Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management Policy

Responsible Officer
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Approved by
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Approved and commenced
July 2019

Review by
July 2022

Relevant Legislation, Ordinance, Rule and/or Governance Level Principle
Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000
Higher Education Support Act 2003
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015
Ordinance 8 – Student Complaints
Ordinance 9 - Student Discipline
Rule 3 - Admission and Student Progress
Rule 4 - Rules of Graduate Research
Governance Level Principle 12 - Academic Standards
Governance Level Principle 13 - Quality Management Framework

Responsible Organisational Unit
Research Division

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Objective

The objectives of this Policy are to outline the principles and procedures for managing variations to candidature within a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) at the University of Tasmania (the University).

Scope

This Policy applies to:

- all domestic, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and international candidates enrolled in an HDR at the University and
- all employees and adjunct staff of the University involved in supervising and managing HDRs and candidates at the University.

Policy Provisions

3.1 Duration of Program

An HDR must be completed within the degree periods prescribed in section 12 of Rule 4 – Rules of Graduate Research (Rule 4).

3.2 Induction

The University will provide to all new candidates an induction that includes, but is not limited to, information on expectations, responsibilities, degree requirements, progress procedures, research integrity and ethics, health and safety procedures, and the availability of support services.

Inductions of candidates, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, should include expectations of a culturally welcoming postgraduate environment.
The Academic Unit of enrolment must provide additional inductions, including where relevant, inductions to specialised laboratories and other facilities, both on- and off-campus.

3.2.1 Responsible Conduct of Research

All research conducted at the University must comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements and University policies, procedures, and guidelines including the University’s Responsible Conduct of Research Policy.

3.2.2 Work Health and Safety

Candidates must:

- comply with University policies and standards for risk management in relation to work health and safety,
- attend work health and safety sessions within the Academic Unit of enrolment, and
- review the requirements specific to their research, as set out on the University work health and safety website.

 Candidates undertaking high risk field work are required to use FieldTeq to manage and document field activity risk, as per the University’s Minimum Standard - Field Activity.

3.2.3 Travel

All Candidates are required to comply with the University Travel Policy and Procedure when undertaking travel associated with their research project and research training, including attending conferences and workshops regardless of the source of funding.

All domestic and international travel for research and research training purposes must be approved using the University Travel Management System well in advance of travel being undertaken, in accordance with the University Delegations Policy.

3.2.4 Insurance

The University will provide insurance for candidates, as per the Insurance Policy and Insurance Guidelines. Candidates are only covered by insurance while on University business and while in compliance with all University Policy, Procedures and Guidelines. Candidates should review the relevant information available on the Financial Services Insurance website.

3.3 Attendance Requirements

The duration of the academic year for candidates is 48 weeks.\(^1\) The University expects all candidates to:

- commit appropriate time to their research project in line with their level of enrolment,
- be available to complete any coursework and/or skills training requirements,

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\(^1\) Candidates are enrolled for 52 weeks of each calendar year and are entitled to four weeks annual leave.
Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management Policy

- engage in continuous interaction with their supervisors, and
- participate in the intellectual and research activities of the Academic Unit of enrolment and the wider community of scholars at the University.

3.3.1 Level of Enrolment: Part-time or Full-time

Full-time During full-time enrolment, a candidate is required to devote, on average, at least 38 hours each week between Monday and Friday inclusive—and usually during normal business hours on each of those days—in pursuit of their research project. Account must be made of attendance requirements specified for any coursework or training expected or warranted at different stages of enrolment.

Part-time During part-time enrolment, a candidate is required to devote on average at least 19 hours each week to their research project, where at least one of these days is between Monday and Friday during normal business hours on each of those days. This requirement will enable the candidate to attend the University to meet with the supervisors or attend seminars, workshops, or other academic activities including coursework or training at different stages of enrolment.

3.3.2 Work/Study Commitments

The primary focus for candidates is their research project.

