

# **Rules Relating to Awards - Rule 7 - Masters by Thesis Awards**

## **Section 1 - Masters By Thesis**

### **Part A - Admission to Candidature**

- (1) An application for admission to candidature is accepted subject to the availability of facilities and supervision.
- (2) An application, which may be submitted at any time, shall be made on the prescribed form and shall be lodged with the Research Training Unit for consideration by the Higher Degrees Research Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Academic Board.
- (3) An applicant shall seek admission to a Masters degree by thesis course as:
  - a. a full-time candidate; or
  - b. a part-time candidate.
- (4) A candidate may convert from full-time to part-time candidature, and vice-versa, with the approval of the Director of the Research Training Unit, upon the recommendation of the relevant Director of Research and Research Training.
- (5) To qualify for admission to a Masters degree by thesis course, applicants must:
  - a. possess a Bachelor's degree with first or second class Honours from Southern Cross University; or
  - b. possess an equivalent qualification; or
  - c. submit such other evidence of general and professional qualifications as will satisfy the Higher Degrees Research Committee that the applicant possesses the educational preparation and capacity to pursue graduate studies; and
  - d. satisfy such additional requirements for admission to a particular program, if any, as may be prescribed by the Higher Degrees Research Committee.
- (6) All candidates, except those who are enrolled in a course offered in a language other than English, are expected to be proficient in English comprehension and expression. Applicants, the medium of whose previous education was not English, may be required to take a special test of English language proficiency approved by the Higher Degrees Research Committee.

### **Part B - Enrolment**

- (7) The Higher Degrees Research Committee shall not permit an applicant to enrol as a candidate unless it has received:
  - a. in the case of an applicant seeking admission either as a full-time or as a part-time candidate, a certificate from the relevant Director of Research and Research Training, and the relevant Head of School, stating that the applicant is fit to undertake a course leading to the award of Masters degree by thesis and that the School is

willing to undertake the responsibility of supervising the work of the applicant; and

- b. in the case of an applicant seeking admission as a candidate at an external site, a certificate from the relevant Director of Research and Research Training stating that the applicant is fit to undertake a course leading to the award of Masters degree by thesis and that suitable arrangements for supervision and access to appropriate facilities have been negotiated and are acceptable to the School.

(8) Reference to School shall include reference to any other appropriate academic organisational unit such as, for example, College.

(9) A Masters qualifying student may apply for enrolment as a Masters by thesis candidate:

- a. upon successful completion of a program approved by the Higher Degrees Research Committee at a level of performance prescribed by the Committee; and
- b. shall lodge an application with the Research Training Unit for consideration by the Higher Degrees Research Committee.

(10) A Masters qualifying student shall not be eligible for enrolment as a Masters by thesis candidate if a period of more than one year, if full-time, or two years, if part-time, has elapsed from initial enrolment, except with the approval of the Director of the Research Training Unit.

(11) The Higher Degrees Research Committee shall, in the case of a Masters qualifying student applying for enrolment as a Masters by thesis candidate, either:

- a. permit the student to enrol as a candidate; or
- b. decline the application.

(12) The Higher Degrees Research Committee shall not permit an applicant to enrol as a candidate unless the applicant has:

- a. qualified for admission in terms of clause (5); or
- b. been enrolled as a Masters qualifying student at Southern Cross University, and has subsequently carried out such work, passed such examinations and reached such standards as the Higher Degrees Research Committee shall prescribe, and has not previously been denied enrolment as a candidate on two occasions; and
- c. satisfied the Higher Degrees Research Committee regarding fitness to become a candidate; and
- d. received a statement from the relevant Director of Research and Research Training, and the relevant Head of School, that the School is willing to undertake the responsibility of supervising the work of the applicant.

(13) The Higher Degrees Research Committee shall approve or, if necessary, vary any periods of residency during which the candidate shall be required to pursue study and research at the University, prescribed by the School proposing the candidate's enrolment.

(14) A commencing candidate is enrolled on completion of all of the following:

- a. acceptance of the offer of admission;
- b. completion of relevant forms;
- c. payment of prescribed fees (unless the Director of Student Services has granted an extension of time for such payment).

## **Part C - Concurrent Studies**

(15) In the case of an applicant enrolled as a candidate, wishing to enrol for another award course at the University, approval of the Higher Degrees Research Committee, upon the recommendation of the relevant Director(s) of Research and Research Training, is required.

(16) A candidate may be required by the Higher Degrees Research Committee to undertake concurrently with thesis preparation a formal course of studies appropriate to the thesis. However, at least seventy (70) per cent of the course of study for the award of a Masters degree by thesis shall comprise an original research project and a thesis.

## **Part D - Requirements for the Award**

(17) To be eligible for the award of a Masters degree by thesis, a candidate shall:

- a. complete the prescribed program involving an original investigation, review, criticism or design; and
- b. submit and have accepted a thesis prepared under the supervision of the Principal Supervisor nominated by the Higher Degrees Research Committee; and
- c. complete such other work as may be prescribed by the Higher Degrees Research Committee.

