

## Doctoral Admissions Protocol

### Summary

When a student is seeking admission to a doctoral programme at AUT the University will assess that the entry criteria have been met, as well as ensuring that there are appropriate resources in place prior to admission (including supervision).

### Purpose

This protocol outlines the requirements, regulations, and processes to be undertaken for admission into a doctoral programme.

### Scope

This protocol applies to all doctoral research applicants and does not include higher doctorate, masters or Bachelor's with Honours admission processes.

Doctorates may be of two types:

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) – Thesis only
- Professional doctorates (DHSc, EdD) – Coursework followed by thesis

### Application

#### Entry Criteria

In order to be admitted to a doctoral degree, an applicant shall normally have completed the requirements of either a master's degree with honours (with the equivalence of at least 40 points of research) or a bachelor's degree with honours (equivalent to four years of study with the equivalence of at least 30 points of research) in a discipline which is appropriate to the proposed research:

- The degree must normally have been gained at the standard of first or second class (first division) honours from a New Zealand tertiary institution or equivalent;
- The degree for applicants to the doctoral programmes must also have included advanced learning in research, the execution of a research project and the writing of a report on that research;
  - Note: Where it is not clear from a student's academic transcript that their research component is equivalent to the required research for entry to an AUT doctorate, supervisors are required to provide an explicit statement of how they have determined the evidence of equivalence (not a character statement) for entry to the AUT Doctoral programme. This statement is to be made in the special admission section of the Admission to a Doctoral Programme form.

The evidence submitted should show the equivalence of research competency that is equivalent to the standard admission requirements, in a discipline which is appropriate to the proposed research.

- In addition, a professional doctorate applicant must provide evidence of having a minimum of five years' professional experience in their specific area of study.

For detailed eligibility criteria refer to the Standard Qualification Regulations in the Academic Calendar.

#### English Language Requirements

All applicants to postgraduate programmes are expected to have an appropriate level of proficiency in English prior to admission.

Applicants for whom English or Māori is not their first language are required to provide either: An International English Language Testing System (IELTS) results card (Academic), or evidence of a comparable pass in an equivalent language test, or other recognised English proficiency equivalency as outlined in the English Language Assessment Criteria Protocol. All results should have been gained within the last two years.

The normal requirement is that the student supplies an IELTS test result and attain the following prior to admission:

**Doctoral Programmes**                      6.5 overall with 7 in writing and no band less than 6.  
Engineering/Computing and Mathematical Sciences require 6.5 in writing

Where this is not provided, alternatives may be applied. Refer to the English Language Assessment Criteria Protocol for further details.

### *International Students*

International PhD students are eligible for domestic fees provided that they are studying full-time, their supervisory team includes a recognised leading researcher and that they are studying in New Zealand. Students may leave the country for data collection purposes for up to 1 year and still remain eligible. Refer to the *Off-Campus Registration* protocol for more details on conducting study off-campus.

The Associate Dean (Postgraduate) will ensure that the leading researcher criteria are met before proceeding with the application and will confirm with the Graduate Research School (GRS).

Note: Leading researchers are supervisors who are eligible to supervise at doctoral level and do not need to apply for leading researcher status.

## Admission

### *Application Requirements*

All enquiries sent to [doctoral.and.mphil.admissions@aut.ac.nz](mailto:doctoral.and.mphil.admissions@aut.ac.nz) will be directed to formally apply online in the first instance. The University Admissions Office (UAO) will collate the documentation and then release the application to the GRS for an initial assessment to ensure the applicant meets the entry requirements. Following this assessment, the GRS will release the application to the appropriate faculty to assess if there are suitable supervisors and resources prior to requesting an Admission to a Doctoral Programme form be completed.

### *Preparation Paper*

To facilitate the preparation of the initial research proposal, applicants to doctoral programmes can be provided with access to university resources, free of charge for three months. Applicants and supervisors should contact their faculty postgraduate administrator to arrange enrolment into the preparation paper.

Applicants should note that enrolment in this paper does not constitute eligibility for student loans and allowances or acceptance onto the programme.

### *Enrolling in the Research Proposal Preparation Paper*

- The faculty will enrol the applicant in a nil fee paper and advise the Graduate Research School (GRS);
- The GRS will advise Student Hub of the enrolment and request a student identification card be generated and sent to the applicant.

### *Special Admission*

In exceptional circumstances applicants who do not meet the standard entry criteria may be admitted following further assessment of their professional and research background and will be required to provide a statement of

support from their supervisor within their Admission to a Doctoral Programme form. On occasion, this may be provided as a separate letter appended to the application.

If an applicant does not meet AUT's standard admission requirements, a special admission application may be considered. In considering this special admission application the University Postgraduate Research Board will consider the following:

1. Evidence of experience, qualifications and/or training that is equivalent to the standard admission requirements for the programme being applied for.
2. Evidence that shows the applicant has the potential to be successful in the programme.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide such evidence as part of their application for special admission.

