

DRAFT NEW POLICY

Academic Progress Review in Graduate Research Courses Policy

1. Objective

The objectives of this policy are to:

- (a) provide a framework to guide decisions regarding candidates' academic performance and academic progress; and
- (b) ensure that academic progress processes are transparent, consistent and fair.
- (c) set clear responsibilities and accountabilities for academic progress review decisions affecting candidates in higher degrees by research.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all:

- (a) graduate research courses (higher degrees by research);
- (b) candidates in higher degrees by research; and
- (b) supervisors, advisory committees and any University staff responsible for the management and support of candidates in higher degrees by research.

3. Authority

This policy is made under the [University of Melbourne Act 2009 \(Vic\)](#), and the [Academic Board Regulation](#) and supports compliance with the:

- (a) Higher Education Support Act 2003;
- (b) Higher Education Standards Framework;
- (c) Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000;
- (d) National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

4. Policy

Academic Progress Requirements

4.1 Candidates must:

- (a) make satisfactory progress towards the timely completion of their course; and
- (b) maintain a satisfactory academic standard to be allowed to continue; and
- (b) understand the progress expectations for their course as discussed and confirmed with their supervisors and advisory committee; and
- (c) meet milestones set by the supervisor(s) and their advisory committee.

4.2 Supervisors must monitor candidates' progress against milestones and candidate's performance standards in their research, written or creative work produced during their candidature at the scheduled monthly supervisory meetings.

4.3 Advisory committees must formally review candidates' academic progress on a six-monthly basis. The review aims to support candidates to successfully complete on time.

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- 4.4 Candidates' supervisors and advisory committees must monitor and report on candidates' academic progress in reaching required milestones and performance standards in their research, written or creative work produced during their candidature, and in particular must:
- (a) understand the academic progress expectations for the candidate's course;
 - (b) discuss, confirm and record an academic progress plan and expectations at:
 - (i) commencement; and
 - (ii) in the regular scheduled meetings between the candidate and the supervisor, and
 - (iii) between the candidate and the advisory committee.
 - (c) monitor the candidate's progress and assess whether satisfactory academic progress is being made;
 - (d) maintain records of all milestones set, whether met or not, including those set at supervisory meetings;
 - (e) formally review the candidate's progress at six monthly progress reviews at meetings between the candidate and the advisory committee and record the outcome in a prescribed academic progress review form;
 - (f) consider, on the basis of regular supervisory meetings or meetings of the advisory committee, whether the candidate is at risk of making unsatisfactory progress and implement remedial measures including formal interventions where required; and
 - (g) ensure that where a candidate fails to make satisfactory progress all requirements of this policy are followed including ensuring that candidates are:
 - (i) asked to attend an "at risk" meeting with the advisory committee;
 - (ii) offered advice, and support through the "at risk" process;
 - (iii) provided with a progress plan including realistic milestones that allow the student to complete in a timely way; and
 - (iv) advised of the consequences of failing to meet milestones.
 - (h) where a candidate has not met academic progress requirements set at "at risk" meetings, request a formal warning notice be issued to the candidate.
- 4.5 Candidates must:
- (a) engage and comply with the requirements of this unsatisfactory progress process; and
 - (b) read and act upon, as appropriate, all notices and correspondence (written or electronic) from the University.

"At Risk" meetings – Advisory Committee

- 4.6 Where a candidate is identified as being at risk of making unsatisfactory progress, the advisory committee must meet with the candidate to discuss the "at risk" status and fulfil all requirements of the policy at the "at risk" meeting.

Unsatisfactory progress - Course Academic Progress Committees (CAPC)

- 4.7 A Course Academic Progress Committees (CAPC) is responsible for hearing all matters relating to unsatisfactory progress, except "at risk" meetings, and must hear any unsatisfactory progress meetings that arise from a "formal warning" of unsatisfactory progress or a "show cause" notice.

