continue to work on their thesis research and writing in their own time off-campus, they are not an official student of the University during such leave. This means that the student has no entitlement

to workspace, supervision or training and support programs and must not undertake any data collection that is subject to the approval and oversight of one of the University's ethics committees.

#### **2.2.4 Additional Intermission (Leave of Absence)**

If you need to take leave beyond twelve months you must complete the *Application for Extension of Intermission* form (available online at [www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students](http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students)).

An extension of intermission can only be applied for in six month blocks to a total of eighteen months. Students may reapply for further leave prior to the previous leave expiring. A new application and form must be submitted including revised timelines, a detailed letter from the student and supporting documentation from the principal supervisor. The grounds for approval of extending intermission are:

- Medical – Letter from doctor required explaining the condition;
- Carers – Supporting documentation from doctor required;
- Other – Supporting documentation must be attached.

The *Application for Extension of Intermission* form must be lodged prior to the leave start date to the Faculty Student Advice Officer for approval by the FPRC. You will be advised via email following the FPRC meeting regarding the outcome of your application.

#### **2.2.5 International Students - Amending your Electronic Confirmation of Enrolment**

Under the National Code 2007 international students are only permitted to make a change to their eCoE in limited circumstances. With agreement from the University and in line with the limitations of the National Code 2007, a student may request to:

- Extend an eCoE;
- Take intermission;
- Transfer to another institution;
- Take a reduced study load or overload.

Further information is available online at <http://www.vu.edu.au/international-students/visa-and-enrolment-variations> or contact VUI by emailing [vuicompliance@vu.edu.au](mailto:vuicompliance@vu.edu.au)

## 2.2.6 Withdrawing from the Course

If you decide to withdraw from your course you will need to complete a *Course Discontinuation Application* form, stating the reasons why you wish to withdraw. The form is available online at <http://www.vu.edu.au/current-students/student-essentials/commonly-used-forms>. You should notify your supervisors of your intention to withdraw. Scholarship holders must contact the Admissions and Scholarships Coordinator on (03) 9919 4659. If you do not inform the Admissions and Scholarships Coordinator that you are withdrawing, you will be overpaid. Any overpayments must be repaid within 30 days of notification. The form must be signed by the principal supervisor and submitted along with your student ID card to the Faculty Student Advice Officer.

Please refer to the Higher Degrees by Research Policy for details regarding withdrawal and applying for reinstatement of candidature at a later date - <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

## 2.3 CANDIDATURE

### 2.3.1 Duration of Candidature

The duration of candidature is calculated from the date of first enrolment into the relevant research degree.

The University expectation regarding the length of time taken to complete a Masters by Research is a maximum of two years EFT (24 months). There is no option of an extension to candidature.

The University expectation regarding the length of time taken to complete a PhD is three years EFT (36 months).

The standard duration of the professional doctorate programs is three years EFT (see below):

Stage 1 - Coursework Component: Standard duration = 1 year EFT

Stage 2 - Research Component: Standard duration = 2 years EFT

Doctoral candidates can apply for an additional two, six month EFT extensions. Maximum duration is four years EFT (48 months).

### 2.3.2 Applying for Candidature

All research students are required to submit an Application for Candidature within six months EFT enrolment to their Faculty Student Advice Officer. An Application for Candidature is a more detailed and extended development of your research proposal. Candidates are also required to undertake an oral presentation of their research project. The preparation of this application constitutes the first stage of your research project. The satisfactory completion of this planning exercise is fundamental to the eventual success of your thesis. The Application for Candidature is required in order to ensure that the University is suitably informed about your intended research. It is also of benefit to you in that the submission process ensures that you have carefully considered the planning and management of your research program. Your proposal should be prepared in consultation with your supervisors.

The candidature review procedure ensures that any significant problems are identified. These procedures may vary between Faculties. The Committee's comments may also be of benefit to you in the planning and development of your research. Candidates are required to attach their candidature proposal to the *Application for Candidature* form, available from your Faculty Student Advice Officer. Please refer to your Faculty guidelines for more detail on the candidature application process. **Please note that your enrolment is provisional until Candidature is approved.**

### 2.3.3 Advanced Candidature

A student may be enrolled with Advanced Candidature standing, if they have:

- Already achieved Candidature at another university;
- Been making satisfactory progress with that project at that university;
- Applied and been accepted for admission to Victoria University to continue the same project, or requested to transfer to VU with their supervisor (subject to a commencing place, resources and funding being available);

OR

Have commenced or produced work on a research project prior to applying for enrolment in a PhD program and have completed one or more papers for publication that they wish to be considered for incorporating into a PhD project submission in the "Thesis by Publication" format.

Please contact your Faculty Student Advice Officer for a copy of the Application for Advanced Candidature form. For further details regarding the process, please refer to Schedule D4, HDR Policy available at <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

## **2.4 THE STUDENT/SUPERVISOR RELATIONSHIP**

The quality of the supervisor/student relationship is a vital factor in the satisfactory completion of the thesis. Different supervisors have different strategies and styles of working with students, and differences in supervisory practice also occur between disciplines. This section attempts to clarify the role of supervisors and students in the supervisory relationship. It also raises some issues that are important for the success of the supervisory relationship and the successful completion of the research student's program, regardless of discipline.

The role of supervisors is to assist their student to devise and complete an independent research program within the allotted time by providing appropriate direction, guidance, feedback and support. For this to occur, the supervisors must be familiar with the practice of research supervision and know what helps and what does not help different students at different times in the research program. They must be available for regular consultation and provide critical feedback (written and verbal) on the thinking, writing and research of the student in a timely manner. Supervisors must be familiar with the area in which the student works and with the ways of researching and writing within that area. One of the biggest challenges in this regard is to help students find their own voice as a researcher, a scholar and a member of a professional community of inquiry and practice. To provide appropriate administrative guidance for the project, supervisors must also be aware and up-to-date in relation to the policies and procedures governing the conduct of research degrees at VU, and be familiar with the information and processes outlined on the OPR webpage: <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/research-supervision>

During the student's enrolment and candidature, the supervisors provide opportunities for the research education of the student, and acts as a general guide and advisor to the progress of the project. Whilst the supervisor's role can be seen as primarily a teaching one, it is important to appreciate that the student is ultimately responsible for the work produced. The supervisors will give advice on the theoretical basis of the project, suggest appropriate reading, provide guidance on research methods and methodology, and generally assist with planning and preparing the thesis. The supervisors also has a key role in introducing the student to scholarly networks and encouraging students to participate in the activities of the research community outside of the actual preparation for the thesis. The supervisors should be alerted to any difficulties, professional or personal, that the student encounters and where they are unable to help, be able to offer advice on where assistance can be obtained.

The responsibility for meeting the expected standard of work lies with the student. The supervisors act as a guide, offering advice, encouragement and criticism, and it is up to the student to incorporate this advice into the development of a final product that meets the standard expected by the examiners.

For a successful supervisory relationship to occur, both sides of the supervisor/student relationship need to be aware of each other's expectations. Workshops and courses are regularly offered by the University to students and supervisors on developing this very important relationship. The OPR website provides advice on when these programs are offered: <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/research-training-program>

#### **2.4.1 Appointment of Supervisors**

All research students are jointly supervised by a principal and an associate supervisor. The involvement of an associate supervisor in a project means that the student can draw on the support, time and expertise of a range of appropriate advisors with complementary expertise. Associate supervisors provide the candidate with access to a broader range of skills and knowledge and are particularly important where the topic is multidisciplinary. They are also available to offer continuing guidance and support when the nominated principal supervisor is away for extended times. Associate supervisors are normally appointed at the outset of a program, but they can also be added later. An associate supervisor must be appointed by the time candidature is

approved. Associate supervisors need not have supervised previously, but should be skilled in an aspect of the proposed project. The *Joint Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Students* policy is available here: <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

Principal supervisors must normally be members of staff at VU. Both principal and associate supervisors must be registered as a supervisor within this University. To register as a principal supervisor, staff must be able to demonstrate proven and current research track records coupled with experience in supervision, an on-going record of professional development, and a research degree at the level or higher than that for which the student is enrolled. Further information can be obtained from the Faculty Student Advice Officer.

