GUIDELINES FOR POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK PROGRAMS
(Other than Professional Doctorates)

These Guidelines provide the basis for structuring postgraduate coursework courses (other than professional doctorates). New courses or course review proposals, which recommend a structure which does not comply with the Guidelines, need to provide specific justification in that regard.

1. **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

   1.1 Minimum entry requirements

   The minimum entry requirements for postgraduate coursework programs will be as follows:

   (a) **Graduate Certificate/Postgraduate Certificate**
   - A three year Bachelor degree;

   (b) **Graduate Diploma/Postgraduate Diploma**
   - A three year Bachelor degree; or
   - A Graduate/Postgraduate Certificate in the discipline;

   (c) **Master by Coursework**
   - A four year Bachelor degree (or equivalent); or
   - A three year Bachelor degree in a related discipline.

   1.2 Special entry

   Special or non-graduate entry into postgraduate programs is accepted only where there are clear criteria or conditions for entry. Unless a strong case for exceptional circumstances can be made, non-graduate entry would normally be at the Graduate Certificate level.

   Students who do not qualify for direct entry to a Master's program may progress step-wise through a suite of postgraduate programs, eg Graduate/Postgraduate Certificate, Graduate/Postgraduate Diploma courses.

   1.3 Non-discipline based entry

   Normal entrance for Master's degree applicants who lack a base in the same or a related discipline would be through the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma programs.

   Where a prospective student has insufficient grounding in the discipline, the Course Coordinator may approve that the student undertake appropriate preparatory study, eg short pre-term programs, or advanced undergraduate courses or graduate courses at the Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma level, prior to undertaking the Master's degree.

2. **CREDIT POINTS AND LENGTH OF COURSE**

   Any postgraduate coursework program should comply with the following schema:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Award</th>
<th>Minimum Total CP</th>
<th>Min duration of FT study</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate/Postgraduate Certificate</td>
<td>40 cp</td>
<td>One Semester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate/Postgraduate Diploma</td>
<td>80 cp</td>
<td>Two Semesters</td>
<td>Includes Graduate Certificate where the Graduate Diploma builds directly upon it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree for those entering with a three year Bachelor degree</td>
<td>160 cp</td>
<td>Four semesters</td>
<td>Includes Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma where the Master’s program builds directly upon them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree that is a continuance in the same or an equivalent discipline for those entering with at least a four year Bachelor award</td>
<td>80 cp</td>
<td>Two Semesters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **EXIT PROVISIONS**

Where an articulated suite of programs exists, a candidate who enrolled directly into a higher level program but does not complete the program requirements may be awarded a lesser qualification if the requirements for such award are fulfilled.

4. **RESEARCH COMPONENT OF POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK PROGRAMS**

Section 4 of these Guidelines applies to those postgraduate coursework programs (other than professional doctorates) which do have a research component. It is acknowledged that not all postgraduate coursework programs include a research component.

4.1 **Description of research component**

If there is a research component in a postgraduate coursework program, it will be named as follows:

(a) *Research Project*: for work with a value of less than 40 cp;
(b) *Thesis*: for work with a value of 40 cp or more.

4.2 **Length of research component of a postgraduate coursework program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Project Report</td>
<td>not more than 20,000 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>not more than 50,000 words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 **Characteristics of research component of postgraduate coursework program**

*Research Project Report*

- demonstrates an understanding of the research process and scholarly conventions in the discipline;
- provides an ordered exposition of knowledge gained through the candidate’s own efforts;
- involves research which is more limited in scope than a Thesis in that it should –
  (a) limit attention to a few main questions;
  (b) keep data collection to a minimum;
  (c) be able to be conducted in situations which are easily accessible to the candidate;
- involves a literature review which should place the study in its research context and be critical without claiming to be exhaustive;
- may include speculation based on the findings, instead of aiming at generalisations grounded on the findings;
- demonstrates the candidate’s ability to present the outcome of the study in a disciplined way that conforms to the scholarly conventions of the discipline;
- should be presented in succinct formal English.

*Thesis*

- demonstrates possession of advanced knowledge in a specialised field;
- shows evidence of an original investigation and testing of hypotheses;
- shows an ability to make critical use of published work and source materials as well as an appreciation of the relationship between the topic and the wider field of knowledge;
- demonstrates competence in independent work or experimentation and an understanding of the techniques and/or approaches which are appropriate to the research questions;
- involves research the scope of which need not be a new line of development but which shows that the candidate has mastered research and synthetical skills in producing a contribution to knowledge;
- demonstrates the contribution to knowledge by drawing generalisations or further hypotheses for testing that are well grounded in the findings;
- should be presented in succinct formal English.

