

REGULATIONS FOR MASTER DEGREES WITH RESEARCH BY DESIGN PROJECTS

1. Regulations for Master Degrees with Research by Design Projects

- 1.1 These regulations apply to the:
- Master of Architecture (MArch),
 - Master of Design (MDes),
 - Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA)

Where the programme of study involves a single course of 240 credits, at level 9, in which a candidate undertakes an approved research by design project.

- 1.2 The [Academic Statute](#) of Unitec should be read in conjunction with these regulations.

2. Definition of Terms

In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions shall apply:

- a) 'Candidate' is a person whose Research by Design project has been approved by the Research Proposals Committee.
- b) A 'full-time candidate' is someone who is not in paid employment for 45 weeks or more of any year while engaged in research for this degree. With the approval of the Principal Supervisor, a full-time candidate may engage in paid employment for a total of up to 400 hours during any one calendar year.
- c) A 'part-time candidate' is one who, because of employment, health or family reasons, is unable to devote his or her full time to study and research.
- d) 'External Examiner' means a person external to Unitec appointed to assess student work.
- e) 'Research by Design Project' or 'Research Project' means a course of study in which a candidate undertakes a scholarly investigation involving the exploration of a research question through engagement in the design of a new work, deemed equivalent to 240 credits of study at level 9.
- f) 'Supervisor' means a person who fulfils the role of adviser, mentor and motivator, thereby guiding the academic progress of the candidate to reach his/her research potential.

3. Programme Admission

3.1 Specific Admission

To be admitted to these programmes, all applicants must meet the English Language requirements set out in the Masters Generic Regulations.

3.2 General Admission

The General Admission requirements set out in the Masters Generic Regulations do not apply to this programme. Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- a) have a recognised undergraduate degree with an average grade of B- or higher in all level 7 courses, in a discipline appropriate to the proposed project;

OR

- b) have a recognised postgraduate diploma in a discipline appropriate to the proposed project, with a B- average;

AND

- c) have a significant portfolio of professional work sufficient to enable critical reflection on their prior practice at the outset of the programme of study.

3.3 Special admission

3.3.1 An applicant may be eligible for special admission if s/he:

- a) can demonstrate competencies equivalent to a bachelor level graduate in a discipline appropriate to the proposed project and has a significant portfolio of professional works sufficient to enable critical reflection on their prior practice at the outset of the programme of study; or
- b) holds a professional qualification in a relevant discipline, recognised as being equivalent to at least a three year undergraduate degree and has a significant portfolio of professional work sufficient to enable critical reflection on their prior practice at the outset of the programme of study.

3.3.2 Such applicants may be required to undertake related studies where this is considered necessary for the attainment of knowledge related to the proposed project.

4. Selection & Enrolment

4.1 Selection criteria

When the number of eligible applicants for admission exceeds the number of places available, the following selection criteria will be applied:

- the potential of the candidate to benefit from the programme;
- the ability of the candidate to pursue study on the programme and to attend workshops and seminars, whilst continuing in their professional practice;
- evidence of ability to complete the qualification within the normal period of registration.

These criteria are not ranked in any order. Applicants who meet the greatest number of criteria will be the preferred applicants.

4.2 Selection process

Selection will be made by the Programme Committee or by those with authority delegated by the Programme Committee

Students will be selected based on the information supplied. In some cases, a telephone or face-to-face interview may be required.

4.3 Enrolment

Upon approval of admission, applicants shall enrol and proceed with the presentation and appraisal of their practice to date and the development of their research by design project before seeking approval of candidature.

5. Credit Recognition and Assessment of Prior Learning

- 5.1.1 Neither credit recognition nor the Assessment of Prior Learning applies to these qualifications.
- 5.1.2 Notwithstanding 5.1.1, when there is evidence that a proportion of the candidate's proposed work for the project has already been undertaken in an appropriate research environment, or within a commissioned report for a professional body, the candidate may apply to the Programme Committee for such work to be recognised for the requirement of the degree, and for a shorter candidature period than normal to be approved.
- 5.1.3 No previously assessed work shall be credited towards the Research by Design Project.