In cases where the student's research is undertaken in collaboration with an outside organisation, that organisation may be required to provide a supervisor for the project. Where the student is based off campus for a substantial time, the student should ensure regular contact with their University-based supervisors.

Supervisors are required to advise their students normally in advance of any planned absences. During some periods of absence, adequate supervision can be maintained through means such as email, but where the absence of a supervisor precludes adequate direct supervision, such as when contact cannot be maintained, principal supervisors are required to give the student and Head of School/Centre/Institute prior notice. Where the period of absence is expected to be more than three months, the supervisor is required to make formal arrangements for an acting supervisor to be appointed. This acting supervisor is normally the associate supervisor.

In any joint supervisory relationships, the main responsibilities of both supervisors must be clear. The principal supervisor normally carries the responsibility of co-ordinating communication between the supervisors and the student, and the associate supervisor should be involved as soon as practicable in the development of the student's research plan. The associate supervisor should maintain a level of communication with the student and the principal supervisor to allow adequate use of their specialised supervision skills whenever necessary, and to prepare the associate supervisor for assuming the principal supervisor role when appropriate.

Should a change in the direction of the research occur or where there are clashes in the supervisory arrangements that prevent fruitful co-operation, these issues should be discussed initially between the supervisors and the student, and then with the Head of School/Centre/Institute or the Associate Dean (R&RT) to determine an appropriate course of action. Sometimes it is not possible for a student to feel confident in raising concerns about supervisory arrangements directly with supervisors. If this is the case, a student should directly approach their School Postgraduate Research Coordinator and/or Faculty Associate Dean (R&RT) for advice about how to resolve the issues that need to be addressed.

If an agreed course of action cannot be determined at School or Faculty level, advice from the Director of Postgraduate Research in the OPR may also be sought. If the appropriate course of action recommended is a change of supervisor, the Head of School/Centre/Institute must approve the change in arrangements and notify the FPRC. In a situation where a conflict of interest might arise, the Director of Postgraduate Research is available for discussions with either student or supervisor to assist in the provision of more appropriate supervision arrangements.

#### **2.4.2 Issues for Consideration by the Supervisor**

Supervisors vary in their style and method of supervision. A document entitled "Issues for consideration by the supervisor", outlining different styles and methods of supervision, is available on the research students webpage: <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/research-supervision>.

Supervisors are also expected to familiarise and meet the established standard of supervision outlined in the *Registration of Higher Degrees by Research Supervisors* policy -

<http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

#### **2.4.3 Initial Areas for Discussion between the Supervisor and Student**

Initial discussions should be undertaken by the supervisors and the student to help clarify expectations around the supervisory arrangement. If this is not practical, the principal supervisor should ensure that the expectations are communicated to the associate supervisors. Discussion of supervisory issues at the outset helps to lay foundations for a good working relationship, but it may also be necessary for aspects of the supervisory relationship to be renegotiated as the student progresses.

The overriding question at the back of both the supervisors' and the student's minds during these initial discussions will be "Can I work with these supervisors as people?" Different viewpoints and methods of interaction and work styles may become apparent during this process. It is important for each party to identify those differences and to determine whether workable solutions can be agreed and maintained. Topics to be discussed should include:

- Sharing of basic information;
- Questions regarding the supervisory process;
- Questions a student may ask their supervisors;
- Questions regarding the thesis;
- Questions regarding meetings;
- Questions regarding time-frames;
- Faculty resources and expectations;
- Questions regarding University requirements/issues.

A detailed guide to areas of discussion of the topics above can be found as a downloadable pdf file for students and supervisors here:

<http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/research-supervision>

#### **2.4.4 Responsibilities of Supervisors in the Supervisory Arrangement**

Supervisors have a range of responsibilities within the supervisory arrangement. These will vary depending on the stage of the student: before the applicant is accepted; at all stages of candidature (including the first year and candidature submission); prior to submission of the thesis; at thesis submission; and following thesis submission. A detailed list of these responsibilities is available as a downloadable reference at:

<http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/research-supervision>

##### **2.4.4.1 Interaction and Establishing Boundaries**

In order to be a good supervisor you need to be able to relate to each of your research students as individuals. Supervisors should try to get to know their students personally and professionally, without losing sight of the fact that the relationship should be a business-like interaction. You need to be able to help students identify their strengths and weaknesses, to help them build on their strengths and overcome their weaknesses. You also need to give students an honest evaluation of their work and performance. At the same time, you need

to clarify your role, identify expectations and establish boundaries. Further information on interaction styles, defining boundaries and expectations, and student resources can be located as a downloadable reference here: <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/research-supervision>

#### **2.4.5 Issues for Consideration by the Student**

A detailed list of issues for consideration by the student is available on the student research webpage (<http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/research-supervision>). It is useful for supervisors to draw their students' attention to these topics as they should form the basis for ongoing discussion and negotiation throughout the supervisory relationship. Areas discussed include issues to be considered: at the time of enrolment, within the first year of enrolment; at all stages of candidature; before submission of the thesis for examination; after examination of the thesis.

#### **2.4.6 Problems with the Supervisory Relationship**

The supervisory relationship can be a very rich and rewarding experience for both students and supervisors. However, like all relationships, some work better than others. In a relationship between a student and two supervisors, the potential for problems or differences of approach to arise can be a concern from time to time. It is important that you understand how you might best approach this with a view to timely and satisfactory resolution.

If there is a difficulty with the supervisory relationship, talk about your concerns with your supervisor as a first step toward resolving any issues – your supervisor is there to listen to you and to respond to your concerns in as helpful and professional manner. It is important to outline your difficulties or differences early on. The relationship between the student and their supervisors is an important one and it will not always be easy. Supervisors need at times to give comments that are difficult to take and students at times may believe it is essential that they ignore advice. Such events in themselves are to be expected but if it becomes clear that the candidature is not progressing satisfactorily or that the student or the supervisors continue to be dissatisfied with some aspect of the relationship then something needs to be done. You may want to talk to a counsellor within the Student Services Division, about ways in which you can approach the discussion. More information is available here: <http://www.vu.edu.au/current-students/services-for-current-students>

### 2.4.6.1 Managing the Supervisory Relationship

It is likely that you will have two supervisors, and problems or concerns may arise that relate directly to either your principal or your associate supervisor, or perhaps with the relationship between the three of you.

If you have a problem with one supervisor but not another, it is best to raise the issues with the supervisor with whom you have concerns. It is not generally helpful, nor is it good professional practice, to raise a complaint or concern about one supervisor with another – this can often intensify the problem you are seeking to resolve and make things uncomfortable for you and your supervisors. If you need to discuss a problem with a particular supervisor with someone else, you should contact your School Postgraduate Research Coordinator or your Faculty Associate Dean (R&RT). You may also contact the Director of Postgraduate Research for advice and discussion.

### 2.4.6.2 Resolution of Problems

We have already recognised that problems can occur in the supervisory relationship – however, not all problems are related to supervision! The importance of meeting with your supervisors regularly and discussing any difficulties has been addressed. Discussing difficulties allows remedial action to be taken before problems become major. Your supervisors may be able to act as mediators or advocates for problems concerning administration or resources. The School Postgraduate Research Coordinator, Faculty Associate Deans (R&RT), Faculty Advice Officers, the OPR and Student Advisory Service staff may also be able to help. Problems affecting progress should be raised in the bi-annual progress report.