(18) A candidate shall not normally be eligible for the award of a Masters degree by thesis until:

- a. in the case of a full-time candidate, at least nine months have elapsed from the time of enrolment as a Masters by thesis candidate; or
- b. in the case of a part-time candidate, at least eighteen months have elapsed from the time of enrolment as a Masters by thesis candidate,
- c. except that a candidate who is specially qualified in the relevant discipline may with approval of the Academic Board be allowed to complete the course in less than the normal minimum time.

## **Part E - Work Environment and Supervision**

(19) All candidates shall normally have appointed by the Higher Degrees Research Committee at least one supervisor, who shall act as Principal Supervisor and who shall be a member of the academic staff of the University. Where more than one supervisor is appointed, one of the supervisors shall be nominated as the Principal Supervisor, who shall be a member of the academic staff of the University.

(20) All candidates shall be required to participate in such colloquia, research seminars and other work of the University as may be considered appropriate by their Principal Supervisor.

(21) Candidates shall, as their Principal Supervisor may from time to time require, submit drafts of the major sections of the written thesis for review and shall submit to their Principal Supervisor a final draft of the written thesis for advice and comment before submission for examination.

(22) In respect of candidates who undertake a major portion of their research at sites external to the University, the Higher Degrees Research Committee may appoint a local Co-supervisor.

(23) If a person appointed as supervisor is unable to perform the duties of the appointment, the Higher Degrees Research Committee shall appoint a replacement supervisor on the recommendation of the relevant Director of Research and Research Training.

## Part F - Progress Reports

(24) Candidates shall, through their Principal Supervisor and relevant Director of Research and Research Training, submit in the prescribed form and at the prescribed times progress reports to the Chair, Higher Degrees Research Committee.

(25) The Principal Supervisor and the relevant Director of Research and Research Training shall at the same time provide comments to the Chair, Higher Degrees Research Committee, on the progress of the candidates being supervised.

(26) The Chair, Higher Degrees Research Committee, may refer progress reports submitted by candidates to the Higher Degrees Research Committee for review. The Higher Degrees Research Committee may recommend that the candidate undertake remedial action or, where progress reports have demonstrated unsatisfactory progress, may recommend termination of the candidature. Where progress reports have not been submitted by the due dates, the Higher Degrees Research Committee may consider progress to be unsatisfactory and thus may recommend termination of candidature.

## Part G - Confirmation of Candidature

(27) All Masters by Thesis candidates will serve a confirmation period, no longer than six (6) months full-time equivalent.

(28) The process of assessment of the confirmation period will be developed within a general framework approved by the Higher Degrees Research Committee, to be used in the respective School.

(29) A Supervisor-Candidate Agreement, containing criteria for satisfactory progress, shall be developed between the candidate and the supervisor, and reviewed as required during candidature.

(30) Candidates must submit their Confirmation of Candidature proposal for text-matching analysis in accordance with the Text Matching Software Policy and the Text Matching Software Higher Degree by Research Procedures.

(31) The assessment of the satisfactory completion of the confirmation period shall result in one of five outcomes:

- a. Satisfactory: Candidate to be offered full candidature (i.e. confirmation of candidature).
- b. Unsatisfactory: Candidate to revise submission to the satisfaction of the Principal Supervisor and the relevant Director of Research and Research Training.
- c. Unsatisfactory: Candidate to resubmit to confirmation period assessment process.
- d. Remedial action: Where a resubmission results in a further unsatisfactory outcome, a course of remedial action shall be put in place. This may require a review of the Supervisor-Candidate Agreement.
- e. Termination of candidature.

(32) Termination may also be recommended by the Chair of the Higher Degrees Research Committee under conditions in which the University is unable to provide adequate supervision.

## Part H - Thesis

(33) Candidates must submit the final draft of their Thesis for text-matching analysis in accordance with the [Text Matching Software Policy](#) and the [Text Matching Software Higher Degree by Research Procedures](#).

(34) On completion of studies during candidature, a candidate shall submit a thesis that complies with the following requirements:

- a. the greater proportion of the work described must have been completed subsequent to initial enrolment as a candidate; and
- b. it must show evidence of competence in research and scholarship; and
- c. it must be in English or in a language approved by the Higher Degrees Research Committee and reach a satisfactory standard of presentation; and
- d. it must have a substantial written component but may also contain a significant amount of non-written material.

(35) The thesis shall consist of the candidate's own account of the work, except that in special cases work done jointly with other persons may be accepted provided the Higher Degrees Research Committee is satisfied in respect of the candidate's part in the joint work.

(36) On submitting a thesis the candidate shall adduce sufficient evidence of its authenticity and originality, and to this end shall submit a written statement at the front of the thesis:

- a. indicating which portions are original and which are not; and
- b. giving the sources of information if these are not adequately indicated in the thesis; and
- c. indicating whether, and if so to what extent, any of the material submitted, or work on which it is based, has been used in seeking another degree in the University or elsewhere.

(37) A candidate shall submit with, but separately from, the thesis a short abstract of the thesis comprising not more than 400 words and written in a form suitable for publication.

