Higher Degree Research Candidate Transfer Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to define the conditions under which a candidate may transfer between a Masters by Thesis and Doctorate degree (and vice-versa).

Scope

(2) This Policy applies to Higher Degree by Research candidates and operates subject to the Rules Relating to Awards Rules 7, 8 and 9.

Section 2 - Definitions

(3) Nil.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(4) Doctoral candidates may transfer at any time into a Master by Thesis degree if the project is suitable and the request is supported by the principal supervisor and Associate Dean (Research) (refer Part A - for specific conditions).

(5) Masters by Thesis candidates who meet the relevant admission criteria to undertake a doctoral degree under the Rule 8 (Professional Doctorate) or Rule 9 (PhD) may transfer at any time into a doctoral degree if the project is suitable and the request is supported by the principal supervisor, Director, Higher Degree Research, and Associate Dean (Research) (refer Part B - for specific conditions).

Impact on Research Training Program Scholarships

(6) If a domestic student (Australian or New Zealand citizen, or Australian permanent resident) has exhausted their Research Training Program Fee Offset Scheme entitlement but remains enrolled, the Commonwealth government will no longer fund the candidature, and the cost of maintaining the candidature will need to be borne by the academic unit supporting the transfer.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Transfer into a Masters by Thesis Degree from Doctoral Degree

(7) Application for transfer from a Doctoral degree to a Masters by Thesis degree should be made to the Dean, Graduate Studies through the principal supervisor, Director, Higher Degree Research and Associate Dean (Research) using the appropriate form.

(8) An application to change from Doctoral candidature to Masters by Thesis candidature must:

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a. describe the circumstances leading to the request;
b. describe the work completed and remaining to be done;
c. define a timetable for completion of the work and the Masters by Thesis degree; and
d. confirm that the proposed Masters by Thesis degree is in an equivalent field of research to that conducted for the Doctoral program.

(9) Approval will not be granted unless the supervisors, Director, Higher Degree Research and Associate Dean (Research) have certified that continuing supervision and research support arrangements are satisfactory, or have advised of new arrangements as appropriate.

(10) The period of candidature already completed at Doctoral level will be deemed completed against the Masters by Thesis. A student who, in order to complete the new program, will exceed the maximum period of candidature applicable to that program, must apply for an extension to candidature. Normally, the new completion date will be extended by no more than twelve months (full time equivalent) from the date of effect of the change.

Part B - Transfer into Doctoral Degree from Masters by Thesis Degree

(11) Application for transfer from a Masters by Thesis degree to a Doctoral degree will be made to the Graduate School through the principal supervisor, Director, Higher Degree Research and Associate Dean (Research) using the appropriate form.

(12) For candidates seeking transfer into a Doctoral award on the basis of non-formal or informal learning (where permitted by Rules Relating to Awards Rule 8 or 9), the candidate must have demonstrated the ability to undertake research at doctoral level as follows:

a. a substantial written report will be required (noting this could be provided through the normal doctoral confirmation process);
b. the Associate Dean (Research) must be able to certify that the candidate has achieved the required academic standard for admission under the relevant Rules;
c. the supervisors must be able to demonstrate that they are eligible to supervise at the PhD level;
d. the project must be suitable for a doctoral program, and the transfer must be supported by the principal supervisor, Director, Higher Degree Research and the Associate Dean (Research); and
e. the applicant must demonstrate that they now meet the admission criteria for entry into Doctoral candidature.

(13) Transfer will normally only be permitted after the first full year of candidature in the Masters by Thesis degree (or part - time equivalent).

(14) Where possible, the transfer process will align with the confirmation of candidature process so that the candidate does not need to complete confirmation for both a Masters by Thesis and a doctorate. All doctoral candidates must have completed confirmation at that level.

(15) In the case of a Masters by Thesis candidate who wishes to combine the transfer and confirmation processes:

a. supervisors, supported by their Director, Higher Degree Research and Associate Dean (Research) may nominate Masters by Thesis candidates as having demonstrated the potential to be transferred to doctoral enrolment. A formal recommendation with supporting documentation must be recorded with the Graduate School;
b. candidates so nominated can have their Masters by Thesis confirmation process deferred by the Faculty/College. They will be required to go through a doctoral confirmation period of at least 6 and no longer than 9 months full-time equivalent or 12 to 18 months if enrolled part-time;

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c. if the confirmation committee judges that the quality of the candidate's confirmation document, presentation and response to questions from the committee indicates that the candidate is capable of completing a doctoral degree, then the panel can recommend to the Dean, Graduate Studies that the candidate be transferred to doctoral enrolment;
d. if the confirmation performance is judged to indicate capacity to complete a Masters by Thesis but not a doctoral degree, then the panel may recommended that the candidate's enrolment in the Masters by Thesis be confirmed in accordance with Rules Relating to Awards Rule 7.
e. if the confirmation performance is below both Doctoral and Masters by Thesis standard, the candidate may be offered an opportunity to try again after three months.

(16) In the case of (16)e, following the second attempt the confirmation committee will make one of the following recommendations to the Dean, Graduate Studies:

a. if the confirmation committee judges that the quality of the candidate's confirmation document, presentation and response to questions from the committee indicates that the candidate is capable of completing a doctoral degree, then the committee can recommend to the Dean, Graduate Studies that the candidate be transferred to doctoral enrolment;
b. if the confirmation performance is judged to indicate capacity to complete a Masters by Thesis but not a doctoral degree, then the committee may recommend that the candidate's enrolment in the Masters by Thesis will be confirmed in accordance with Rules Relating to Awards Rule 7.
c. if the confirmation performance is below both Doctoral and Masters by Thesis standard the committee can recommend the following outcomes in accordance with Rules Relating to Awards Rule 7 Part G with respect to Masters by Thesis candidature:
    i. remedial action in accordance with Rules Relating to Awards Rule 7 Part G; or
    ii. recommendation to terminate candidature in accordance with Rules Relating to Awards Rule 7 Part G.

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Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	13th April 2023
Review Date	13th April 2026
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	6th April 2023
Expiry Date	16th April 2024
Responsible Executive	Mary Spongberg Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor +61 7 55893361
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