Where problems seem to require further intervention, you should refer to the University's Grievance Procedures: <http://www.vu.edu.au/current-students/student-essentials/student-feedback-and-complaints>. Every attempt to resolve grievances should be made at the School/Centre/Institute level in the first instance before instigating formal grievance procedures. The grievance procedures relate to perceived grounds for complaint or resolution of grievances concerning, for example:

- Individual staff members (e.g. supervisory relationships, interpersonal relationships);
- Administrative operations or decisions of the University (eg. enrolment procedures, transfer of candidature, extensions).

## 2.5 ETHICS

### 2.5.1 Principles of Good Conduct in Research

All research conducted at VU, including student research projects are subject to the University's policies on research conduct and research ethics. The University is also required to comply with guidelines released by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC), the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) regarding general research conduct and the use of animal and human subjects in experiments and by the Office of the Gene Technology (OGTR) in relation to experiments involving genetic manipulation of micro-organisms or cells. The *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and the *VU Code of Conduct for Research* are available online at <http://research.vu.edu.au/ordsite/rcc.php>. The Code outlines specific requirements in relation to research data collection and storage, publications, supervision and issues of conflict of interest. The issue of acknowledgment and/or co-authorship in publications can sometimes be a cause for disagreement between students, supervisors and other participants in the research project. The *Code of Conduct for Research* outlines specific requirements in this regard. You should discuss the issue of authorship of publications with your supervisors in the initial stages of your research. The AVCC\* defines "authorship" as follows:

*"Authorship is substantial participation, where all the following conditions are met: a) conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data; and b) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and c) final approval of the version to be published. Participation solely in the acquisition of funding or the collection of data does not justify authorship. General supervision of the research group is not sufficient for authorship. Any part of an article critical to its main conclusion must be the responsibility of at least one author. An author's role in a research output must be sufficient for that person to take public responsibility for at least that part of the output in that person's area of expertise. No person who is an author, consistent with this definition, must be excluded as an author without their permission in writing."*

\* Joint NHMRC / AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice

The following guiding principles prescribe the standard of work performance and ethical conduct expected of all persons engaged in research at the University:

- Research is an activity that is devoted to the advancement and application of knowledge by extending, re-interpreting or replacing existing concepts of knowledge and truth;
- Researchers should, in all aspects of their research:
  - Demonstrate integrity and professionalism;
  - Observe fairness and equity;
  - Avoid conflicts of interest;
  - Ensure the safety of those associated with research;
  - Uphold the rights and dignity of participants involved in that research.
- Research methods and results should be open to scrutiny and debate.

### *Research Conduct Committee*

The Research Conduct Committee is a sub-committee of the University Research Committee. It was established to provide advice on matters relating to proper conduct of research within the University. Student should familiarise themselves with the *Research Misconduct* policy available at: <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

### *Allegations of Misconduct in Research*

As a postgraduate student, any issues of misconduct may also be dealt with as stipulated in the *Academic Honesty and Preventing Plagiarism* policy available at <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

## **2.5.2 Responsibilities regarding Research Data**

It is essential that supervisors and research students are aware and act in accordance to the relevant practices in their discipline that govern storage and management of their data. It is the responsibility of the supervisors to provide:

- Facilities for the safe and secure storage of research data;
- Maintain records where research data is stored (eg. catalogue/register of research data).

In practical terms, it is recommended that such research be held in a School/Centre/Institute within the University. This should include a lockable storage facility, which is secure from theft, and from persons not authorised to access the data. The storage facility should also ensure that environmental factors do not corrupt/destroy the research data during:

- The life of the project;

- The required retention period.

The practice of backing up research data is critical, and is recommended to be maintained on the University server. It is vital that a registry is maintained to ensure that the locations of such materials are recorded (this should also include records for research data that involves other institutions).

The transportation of electronic data (eg. USB devices) poses several concerns. The VU Human Research Ethics Committee has stressed the importance to researchers of securing and only transporting de-identifying data on portable devices. It is essential that researchers/supervisors and students holding primary material including electronic data are aware of the issues that surround appropriate security of such data and matters relating to the access of such data. Supervisors and students given access to confidential data must ensure such data is kept confidential. Hence, confidential data must be kept in secure storage, and care exercised when discussing such matters.

### **2.5.3 Procedure for Submission of Ethics Approval**

Information regarding the process for submitting an ethics application and the various ethics committees can be downloaded from

<http://research.vu.edu.au/ethics0.php>

### **2.5.4 Health and Safety in Research Environments**

Students must take all reasonably practicable steps to control hazards and risks in the workplace to comply with their obligations under the OHS Act. This means you must establish procedures to systemically identify and assess risks and implement control measure to eliminate, reduce or prevent injury, illness and disease and save lives. Common forms of hazards include:

- Mechanical hazards: plant and equipment that may cut, tear, crush or result in an impact that can cause injury or harm in the workplace;
- Chemical and biological substances: powders, dusts and vapours that are inappropriately handled or stored can cause illness or disease, a fire or may explode;
- Sources of energy: electricity, heat, cold, noise and damaging radioactive sources can cause harm in the workplace;
- Body stress or impact: manual handling, tripping hazards or falls can cause stress to muscles or bones;

- Gravity: situations where a person or object may fall can also cause harm;
- Psychological hazards: work related stress, bullying, aggressive or violent behaviour or fatigue are also hazards that need to be identified, assessed and controlled to prevent harm.

You will be required to work with your Supervisor(s) to develop a Research OHS Action Plan and provide updates in your Progress Report. There are four steps to identifying hazards, and assessing and controlling risks in the workplace that should form part of.

Step 1: Identify hazards

Step 2: Assess risk

Step 3: Control hazards and risks

Step 4: Check controls

You may also identify potential hazards in your workplace by reviewing information and data from similar industries. This may be obtained from industry associations, manufacturers, suppliers, technical specialists, industry experts and WorkSafe.

## **2.6 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

It is important that candidates are made aware of the institution's policy relating to intellectual property before embarking on their research. The policy is to be made available to the candidate at the time of enrolment. Under the current IP policy, students will own the intellectual property they create in the course of their studies.

If a student is to be involved in work which could result in the generation of intellectual property with commercial potential and/or is funded by a contractual agreement and/or with a research activity in which the University has or will make a substantial investment, the candidate should be fully informed by the supervisors, in writing, of any particular conditions or contracts which could either restrict disclosure or affect the extent to which communication with colleagues is possible during the course of the work and on its completion. For example, students working in Cooperative Research Centres or funded by Australian Postgraduate Awards (Industry) or industry scholarships need to be informed clearly at the beginning of their candidature about the arrangements concerning intellectual property that may conflict with or override the University's policy in this area.

If the candidate agrees to take part in such a project, a written agreement of the assignment of intellectual property to the University including conditions of disclosure and related matters, should be concluded over the signatures of the candidate, principal supervisor and University's Intellectual Property Officer (currently the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Region)). The candidate is to be advised that s/he may seek independent legal counsel before signing any agreement relating to the assignment of intellectual property.

Any research partner involved in such a project will be informed of the institution policy regarding student involvement and the consequent impact on intellectual property with commercial potential. The University will ensure that the student progress is not unreasonably influenced by commercial or industrial factors.

Any delay in publication eg. while patentability is investigated and patent specifications are drawn up and filed, will be managed in a manner consistent with the University's policy on intellectual property.

The candidate, the supervisors and the Head of School/Centre/Institute must meet and complete an Invention Disclosure Form should intellectual property with commercial potential be generated. As a general principle it would be expected that the student would assign such intellectual property rights to the University consistent with the University's policy on intellectual property.

Students will continue to own the copyright on any research thesis submitted for examination. If the thesis contains any commercial-in-confidence material, examiners will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement prior to the thesis being submitted for examination.

Restricted access to theses following classification will only be considered when a case is made and only agreed to in compelling circumstances. Such circumstances could include commercial confidences, but not simply the denial of access by other scholars to what purports, after all, to be an advance in knowledge. When granted, restricted access should be for a limited time, and as short a period as possible.