(38) A candidate may not submit as the main content of the thesis any work or material which has previously been accepted for a degree or other similar award but shall not be precluded from incorporating such work or material in the thesis, provided that the candidate indicates, generally in the preface and specifically in the notes, the work or material which has been so incorporated.

(39) The candidate may submit as supporting documents any work published by the candidate, but only if it bears on the subject of the thesis.

## **Part I - Thesis Submission**

(40) A candidate shall, through the Principal Supervisor and relevant Director of Research and Research Training, give the Research Training Unit two (2) months' written notice of intention to submit a thesis and such notice shall be accompanied by the appropriate fee, if any.

(41) Three (3) copies of the thesis in a form of temporary binding prescribed by the Research Training Unit shall be submitted by the candidate, through the Principal Supervisor, to the relevant Director of Research and Research Training, and these copies may be retained by the University.

(42) These three copies of the thesis shall be submitted to the Research Training Unit by the relevant Director of Research and Research Training with a certificate signed by the Principal Supervisor certifying that the candidate's work, including the thesis, is in a form suitable for examination.

(43) A thesis shall be prepared in the format prescribed by the Research Training Unit.

(44) HDR candidates shall be required to submit two copies of their final thesis to the Research Training Unit:

- a. One unbound copy for distribution to the University Library;
- b. One digital copy.

(45) The digital copy of the thesis shall be deposited with the Research Training Unit using the prescribed form. This

digital copy shall be:

- a. included in the institutional repository for archival purposes; and
- b. made available on open online access unless application to restrict access is made and decided in accordance with clauses (46) - (48). Some third party copyright material contained in the thesis may need to be removed to provide online access. This will be done on the advice of the University Copyright Officer.

(46) The copies of the thesis deposited with the University Library will be available for consultation, loan, or copying at the discretion of the University Librarian, unless the University on the application of the candidate determines that it shall not be available until after the expiry of a period, which period shall not normally exceed two (2) years. The University Librarian shall require each user and recipient of a copy of a thesis to undertake in writing to respect the author's rights under the law relating to copyright.

(47) A candidate may, when lodging a thesis, make application on the prescribed form to the Director, Research Training, to restrict access to a thesis, either in whole or in part, and in all formats. The Director, Research Training, shall decide such application in accordance with the terms detailed on the prescribed form. Normally, access may be restricted for a period up to two (2) years. In special cases, application may be made to restrict access for a longer period. Where the thesis contains material which the candidate considers should have restricted distribution, the Principal Supervisor, the Director, Research Training, and the examiners shall be informed which parts are classified.

(48) Where a candidate states that a thesis contains confidential information which the candidate does not desire to be disclosed freely, or which the candidate is not at liberty to disclose freely, the candidate may, to the extent that it is possible, place that information in an appendix to the thesis. The copy of the thesis deposited in the University Library shall have a notation, authorised by the Director of the Research Training Unit, indicating which parts of the thesis are not included because they contain confidential information, and informing the reader to contact the candidate for further information.

## **Part J - Examination of Thesis**

(49) The Higher Degrees Research Committee shall appoint at least two (2) examiners of whom at least one (1) shall be external to the University. A supervisor of a thesis shall not also be an examiner. The examiners may consult with each other, but each examiner shall make a separate report and recommendation on the merit of the thesis and any other work submitted for examination. An examiner may question the candidate, through the Director of the Research Training Unit, in relation to any aspect of the work, which in the opinion of the examiner requires clarification. Any questions and answers shall be sent to the other examiners.

(50) The examiners' reports on a thesis shall be forwarded to the relevant Director of Research and Research Training for comment, who in turn shall forward them to the Principal Supervisor and the candidate for comment. The examiners' reports, together with any written comments received from the Principal Supervisor and the candidate, shall then be considered by the relevant Director of Research and Research Training, who shall make a recommendation to the Higher Degrees Research Committee.

(51) The recommendation of the relevant Director of Research and Research Training, together with the reports of the examiners and any written comments received from the Principal Supervisor and the candidate, shall be considered by the Higher Degrees Research Committee, which shall have broad discretion to seek additional input as appropriate, and which shall:

- a. recommend to the Academic Board that the candidate be admitted to the award of a Masters degree by thesis;  
or
- b. recommend to the Academic Board that the Masters by thesis candidature be terminated.

(52) Before making a recommendation to the Academic Board, the Higher Degrees Research Committee may require:

- a. the candidate to address any matters raised in the examiners' reports,
- b. the candidate to address additional issues in the thesis,
- c. additional input to the examination process, for example, the candidate may be required to undertake a written or an oral examination of the thesis under such reasonable conditions as determined by the Higher Degrees Research Committee; or
- d. re-examination of the thesis within six months if full-time, or within one year if part-time.

(53) Candidates required to undertake changes to their thesis in response to examiners' reports prior to award will be required to undertake these changes within a maximum of three months after the date of notification of these; and the School and supervisor are required to review these and submit a report on changes made for final ratification by the Higher Degree Research Committee no later than six months after the original notification of these to the student (unless a longer period is approved by the HDRC).