Full-time candidates may undertake limited work experience or employment provided it does not interfere with their research project nor exceed on average 20% of a full-time load. Any exceptions should be endorsed by the Primary Supervisor and Graduate Research Coordinator (GRC), articulated in the research plan, and approved by the Dean of Graduate Research.

Approved work commitments cannot be used as a justification to request extensions to candidature and/or scholarship.

International candidates are required to gain confirmation from the Department of Immigration and Border Projection that they are eligible to work under the conditions of their immigration visa.

These conditions do not apply to work experience or employment undertaken outside of the hours of full-time enrolment as defined in section 3.3.1.

Full-time candidates may not engage in any academic course of study leading to a qualification that is not an essential part of their Research Program.

3.4 Leave Entitlements

3.4.1 Annual Leave

Candidates are entitled to receive up to 20 working days of recreational leave per year.

Annual leave may be accrueable but will be dissolved upon submission of the thesis or termination or expiry of candidature.
Annual leave is monitored by the Academic Unit of enrolment and approved by the Primary Supervisor.

3.4.2 Cultural and Ceremonial Leave

A candidate may use accrued annual leave to follow and practice the requirements of cultural, spiritual, or religious beliefs to which they adhere. Alternatively, the Dean of Graduate Research may grant special leave with and without pay for a period not exceeding 5 working days in any one calendar year. Applications for leave under this section should be made with reasonable advance notice and be supported by appropriate evidence of the need for the candidate to be absent on leave.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates are entitled to an additional day’s leave to participate in National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Observance Committee (NAIDOC) activities and events during NAIDOC week.

3.4.3 Sick Leave

Candidates are entitled to 10 working days of sick leave per year.

Sick leave that continues for more than 10 consecutive days must be considered under section 3.4.3 of this Policy.

Sick leave entitlements may also be used to cover leave for candidates caring for the candidate’s ill or incapacitated partner or immediate family members.

Sick leave is monitored by the Academic Unit of enrolment and approved by the Primary Supervisor.

3.4.4 Leave of Absence on Medical Grounds

Candidates are entitled to a leave of absence on medical grounds for periods of illness or for the candidate’s partner or immediate family member’s illness or incapacitation lasting longer than 10 consecutive working days.

Candidates must apply for a leave of absence on medical grounds as per section 3.3 of the candidature management procedure.

Candidates are not required to disclose information about their medical condition. Candidates may choose to disclose information about their medical condition to enable the University to support their return to work.

Information concerning a candidate’s medical condition will not be released without permission from the candidate.

A leave of absence on medical grounds is approved by the Dean of Graduate Research.

3.4.5 Parental Leave (unpaid)

Candidates who are considered primary carers are entitled to a maximum of 12 months’ unpaid parental leave, including adoption leave, for each pregnancy or legal adoption in the course of their candidature. In both instances, proof must be provided of pregnancy and expected birth date, or of adoption.
Candidates who are the partner of a primary carer are entitled to 10 days of parental leave at the time their partner gives birth or they adopt a child.

Unpaid parental leave is approved by the Dean of Graduate Research.

3.4.6 Scholarship Conditions Associated with Leave

Candidates should check their scholarship terms and conditions to determine if there are provisions for paid leave. In instances where the scholarship does not permit paid leave, scholarship payments will be suspended for any period of leave.

3.5 Variations of Candidature

Candidates may apply to vary the conditions of their candidature.

All applications:

- must be endorsed by the Primary Supervisor, GRC, and Head of Academic Unit (HoAU),
- must be submitted at least four weeks prior to the requested date of the change to candidature, and
- normally will not be approved retrospectively unless the reason for the variation was unforeseen.

All candidature variations are approved by the Dean of Graduate Research.

Candidates enrolled in a Professional Doctorate should seek advice from the Course Coordinator prior to applying to vary their candidature.

International candidates should seek advice from an International Student Advisor prior to applying to vary their candidature.

Candidates must notify the University of any change to personal details such as name, address, or citizenship, and must provide information on other circumstances that may affect the candidature’s progress as soon as possible after such circumstances change.

Candidates in receipt of a scholarship must check the conditions of their award because an application to vary candidature may affect the tenure of the scholarship and their eligibility to retain it.