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- 4.8 The dean responsible for each higher degree by research must nominate members to a CAPC. The dean is responsible for ensuring that those nominated are eligible to sit on the committee.
- 4.9 The composition of the CAPC is set in the Academic Board Regulation – Part 7 – Academic Progress, Division 1 – Academic progress requirements, section 36.
- 4.10 A CAPC may only make a decision where the committee composition meets the requirements set out at section 4 of the Academic Board Regulation – Part 7 – Academic Progress, Division 1 – Academic progress requirements and the following requirements set by the Board:
- (a) The membership of a CAPC for candidates in research higher degrees comprises:
- (i) the Associate Dean (Research training), or faculty equivalent or their nominee, who is the CAPC chair;
 - (ii) two other senior academic staff members who are not supervisors or advisors of the candidate but are active supervisors and have a proven record in supervising candidates to timely completion.
- 4.11 The membership of the CAPC must approach gender balance wherever possible.
- 4.12 The candidate's principal supervisor must be invited to attend the meeting to answer any questions the CAPC may have.
- 4.13 The advisory committee chair must be invited to attend.
- 4.14 The CAPC meeting can only proceed if the principal supervisor or the chair of the advisory committee is in attendance.
- 4.15 The faculty graduate research manager (or equivalent), or their nominee, will provide executive support to the meeting.
- 4.16 Where a candidate has been asked to appear at a CAPC and fails to do so, the matter will be heard and decided in their absence.

5. Procedural Principles

Academic progress review – six monthly meetings

- 5.1 At advisory committee meetings, the advisory committee must formally review the candidate's academic progress and record the outcome in a prescribed academic progress review form.
- 5.2 The principal supervisor must advise the candidate in writing, 10 business days prior to the scheduled meeting date, of:
- (a) any information they need to present to the advisory committee; and
 - (b) who will attend the meeting.
- 5.3 Candidates must complete any additional reports required as a condition of their scholarship or sponsorship.
- 5.4 For full-time candidates the first academic progress meeting with the advisory committee must be scheduled prior to the confirmation meeting.
- 5.5 Part-time candidates must attend an academic progress review meeting prior to confirmation as follows:
- (a) Master Degree (Research) candidates – within six months of commencement; and,

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- (b) Doctoral Degree (Research) candidates – within 12 months of commencement.
- 5.6 After confirmation candidates must attend regular academic progress reviews every six months.
- 5.7. Academic progress review due dates are adjusted to take account of any approved leave of absence, changes between full and part-time candidature, approved extensions to candidature, and where a candidate has been suspended as a penalty for academic or general misconduct.
- 5.8. If a candidate fails to attend an academic progress review meeting, and fails to respond to a reasonable request to attend subsequently, they are in breach of the conditions of candidature and the unsatisfactory progress process is applied. In the first instance an “at risk” notice must be issued to the candidate.

Candidates “at risk”

- 5.9. Candidates are identified as at risk of making unsatisfactory progress (“at risk”) if any of the academic progress expectations have not been met, including one or more of the following:
 - (a) confirmation requirements;
 - (b) milestones set by the supervisor(s);
 - (c) milestones set by the advisory committee;
 - (d) a first report of failing to respond to or attend a scheduled academic progress meeting.
- 5.10 The candidate’s advisory committee must notify the candidate in writing that they are at risk of making unsatisfactory progress explaining their status and include information about:
 - (a) the requirement to attend an “at risk” intervention meeting with the advisory committee and complete a written submission; and
 - (b) the purpose of the meeting including the requirement for an action plan to be discussed and implemented; and
 - (c) the possible consequences of further poor performance, or failure to respond to or attend scheduled academic progress meetings.
- 5.11 Candidates who receive an “at risk” notification must respond according to the instructions and within the timeline specified in the notification, and:
 - (a) should seek clarification from the issuing faculty of any instruction or information that is unclear; and
 - (b) may seek advice and support from the Student Union Advocacy Service (SUAS) or other support service.
- 5.12. It is a candidate’s responsibility to read and act upon an “at risk” notification. Failure to respond to any notification may lead to the issue of a “formal warning” notice of unsatisfactory progress.
- 5.13 Where a candidate declines to appear and/or fails to respond to an “at risk” notice the matter will be heard and decided in their absence.