(54) A candidate whose thesis fails re-examination, as conducted under conditions prescribed by the Higher Degrees Research Committee, shall have candidature terminated by the Academic Board and shall not be eligible for re enrolment in a Masters by thesis course in the same topic area.

## **Part K - Maximum Tenure, Extension, Interruption, Cancellation**

(55) The maximum period of Masters by thesis candidature is two (2) years full-time, four (4) years part-time.

(56) A candidate shall present a thesis for examination a minimum of two months prior to their maximum period of candidature, unless special permission for an extension of time has been granted by the Director of the Research Training Unit. Maximum time allowed to complete a course shall not include periods of approved leave of absence.

(57) The Director of the Research Training Unit, on the recommendation of the Principal Supervisor and relevant Director of Research and Research Training, may permit an extension or interruption of candidature for a period or periods totalling no more than six (6) months.

(58) The Higher Degrees Research Committee may on behalf of the Academic Board permit interruption beyond six (6) months, at its discretion and on the recommendation of the Director of the Research Training Unit.

(59) Unless the Director of the Research Training Unit (RTU), or the Higher Degrees Research Committee, otherwise determines, a candidate shall maintain continuous enrolment until all requirements for admission to the degree have been met.

(60) A candidate may cancel enrolment at any time by giving written notice to the Research Training Unit.

(61) A candidate who exceeds the maximum tenure without an approved extension, will be deemed to be, and recorded as having 'lapsed candidature'. A lapsed candidate may apply to the Research Training Unit for candidature for the purpose of submitting a thesis which, if the readmission is approved, would be submitted within one calendar month and sent for examination. An application for re-admission must be made within the following time periods:

(62) Candidates who were enrolled full time at time of their candidature's lapse, up to 6 months from notification of lapse of candidature

(63) Candidates who were enrolled part-time at time of their candidature's lapse, up to 12 months from notification of lapse of candidature

(64) Any lapsed candidate who does not apply for readmission to submit a thesis for examination by the end of their maximum period of lapsed candidature, or whose readmission application is rejected, or who does not submit within

the one calendar month following readmission, will be considered to have failed and will have their candidature terminated.

(65) Within 8 weeks of a student being notified of SCU Withdrawn the principal supervisor will provide the Director of the Research Training Unit with a written report on the reasons for the candidature's failure to submit a thesis within the maximum period of candidature. Upon receipt of this report the Director of the Research Training Unit may seek further information from the supervisor, student and/or other members of the supervisory team concerning the unsuccessful candidature.

## **Part L - Readmission**

(66) A candidate whose candidature is terminated shall not be eligible to be readmitted until the lapse of one (1) year, unless approved by the Director of the Research Training Unit.

(67) A candidate readmitted shall have determined by the Higher Degrees Research Committee the maximum period of time in which the candidate shall be permitted to complete the course.

## **Part M - Query and Appeal**

### **Query of Review of Progress Reports**

(68) A candidate who is not satisfied with the review of progress reports under clause (26) may query the review with the relevant Director of Research and Research Training.

(69) A candidate who is not satisfied with the result of discussions arising from clause (68) may query the review in writing with the Chair of the Higher Degrees Research Committee within ten (10) working days of the date of sending of formal notification of the outcome of the review to the candidate.

(70) If, as a result of such a query, it is deemed appropriate to vary the decision, the Chair of the Higher Degrees Research Committee may make such variation.

### **Query of Assessment of Completion of Confirmation Period**

(71) A candidate who is not satisfied with the outcome of the assessment of completion of a confirmation period under clause (31) may query the assessment with the relevant Director of Research and Research Training.

(72) A candidate who is not satisfied with the result of discussions arising from clause (71) may query the assessment in writing with the Chair of the Higher Degrees Research Committee within ten (10) working days of the date of sending of formal notification of the outcome of the assessment to the candidate.

(73) If, as a result of such a query, it is deemed appropriate to vary the assessment, the Chair of the Higher Degrees Research Committee may make such variation.

### **Query of Decision Not to Submit Thesis**

(74) A candidate who is not satisfied with a decision not to submit a thesis for examination may query the decision with the Principal Supervisor.

(75) A candidate who is not satisfied with the result of discussions arising from clause (74) may query the decision with the relevant Director of Research and Research Training.

(76) A candidate who is not satisfied with the result of discussions arising from clause (75) may request the Higher Degrees Research Committee to forward the thesis to examiners even though it is against the advice of the Principal



Supervisor. The Higher Degrees Research Committee is not obliged to accede to the request, but if the Committee does agree, the examiners will be advised that the thesis did not have the support of the Principal Supervisor after they have provided their reports. Reasons for wishing to submit without the Principal Supervisor's approval must be provided in writing to the Secretary of the Higher Degrees Research Committee.