The student and supervisors must agree and record their resolutions concerning the authorship of publications and acknowledgement of contributions during and after the candidature. There should be open and mutual recognition of the candidate and supervisor's contribution on all published work arising from the project. Any dispute concerning authorship must take account of the University Code of Conduct for Research, and is to be referred to through normal procedures for grievance resolution.

### **2.6.1 Moral Obligations**

Academic endeavour is centred on the generation, exploration and expansion of new and original ideas. The intellectual work undertaken by higher degree students is the foundation of their careers. Supervisors and institutions have a key responsibility to assist students in publishing their work both during the course of candidature and immediately following submission of their thesis.

Joint publication is one significant way in which supervisors can assist a student in these terms. However, care needs to be taken, in the context of what is a power imbalance between supervisor and student, to ensure supervisors do not usurp credit for a student's work. To ensure that this does not happen and that possibilities of misunderstanding are minimised, supervisors and students should negotiate the basis of acknowledgement of joint authorship, particularly the order in which authorship is listed, in the early stages of a student's candidature, and preferably before the research is conducted. Supervisors should adhere to existing AVCC guidelines relating to publication and authorship, treating their students as colleagues in this regard; and respect the ethical guidelines that might be laid down to the profession associated with their discipline.

## **2.7 PROGRESS**

You are required by the University to submit biannual progress reports. In addition, your supervisors and/or Head of School/Centre/Institute may ask you to submit particular pieces of work at various stages in your research program to judge your progress.

### **2.7.1 Progress Reports**

You are required to complete a progress report in March and September of each year. The OPR emails the progress reports to all enrolled students via their @ live student account at the beginning of March and September. After

completing the report and discussing it with your supervisors, it is forwarded to your Head of School/Centre/Institute. They will forward the completed form to your Faculty Student Advice Officer. Failure to submit a progress report will result in your name being forwarded to the University PRC for unsatisfactory progress (see section 2.7.2).

You should discuss your progress over the preceding six months with your supervisors. If there have been any problems that have impeded progress or may do so in the future, these must be outlined in the report. If you wish to submit a report independently from your principal supervisor and Head of School/Centre/Institute, you may do so by sending it directly to the OPR.

As part of your progress, your principal supervisor will be asked to comment each year on whether you are developing each of the University's generic attributes. Please note that the core graduate attributes are not all testable as they are worded within a written thesis or performance-based thesis. Hence we have embedded all the attributes in the progress reports and examiner instrument but we have also added an additional question on the development of a viable research question (see below):

- Attribute 1 - Evaluate and Synthesize the Research;
- Attribute 2 – Formulate the Research Questions;
- Attribute 3 – Design, Conduct and Report the Research;
- Attribute 4 – Address and Solve Research Problems;
- Attribute 5 –Critically Analyse;
- Attribute 6 – Contextualise the Research;
- Attribute 7 – Understand the Relevance of the Research.

The progress report can also be used when requesting an extension to candidature (see section 2.8).

### **2.7.2 Unsatisfactory Progress**

The criteria used for determining whether unsatisfactory progress proceeding should be invoked are as follows:

- a. Failure to submit a progress report by the due date  
or
- b. Failure to make satisfactory progress towards their research degree.  
This is defined to include:
  - Failure to progress adequately in a Required Coursework component;

- Failure to complete the Required Coursework component with an average of 70% across the required units of study;
- Failure to achieve candidature at the first or second attempt within set timeframes, as stipulated by Faculty candidature guidelines;
- Exceeding maximum candidature duration;
- Repeated failure to meet agreed timelines set in conjunction with the supervisor/s or as outlined in the progress report;
- Failure to adhere to any determination of the FPRC or the University PRC;
- Repeated failure to meet with supervisor/s;
- Inability (or an apparent inability) to complete a Thesis of appropriate quality within the required timeframe;
- Failure to accept a direction to convert enrolment from a doctoral to a (research) masters degree, or from one type of doctorate to another;
- Failure to resubmit thesis for re-examination within agreed timelines.

If the University PRC agrees to invoke unsatisfactory progress proceedings, a formal warning will be sent to you. This will state that at the expiration of three months from the date of the warning, the Committee intends to either recommend changes to your enrolment or candidature, or recommend discontinuation of enrolment.

If you receive a warning you may do one of the following:

- Respond to the warning by notifying the University PRC that you request a hearing before the Committee; OR
- Not respond.

If you respond to the warning, a sub-committee of the University PRC will conduct a hearing and consider the circumstances you put forward for your case. You will be advised to seek assistance from Student Advisory Services to help prepare your case or arrange representation. Following the hearing, the sub-committee will notify you in writing of its recommendation to the University PRC. If the University PRC agrees to discontinue your enrolment, this will be recommended to the Education and Research Board. The Board will discontinue your candidature.

If the student does not request a hearing, the student will be deemed to be making unsatisfactory progress and the University PRC will recommend that the Education and Research Board to discontinue the student's enrolment.

For further information about unsatisfactory progress, please refer to Schedule G3, Higher Degrees by Research Policy - <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

## **2.8 EXTENSION TO CANDIDATURE**

You cannot assume that an extension will be granted. Part of research training is learning to complete a project within a deadline. All applications for extension should explain why you are unable to meet your deadline and should refer to any difficulties you have experienced during the candidature or pre-candidature period. Normally such problems should have been referred to in your progress report. You must submit your application to extend candidature at least two months prior to your submission date. Your revised timeline should demonstrate where your research has been delayed and what steps are to be taken for completion. It should include a realistic estimate of the time you require to finish. Supporting statements from your supervisors should accompany requests. You can either apply for an extension in your progress report (attaching a revised timeline in the form of a Gantt chart) or by completing the *Application for Extension to Candidature* form, available online at <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students>

### **2.8.1 Application for Pre-Candidature Extension**

Please refer to your Faculty guidelines regarding timelines for submission of your candidature proposal. If you require additional time to submit your candidature proposal you must complete the *Application for Pre-Candidature Extension* form available at <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students>. Your Faculty Student Advice Officer will be able to answer any questions that you have regarding this process.

### **2.8.2 Extension to Candidature Duration – Scholarship Students**

If you are on a stipend scholarship, you may be eligible for an extension to your scholarship. Please contact (03) 9919 4659 to discuss your eligibility. Not all scholarships allow for an extension of award. An extension to

scholarship automatically grants an extension to candidature, however the reverse does not hold true.

If you are eligible for an extension to scholarship, you must complete the *Application for Extension to Scholarship* form available online at <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students>. You must submit the application to the Faculty Student Advice Officer at least two months prior to the expiry of your award. It will be forwarded to the FPRC for recommendation. The OPR approves extensions to candidature. One scholarship extension of up to a maximum of six months may be granted if the FPRC/OPR are satisfied that the grounds for extension are beyond the control of the candidate and are related to his or her studies rather than of a personal nature. You should put forward a case for extension that outlines the reasons why you are unable to meet your deadline. The application should refer to any difficulties experienced during candidature. Such difficulties should have been referred to in your progress reports. Your application should contain a detailed timeframe for completion. The Admissions and Scholarships Coordinator can provide guidelines for your scholarship extension request.

### **2.8.3 Extension to Candidature Duration – Masters by Research Students**

Masters by Research students are not eligible to apply for an extension to candidature. Maximum duration is 24 months EFT.

### **2.8.4 Extension to Candidature Duration – Doctoral Students**

The standard duration for the doctoral program is three years EFT (36 months). You can apply for a total of two, six month extensions EFT. Maximum duration is 48 months EFT.

### **2.8.5 Approval of Late Submission Date**

If you are close to maximum duration of candidature and need a short amount of time to complete your degree, you can apply for an Approval of Late Submission Date. These are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Your Application must be submitted in the form of a letter attaching a revised timeline and supporting letter from your Principal Supervisor and submitted to your Faculty for approval. You must apply for an Approval of Late Submission Date before you reach maximum duration.