The “at risk” meeting

- 5.14 At the “at risk” meeting, the advisory committee must provide advice and make recommendations to the candidate on matters including those listed below except where a candidate has failed to respond to the “at risk” notice:
 - (a) a candidate’s progress including any issues with the project, supervision, or time management;

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- (b) a progress plan including expectations for the following three months;
 - (c) assistance available from support services including academic skills support or counselling; and
 - (d) that continued unsatisfactory progress may lead to a “formal warning” of unsatisfactory progress.
- 5.15 If a candidate fails to respond to an “at risk” notice the advisor committee may follow the actions at 5.14 or may request that the dean issue a “formal warning” notification of unsatisfactory progress.
- 5.16 The advisory committee must keep a written record of the “at risk” meeting, and any other actions including the progress plan and intervention strategy, progress requirements, or the decision to request that the candidate be issued a formal warning of unsatisfactory progress.
- 5.17 No later than five (5) business days after the meeting, the advisory committee chair must advise the candidate in writing:
- (a) of a progress plan, and a reasonable deadline by which to meet the requirements of the plan (which must not be greater than 3 months) and thereby demonstrate satisfactory progress; and
 - (b) alert the candidate to the potential outcome of failing to meet the progress plan requirements by the deadline, that is a failure to make satisfactory progress which may lead to a “formal warning” of unsatisfactory progress.

“Formal warning” - Notification of unsatisfactory progress

- 5.18 Candidates are classified as making unsatisfactory progress if any of the progress requirements have not been met, and
- (a) the candidate has previously been issued an “at risk” notice and has failed to meet the requirements of a progress plan put in place after an “at risk” meeting (candidates may also have been previously issued a “formal warning” notice), or
 - (b) the candidate has failed to respond to an “at risk” notice within ten (10) business days of the date of the notice (sent date); or
 - (c) the candidate has not met milestones and cannot complete within the maximum time to submit.
- 5.19 The dean must:
- (a) issue a “formal warning” of unsatisfactory progress to the candidate in a form approved by the Academic Secretary; and
 - (b) invite the candidate to submit a written response to the “formal warning” notice; and
 - (c) invite the candidate to appear at a meeting of a Course Academic Progress Committee (CAPC).
- 5.20 The “formal warning” notice must be sent to the candidate’s University email address.
- 5.21 The candidate must:
- (a) respond to the “formal warning” notice within 10 days of the date of the notice (sent date); and
 - (b) attach a written submission as detailed in the “formal warning” notice; and
 - (c) advise whether they intend to appear at the CAPC meeting in person; and
 - (d) advise whether they intend to bring a support person, who cannot be a legal practitioner.
- 5.22 It is a candidate’s responsibility to read and act upon a notification.

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- 5.23 If a candidate fails to respond to a “formal warning” notice within the timeline set out in the notice, the CAPC may initiate the issue of a “show cause” notice.
- 5.24 Whether or not a candidate submits a written response or requests to be heard, the dean must convene a CAPC to hear the case not more than 20 business days after the issue of the “formal warning” notice.
- 5.25 The CAPC must be constituted in accordance with the requirements set out at 4.9 – 4.12 of this policy.
- 5.26 The faculty graduate research manager (or equivalent), or their nominee, will provide executive support to the meeting.
- 5.27 Where a CAPC is convened, the chair must send formal notification of the CAPC hearing and meeting papers to the candidate, supervisors, the advisory committee chair, and CAPC members such that the notice is received five (5) business days before the hearing. The notice must:
- (a) be sent to the candidate’s University email address;
 - (b) advise the candidate of their right to bring a support person, who may not be a legal practitioner, to the hearing;
 - (c) include the documentation relating to the candidate’s progress including any progress plans; and
 - (d) include the candidate’s written response to the “formal warning” of unsatisfactory progress provided by the candidate (where one is received).
- 5.28 The CAPC may only make a decision if all three members are present. The decision must be reached by majority.
- 5.29 Where a candidate declines to appear and/or fails to respond to a formal warning notice the matter will be heard and decided in their absence.
- 5.30 At the meeting the CAPC must,
- (a) discuss the unsatisfactory progress;
 - (b) allow the candidate to raise concerns and issues they have had with their progress. (If the candidate does not attend consider the candidate’s written response, where one is received); and
 - (c) discuss the candidate’s progress plans to date.
- 5.31 A CAPC must not:
- (a) comment on a candidate’s personal circumstances outside of the context of their unsatisfactory academic progress;
 - (b) attempt to counsel a candidate on any matters other than their unsatisfactory academic progress; or
 - (c) make assumptions about a candidate’s motivation for study/research either at University generally or within the specific course/research project.
- 5.32 The CAPC must not inform a candidate of the outcome of their deliberations during the hearing.
- 5.33 The CAPC may decide that:
- (a) the candidate be permitted to continue and require the advisory committee to issue a revised progress plan to the candidate; or
 - (b) the candidate be granted a period of leave and on return be required within three months to meet the requirements of a new progress plan; or