### **Appeal Against Assessment of Completion of Confirmation Period**

(77) A candidate who is not satisfied with the determination of the Chair of the Higher Degrees Research Committee under clause (72), may appeal on the prescribed form to the Academic Board Appeals Committee on one or more of the following grounds:

- a. improper action in the conduct of the confirmation assessment;
- b. irregularity in the conduct of the assessment;
- c. negligence on the part of any person involved in the conduct of the assessment;
- d. discrimination against the candidate which is unlawful under State or Federal legislation;
- e. prejudice or bias on the part of the assessor or any other person involved in determining the outcome of the assessment;
- f. the assessment process as detailed in the Supervisor-Candidate Agreement or similar document or any subsequent amendment not being followed;
- g. where additional evidence for special consideration can be provided or where procedures for consideration of an application for special consideration were not properly followed

(78) An appeal made under this Rule shall be lodged with the Secretary, Academic Boards Appeals Committee, within ten (10) working days of the date of sending of formal notification of the determination of the Chair of the Higher Degrees Research Committee. A late appeal may be received at the discretion of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee where the candidate is able to satisfy the Chair that the appeal was lodged late through no fault of the candidate.

(79) The Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee will assess the content of the appeal and determine whether it is appropriate for the appeal to proceed to a hearing by the Academic Board Appeals Committee under the relevant Rule. The Secretary, on behalf of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee, will contact the candidate in writing within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal by the Chair, informing them that:

- a. the appeal is rejected on the basis that the grounds for appeal are frivolous or vexatious, no ground of appeal is revealed on the face of the correspondence received, or the candidate has not followed the processes, as described in the Rules and Procedures (which will be reported to the next meeting of the Academic Board Appeals Committee); or
- b. the Chair on behalf of the Appeals Committee is proceeding with the appeal, and may be seeking further information.

(80) The decision of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee whether or not to proceed to a hearing by the Academic Board Appeals Committee shall be final within the University.

### **Appeal Against Review of Progress Reports**

(81) A candidate who is not satisfied with the determination of the Chair of the Higher Degrees Research Committee under clause (69) may appeal on the prescribed form to the Academic Board Appeals Committee on one or more of the following grounds:

- a. improper action in the conduct of the review process;
- b. irregularity in the conduct of the review;

- c. negligence on the part of any person involved in the conduct of the review;
- d. discrimination against the candidate which is unlawful under State or Federal legislation;
- e. prejudice or bias on the part of any person involved in determining the outcome of the review;
- f. the reporting process as detailed in the Supervisor-Candidate Agreement or similar document or any subsequent amendment not being followed;
- g. where additional evidence for special consideration can be provided, or where procedures for consideration of an application for special consideration were not properly followed.

(82) An appeal made under this Rule shall be lodged with the Secretary, Academic Board Appeals Committee, within ten (10) working days of the date of sending of formal notification of the determination of the Higher Degrees Research Committee. A late appeal may be received at the discretion of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee where the candidate is able to satisfy the Chair that the appeal was lodged late through no fault of the candidate.

(83) The Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee will assess the content of the appeal and determine whether it is appropriate for the appeal to proceed to a hearing by the Academic Board Appeals Committee under the relevant Rule. The Secretary, on behalf of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee, will contact the candidate in writing within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal by the Chair, informing them that:

- a. the appeal is rejected on the basis that the grounds for appeal are frivolous or vexatious, no ground of appeal is revealed on the face of the correspondence received, or the candidate has not followed the processes as described in the Rules and Procedures (which will be reported to the next meeting of the Academic Boards Appeals Committee); or
- b. the Chair on behalf of the Appeals Committee is proceeding with the appeal, and may be seeking further information.

(84) The decision of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee whether or not to proceed to a hearing by the Academic Board Appeals Committee shall be final within the University.

### **Appeal Against Decision not to Submit Thesis**

(85) A candidate who is not satisfied with the determination of the Higher Degrees Research Committee under clause (76) may appeal on the prescribed form to the Academic Board Appeals Committee on one or more of the following grounds:

- a. improper action in the conduct of the examination submission process;
- b. irregularity in the conduct of the examination submission process;
- c. negligence on the part of any person involved in the conduct of the examination submission process;
- d. discrimination against the candidate which is unlawful under State or Federal legislation;
- e. prejudice or bias on the part of any person involved in determining the outcome of the examination submission process;
- f. the examination submission requirements as detailed in the Supervisor-Candidate Agreement or similar document or any subsequent amendment not being followed;
- g. where additional evidence for special consideration can be provided, or where procedures for consideration of an application for special consideration were not properly followed.

(86) An appeal made under this Rule shall be lodged with the Secretary, Academic Board Appeals Committee, within ten (10) working days of the date of sending of formal notification of the decision of the Higher Degrees Research Committee. A late appeal may be received at the discretion of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee where the candidate is able to satisfy the Chair that the appeal was lodged late through no fault of the candidate.

