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Approved by	Research Committee
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Superseded documents	None
Related documents	<i>HDR Leave, Suspension and Extension Form</i> <i>Tuition Fee Refund Policy</i> <i>Extension, Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Enrolment Policy - Overseas Student</i>
Related HE Standards	7.2.2.c
Student Lifecycle Stage/s	Learning

1. PURPOSE

To set out the rules for leave, suspension, and extension of candidature for AUT HDR candidates.

2. DEFINITIONS

Definitions for any words in **Bold** in this document can be found in the [Policy Glossary](#). The first instance of each defined term has been outlined in bold.

3. SCOPE

These rules apply to all AUT HDR candidates. For **overseas students** on student visas, special conditions apply and this policy must be read in conjunction with the *Extension, Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Enrolment Policy - Overseas Student*. For the purposes of this policy, offshore candidates are under the same regulations as domestic candidates. For withdrawal from a semester of research after census date, see the *Tuition Fee Refund Policy*.

4. RULES

HDR Suspension of Candidature

4.1.1 The AUT will receive sympathetically requests from candidates seeking suspension of candidature for legitimate reasons if requested before taking a period of leave, including reasons such as movement overseas on missionary service, settling into a new parish ministry, medical or other personal reasons. Suspension may be granted for one or two semesters at a time, normally for a maximum of two semesters during the term of candidature. Due to government regulations, applications by candidates on a student visa (**overseas students**) must be supported with written evidence. Approved **Suspensions of Candidature** will automatically extend the date for completion of the course of study equal to the length of time granted.

HDR Extended Leave of Absence

4.2.1 Where a candidate is unable to continue with their research due to exceptional and unavoidable circumstances, further suspension of candidature may be granted. Normally, this will be limited to an additional two semesters, for a total of up to two years. This is known as an Extended Leave of Absence. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be supported with written evidence. Approved Extended Leaves of Absence will automatically extend the date for



completion of the course of study equal to the length of time granted.

HDR Special Leave of Absence

- 4.3.1 HDR candidates may apply for a Special Leave of Absence in the circumstances detailed below and this will be given in addition to any other Suspension of Candidature and Extended Leave of Absence entitlements. Candidates on a student visa (**overseas students**) are not entitled to apply for a Special Leave of Absence but may apply for Extended Leave of Absence under 4.2.1.
- 4.3.2 Applications must be supported with written evidence. Approved Special Leaves of Absence will automatically extend the date for completion of the course of study equal to the length of time granted.
- 4.3.3 **Parental Leave:** HDR candidates are entitled to a maximum of two semesters of parental leave for each pregnancy of themselves or their partner in the course of their candidature. Parental leave may also be approved if a candidate has adopted or been granted permanent fosterage of a child or children. Candidates may choose which two semesters they take as leave, provided such leave is taken within three years of the birth or date of adoption/fosterage.
- 4.3.4 **Jury leave:** HDR candidates are entitled to jury leave, where the candidate is empaneled for jury service for a period greater than four (4) weeks. The leave will be given for the semester in which the candidate is empaneled. Candidates are able to request withdrawal and a refund of the fees if they have already enrolled for that semester.

HDR Candidate Progression after Suspension or Leave of Absence

- 4.4.1 When approaching the end of a period of suspension or leave, HDR candidates are encouraged to work with their supervisors to revise their research plan in order to ensure that their thesis can be submitted on time.

Extension of Candidature

- 4.5.1 A candidate whose candidature is about to lapse will not lose credit for units completed as long as their supervising college is prepared to support their case for extension of candidature in the award.
- 4.5.2 It is the responsibility of the candidate to begin discussions with their Principal Supervisor and Postgraduate Coordinator as to whether they would support an application for an extension of candidature, preferably at least a semester before their date for completion.
- 4.5.3 Normally, extension of candidature may be applied for one semester at a time and no more than two semesters of extension of candidature prior to the examination phase will be granted.
- 4.5.4 Extending candidature once the necessary credit points for the award have been attained will incur additional fees at the rate applicable at the time.
- 4.5.5 Candidature will be considered to have lapsed if a formal application for extension of candidature has not been received by the date for completion provided in the letter of offer and acceptance (as adjusted for any periods of suspension and leave).



Lapse of Candidature

- 4.6.1 If the thesis is not submitted by the date for completion, candidature shall be deemed to have lapsed and all credit will be nullified, unless permission from the AUT has been obtained.

Changes in Regulations

- 4.7.1 Normally, candidates who are continuing or are under suspension of candidature or on leave of absence will not be subject to new regulations (except in the case of fee changes), unless such changes benefit the candidate.
- 4.7.2 Candidates who have failed to complete the award in the maximum time allowed but who have been granted an extension of candidature may be subject to the new regulations governing the award in which they are enrolled.
- 4.7.3 Where major changes to an award occur, the Academic Board may impose a time limit on the previous version of that award, after which candidates still completing that award will be subject to the new regulations, even if there has been no break during the course of their study.

5 RELATED LEGISLATION AND REFERENCES

None

6 VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1	R&RSC	2017	2017	
2	R&RSC	27 April 2018	27 April 2018	reformat
3	R&RSC	24 July 2020	24 July 2020	Updated template.
4	RC	6 October 2023	6 October 2023	Renamed leave, suspension and extension rules. Rules simplified. Removal of progression after suspension rules.
5	Vice-Chancellor	June 2025	June 2025	New policy format, minor editorial updates to implement university status.
6	RC	10 October 2025	10 October 2025	Updated names of related policy documents.

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