## 2.8.6 Extension to Electronic Confirmation of Enrolment – International Students

International students applying to extend their candidature and eCoE should familiarise themselves with the National Code of Practice 2007

(<http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/ESOS/NationalCodeOfPractice2007/default.htm> -

Standard 9). Once the FPRC has approved the extension to candidature, international students must then apply to VUI for an extension to eCoE using the “*Request for an Electronic Confirmation of Enrolment*” form. For further information email VUI Compliance at [yuicompliance@vu.edu.au](mailto:yuicompliance@vu.edu.au)

## 2.9 ALTERATIONS TO CANDIDATURE

### 2.9.1 Reduction to Standard Duration

If you wish to submit your thesis 12 months EFT or more before your standard duration expires then you need to request approval from the appropriate committee. The following documentation must be submitted to the Faculty Student Advice Officer:

- A copy of the thesis;
- Completed *Release of Thesis* form;
- A detailed letter from your principal supervisor indicating the reasons for early submission and confirming that the thesis has been analysed through Turnitin.

The Faculty Student Advice Officer will forward the thesis and accompanying paperwork to the Faculty Associate Dean (R&RT) for review. Once approved by the Faculty Associate Dean (R&RT), the Faculty Student Advice Officer will place the item on the FPRC agenda.

The FPRC will approve Master by Research applications. The University PRC will approve doctoral applications. You will be advised via email following the committee meeting of the outcome. If your application has been approved, you will be required to submit the spiral/comb bound copies to the appropriate officer and your thesis will be sent for examination once examiners are approved.

### 2.9.2 Ten Year Rule

If ten years from the initial date of enrolment has lapsed (regardless of any periods of intermission or lapsed enrolment), you will need to apply to the

University PRC for a waiver of the ten year rule. The application must include:

- Initial date of enrolment;
- Intermission/Additional Intermission periods taken;
- Any lapsed periods (include period and reason);
- An explanation as to the delay (eg. equipment failure, lack of participants, change in direction of research, change in supervisions, personal reasons);
- Timeline in the form of a Gantt chart to expected submission date.

The principal supervisor must supply a supporting letter acknowledging all points made in the student's letter and confirming the following:

1. The timeline for submission is achievable and how this will be supported (eg. frequency of meetings with student, additional language support);
2. The research is still current and relevant.

The application form is available at <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students> and must be lodged with the OPR prior to the ten year expiration date. For further information, please refer to *Schedule D7, Higher Degrees by Research* policy – <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

### 2.9.3 Reinstatement of Candidature

Failure to re-enrol by the prescribed re-enrolment date results in your candidature lapsing and your enrolment being discontinued. In order to be reinstated you need to complete the *Application for Reinstatement of Candidature* form and forward it to the relevant Faculty Student Advice Officer.

The principal supervisor must supply a supporting letter acknowledging all points made in the student's letter and confirming:

1. The timeline for submission is achievable and how this will be supported (eg. frequency of meetings with student, additional language support);
2. The research is still current and relevant.

The Application form is available at <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students> and must be lodged with the Faculty Student Advice Officer. The FPRC will review and if satisfied, approve reinstatement. If reinstated, the period remaining of your candidature will be

the same as when your candidature lapsed. You must be enrolled to submit your thesis for examination. For further information, please refer to *Schedule D6, Higher Degrees by Research* policy - <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

#### 2.9.4 Change of Thesis Title

As your topic becomes more focused, in some cases it will become apparent that the thesis title ought to be changed. In order to change your thesis title you need to submit an *Application for Change in Thesis Title* form. If candidature has not yet been approved, it is not necessary to complete this form, as your thesis title is considered provisional at this stage.

If the change in the title reflects a significant change in the direction of the research, and candidature has been approved, a new research proposal should be submitted to the relevant Faculty committee together with the *Application for Change in Thesis Title* form (see section 2.9.5).

All thesis titles should adopt the following guidelines:

- Titles should be a clear description of the research project;
- Titles should be concise, containing no more than 150 characters on the spine of the thesis;
- Abbreviations are discouraged;
- Titles should normally be in sentence case with only the first letter of the significant words capitalised.

The *Application for Change in Thesis Title* form is available online at <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students>. The form must be signed by you and your principal supervisor. Once completed, the form should be submitted to the Faculty Student Advice Officer. The FPRC approves all requests for change in thesis titles.

#### 2.9.5 Change in Direction of Research

If there has been a significant change in the direction of your research and candidature has been approved, a new research proposal may need to be submitted to the relevant Faculty committee together with the *Application for Change in Thesis Title* form. A significant change may include:

- Change in methodological approach, for example changing from a predominantly quantitative approach to a qualitative one or vice versa;

- Change in the scope and or focus of the research (eg. a substantive change in the content of the thesis);
- Change in the study sample.

Please note that a change to the direction of your research may have ethical implications. Please contact your Faculty Student Advice Officer for further information.

### 2.9.6 Change of Supervision

For various reasons, during the course of your program, you may wish to change supervisors. If your principal supervisor will be absent from the University for a period longer than three months, an acting supervisor should be appointed. This is usually the associate supervisor. If there are problems with the supervisory relationship it is important that you talk through these issues with someone. Naturally, whatever the reason for the change in supervision, you should discuss the matter with your current supervisor before making formal arrangements. You should ask your School Postgraduate Research Coordinator, Associate Dean (R&RT) or Head of School/Centre/Institute to act as a mediator in discussion, if necessary. If candidature has not yet been approved, it is not necessary to complete a form, as your supervisors are considered provisional at this stage.

After discussing alternative supervisory arrangements with your existing and proposed supervisors, your School Postgraduate Research Coordinator and Head of School/Centre/Institute, you need to submit the completed *Application for Change in Supervision* form to your Faculty Student Advice Officer. The form is available online <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students>. The FPRC approves all applications for change of supervision.

If the new supervisor to be appointed is to be your principal supervisor, and works in a different School/Centre/Institute to the one in which you are currently enrolled, you will need to seek permission for the change from the each Head of School/Centre/Institute involved. It is standard practice to enrol a research student in the School/Centre/Institute of their principal supervisor, unless there is a specific request to do otherwise. Consequently, a change in principal supervisors that involves a different School/Centre/Institute will normally require you to make a change to your enrolment through

Admissions and Enrolments. Please contact your Faculty Student Advice Officer for further information.

## 2.10 CONVERSIONS

International students must contact VUI if they are considering course conversion. Applications for conversion must be applied in the first 12 months of EFT enrolment.

### 2.10.1 Masters by Research to Doctor of Philosophy

You may apply to convert from a Masters by Research to a PhD program provided that you can demonstrate exceptional ability in the performance of the first stages of your Masters by Research program. The type of evidence required could include information on data collected, conference or published papers, or thesis chapters. The application must include a revised timetable and should demonstrate that the revised research program is of doctoral level in both depth and breadth.

Please contact your Faculty Student Advice Officer for a copy of the *Faculty Application for Conversion* form. Candidates must attach their Masters by Research proposal to the application if it has been previously approved. Your Faculty Student Advice Officer will advise you of the process if you have not had your Masters by Research proposal approved. Please refer to your Faculty guidelines for further information and *Schedule D5, Higher Degrees by Research* policy - <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

Normally, the FPRC determines that the candidature commences from the date of enrolment in the Masters by Research program. The standard duration of three years for a PhD program applies to students transferring from a Masters by Research program to a PhD.

**Scholarship holders** should note that an application for a 12 month extension of their award must be lodged with the Admissions and Scholarships Coordinator at least one month before expiry of the Masters by Research award. Not all scholarships have provision for funding upgrades from Masters by Research to PhD programs.