3.5.1 Varying Enrolment: Full-time to Part-time or Vice Versa

Except where an application is made for medical reasons, applications to convert a full-time enrolment to part-time enrolment or vice versa will only be considered if:

- the Academic Unit of enrolment has sufficient resources to facilitate completion of candidature with respect to supervision, funding and access to relevant facilities, and
- any Thesis submitted by the revised expiry of the maximum degree period will—as a body of work—still form a supervised, independent, and significant contribution to knowledge.
Candidates applying to convert a full-time enrolment to part-time enrolment on medical grounds should refer to the *Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management Procedure*.

Before applying for part-time candidature, international candidates enrolled in an HDR onshore must check the requirements of their visa.

### 3.5.2 Leave of Absence and Additional Leave

HDR candidates may apply for a leave of absence from their candidature in accordance with Rule 4.

A candidate may take a leave of absence from their candidature on personal grounds for a cumulative period of up to 12 calendar months in addition to any parental leave as defined in this Policy; this leave is to be within the maximum degree period of an HDR as specified in Rule 4.

Unless there are circumstances considered exceptional by the Dean of Graduate Research, a leave of absence on personal grounds will not be permitted:

- before confirmation of candidature, and
- in the final six months equivalent full-time enrolment in a Doctoral degree or in the final three months equivalent full-time enrolment in a Master of Research degree.

An HDR candidate may apply for a leave of absence on medical grounds at any time, as per this *Policy*.

Where a leave of absence is approved by the Dean of Graduate Research, the total length of the maximum degree period remains unchanged, but the expiry date will be revised in proportion to the approved leave of absence.

### 3.5.3 Change of Thesis Topic and/or Academic Unit

Where a change of thesis topic has implications for supervision arrangements in the Academic Unit of enrolment, or where such change of topic will significantly diverge from the existing research plan, approval by the Dean of Graduate Research is required.

The Primary Supervisor must:

- provide assurance that the candidate will complete within the maximum degree period and that the revised research plan is well-developed and realistic, and
- confirm whether the change of topic has any funding and/or resourcing implications.

Supervisors of candidates who are citizens of a country listed under the United Nations Security Council and Australian autonomous sanctions regimes will be required to complete and submit an “autonomous sanctions compliance and risk assessment and defence export controls assessment” with an application to change Thesis topic, as per the *UN Security Council and Autonomous Sanctions Compliance Policy* and the *Defence Export Controls Policy*. 
3.5.4 Place of Candidature

As specified in Rule 4 the normal place of candidature will be at one of the University’s campuses.

Candidates may be located away from the campuses of the University for extended periods.

The Dean of Graduate Research may give approval to a candidate to undertake all or part of an HDR in a location external to one of the University campuses, but only if satisfied that suitable arrangements can be made to enable the candidate to fulfil the requirements of the HDR (see the Higher Degree by Research Admissions Policy for more information).

If an on-campus candidate seeks to spend more than 3 months of continuous time away from the University to complete all or part of their program, they are required to apply for a change of mode external ‘off-campus’ candidature.

A candidate for a Doctoral degree that is part of a joint research training program will be required to conduct research at a campus of the University and a campus of the partner university as specified in the relevant candidate agreement.

Candidates who are based within reasonable commuting distance of the University are expected to attend on-campus supervision meetings and seminars, and to participate in the research culture of their Academic Unit of enrolment.

Arrangements for interactions with candidates based outside reasonable commuting distance of the University should be developed to the satisfaction of the Primary Supervisor and GRC to ensure that they have the support of an appropriate research culture, accessed during periods spent on-campus or by other arrangements.

International onshore candidates who hold a student visa may not spend more than 33% of the total course duration external from the University campus to which their course is CRICOS registered.