(87) The Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee will assess the content of the appeal and determine whether it is appropriate for the appeal to proceed to a hearing by the Academic Board Appeals Committee under the relevant Rule. The Secretary, on behalf of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee, will contact the candidate in writing within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal by the Chair, informing them that:

- a. the appeal is rejected on the basis that the grounds for appeal are frivolous or vexatious, no ground of appeal is revealed on the face of the correspondence received, or the candidate has not followed the processes as described in the Rules and Procedures (which will be reported to the next meeting of the Academic Boards Appeals Committee); or
- b. the Chair on behalf of the Appeals Committee is proceeding with the appeal, and may be seeking further information.

(88) The decision of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee whether or not to proceed to a hearing by the Academic Board Appeals Committee shall be final within the University.

(89) If the appeal is upheld and the thesis forwarded for examination, then the certificate shall be signed by the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee, and neither the Principal Supervisor nor the Director of Research and Research Training nor the Chair of the Higher Degrees Research Committee shall be required to sign it.

### **Appeal Against Additional Examination Requirements and Failure of Admission to the Degree**

(90) A candidate who is not satisfied with the determination of the Higher Degrees Research Committee under clauses (51),(52) or (53) may appeal on the prescribed form to the Academic Board Appeals Committee on one or more of the following grounds:

- a. improper action in the conduct of the examination process;
- b. irregularity in the conduct of the examination process;
- c. negligence on the part of any person involved in the conduct of the examination process;
- d. discrimination against the candidate which is unlawful under State or Federal legislation;
- e. prejudice or bias on the part of any person involved in determining the outcome of the examination process;
- f. the examination requirements as detailed in the Supervisor-Candidate Agreement or similar document or any subsequent amendment not being followed;
- g. where additional evidence for special consideration can be provided, or where procedures for consideration of an application for special consideration were not properly followed.

(91) An appeal made under this Rule shall be lodged with the Secretary, Academic Board Appeals Committee, within ten (10) working days of the date of sending of formal notification of the decision of the Higher Degrees Research Committee. A late appeal may be received at the discretion of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee where the candidate is able to satisfy the Chair that the appeal was lodged late through no fault of the candidate.

(92) The Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee will assess the content of the appeal and determine whether it is appropriate for the appeal to proceed to a hearing by the Academic Board Appeals Committee under the relevant Rule. The Secretary, on behalf of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee, will contact the candidate in writing within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal by the Chair, informing them that:

- a. the appeal is rejected on the basis that the grounds for appeal are frivolous or vexatious, no ground of appeal is revealed on the face of the correspondence received, or the candidate has not followed the processes as described in the Rules and Procedures (which will be reported to the next meeting of the Academic Boards Appeals Committee); or

- b. the Chair on behalf of the Appeals Committee is proceeding with the appeal, and may be seeking further information.

(93) The decision of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee whether or not to proceed to a hearing by the Academic Board Appeals Committee shall be final within the University.

### **Appeal Against Termination of Enrolment due to Special Circumstances or to Exceeding Maximum Tenure**

(94) A candidate whose enrolment is terminated under (32) or (60) may appeal on the prescribed form to the Academic Board Appeals Committee against the termination of enrolment on the following grounds:

- a. clause (32) or (60) was unreasonably applied;
- b. there were exceptional circumstances not likely to continue which contributed to poor academic performance.

(95) An appeal to the Academic Board Appeals Committee against termination of enrolment must reach the University within ten (10) working days of the date of sending of formal notification.

(96) A candidate whose appeal is unsuccessful shall have termination of enrolment confirmed. The decision of the Academic Board Appeals Committee shall be final.

### **Appeal Against a Decision to Refuse Readmission After Termination**

(97) An applicant refused readmission after termination of enrolment may appeal against that decision to the Academic Board Appeals Committee on the prescribed form within ten (10) working days of sending of formal notification by the University.

## **Section 2 - Masters by Thesis Qualifier**

### **Part N - Admission to a Masters by Thesis Qualifier**

(98) An application for admission is accepted subject to the availability of facilities and supervision.

(99) An application, which may be submitted at any time, shall be made on the prescribed form and shall be lodged with the Research Training Unit for consideration by the Higher Degrees Research Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Academic Board.

(100) An applicant shall seek admission to a Masters by thesis Qualifier as:

- a. a full-time student; or
- b. a part-time student.

(101) A student may convert from full-time to part-time, and vice-versa, with the approval of the Director of the Research Training Unit, upon the recommendation of the relevant Director of Research and Research Training.

(102) To qualify for admission to a Masters by thesis Qualifier, applicants must submit such evidence of general and professional qualifications as will satisfy the Higher Degrees Research Committee that the applicant possesses the educational preparation and capacity to pursue graduate studies, and satisfy such additional requirements for admission, if any, as may be prescribed by the Higher Degrees Research Committee.

(103) Applicants who do not meet the requirements under clause (104) but who are able to provide evidence of research experience at an appropriate level may, at the discretion of the Higher Degrees Research Committee, be

admitted to candidature on such terms and under such conditions as the Higher Degrees Research Committee may determine.

(104) All students, except those who are enrolled in a course offered in a language other than English, are expected to be proficient in English comprehension and expression. Applicants, the medium of whose previous education was not English, or whose first language is not English, may be required to take a special test of English language proficiency approved by the Higher Degrees Research Committee.