## 2.10.2 Doctor of Philosophy to Masters by Research

You can apply to convert from a PhD to a Masters by Research program by lodging an *Application for Conversion* with your Faculty Student Advice Officer. The difference between your PhD and Masters by Research program should be made apparent in the revised proposal. The request should be supported by your principal supervisor and Head of School/Centre/Institute. The FPRC is responsible for approving the conversion. For further information, please refer to your Faculty guidelines and *Schedule D5, Higher Degrees by Research* policy -

<http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

If you are a scholarship holder, you should advise the Admissions and Scholarships Coordinator on (03) 9919 4659 of your intention of converting to a Masters by Research program.

## 2.10.3 Converting to or from a Professional Doctorate

You can apply to transfer to or from a professional doctorate by lodging an *Application for Conversion* form with your Faculty Student Advice Officer. The difference between the two degrees should be made apparent in your submission. The request should be supported by your principal supervisor and Head of School/Centre/Institute. The FPRC is responsible for approving the conversion. For further information, please refer to your Faculty guidelines and *Schedule D5, Higher Degrees by Research* policy -

<http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

Normally, the FPRC determines that the candidature commences from the date of enrolment in the initial program. For further information, please contact your Faculty Student Advice Officer or the Admissions and Scholarships Coordinator on (03) 9919 4659.

## 2.11 THE THESIS

### 2.11.1 Preparation

Your thesis is your final account of your research. It is the means by which your research program will ultimately be judged.

Examiners of your thesis will be asked to comment on the following:

- To what extent and how the thesis makes a contribution to the subject with which it deals;
- How the thesis shows that the candidate understands the relationship of the investigation in the wider context of the knowledge in which it belongs;
- Whether the thesis shows the ability of the candidate to survey the relevant literature and to document statements adequately;
- The extent to which the candidate's attitude to his or her work and to the work of others is critical and perceptive;
- Whether the literary presentation of the thesis is satisfactory and if changes should be made to the thesis.

As you complete each draft of your thesis, you should pass it on to your supervisors for critical comment. As your thesis is an account of your research, you must prepare it, in your own words. Your supervisors should assist you in planning your writing schedule and maintaining progress. Supervisors should review the drafts of the thesis against the same criteria used by examiners. Your supervisors should also consider the presentation of the work. Your supervisors should give you guidance in the final preparation of your thesis, but will not do the editing for you. If you and your supervisor/s disagree about the amount of data to be collected or the length of the thesis, you should attempt to resolve these issues. If you disagree with your supervisor/s over these issues you should contact your School Postgraduate Research Coordinator, the Associate Dean (R&RT) or the Head of School/Centre/Institute for further advice. It is important to ensure that matters are resolved before submitting your thesis. Supervisors should guide, advise and indicate any problems that they foresee, whilst respecting the principle that the thesis is an account of your own work. Supervisors and the Head of School/Centre/Institute have a responsibility to ensure that the thesis is fit for examination at the time of submission.

Your thesis should be based on original or developmental work at a standard that demonstrates:

- A thorough understanding of the relevant field of study;
- A competent work relevant to the field of study;
- Independence of thought;
- The ability to present findings logically.

### 2.11.2 Academic Honesty and Student Plagiarism

Research students at VU, as elsewhere, are required to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity in dealing with the scholarship, writing, research and ideas of others in both the academic and the broader community. A key element of this is awareness of the basic principles and guidelines relating to plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of the words written by another person or people without proper attribution or acknowledgement that the words belong to them and are not your own. Proper attribution is as easy as including quotation marks around any words (including brief phrases) that are drawn from the writing of others, and acknowledging their source in your notes and bibliography. Ensuring the appropriate management of your sources, references, and quoted material drawn from the scholarship of others throughout your candidature – and of course in the written thesis you produce for examination is a central facet of learning how to be an ethical and professional researcher. VU has a plagiarism policy that spells out the definitions of plagiarism, details the process for reporting and dealing with cases of suspected plagiarism, and the consequences and penalties for students who are found to have plagiarised the work of others. There is a special section of the VU policy on ‘academic honesty and student plagiarism’ dealing with research students and plagiarism, available online at <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/>. The *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/files/r39.pdf>) also deals with the ethical and responsible conduct of research and issues surrounding attribution and acknowledgement of the work and scholarship of others. We encourage all research students to thoroughly familiarise themselves with the rules, guidelines and penalties relating to plagiarism in both these documents.

### 2.11.3 Basic Requirements

The University specifies the following in regard to the presentation of your thesis:

- The text must be typed on A4 sized paper, single sided at either double, or one and a half spacing;
- Recommended font size is 11 or 12. Common fonts used are Times New Roman and Arial;

- The text must be typed on one side of the paper only. Diagrams, tables, etc should be placed so that they can be seen at the same time as the text to which they refer. If this is inconvenient, or does not meet with your Faculty's conventions, tables should stand as near as possible to the text to which they refer;
- All pages must be numbered;
- There must be a minimum margin of 3 centimetres on the left and right side of each page;
- The thesis must contain an abstract of approximately two hundred words summarising the context and purpose of the research project, method of analysis used and major conclusions drawn;
- The thesis should be written in a logical and concise manner and as a general guide be:
  - 30,000 to 60,000 words for a Masters by Research thesis;
  - 40,000 words for a DPsych / DAppPsych thesis;
  - 45,000 to 65,000 words for a DBA thesis;
  - 50,000 to 60,000 words for a EdD and DSW thesis;
  - 60,000 to 100,000 words for a PhD thesis;
  - Equivalent to the above in another approved thesis format for the degree as per University and/or Faculty guidelines such as Thesis by Creative Project and Thesis by Publication.
- The word limit for your degree includes quotes and excludes tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. If the word limit is beyond the amount specified for your degree, then a letter from your principal supervisor must accompany your thesis stating the length and explaining why the thesis is above the set word limit. Your principal supervisor must also contact the examiners and obtain clearance that they are willing to view a thesis of this length. The letter must make reference to contact made and approval sought from the examiners;
- A title page showing the title of the thesis, the degree for which it is submitted, the name of the School/Centre/Institute and Faculty in which

the research is carried out, the full name of the author and the year of submission;

- A comprehensive list of contents;
- A signed declaration of authenticity that attests (among other things) that the maximum word limit for the degree has been adhered to. The declaration should appear at the beginning of the thesis, following your title page and abstract but before the table of contents. Please refer to OPR website for the exact wording of the student declaration (<http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/thesis-submission>). Theses submitted that do not include this declaration will not be accepted for examination;
- Additional declarations as per University and Faculty Guidelines are mandatory for theses presented in Thesis by Publication format and must be included in the thesis submission for the thesis to be accepted for examination.
- Diagrams should not be grouped together at the end of each chapter. Each diagram must carry both a number and a caption;
- References should be listed at the end of the thesis.

Your Faculty or School/Centre/Institute may have further documentation on format and will be able to advise on any scholarly conventions applying to your discipline. In addition, a number of theses are held in the library that you may use as a guide. Your supervisors should also be able to refer you to exemplary theses. Scholarship holders may be eligible for a copy and binding allowance. Please contact the Admissions and Scholarships Coordinator on (03) 9919 4659 for further information.

For further information and resources (thesis template, student declaration template), please refer to the OPR website - <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/thesis-submission>

#### **2.11.4 Appointment of Examiners**

At least three months prior to your expected submission of thesis date, you should ensure that your supervisors and Head of School/Centre/Institute are aware of your intention to submit your thesis.

Your principal supervisor is required to nominate examiners for your thesis. Two nominations are required for Masters by Research and Doctor of Psychology/Applied Psychology students. Please note that some Faculties nominate a reserve examiner. Please contact your Faculty Student Advice Officer for further information. Three examiners are nominated for PhD, DBA, EdD, DSW (or another approved thesis format) and Masters by Research students including a performance or exhibition and four examiners (three plus a reserve) are required for doctoral theses including a performance or exhibition.

