

This document provides important information relevant to submitting a variation to candidature form to the Office of Graduate Studies at research-candidature@newcastle.edu.au. Please consider this information prior to submitting the relevant form. Information is provided as necessary and therefore note that not all variation to candidature forms are represented within this document.

Once a variation form has been processed by the Office of Graduate Studies, we will notify you and your supervisors via email.

Leave of Absence (LoA)

- LoA may only be requested after completion of one full-time year, or part-time equivalent, candidature.
- Minimum period of LoA is one semester.
- LoA is not granted for more than twelve months throughout the period of candidature, however in exceptional circumstances further leave may be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Holders of an international student visa may only apply for LoA based on compassionate or compelling grounds. Approved leave will be reported to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and in most cases candidates are expected to return to their home country for the duration of the approved leave.

Scholarship Holders:

- Scholarship holders will have their scholarship suspended when LoA is approved.
- Periods of approved scholarship suspension will not be deducted from the overall scholarship tenure.

Transfer of Program

Upgrade

After two full-time semesters, or part-time equivalent, a transfer from Master of Philosophy to PhD candidature may be considered, provided the applicant meets the minimum criteria. Faculties may impose additional criteria at their discretion.

Supporting documentation must be presented addressing the following criteria:

1. The research topic is confirmed as being of the required scope, depth and rigour for PhD studies. A detailed research plan is recommended.
2. The supervisory capacity of the school/discipline/faculty has been established and there are sufficient resources available to successfully support an extended candidature, including continued scholarship support if applicable. The Head of School (or nominee) is required to confirm this in writing.
3. The candidate is working well and consistently and is in regular contact with the supervisor. This is determined from the appropriate Progress Report, or other report from the Supervisor and Head of School (or nominee).
4. The candidate has produced assessable evidence of quality research achievements and that any required skills have been gained. Different interpretations of 'assessable evidence' can apply across disciplines and can include publications, conference papers, presentation at school seminars, significant progress with literature review, thesis draft or data collection and analysis, performance or exhibition.

Downgrade

Candidates may also transfer from PhD to Masters. Supporting documentation detailing the circumstances must be provided.

Sideways Transfer

Movements across programs, schools or faculties also require formal approval. Supporting documentation detailing the circumstances must be attached.

Change of Load

- Scholarship holders have restrictions on part-time study. Refer to scholarship conditions and contact the Office of Graduate Studies for advice if necessary.
- Holders of an international student visa are required to maintain full-time study.

Coursework Request

- As a standard, each course is undertaken at 10 units per semester.
- For international candidates, note that the addition of coursework will affect the tuition fees charged for the semester/s that the coursework is undertaken.
- Admission into coursework after the first two weeks of semester is at the discretion of the course coordinator. The Office of Graduate Studies will refer requests for late entry into coursework to the course coordinator, however it is recommended that candidates discuss their reasons for late entry with the course coordinator prior to submitting their application.
- The Office of Graduate Studies will enrol the candidate in the specified course/s on receipt of the coursework request form.

Off-Campus Enrolment

- Off-campus candidature may be available to candidates who reside outside a 50km radius of the Callaghan or Ourimbah campuses.
- Off-campus candidates must attend the campus at least once each year for discussions with supervisors and give an oral presentation to a confirmation committee at a school-based seminar as part of the confirmation process.
- Candidates are responsible for providing their own resources and must be aware that the university does not provide special services for candidates who wish to undertake this mode of study.
- The final off-campus enrolment approval for scholarship holders and international candidates rests with the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Extension to Candidature

- Extensions to candidature must be sought if enrolment is to continue beyond the maximum period permitted under the Rules Governing Research Higher Degrees.
- The maximum lengths of candidature are:
 - Master of Philosophy – 2 years full-time or part-time equivalent
 - PhD – 4 years full-time or part-time equivalent
- Extensions for more than two semesters are unlikely to be approved.

Change of Research Topic/Direction

- Changes to only the wording of your research topic do not require approval, however they should be advised to the Office of Graduate Studies in writing with confirmation that the direction or focus of the research has not changed.
- Approval is required where a change in direction or focus has occurred.
- Changes should be discussed with your supervisor/s
- Note: If the change is significant and represents a change of program, a transfer of program should be sought and the relevant form completed.