
Awarding of Qualifications Posthumously Policy

Academic Policy

1 Purpose

On rare occasions the University wishes to award a posthumous qualification to a student who has died when close to completion of their programme. This policy sets out procedures and criteria to ensure that these cases are dealt with in a consistent and appropriate manner.

2 Organisational Scope

This is a University-wide policy.

3 Definitions

For purposes of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

Minor Amendments: Amendments that are 'minor' should be able to be completed within two to four weeks' full-time work ([PhD Policy: Approving, Enrolling, Supervising and Examining Candidates](#), section 4.20.1(a))

Revisions: Where examiners require 'revision' it is expected that the thesis is generally of the required standard and the changes required are such that: it does not need to be re-examined as a whole; the changes that the examiners require are such that it is reasonable for the internal examiner alone to assess the revised thesis; the revisions are of a kind and scope that it would be reasonable to expect that they might be completed within six months of full-time work ([PhD Policy: Approving, Enrolling, Supervising and Examining Candidates](#), section 4.20.2(a)).

4 Policy Content and Guidelines

4.1 *The Posthumous award of a PhD or Master's by thesis*

4.1.1 When the posthumous award of a PhD should be considered

PhD theses are usually accessible to the public, and it is important that appropriate standards are maintained. The Research Degrees Committee (RDS) may give consideration to the awarding of a PhD posthumously when:

- (a) The thesis is ready for submission, or a penultimate draft is completed and only "routine" editing is required. In this case, it is submitted without alteration and examined in the usual manner (see [PhD Policy: Approving, Enrolling, Supervising and Examining Candidates](#)); or

- (b) The thesis has been examined and minor amendments or revisions are required (see [PhD Policy: Approving, Enrolling, Supervising and Examining Candidates](#)).
- (c) In exceptional circumstances the Convener of the RDS has discretion to allow a thesis that does not fully satisfy (a) or (b) above to be considered.

4.1.2 Requirements for amendments and revisions to a thesis

- (a) If the thesis has been examined and no amendments or revisions are required the PhD is awarded in the usual manner (see [PhD Policy: Approving, Enrolling, Supervising and Examining Candidates](#)).
- (b) Minor amendments may be carried out by a third party.
- (c) Where two or more examiners require revisions to the thesis, a committee consisting of the Convener of the Research Degrees Committee, internal examiner and supervisor shall be formed to investigate the case and if necessary consult with the other examiners to reach an agreement on how the issue might be resolved. Consideration may be given to the award of a Master's degree.

4.1.3 The posthumous award of a Master's degree by thesis

The procedures set out for a PhD with appropriate modification will apply for Master's by thesis.

4.2 The posthumous award of other qualifications

4.2.1 When the posthumous awarding of a qualification is to be considered

- (a) The posthumous award of a qualification is to be considered if:
 - (i) the student required no more than the lesser of 60 points or one sixth of the points required for the qualification; and
 - (ii) in the case of a bachelor's degree, had completed at least 24 points of the 300-level requirements of their major.

The student need not have been enrolled in the courses required to complete the qualification.

- (b) In exceptional circumstances consideration may be given to the posthumous awarding of a qualification that is less complete than specified above, but where the qualification is still deemed to be substantially complete.

4.2.2 Requirements

Subject to section 4.2.1, a qualification will be awarded posthumously if the student's level of academic performance to date suggests that, had they continued, they would have passed the courses required to complete the qualification. Any degree of impairment should be taken into account.

4.2.3 Deciding authority

The relevant Head of School shall consult with staff as appropriate and advise the relevant Associate Dean. The Associate Dean shall make a recommendation to the Convener of the Academic Committee, who shall decide whether the qualification should be awarded.

4.3 Reporting and communication

4.3.1 Student's representative

For the purposes of this policy, all communication is to be with the student's next of kin.

4.3.2 Reporting of decision

Upon deciding that a posthumous qualification is to be awarded, the Convener of the Research Degrees Committee or the Convener of the Academic Committee (as appropriate) is responsible for ensuring the following people are advised:

- (a) The student's next of kin
- (b) The relevant Faculty Administration Manager
- (c) The Graduation Office

5 Legislative Compliance

Though the University is required to manage its policy documentation within a legislative framework; there is no specific legislation directing this policy.

6 References

[PhD Policy: Approving, Enrolling, Supervising and Examining Candidates](#)

[Personal Courses of Study Statute](#) (Victoria University of Wellington Calendar, Section C)

7 Appendices

None

8 Approval Agency

Academic Board

9 Approval Dates

This policy was originally approved on: 14 March 2002
(PhDs only)

This version was reviewed on: 5 August 2004

This version was approved on: 19 March 2007

This version takes effect from: 19 March 2007

This policy will be reviewed by: 31 March 2010

10 Policy Sponsor

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) – in relation to the award of PhDs and Master's by thesis

Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) - in relation to the award of other qualifications

11 Contact Person

The following persons may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy:

For queries relating to PhDs and Master's by thesis,

Theresa Sawicka
Research Manager
Ext: 5190

For queries relating to the award of other qualifications,

Jenny Christie
Academic Policy Adviser
Ext: 5191