You are not permitted to know who is examining your thesis, until the conclusion of the examination. You may provide your principal supervisor with a list of suitable/unsuitable examiners, however it is the supervisor's responsibility to nominate examiners and this list will not be disclosed. Examiners may request total confidentiality in which case this information will not be released to you.

#### **Points to Consider – Examination of Masters by Research, DPsych and DAppPsych Students**

In the event that one of your examiners returns a deferred recommendation, or one of the previously nominated examiners is no longer available, your principal supervisor will be required to nominate a further examiner to the FPRC to examine your thesis. The examiner will be given two months from the date they receive the thesis to submit a report.

#### **Points to Consider – Examination of PhD, EdD, DSW and DBA Students**

If one of the previously nominated examiners is no longer available, your principal supervisor will be required to nominate a further examiner to the FPRC to examine your thesis. The examiner will be given two months from the date that they receive the thesis to submit a report.

#### 2.11.4.1 Notes for Supervisors

- When considering potential examiners, note that they should be currently associated with a university or research institution;
- At least one examiner should be located overseas;
- Examiners should be specific to the research area;
- The supervisor should establish that the nominated examiner will be available to mark the thesis at the anticipated time of submission, and is available to provide a report within a two month period;
- The principal supervisor is to submit the *Nomination of Examiners* form to the Faculty Student Advice Officer, three months prior to the anticipated thesis submission date;
- The FPRC approves all examiners;
- Once examiners are approved, and the student has submitted the required copies of the thesis and accompanying completed *Release of Thesis* form, the thesis can be forwarded to the approved examiners;
- The principal supervisor and Head of School/Centre/Institute, should be aware that the University pays examiners, in accordance with the honorarium set by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee. Details of the honorarium can be obtained by contacting (03) 9919 5014. The School/Centre/Institute in which a student is enrolled assumes the cost of examiners' honoraria.
- Only in exceptional circumstances will the Committee approve two examiners currently employed by the same institution. Ex VU staff members may be considered to assess a thesis. In both instances, sufficient evidence must be presented to illustrate that the examiner is an expert in the field and what, if any, contact they have had with the student or the thesis.

#### 2.11.4.2 Notes for the Head of School/Centre/Institute

The Head of School/Centre/Institute is required to endorse the nominations. When nominating examiners, principal supervisors should:

- Discuss with you the names of any individuals considered unsuitable to act as an examiner;
- Consider the academic standing of the examiners in relation to the area of research covered in the thesis;
- Ensure that no members of the University staff are nominated;
- Ensure that no individuals who have been associated with your or your student's research program are nominated.

For further information, please refer to the *Guidelines for Chairs of Examiners* available online at <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students>

## **2.11.5 Enrolment Issues relating to Submission of Thesis**

### **2.11.5.1 Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents**

You must be enrolled to submit your thesis for examination. If you are not currently enrolled then you will need to apply for the reinstatement of candidature (see section 2.9.3). Once you have submitted your thesis, your enrolment status will be converted to 'Thesis under Examination' status. If you submit your thesis before the semester census date you will not incur fees for that semester.

You are required to re-enrol if your thesis is returned from examination with the classification deferred for major rewrite. Please refer to section 2.12.1 for further information.

### **2.11.5.2 International Students**

International student visas are only issued for the duration of the course up to the time of submission. Once the thesis has been submitted you will need to take a letter from your principal supervisor to immigration to state this so that your visa can be extended for three months whilst the thesis is being examined. Immigration will extend the student visa for three months with the provision of a further three month extension (6 months is the maximum time for extension).

You do not need an eCoE for this extension but you will need to prove to immigration that you have medical cover and the means to support yourself for the duration of the extension.

If your thesis is returned from examination with an overall deferred result, you will be required to re-enrol. VUI can inform you of the fees to be charged and arrangements to be made. Please refer to section 2.12.1 for further information.

## 2.11.6 Submitting your Thesis for Examination

When you, your supervisors and Head of School/Centre/Institute, are satisfied with the final version of your thesis, it is time to officially submit your thesis for examination. Doctoral students must arrange an appointment to submit their thesis for examination (03 9919 5014).

If there is disagreement concerning whether or not the thesis is ready for submission, in the first instance the matter should be discussed and resolved if possible between the student, supervisor/s and Head of School/Centre/Institute. If resolution can not be found the matter should be referred to the School Postgraduate Research Coordinator, Associate Dean (R&RT) and/or the Director of Postgraduate Research, OPR.

### 2.11.6.1 Submission Requirements

The following must be in order at the time you submit your thesis for examination:

- The thesis title must be identical to the title registered with the University and in the required format (see section 2.9.4). Please contact your Student Advice Officer to confirm your registered title;
- You must be currently enrolled;
- The signed student declaration must be included in each copy of your thesis. The declaration is available online at <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/thesis-submission>. It is essential that the exact wording be used in each copy of your thesis;
- Students completing a Thesis by Creative Project must provide an abstract, creative component and analytical component. In all cases where the create component does not include a performance or exhibition, the three required components for submission will be submitted simultaneously (refer to Schedule K, HDR policy (<http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>) and the Examination Guidelines for PhD Research Degrees – Thesis by Creative Project (<http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students>);
- Students completing a Thesis by Publication must include the following, in addition to the normal thesis presentation requirements:
  - List of Paper publications and/or Paper manuscripts, including verification of ERA ranking of the journal or conference publication and of the status of the paper in relation to its submission, review or acceptance;

- For each Paper a declaration about authorship and contribution to the work, including acknowledgement of joint or multiple authors and verification of each of their contributions and permissions;
- Copies of the published Papers and submitted and/or final draft Paper manuscripts.
- The completed and signed Release of Thesis form (see below).

Complete the *Release of Thesis* form and submit it in person together with the required number of copies of your thesis. Please note that if your principal supervisor is also the Head of School/Centre/Institute s/he is unable to act as Chair of Examiners. In this instance, the Associate Dean (R&RT) normally acts as Chair of Examiners for that students' thesis. The OPR for doctoral students or the Faculty Student Advice Officer for Masters by Research students must be advised of the appointment at the time the thesis is submitted for examination. The number of copies for each discipline is listed below:

- Masters by Research students must submit three copies of the thesis in spiral/comb binding to the Faculty Student Advice Officer;
- Masters by Research students by performance or exhibition must submit four copies in spiral/comb binding to the Faculty Student Advice Officer;
- DPsych and DAppPsych students must submit three copies in spiral binding to the OPR;
- PhD, EdD, DSW and DBA students must submit four copies in spiral/comb binding to the OPR;
- PhD involving a Thesis by Creative Project that incorporates either a live performance or exhibition must submit five copies in spiral/comb binding to the OPR.

At the time that you submit your thesis for examination, you will receive an acknowledgment card from the appropriate officer. Doctoral students will have their submission details placed on the OPR website. Please note that 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). One copy of the thesis is retained in the administrative office responsible for coordinating the examination process. Please note that it is at the examiners discretion to return the thesis. Any returned copies of your thesis plus the

copy retained by the University will be returned to you following the examination of your thesis. Students are not permitted to contact the OPR or the Faculty Student Advice Officer once the thesis has been forwarded to the examiners. Any questions regarding the examination process must be directed to the Chair of Examiners who is usually the Head of School/Centre/Institute.

## **2.12 EXAMINATION AND CLASSIFICATION**

### **2.12.1 Examiners' Reports**

The examiners are required to provide a report within two months from the date that they receive the thesis. The officer responsible for coordinating the examination process will contact the examiner concerned, if a report is not received in that time. At this time the supervisors may contact the appropriate officer to ascertain the status of the examination process (e.g. how many examiner reports remain overdue).

The examination reports cannot be released until all reports have been received. Once all the examiners' reports are received, your Head of School/Centre/Institute and principal supervisor will receive full copies of the reports via email. An examiner may specify that parts of the report should not be made available to the student. If this is not the case, you should expect to receive a full copy of all reports (via email and mail). You will also receive any returned copies of your thesis.