5. **SUPERVISION AND EXAMINATION OF RESEARCH COMPONENT OF A POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK PROGRAM**

5.1 **Supervision**

The research component will be taken under the guidance of a supervisor appointed by the School Committee on the recommendation of the relevant Head of School.

5.2 **Submission of Research Project Report/Thesis**
On completion of the course of study and research, a candidate will submit a written report in the form of a Research Project Report or Thesis, based on work carried out during the period of study and research.

5.3 **Appointment of Examiners**

5.3.1 Examiners will be appointed by the School Committee on the advice of the Head of School, after consultation with the supervisor.

5.3.2 For a Thesis, the Committee will appoint two examiners. At least one examiner must be external to Australian Catholic University. A candidate’s supervisor may not be appointed to be an examiner for a Thesis.

5.3.3 For a Research Project Report, the Committee will appoint one examiner. The examiner may be an academic staff member of Australian Catholic University and may be the candidate’s supervisor.

5.4 **Examination of Research Project Report/Thesis**

5.4.1 The examiners will examine the Research Project Report/Thesis and make separate reports which will be submitted for consideration to the relevant School Committee. Each examiner’s report will include a recommendation:

(a) That the student has met the Research Project Report/Thesis requirements and has passed outright; or

(b) That the student has passed the Research Project Report/Thesis requirements, subject to minor changes, as recommended in the examiners’ reports, being made to the satisfaction of the Head of School acting on the advice of the supervisor; or

(c) That the student be permitted to revise and re-submit the Research Project Report/Thesis within an appropriate time frame of no more than two semesters, as determined by the School Committee, in consultation with the supervisor and in accordance with the Academic Regulations; or

(d) That the student has failed to meet the Research Project Report/Thesis requirements and has failed outright.

5.4.2 Examiners will also be requested to provide a grade for the Research Project Report/Thesis in accordance with the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical marks</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HD</td>
<td>85-100</td>
<td>The Research Project Report/Thesis demonstrates a level of competence which would lead the examiner to recommend that the candidate is competent to proceed to doctoral studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DI</td>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>With some strengthening of present competence, remedying of particular deficiencies and close supervision, the candidate could proceed with reasonable confidence to doctoral studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>The Research Project Report/Thesis presented is a sufficiently competent piece of work but indicates that the candidate is unlikely to be able to complete doctoral studies. The grade to be awarded depends on a judgement about the relative level of the Report/Thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>50-64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NN</td>
<td>Less than 50</td>
<td>The Research Project Report/Thesis should not be passed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These grades are awarded on the basis of the Research Project Report/Thesis as submitted for examination and not on the basis of a version produced after revisions have been made in the light of examiners’ comments.

5.5 **Resolution of differences in assessment of a Thesis**

5.5.1 In the case of a serious difference of opinion between Thesis examiners, that is, more than one grade apart, the Head of School will refer the issue to a designated School sub-committee. The sub-committee will be given copies of the Thesis and the examiners’ reports and may:

(a) seek consultation with and/or between the examiners to resolve the issue;

(b) not re-examine the Thesis but make a recommendation to the School based upon the advice found within the conflicting examiners’ reports;
(c) ask the candidate to re-submit the Thesis within two semesters only to the examiner that required re-submission; or
(d) appoint an adjudicator, external to the sub-committee, who will be given a copy of the Thesis and the examiners’ reports. The adjudicator’s report will be provided to the sub-committee for it to make a final recommendation to the School Committee.

5.5.2 In the case where one of the examiners has recommended a fail outright and this issue cannot be resolved amongst the examiners outright, the Committee must seek adjudication.

5.6 Revision and resubmission
A candidate may be permitted to re-submit their Research Project Report/Thesis no more than twice.

A candidate who has been deemed to have failed to meet the Research Project Report/Thesis requirements by the examiner(s) and has failed outright shall not be permitted to re-submit the Research Project Report/Thesis for further examination.

5.7 Award of degree
The School Committee, or for Faculty-wide Masters’ programs the relevant Faculty Committee, will receive the reports of the examiner(s) and, following successful completion of any requirements, will recommend the candidate to the Faculty Board as a graduand.

5.8 Report to the University Research and Research Training Management Committee
Following Faculty Board approval, the outcome of the examination of a Thesis will also be reported to the University Research and Research Training Management Committee.