6. Approval of Candidature

- 6.1.1 Within 12 months of enrolment the student shall present to the Research Proposals Committee for approval a research project proposal which meets the requirements of the degree. Upon approval of the project proposal the topic shall be registered, the student admitted to candidature and the degree being studied confirmed.
- 6.1.2 Before approving candidature and registration of the research proposal, the Research Proposals Committee shall be satisfied that the following requirements have been met:
 - a) the learning outcomes are achievable;
 - b) the project proposal is viable;
 - c) ethics approval has been granted, where appropriate;
 - d) the proposed supervision arrangements are appropriate and able to be sustained;
 - e) commercial sensitivity will not prevent academic review;

- f) the resources required to undertake the research project are available and sufficient.

6.1.3 Failure to obtain such approval within 15 months of enrolment may lead to termination of enrolment.

7. Period of Candidature

- 7.1.1 For full-time candidates the minimum period of candidature is twelve months and shall not exceed three years.
- 7.1.2 For part-time candidates the minimum period of candidature is eighteen months and shall not exceed four years.
- 7.1.3 The period of candidature shall begin on the date at which the project proposal is registered and the candidature approved.
- 7.1.4 Where a candidate is prevented by ill health or exceptional circumstances from making progress with the research by design project, the Programme Committee may grant one suspension of registration, normally for not more than twelve months.
- 7.1.5 A candidate may transfer from full-time to part-time status and vice versa. In such situations the Programme Committee will determine a revised period of registration for the candidate.

8. Requirements for the Award of the Degree

8.1 Credit points and levels

To qualify for the award of the degree, a candidate must gain 240 credits at level 9 from a successfully completed research by design project eg Course DESN9000, ARCH9000, LAND9000

8.2 Award of the degree with Distinction or Merit

The degree shall be awarded with Distinction if the research project has been awarded an A- or better grade within the time limits defined in clauses 7.1.1 and 7.1.2. The degree shall be awarded with Merit if the research project has been awarded a B or better grade within the time limits defined in clauses 7.1.1 and 7.1.2.

9. Supervision

- 9.1.1 A candidate undertaking a research by design degree shall have a Principal Supervisor and at least one other supervisor who shall be appointed by the Research Proposals Committee. All supervision appointments need to be notified to the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee. At least one supervisor shall have experience of supervising to successful completion a postgraduate degree and a research record of

standing. At least one supervisor shall be a Unitec academic staff member. Supervisors will be appointed within 6 weeks.

- 9.1.2 The Research Proposals Committee shall approve a supervision regime that demonstrates an appropriate combination of expertise, qualifications, experience and credible professional standing between supervisors.
- 9.1.3 One supervisor shall be designated the Principal Supervisor with overall responsibility to supervise the candidate on a regular and frequent basis.
- 9.1.4 If the Principal Supervisor is absent for an extended period because of illness, leave or other reasons, either the Associate Supervisor or an appropriately qualified replacement will be appointed, on the approval of the Research Proposals Committee, after consultation with the candidate. All supervision appointments need to be notified to the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee.
- 9.1.5 Any change of supervisor will be approved by the relevant programme committee, and notified to the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee.
- 9.1.6 In the case of a dispute between a candidate and a supervisor, the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee shall act as the arbiter. If a resolution is not reached, the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee shall have discretion to replace that supervisor..
- 9.1.7 Candidates may apply to the Research Proposals Committee to undertake a part of their research at an approved collaborating institution such as a professional, research, commercial or industrial establishment or another university. Such formal collaboration shall normally involve the candidate using facilities and other resources provided either separately or jointly by the collaborating establishments, and shall include joint supervision of the candidate.
- 9.1.8 All supervisors shall abide by the Unitec Code of Research Supervision.