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- (c) the candidate be offered the opportunity to transfer to a masters by research course; or
 - (d) the candidate has no prospect of completing within the maximum time to submit and should not be offered a transfer, the CAPC may notify the student of their decision to terminate the candidate's enrolment and issue a "show cause" notice.
- 5.34 Where the CAPC decides that outcome 5.33 (a) or 5.33 b) is appropriate, the advisory committee must, within 5 days of the outcome notice to the candidate, meet with the candidate to set a new progress plan with specific progress requirements to be met within a maximum three-month period.
- 5.35 The CAPC chair must advise the candidate of the outcome of the hearing in writing to the candidate's University email address within five (5) business days of the hearing.
- 5.36 Possible outcomes of the CAPC meeting are:
- (a) a new or revised progress plan set by the Advisory Committee, and a three-month deadline by which to demonstrate satisfactory progress by meeting the requirements of the progress plan;
 - (b) the potential outcome if satisfactory progress has not been made by the three-month deadline, that is, a "show cause" notice may be issued; or
 - (c) the CAPC's recommendation that the candidate be given the opportunity of a late submission.
- 5.37 The outcome notice must advise the candidate of the right to appeal the decision.
- 5.38 The faculty graduate research manager (or equivalent), or person providing executive support to the meeting must keep a written record of the meeting, the decision and the outcome in a form which meets the requirements of the University's records policy.

The "show cause" notice

- 5.39 A dean may require a candidate to show cause as to why the candidate should not have their enrolment terminated if a candidate has previously been warned of the consequences of making unsatisfactory progress and been asked to attend "at risk" and CAPC meetings: and
- (a) has not met the requirements of a progress plan, issued following a CAPC meeting, at the expiration of the three-month period; or
 - (b) chooses not to take up the opportunity to transfer to a masters degree offered by a previous CAPC meeting.
- 5.40 The dean must issue a "show cause" notice to the candidate in a form approved by the Academic Secretary, together with any relevant documents, which may include the candidate's most recent progress plan at the expiration of the three-month period allowed to meet the requirements.
- 5.41 A candidate must respond to a "show cause" notice by submitting a response in writing within ten (10) business days of receipt of the notice, as detailed in the "show cause" notice.
- 5.42 In addition to a written response, a candidate may appear before an CAPC to explain their circumstances in support of their written submission.
- 5.43 The CAPC must be constituted in accordance with 4.7 – 4.12 of this policy.
- 5.44 The faculty graduate research manager (or equivalent), or their nominee, will provide executive support to the meeting.

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- 5.45 The chair must send formal notification of the hearing and meeting papers by email to the candidate, supervisors, and the advisory committee chair, and CAPC members five (5) business days before the hearing. The notice must:
- (a) be sent to the candidate's University email address;
 - (b) advise the candidate of their right to bring a support person, who may not be a legal practitioner, to the hearing;
 - (c) include the documentation relating to the candidate's progress including matters discussed with supervisors and their advisory committee about their academic progress; and
 - (d) include the candidate's written response to the show cause notice, where a response has been submitted.
- 5.46 The CAPC can only make a decision if:
- (a) the CAPC is correctly constituted; and
 - (b) all three members are present.
- 5.47 Where a candidate declines to appear and/or fails to respond to the "show cause" notice, the matter will be heard and decided in their absence.
- 5.48 The CAPC must terminate the candidate's enrolment in the course where the committee determines they have failed to show cause as to why their enrolment should not be terminated and the candidate:
- (a) is unlikely to be able to meet the requirements of the course in the required timeframe; or
 - (b) has reached the maximum time to submit and is unlikely to be able to complete within the next 6 months, where an additional 6 months does not exceed the maximum time to complete.
- 5.49 The CAPC may, after considering any submission or evidence produced by the candidate and/or the supervisors or advisory committee:
- (a) impose progress conditions and one final three-month timeline on the candidate to meet those requirements; or
 - (c) require the candidate to transfer to a masters course.
- 5.50 A CAPC may only terminate a candidate's enrolment where it can be demonstrated that the candidate has previously been issued with unsatisfactory progress notices in accordance with this policy.
- 5.51 Where a candidate has been offered the opportunity to transfer to a masters course and does not take up that opportunity with 10 business days of the outcome notice, their candidature and enrolment will be terminated.
- 5.52 Candidates must be advised of the outcome of the CAPC meeting within five (5) business days of the hearing. The outcome notification is sent to the candidate's University email address.
- 5.53 The formal outcome notification must include:
- (a) the details of the CAPC decision and outcome(s) agreed by the CAPC;
 - (b) information about the implications for the candidate; and
 - (c) the right to appeal any decision of the CAPC to the Academic Board.