3.5.5 Transferring from a Doctoral Degree to Master of Research Degree

On the recommendation of the GRC, the Dean of Graduate Research may approve the transfer of candidature from a Doctoral degree to Master of Research degree where the Dean of Graduate Research is satisfied that the candidate has fulfilled all the requirements of the Master of Research degree (including coursework as specified in the Higher Degree by Research Admissions and Enrolment Policy) and/or where the candidate is no longer able to continue in the Doctoral degree due to personal reasons or as an outcome of:

- confirmation of candidature,
- an annual review of progress, or
- a termination of candidature.

The date of commencement in the new degree will be backdated to the date the Candidate enrolled in the degree from which they are transferring.

If a candidate has completed two or more years of candidature at the time of the approved transfer, the candidature in the Master of Research degree will lapse immediately. Where the thesis is not ready for immediate submission, the lapse date will be extended by a maximum of six months (or part-time equivalent) by lodging an
application for extension of candidature, at the same time as the application to transfer.

3.5.6 Transferring from a Master by Research Degree to a Doctoral Degree

Subject to approval by the relevant College, candidates enrolled in a Master of Research degree may apply to the Dean of Graduate Research to upgrade their candidature to a Doctoral degree provided they meet the following conditions:

- they have passed confirmation of candidature,
- they have completed no more than 75% of a Master of Research degree,
- the Dean of Graduate Research is satisfied that, since commencing a Master of Research, the candidate has produced both a substantial piece of creative and systematic work to advance the research project and a revised research plan that has been assessed, in accordance with disciplinary norms, to be of doctoral standard; the basis for this assessment is:
  - an independent evaluation of the research completed at the time of the application by a reviewer external to the supervisory team, or
  - the presentation (exhibition or performance) or publication (or acceptance for publication) of a piece of peer reviewed research completed during candidature
- the research topic is suitable for a Doctoral degree,
- appropriate resources are available for doctoral study and the supervisors are eligible to supervise the candidate at the proposed degree level, and
- the research project and any remaining coursework can be completed within the remaining maximum degree period for the Doctoral degree.

3.5.7 Extension of Candidature

There is an expectation that candidates complete the requirements of their degree within the maximum degree periods stated in Rule 4.

Issues that may affect candidate’s ability to meet the requirements of their degree within the maximum degree period should be addressed as soon as they arise and options for a leave of absence should be discussed with the Supervisor and GRC.

Candidates may apply for an extension to the maximum degree period where the thesis submission date is delayed by matters that are beyond the control of the candidate, are directly related to the conduct of their research project and are not of a personal nature.

The Dean of Graduate Research may, in exceptional circumstances, approve a period of extension beyond the expiry date of the original maximum degree period in order to allow a candidate to submit their thesis within the extended period provided that adequate supervision for the period of extension is available. The candidate and Primary Supervisor will be required to develop a candidature management plan in accordance with the Higher Degree by Research Reviews of Progress Policy.

Extension to the maximum degree period will not exceed six calendar months for Doctoral candidates and three calendar months for Master of Research candidates.

Extensions to candidature are not granted automatically and approval will be subject to strict conditions. Failure to adhere to these conditions (including failure to submit
the thesis by the approved date) may result in termination of candidature. Multiple extensions to candidature will not normally be approved.

3.5.8 Withdrawal

Candidates who wish to withdraw from an HDR must first notify the Primary Supervisor and the GRC in their Academic Unit of enrolment. Candidates must also formally notify the Graduate Research Office (GRO) if they are discontinuing their HDR and must do so by completing the change of candidature or scholarship form. The GRO will also accept notification by email.

Failure to notify the GRO of a withdrawal of candidature will result in elapsed enrolment time being included in any future enrolment tenure calculations for an HDR at this or another Australian university.

For international candidates, if the GRO is not officially notified at the time withdrawal occurs:

- fees will continue to be charged and candidates will be required to pay those fees, and
- candidates on a student visa may be in breach of its conditions.

Scholarship holders may be required to repay funds received after the withdrawal date, where the candidate failed to notify the GRO of their intention to withdraw or where the withdrawal is backdated to a time prior to the candidate notifying the GRO that they have withdrawn.

3.5.9 Termination of Candidature

Termination of candidature will be dealt with under Rule 4.