10. Satisfactory Progress, Suspensions and Terminations

- 10.1.1 Once candidature is approved, a candidate and supervisors shall present brief written reports to the Programme Committee. Such reports shall be submitted at six monthly intervals from the date of candidature.
- 10.1.2 Following review of the progress reports, the Programme Committee may continue the candidature, vary the conditions of candidature, or consider termination of the candidature. Prior to deciding termination, the Committee may seek clarification or advice in consultation with the candidate and the supervisors.
- 10.1.3 The candidature may be terminated if the Programme Committee considers the supervisor's report for a candidate's progress is unsatisfactory, but not before the candidate is invited to show cause, by a date determined in writing, why candidature should not be terminated.
- 10.1.4 During the period of candidature, the candidate shall present their new work at workshops as it is developed to their supervisors, the cohorts, expert practitioners and

theorists at regular intervals, who will critique it. Except in exceptional circumstances approved by the Programme Committee, the candidate must make satisfactory presentations at a minimum of three workshops before their work is presented for examination.

- 10.1.5 Any candidate who fails to enrol by 31 March in any year of candidature will be deemed to have terminated his or her candidature.
- 10.1.6 A candidate whose candidature has been terminated under 10.1.5, may apply to be re-enrolled as a candidate, and the Programme Committee may approve such re-enrolment on such conditions as it considers appropriate.

11. Examination¹

11.1 Grading of Research Project

The Research Project shall be graded according to the following scale:

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|----|---------------|
| A+ | 90 – 100 Pass |
| A | 85 – 89 Pass |
| A- | 80 – 84 Pass |
| B+ | 75 – 79 Pass |
| B | 70 – 74 Pass |
| B- | 65 – 69 Pass |
| C+ | 60 – 64 Pass |
| C | 55 – 59 Pass |
| C- | 50 – 54 Pass |
| D | 40 – 49 Fail |
| E | 0 - 39 Fail |

Projects shall be graded in accordance with this 11 point grading system, except that where a student's first enrolment in the degree commenced prior to semester one 2004, that student shall not be awarded a grade of A-, B-, or C- for his or her project, being awarded instead a grade of A, B, or C respectively.

11.2 Examination and examiners

- 11.2.1 Theses, dissertations and research projects will not be accepted for examination unless the student is enrolled on the relevant course at the time he/she submits the work and unless a signed Declaration Form, found in the Postgraduate Student Resources page on Moodle, is provided at the time of submission.
- 11.2.2 The candidate shall present for examination:
- The new work in a public setting and give an oral explanation of the work;
 - a digital copy of the new work; and work which shall be lodged with the Unitec Library

¹ All changes to 11 Examination approved by Board of Postgraduate Studies on 24 April 2007, effective Sem 2 2007

- Four copies of an explanatory document which includes the research proposal, a review of current theory and practice, a description of the development of the work and a critical appraisal of the finished work and the theoretical framework that informed it. This shall be accompanied by a statement from the Principal Supervisor certifying that the project was carried out under his/her immediate supervision and that the project is the independent work of the candidate
- 11.2.3 On receipt of the application for examination the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee shall appoint a senior Unitec academic staff member as the Convenor of the examination process.
- 11.2.4 The work shall be examined by a minimum of two examiners. At least one of these shall be external to Unitec. The examiners shall be appointed by the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee. Persons who have acted as a candidate's supervisor or advisor normally will not be appointed as examiners of the candidate's research.
- 11.2.5 The examiners shall be appointed on the basis of postgraduate qualifications, experience in research or independent scholarship and practice in the general area of the candidate's study and at least one examiner must have experience as a specialist in the area to be examined.
- 11.2.6 In circumstances where the research undertaken for a research by design project has commercial sensitivity, the candidate and the Principal Supervisor may, on application, be permitted by the Programme Committee to treat all or part of the project as a confidential document for such a period as deemed appropriate. In such cases, access to the confidential material shall be restricted to the supervisors, candidate and examiners, and the intellectual property policy of Unitec shall be followed.