## **Part O - Enrolment**

(105) The Higher Degrees Research Committee may permit the applicant to enrol as a Masters by thesis qualifying student for the purpose of preparing for candidature for a Masters degree by thesis provided it has received:

- a. in the case of an applicant seeking admission either as a full-time or as a part-time student, a certificate from the relevant Director of Research and Research Training, and the relevant Head of School, stating that the applicant is fit to undertake a program leading to qualification for entry to the Masters degree by thesis and that the School is willing to undertake the responsibility of supervising the work of the applicant; and
- b. in the case of an applicant seeking admission as a student at an external site, a certificate from the relevant Director of Research and Research Training stating that the applicant is fit to undertake a course leading to qualification for entry to the Masters degree by thesis and that suitable arrangements for supervision and access to appropriate facilities have been negotiated and are acceptable to the School.

(106) Reference to School shall include reference to any other appropriate academic organisational unit such as, for example, College.

(107) A Masters by thesis qualifying student may apply for enrolment as a Masters by thesis candidate, upon successful completion of a program approved by the Higher Degrees Research Committee at a level of performance prescribed by the Committee, by lodging an application with the Research Training Unit for consideration by the Higher Degrees Research Committee.

(108) A Masters by thesis qualifying student shall not be eligible for enrolment as a Masters by thesis candidate if a period of more than one year, if full-time, or two years, if part-time, has elapsed from initial enrolment, except with the approval of the Director of the Research Training Unit.

(109) The Higher Degrees Research Committee shall, in the case of a Masters by thesis qualifying student applying for enrolment as a Masters by thesis candidate, either:

- a. permit the student to enrol as a Masters by thesis candidate; or
- b. decline the application.

(110) The Higher Degrees Research Committee shall not permit an applicant to enrol as a Masters by thesis candidate unless the applicant has:

- a. qualified for admission in terms of clause (5); or
- b. been enrolled as a Masters by thesis qualifying student at Southern Cross University, and has subsequently carried out such work, passed such examinations and reached such standards as the Higher Degrees Research Committee shall prescribe, and has not previously been denied enrolment as a Masters by thesis candidate on two occasions; and
- c. satisfied the Higher Degrees Research Committee regarding fitness to become a Masters by thesis candidate; and
- d. satisfied the Higher Degrees Research Committee that sufficient time can be devoted to Masters by thesis

research; and

- e. received a statement from the relevant Director of Research and Research Training, and the relevant Head of School, that the School is willing to undertake the responsibility of supervising the work of the applicant.

(111) The Higher Degrees Research Committee shall determine any periods of residency during which the student shall be required to pursue study and research at the University.

(112) A commencing student is enrolled on completion of all of the following:

- a. acceptance of the offer of admission;
- b. completion of relevant forms;
- c. payment of prescribed fees (unless the Director of Student Services has granted an extension of time for such payment).

## **Part P - Concurrent Studies**

(113) In the case of an applicant enrolled as a Masters by thesis qualifying student wishing to enrol for another award course at the University, approval of the Higher Degrees Research Committee, upon the recommendation of the relevant Director(s) of Research and Research Training, is required.

## **Part Q - Requirements for Completion**

(114) To be eligible to apply for admission to a Masters degree by thesis, a qualifying student shall complete such work as may be prescribed by the Higher Degrees Research Committee, and to the satisfaction of that Committee.

## **Part R - Work Environment and Supervision**

(115) All qualifying students shall normally have appointed by the Higher Degrees Research Committee at least one supervisor, who shall act as Principal Supervisor and who shall be a member of the academic staff of the University. Where more than one supervisor is appointed, one of the supervisors shall be nominated as the Principal Supervisor, who shall be a member of the academic staff of the University.

(116) All Masters by thesis qualifying students shall be required to participate in such colloquia, research seminars and other work of the University as may be considered appropriate by their Principal Supervisor.

(117) In respect of students who undertake a major portion of their research at sites external to the University, the Higher Degrees Research Committee may appoint a local Co-supervisor.

(118) If a person appointed as supervisor is unable to perform the duties of the appointment, the Higher Degrees Research Committee shall appoint a replacement supervisor on the recommendation of the relevant Director of Research and Research Training.

(119) Termination may be recommended by the Chair of the Higher Degrees Research Committee under conditions in which the University is unable to provide adequate supervision.

## **Part S - Progress Reports and the Supervisor Candidate Agreement**

(120) Students shall, through their Principal Supervisor and relevant Director of Research and Research Training, submit in the prescribed form and at the prescribed times progress reports to the Chair, Higher Degrees Research Committee.

(121) The Principal Supervisor and the relevant Director of Research and Research Training shall at the same time

provide comments to the Chair, Higher Degrees Research Committee, on the progress of the students being supervised.

(122) A Supervisor-Candidate Agreement, containing criteria for satisfactory progress, shall be developed between the student and the supervisor.