### **Supervisor Support Statement**

The supervisor support statement should detail key reasons underpinning their support the student's commencement of a doctoral thesis (including budget implications, where applicable). It should be an explicit statement of how the primary supervisor/co-supervisor (admin lead) has determined the equivalence of evidence (not a character statement) for entry to the AUT Doctoral programme. The statement is particularly relevant and important where entry criteria are not clearly met and should also include:

- Competency/knowledge of the methodology and methods to be undertaken and that this knowledge is current;
- When the admitting qualification is older than five years that there is evidence of currency within the discipline;
- Where the application is borderline in meeting the criteria, recommend possible conditions.

The statement should provide examples and use the student's previous qualifications, publications, and work history (where relevant) to demonstrate the above. The documents mentioned should be part of the application: transcripts, references CVs, etc.

### *Review by Faculty Postgraduate Committee*

The Faculty Postgraduate Office will review the application for completeness and will complete their section of the Admission to a Doctoral Programme form and obtain approval of the Faculty's Postgraduate Committee /Associate Dean (Postgraduate). Once approved by the Faculty, the Admission to a Doctoral Programme form together with the application and associated documents will be forwarded to the Graduate Research School for approval at the University Postgraduate Research Board (UPRB).

Faculties are required to submit documentation to the Graduate Research School before an admission may be considered. The required documentation includes:

- a completed and signed *Admission to Doctoral Programme* form
- academic transcripts (where applicable, certified transcripts and parchments for both undergraduate and postgraduate degree)
- the applicant's CV (for professional doctorates a minimum of 5 years professional experience specific to the area of study must be stated)
- IELTS (or equivalent) for applicants whom English or Māori is not their first language
- Additional documentation may be requested in order to appropriately assess that the entry criteria has been met (including a supervisor support letter endorsed by the Associate Dean (Postgraduate))

### *Review by the University Postgraduate Research Board (UPRB)*

The Graduate Research School will check that the normal entry criteria have been met and will approve the admission under delegated authority from the UPRB (if the admission meets the normal entry criteria). Applicants that do not

meet the normal entry requirements may be considered for special admission, which are referred to the Dean of the Graduate Research School (and in some instances the UPRB) for approval.

An offer of place is only issued once the UPRB accepts the applicant into the doctoral programme. All supervisory staff new to AUT and new supervisors are required to attend an AUT Supervision Workshop.

The initial admission status will be determined by the UPRB as provisional. In some circumstances, a student transferring from another institution or qualification can be admitted as a confirmed student.

For further information on the doctoral admission process refer to *Appendix 1 Doctoral Admission Processes*.

## Conditions on Admission

All students are admitted provisionally to the programme and are required to meet the following requirements before full admission is granted:

- Submit regular progress reports to the UPRB. The frequency of the required reports is detailed in the Postgraduate Handbook and the *Progress Report Protocol*.
- Completed a Confirmation of Candidature research proposal and submitted it to the UPRB within 12 months for full-time students and 24 months for part-time students from the date of first enrolment for PhD students and immediately following the coursework component for professional doctorates. Please refer to the *Confirmation of Candidature Protocol* for more details on this process.

Students who do not directly meet the entry criteria may be required to meet additional requirements during their provisional admission. These conditions may include:

- Undertaking additional coursework, as required in the field of study (such as a research methods paper)
- Appointment of a secondary supervisor (required prior to enrolment for PhD and by Confirmation of Candidature for professional doctorates)
- Successfully completing an IELTS examination and meeting the required scores before enrolment in the doctoral programme

Where required, certified documents must be supplied prior to admission (enrolment) in the thesis.

## Enrolments

PhD students are required to be enrolled in one of four intakes throughout the year (1<sup>st</sup> February, 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1<sup>st</sup> July or 1<sup>st</sup> October) Professional doctorates (DHSc or EdD) will enrolled in one of two intakes per year (1<sup>st</sup> February or 1<sup>st</sup> July).

From 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024, domestic doctoral students may apply to study full or part-time. Full-time students must complete three years of study before submission for examination (equivalent to 3EFTS of enrolments for a 360-point programme). Part-time students must complete six years of study before they can submit for examination. For international students to remain eligible for domestic fees they must be enrolled full-time.

## Outcome

Doctoral applicants are aware of the requirements, regulations and application process that is undertaken for efficient admission to a doctoral programme.

## Review

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October 2016

## Version Approvals

V1.0 Oct 2016

V1.1 Apr 2019

V1.2 May 2022

V1.3 June 2023

V1.4 February 2024

## Review Date

June 2025

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October 2016

## *Related Documents*

Admission to Doctoral Programme

AFE - Application for Enrolment (Domestic)

IAFE- International Application for Enrolment

## *Related Protocols*

English Language Protocol

Off-Campus Registration

Progress Report Protocol

Confirmation of Candidature Protocol