3.6 Misconduct

3.6.1 Academic Misconduct

The University Guide to Academic Integrity for Students details the expectations of candidates and defines academic dishonesty. Breaches of academic integrity may lead to allegations of academic misconduct which are dealt with in accordance with Ordinance No 9.

3.6.2 Research Misconduct

The definition of research misconduct and the process for submitting an allegation of research misconduct are detailed in the University’s Managing Research Integrity and Potential Breaches of Responsible Research Conduct Procedure.

Where the preliminary assessment of an allegation of research misconduct involving a candidate determines that further investigation is warranted, the investigation will be conducted in accordance with Ordinance 9.

Where the preliminary assessment of an allegation of research misconduct involving a supervisor(s) determines that further investigation is warranted, the investigation will be conducted in accordance with the University Staff Agreement.

The University has appointed Research Integrity Advisors to provide guidance and advice to staff and candidates on responsible research practices. They are available
to explain University policy and procedure, and to provide advice on options available
to staff and candidates who are considering making an allegation of non-compliance
with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018).

3.6.3 Other Misconduct

Inappropriate behaviour of staff and candidates will be managed in line with the
University Behaviour Policy and Procedure.

3.7 Resolving Difficulties

Where possible, candidates should work with their Primary Supervisor to resolve
issues of concern as soon as they arise during their candidature.

Candidates may also take advice and seek support from the Postgraduate Advocate
and Welfare Support Officer of the Tasmania University Union.

Where a candidate has been unable to resolve a problem(s) with their supervisor(s),
they should continue to seek to resolve the problem(s) by working with the following
in the order presented:

- GRC,
- HoAU, and
- Executive Dean.

If a candidate is still unable to resolve the issues of concern, they can make a formal
complaint:

- for academic and administrative matters under Ordinance 8 – Student
  Complaints through the Dean of Graduate Research following the procedure
  outlined on the website. HDR candidates are advised to review the information
  available on the Student Complaints website, and
- for matters related to harassment or discrimination or other inappropriate
  behaviour, under the University Behaviour Policy and Procedure.

3.8 Review of Decisions made by the Dean of Graduate Research

Where a decision has been made by the Dean of Graduate Research, a candidate
may request that the DVCR review the decision. If the candidate is still unsatisfied
with the decision of the DVCR they may give notice in writing within 20 days to the
Safe and Fair Community Unit that they seek an appeal under Part 4 of Ordinance 8.

3.9 Recordkeeping Requirements

Records and information that support these activities will be created, managed, and
retained in accordance with University Records Management Policy, Procedures and
Guidelines.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 The Dean of Graduate Research is responsible for ensuring:

- high quality administrative processes and appropriate candidate support are
  provided and monitored,
- candidates receive a high standard of supervision,
• strategies and associated policies are in place to retain and help candidates achieve successful completion, and
• that the University maintains appropriate standards in relation to candidature matters, including admission, appropriate infrastructure, supervision, and examination.

4.2 Executive Deans are responsible for:
• strategically managing College financial, supervision, and infrastructure resources as per the Academic Structures Policy, Delegations Policy and Schedules.

4.3 Heads of Academic Units are responsible for:
• the administration of the Academic Unit including in relation to planning, budget, strategy, human resources, and performance as per the Academic Structures Policy, Delegations Policy and Schedules.

4.4 Graduate Research Coordinators are responsible for:
• Advising HDR candidates, supervisors, and HoAU on candidature matters.

5 Definitions and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term/Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Unit</td>
<td>The secondary organisational unit in the academic structure of the University, reporting directly to the College Executive Deans, as per Ordinance 14 – Academic Structure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>a person enrolled at the University as a candidate for an HDR.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidature</td>
<td>the status conferred on a person who is enrolled as a candidate under these rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>means a) the primary organisational unit in the academic structure of the University, as per Ordinance 14 – Academic Structure b) the University College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of candidature</td>
<td>confirmation by the Dean of Graduate Research that candidature may progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Graduate Research</td>
<td>The Dean of Graduate Research is the person who has responsibility for: • establishing the academic framework for research training at the University, and • for working with Faculties and Institutes to ensure the University maintains appropriate standards for research training at the University, including admission, appropriate infrastructure, supervision, and examination.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Equivalent full-time enrolment
Elapsed time where a candidate is enrolled full-time, excluding approved leave of absence and including annual and sick leave. For those enrolled part-time, equivalent full-time enrolment is twice as long as for full-time candidates.