11.3 Examiners' recommendations

- 11.3.1 The examiners shall, at the time of the presentation of work, determine and make a recommended grade to the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee. The examiners may recommend that a project be:
- a) accepted and a grade awarded in accordance with 11.1;
 - b) accepted and a grade awarded in accordance with 11.1 after minor amendments have been made to the satisfaction of one or more of the examiners;
 - c) rejected in its present form and awarded a grade of D, but be permitted to be revised, resubmitted, and re-examined by at least two of the original examiners, including at least one external examiner, with a maximum grade of C-.
 - d) failed with no right of resubmission, and awarded a grade of E.
 - e) In the event of disagreement among the examiners, if the range of grades suggested by the different examiners is within three grade levels, but where all the suggested grades are passing grades, the Convenor of the examination process shall report to the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee the different grades suggested by each of the examiners. The Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee shall then determine a grade in accordance with clause 12.6 a of the Unitec Masters Generic regulations.

- f) In the event that the disagreement among the examiners is beyond three grade levels, or where one or more of the examiners wishes to recommend a failing grade, but there is a majority view about the merit of the work, provided that the majority includes at least one examiner who is external to Unitec, the Convenor shall report this to the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee, which will award a grade in accordance with the majority view.
 - g) The examiners shall continue their deliberations until an outcome has been reached in accordance with clauses (a) through (f) of this section.
 - 11.3.2 The Convenor of the examination process shall provide a written report to the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee, detailing the examiners' recommendations, within seven working days following the examination. In the event that the examiners recommend accepting the project after minor amendments have been made, or rejecting it in its present form but permitting re-submission, the Convenor's report shall:
 - a) detail any minor amendments which the candidate is required to make to the project, along with an indication of which of the examiners will determine when these amendments have been completed satisfactorily, in accordance with clause 11.3.1 (b) above, or
 - b) detail the shortcomings in the project which make it unacceptable in its present form, along with an indication of which of the examiners will re-examine the re-submitted work, in accord with clause 11.3.1 (c) above.
 - 11.3.3 The Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee shall declare the final grade for the research project and the classification of the degree with or without Distinction (A- or better) or Merit (B or better)
 - 11.3.4 Any and all correspondence with the candidate regarding the outcome of the examination process shall be conducted by the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee.
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12. Appeals

12.1 Appeals against decision of candidature and enrolment

- 12.1.1 Candidates may appeal against a decision of Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee in accordance with Section 9 of the Academic Management Policy.
- 12.1.2 Applications for appeal must be received by the Chair of Academic Board Appeals Committee within 15 working days of the mailing of the decision of Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of Academic Board Appeals Committee may extend the time for receipt of the application for appeal.
- 12.1.3 Except as allowed for in section 9.2 of the Academic Management Policy, there shall be two grounds of appeal only. These grounds are that:

- a. additional information has become available which was not available and could not reasonably have been made available at the time the original decision was made; or
 - b. there was a material irregularity in the conduct of summative assessment on the course or in the procedures of the Programme Committee or the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee.
- 12.1.4 If in the opinion of the Chair of Academic Board Appeals Committee the grounds for appeal have not been satisfied, the Chair of Academic Board shall notify the student within 10 working days that the appeal will not be heard, otherwise the Chair of the Academic Board Appeals Committee shall arrange for the Appeals Committee to be convened.
- 12.2 Appeals against decisions for grading of the Research Project**
- 12.2.1 Candidates may appeal against a decision of the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee in accordance with Clause 11.3.c.
- 12.2.2 An appeal shall be heard by the Appeals Committee of the Faculty Academic Committee, whose decision shall be final.
- 12.2.3 Applications for appeal must be received by the Faculty Executive Dean within 15 working days of the mailing of the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee decision. In exceptional circumstances the Faculty Executive Dean may extend the time for receipt of the application for appeal.
- 12.2.4 The only allowable grounds for appeal are that:
- a) there are circumstances affecting the candidate's performance of which the examiners were not aware of at the time of examination;
 - b) there is evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the examination as to suggest that the result might have been different had there not been such an irregularity.
 - c) there is evidence of unfair or improper assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners.
- 12.2.5 If in the opinion of the Faculty Executive Dean the grounds for appeal have not been satisfied the Faculty Executive Dean shall notify the candidate within 5 working days that the appeal will not be heard, otherwise the Faculty Executive Dean shall arrange for the Appeals Committee to be convened.

13. Commencement

These regulations came into force in Semester 2, 2015.