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- 5.54 The formal termination of enrolment notification must include particular advice to international candidates to seek guidance from the Student Service Centre on the consequences of that decision in respect to their student visa.
- 5.55 A termination of enrolment cannot be actioned in the student management system until the time for appeal has passed and it has been determined that the candidate has not lodged an appeal.
- 5.56 The faculty graduate research manager (or equivalent), or person providing executive support to the meeting must keep a written record of the meeting, the decision and the outcome in a form which meets the requirements of the University's records policy.

Complaints and Grievances

- 5.57 Matters relating to academic progress in a course are not subject to the Student Complaints and Grievances Policy

Appeals

- 5.58 Being detrimentally affected by a failure to read and act upon, as appropriate, a notice or correspondence from the University is not grounds for appeal.
- 5.59 Appeals against a decision made under this policy must be made in writing to the Academic Secretary within 20 business days of the date (sent date) of any decision or outcome, in accordance with the [Student Appeals Policy](#).

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Role/Decision/Action	Responsibility	Conditions and limitations
Review and monitor candidate academic progress	Advisory committee and supervisors	Monitoring by supervisors must be ongoing. Review by Advisory committee is <ul style="list-style-type: none">at least every 6 months and/or,whenever the supervisor reports that a candidate has not met milestones or attended regular supervisory meetings.
Identify candidates "at risk"	Supervisors and Advisory committee	
Put in place an intervention strategy for candidates identified as being "at risk"	Advisory committee	Must include a documented progress plan with milestones set at a maximum of 12 weeks.
Issue "at risk" notice	Advisory committee chair - authorised by the dean to act.	
Nomination of members to the CAPC	Dean of the relevant faculty or Associate Dean or person authorised to act	
CAPC deliberation, decision	Course Academic Progress Committee (CAPC)	

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Notification of CAPC outcome to student	CAPC chair or executive support on behalf of the chair	
Updating the student record card	Graduate Research Manager	

7. Definitions

“advisory committee” is a committee appointed by the head of department in which the candidate is enrolled.

“Board” means the Academic Board of the University of Melbourne.

“candidate” means any person admitted to and enrolled in a planned course of research leading to a graduate research course at the University of Melbourne. A candidate is a student of the University.

“candidature” means the period of study towards the graduate research course being the period from the date of commencement until the end of enrolment based on successful completion of all coursework and mandatory training completed satisfactorily leading to lodgement for thesis examination (after which time the candidate holds the status of 'Under Examination') or until the candidature is terminated or the candidate withdraws, but excludes periods spent on leave of absence or lapsed.

“course” means a degree, diploma or other award.

“expected course duration” means the expected time for completion of a course expressed in full-time years.

“Maximum course duration” for graduate research courses is expressed in full time years, and is calculated based on the expected course duration, allowing for part time enrolment in coursework degrees and RTP in research degrees. In research degrees it is also adjusted to take account of periods of leave.

“Maximum submission date” also referred to as the maximum time to submit, means the maximum number of years allowed to submit a thesis or dissertation for examination, and to undertake any other examination components, for graduate research courses taking into account an allowance for late submission.

“senior member of academic staff” means a member of academic staff appointed at classification Level C or above

“supervisor” means an appropriately qualified person who is responsible for the academic supervision of a graduate research course candidate.

“thesis” means a dissertation embodying the results of original research and especially substantiating a specific view.

“University” means the University of Melbourne.

POLICY APPROVER

Academic Board

POLICY STEWARD

Academic Secretary

REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed by

VERSION HISTORY

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Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified
1	Academic Board			New policy – replaces relevant section in the Graduate Research Training Policy

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