Executive Dean
means:
(a) the Executive Dean of the relevant College, or
(b) in relation to the University College, the Principal of the University College.

Full-time
As per section 3.3.1 of this Policy.

Graduate Research Coordinator
an academic staff member who oversees candidature management within an Academic Unit in consultation with the HoAU.

Head of Academic Unit
The Head of the Academic Unit of Enrolment or the Director of the Centre or Head of the Institute of Enrolment (or delegate/nominee).

Higher Degree by Research
Means a Doctor of Philosophy, Professional Doctorate, or Master of Research Degree as listed in Rule 4: Rules of Graduate Research.

Inappropriate behaviour
See the University Behaviour Policy.

Maximum Degree Period
As per Rule 4:
- Doctor of Philosophy: 4 years full-time or equivalent part-time.
- Professional Doctorate: the maximum degree period as approved by Academic Senate and set out in the applicable the University course and unit handbook.
- Master’s degree (Research): 2 years Full-time or equivalent Part-time.
- Joint/Double/Cotutelle Doctoral Degree: the maximum degree period as specified in the candidate agreement.

Medical Professional
A registered health professional with a medical degree; that is, a general practitioner or medical specialist.

Part-Time
As per section 3.3.1 of this Policy.

Primary Supervisor
The supervisor who is primarily responsible for ensuring that all administrative and regulatory requirements prescribed for candidates are met.

Research
As per the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018, p.5), research is defined as “the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative”.

Research plan
A plan, developed by the candidate, that:
- develops a rationale for the research, including the context of research and a structural outline of the project,
states the hypothesis/questions to be tested by the research project,
• defines aims and outlines realistic milestones to be met during candidature, and provides a timeline for the achievement of these activities, and
• is continually updated and used to report a candidate’s progress against agreed milestones on an annual basis at minimum or more frequently where required.

Research Project

The research undertaken towards the HDR as articulated in the research plan.

Rule 4

Rules of Graduate Research.

Academic Unit of Enrolment

The Academic Unit within which candidate is enrolled.

The University

Unless otherwise stated, all references to the University mean the University of Tasmania.

Travel Management System

Travel management software enabling travel authorisations, workflows and bookings of the most cost effective and logical flight and accommodation options of travel for individual registered clients.

6 Supporting Documentation

• Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management Procedures
• Higher Degree by Research Admissions Policy
• Higher Degree by Research Admissions Procedure
• Higher Degree by Research Minimum Infrastructure and Resources Policy
• Higher Degree by Research Minimum Infrastructure and Resources Procedure
• Defence Export Controls Policy
• UN Security Council and Autonomous Sanctions Compliance Policy
• Rule 4 – Rules of Graduate Research
• Responsible Conduct of Research Policy
• Managing Research Integrity and Potential Breaches of Responsible Research Conduct Procedure
• Minimum Standard- Field Activity
• Records Management Policy
• Travel Policy
• Travel Procedure
• Insurance Policy
• Insurance Procedure
• Academic Structure Policy
• Delegations Policy
• University Behaviour Policy and Procedure

7 Acknowledgements

This Policy has been developed with reference to the Australian Council of Graduate Research Good Practice Principles.
## Versioning

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Former Version(s)</th>
<th>Version 1 – <em>Higher Degree by Research Candidature Policy</em>, approved November 2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Version 2 – <em>Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management Policy</em>, approved April 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Version</td>
<td>Version 4 – <em>Higher Degree by Research Candidature Management Policy</em>, approved July 2019 to reflect to alignment parental leave requirements with the Staff Agreement.</td>
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