Each examiner's report will recommend one of the following:

- The thesis/major work should be classified as **PASSED**, without further correction;
- The thesis/major work should be classified as **PASSED**, subject to minor corrections being made to the satisfaction of the Chair of Examiners;
- The thesis/major work should be classified as **PASSED**, subject to substantial amendment as outlined in the examiner's report being made to the satisfaction of the Chair of Examiners;
- The thesis/major work should be classified as **DEFERRED** and the candidate should be permitted to resubmit the thesis in a revised form;
- The thesis should be classified as **FAILED**.

In addition to providing the examiners report, examiners assessing a research doctorate are also asked to assess the quality of the thesis and

generic attributes. The guidelines for assessing the quality of the thesis and generic attributes are available online at <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students>

In the event that two of your examiners return a deferred recommendation, you will be required to re-enrol and your thesis must undergo major rewrite. You will not be advised of the examiner names (who deferred your thesis) until the re-examination has taken place. You have twelve months to revise your thesis and resubmit for examination irrespective of your mode of study. If additional time is required, you must apply to the OPR for an extension. Normally three additional months will be granted. A supporting statement must be provided by your principal supervisor. For further information, please phone (03) 9919 5014. The resubmitted thesis will be sent to the two examiners who initially deferred the thesis. The initial examiner reports will also be returned to the examiners. The examiners will be given two months from the date that the examiner receives the thesis to return their report and will only be able to grade the thesis as "passed" or "failed". Students submitting their thesis for re-examination must include a detailed letter addressing the substantive changes made to their thesis. The letter will be forwarded to the examiners along with the resubmitted thesis.

### **2.12.2 Classification of Thesis**

The Chair of Examiners (normally the Head of School/Centre/Institute) is asked to recommend to the University PRC Working Party, classification of the thesis based on the examiners' majority decision.

The document *Procedure for Classification of Theses/Major Work* available online at <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students> will assist in determining classification where differing examiners reports are received.

If you are requested to make amendments to your thesis, you must do so within twelve months of receiving notification. If you require additional time, you must apply for an extension prior to the twelve month expiry date. Normally three additional months will be granted. Written applications should be addressed to the OPR and outline the reasons why an extension is required. A supporting statement must be provided by your principal supervisor. For further information, please phone (03) 9919 5014.

After you have made any necessary amendments, and the Head of School/Centre/Institute and principal supervisor have confirmed that the corrections have been made, a *Classification of Thesis* form will be lodged to the OPR along with the other documents listed in the *Guidelines for Submission of Thesis for Classification* available online at <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students>. If an examiner recommends a change in your thesis title, you must clearly state in your letter the new title. Your principal supervisor must also make reference in their letter to the new thesis title. Please note the following:

- Once you submit your thesis for classification, your student entitlements will cease;
- The University PRC guidelines state that normally thesis titles should be formatted in sentence case with only the significant words capitalised.

### **2.12.3 Approval of Classification Recommendation**

A recommendation that the thesis be classified as passed is conveyed via the University PRC or in exceptional cases the PRC Working Party, to the Education and Research Board (or a delegate), who will approve that the particular degree be awarded. You will be advised in writing of the University PRC Working Party decision regarding the classification of your thesis.

### **2.12.4 Appeals**

If the majority of examiners' reports indicate that your thesis should be classified as failed, this will be conveyed to the appropriate committee and the thesis will be classified as failed. If you wish to appeal against the classification of your thesis, you should contact the Director of Postgraduate Research on (03) 9919 4587.

### **2.12.5 Permanent Binding**

If the University PRC Working Party recommendation for the classification of your thesis is 'passed', you will be notified to lodge three copies (two hardbound; one electronic) of your thesis to the OPR along with the submission and permission form. One copy is for the University Archive, one for the School and one for the Library (in electronic format). The Library copy should preferably be in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF on compact disc (CD). A blank CD will be provided by the OPR. Students lodging an electronic copy of a thesis are asked to sign a submission and permission form, allowing the Library to deposit the thesis in electronic format on the VU Institutional

Repository (VUIR). If the student does not want the thesis available online, they can request on the form for access to the full text to be restricted (and only metadata available). For further information, please refer to the *Submission of Research Outputs of VU Staff and Students to the VU Institutional Repository (VUIR) policy* - <http://wcf.vu.edu.au/GovernancePolicy/index.cfm>

You should organise the required number of photocopies of the thesis yourself. You may wish to examine other theses lodged in the Library to evaluate standards. You should ensure that the binder follows VU's specifications. The University specifications are that, the title (abbreviated if necessary) should be on the spine, placed so the tops of the letters are facing towards the front cover. Your name, the degree name and the year of classification should also be on the spine. The colour of the hardbound thesis is your choice as is whether you have any details printed on the front cover. The hardbound copy may be printed in double sided format. A signed declaration of authenticity with the current date (identical to the declaration submitted for examination) must be included in the hardbound copies of the thesis. The Yellow Pages provides a list of commercial bookbinders or you can organise the binding through the OPR. Please contact (03) 9919 4522 for further information.

Once a student has submitted the copies and have had their thesis classified by the ERB or a delegate of ERB, they will receive a completions letter. The completions letter can be used for employment purposes. In most cases you will be given two months from receiving the notification to have the copies lodged. The exception is when Assessment and Graduations require notification sooner in order to prepare for the graduation ceremony.

#### **2.12.6 Restricted Access to the Thesis**

Where there are commercial intellectual property issues, or the circumstances of the research project warrant the imposition of a measure of secrecy, at the request of the student, access to the thesis can be restricted up to two years.

All applicants must explain in detail the reasons for which restricted access is requested, and include supporting documentation from the principal supervisor and Chair of Examiners.

Applicants should consider whether restricting access would impede their ability to publish their research or make their work and achievements known to potential employers. It is important that these issues are discussed with the supervisors in detail prior to making an application.

The *Restricted Access to a Thesis* form is available online at <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/forms-for-research-students>. The completed form should be submitted with the electronic and hardbound copies to the OPR. The University PRC approves applications for restricted access to a thesis.

## 2.13 GRADUATION

You need to apply to receive your award, even if you do not want to attend a ceremony. You should not wait until your thesis has been classified before applying to graduate. The website <http://www.vu.edu.au/current-students/student-essentials/graduation/graduation-ceremonies> will list the application closing dates for the ceremonies.

You apply via the link on the MYVU portal for your award - <http://myvu.vu.edu.au/myVU/index.jsp>. The online application facility allows you to amend your address details. You will immediately receive confirmation that your application has been received via a return email to your University @ live email account or to an account you nominate when you apply. Alternatively, you can download the *Application for Award* form online at <http://www.vu.edu.au/current-students/student-essentials/commonly-used-forms>. The completed form can be lodged at any Student Service Centre on or before the prescribed closing date in order to be eligible to graduate at a particular conferring ceremony. Late applications will not be processed, and the award will be conferred at a subsequent scheduled University ceremony or in absentia.

A student cannot graduate until their thesis has been classified by ERB as passed and the hardbound/electronic copies submitted to the OPR.

You will receive details of the graduation ceremony and instructions on the hiring of the gown from Assessment and Graduations approximately six weeks before the ceremonies are scheduled. Alternatively, a full set of doctoral regalia can be purchased from Assessment and Graduations. You need to allow 5 to 6 weeks to ensure a timely delivery. For further information please refer to <http://www.vu.edu.au/current-students/student-essentials/graduation>

### **International students**

International students whose visas will expire before the graduation ceremony should apply through VUI for assistance with a change to visitors visa status. In order to apply for an extension of stay you will require a letter from the University's Graduation Officer stating that you are eligible to graduate for the degree and the date of the graduation ceremony. The maximum extension of stay that DIAC will grant is three months from the expiry of your student visa. DIAC may require you to provide evidence that you can support yourself during this time.