(123) The Chair, Higher Degrees Research Committee, may refer progress reports submitted by students to the Higher Degrees Research Committee for review. The Higher Degrees Research Committee may recommend that the student undertake remedial action or, where progress reports have demonstrated unsatisfactory progress, may recommend termination of the candidature. Where progress reports have not been submitted by the due dates, the Higher Degrees Research Committee may consider progress to be unsatisfactory and thus may recommend termination of candidature.

## **Part T - Maximum Tenure, Interruption, Cancellation**

(124) The maximum period of Masters by thesis qualifying candidature is twelve (12) months full-time, two (2) years part time, unless special permission for an interruption has been granted by the Research Training Director. Maximum time allowed to complete a course shall not include periods of approved leave of absence.

(125) Unless the Research Training Director otherwise determines, a student shall maintain continuous enrolment until all requirements for the qualifier have been met.

(126) A student may cancel enrolment at any time by giving written notice to the Research Training Unit.

(127) A qualifying student who exceeds the maximum tenure, including any periods for which an application for interruption has been approved, will be considered to have failed and will have their candidature terminated by the Higher Degrees Research Committee.

## **Part U - Readmission**

(128) A student whose enrolment is terminated shall not be eligible to be readmitted until the lapse of one (1) year.

(129) A student readmitted shall have determined by the Higher Degrees Research Committee the maximum period of time in which the student shall be permitted to complete the course.

## **Part V - Query and Appeal**

### **Query of Review of Progress Reports**

(130) A student who is not satisfied with the review of progress reports under clause (123) may query the review with the relevant Director of Research and Research Training.

(131) A student who is not satisfied with the result of discussions arising from clause (130) may query the review in writing with the Chair of the Higher Degrees Research Committee within ten (10) working days of the date of sending of formal notification of the outcome of the review to the student.

(132) If, as a result of such a query, it is deemed appropriate to vary the decision, the Chair of the Higher Degrees Research Committee may make such variation.

### **Appeal Against Review of Progress Reports**

(133) A student who is not satisfied with the determination of the Chair of the Higher Degrees Research Committee under clause (131) may appeal on the prescribed form to the Academic Board Appeals Committee on one or more of

the following grounds:

- a. improper action in the conduct of the review process;
- b. irregularity in the conduct of the review;
- c. negligence on the part of any person involved in the conduct of the review;
- d. discrimination against the student which is unlawful under State or Federal legislation;
- e. prejudice or bias on the part of any person involved in determining the outcome of the review;
- f. the reporting process as detailed in the Supervisor-Candidate Agreement or similar document or any subsequent amendment not being followed;
- g. where additional evidence for special consideration can be provided, or where procedures for consideration of an application for special consideration were not properly followed.

(134) An appeal made under this Rule shall be lodged with the Secretary, Academic Board Appeals Committee, within ten (10) working days of the date of sending of formal notification of the determination of the Higher Degrees Research Committee. A late appeal may be received at the discretion of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee where the student is able to satisfy the Chair that the appeal was lodged late through no fault of the student.

(135) The Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee will assess the content of the appeal and determine whether it is appropriate for the appeal to proceed to a hearing by the Academic Board Appeals Committee under the relevant Rule. The Secretary, on behalf of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee, will contact the student in writing within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal by the Chair, informing them that:

- a. the appeal is rejected on the basis that the grounds for appeal are frivolous or vexatious, no ground of appeal is revealed on the face of the correspondence received, or the student has not followed the processes as described in the Rules and Procedures (which will be reported to the next meeting of the Academic Boards Appeals Committee); or
- b. the Chair on behalf of the Appeals Committee is proceeding with the appeal, and may be seeking further information.

(136) The decision of the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee whether or not to proceed to a hearing by the Academic Board Appeals Committee shall be final within the University.

### **Appeal Against Termination of Enrolment due to Exceeding Maximum Tenure**

(137) A student whose enrolment is terminated under clause (127) may appeal on the prescribed form to the Academic Board Appeals Committee against the termination of enrolment on the following grounds:

- a. clause (127) was unreasonably applied; or
- b. there were exceptional circumstances not likely to continue which contributed to poor academic performance.

(138) An appeal to the Academic Board Appeals Committee against termination of enrolment must reach the University within ten (10) working days of the date of sending of formal notification.

(139) A student whose appeal is unsuccessful shall have termination of enrolment confirmed. The decision of the Academic Board Appeals Committee shall be final.

### **Appeal Against a Decision to Refuse Readmission After Termination**

(140) An applicant refused readmission after termination of enrolment may appeal against that decision to the Academic Board Appeals Committee on the prescribed form within ten (10) working days of sending of formal



notification by the University.

(141) In these Rules, an academic staff member is defined as being a member of the academic staff of the University appointed to a fixed-term contract of three years or more.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	20th May 2015
<b>Review Date</b>	20th January 2018
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Board
<b>Approval Date</b>	20th May 2015
<b>Expiry Date</b>	29th July 2015
<b>Head of Work Unit</b>	Leigh Sullivan Dean, Graduate Studies
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Graduate School