

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN RESEARCH COURSE RULES



This Course Rules relates to students commencing on or after 10 January 2026. Please refer to the [previous version](#) for students who commenced before 10 January 2026.

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 These course rules govern the Graduate Certificate in Research (GCR) at CQUniversity.
- 1.2 These course rules ensure that the GCR course meets CQUniversity's strategic, policy, and operational requirements, and complies with the:
 - [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Framework\) 2021](#) (Cwlth)
 - [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) (AQF) Level 8 Graduate Certificate qualification specifications, and
 - [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#) (Cwlth).

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 These course rules apply to the GCR offered by CQUniversity, either as a standalone course or as an embedded curriculum within other coursework offerings (for example, Master of Laboratory Medicine; Master of Public Health).

- 2.2 These course rules do not apply to the GCR when an embedded part of the Doctor of Philosophy (Industry) degree. Refer to the [Doctor of Philosophy \(Industry\) Course Rules](#).

3 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 GCR candidates must understand and comply with policy documents applicable to coursework students as well as those relevant to research higher degree (RHD) studies, including:
- [Animal Ethics Procedure](#)
 - [Assignment of Authorship Policy](#)
 - [Code of Conduct for Research](#)
 - [Human Research Ethics Procedure](#)
 - [Intellectual Property and Moral Rights Policy](#)
 - [Research Data Management Policy and Procedure](#)
 - [Research Higher Degree Supervision Policy and Procedure](#), and
 - [Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure](#).

Course governance and management

- 3.2 The GCR's quality assurance will be managed through the University's academic committee structure, including the Research Course Committee and Research Committee.
- 3.3 The Dean School of Graduate Research is given considerable duties and responsibilities in managing the GCR via these course rules. In discharging these duties, the Dean may delegate such responsibility, and/or consult with the Course Coordinator or Deputy Dean (School of Graduate Research).

4 COURSE RULES

Entry requirements

- 4.1 An applicant may be considered for admission into the GCR course if the person holds:
- a) a recognised completed bachelor degree in any discipline that meets the Level 7 criteria of the [AQF](#) or equivalent
 - b) a recognised completed diploma (or an equivalent vocational education and training qualification) together with a minimum of three years relevant professional experience, or
 - c) a minimum of five years relevant professional experience and formal skills or learning that demonstrates the applicant's capacity to undertake the course.
- 4.2 Applicants applying on the basis of experience will be required to provide evidence of writing skills and may be required to attend an admissions interview.
- 4.3 In considering the above admissions criteria, the University will have regard to the recency of the applicant's formal qualifications, professional experience, and/or formal skills/learning and the extent to which this links with the applicant's proposed research topic area.
- 4.4 Applicants must meet the applicable requirements as set out in the [English Language Proficiency Requirements Policy and Procedure](#).
- 4.5 If an applicant is born outside of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, or the United States of America; or does not hold citizenship of one of those countries, then certified documentary evidence of English language proficiency must be provided. The University may also request international applicants studying onshore to provide a motivation to study statement and financial declaration to support their application for admission as a Genuine Student.

- 4.6 Where a domestic applicant presents with educational qualifications from an institution that does not instruct in English, the University reserves the right to request evidence of English language proficiency, prior to granting admission.

Application for admission

- 4.7 The application for admission must be submitted through the University's online admissions portal, and be accompanied by certified documentary evidence of qualifications and any other information relevant to the admission.
- 4.8 The Dean School of Graduate Research, may refuse admission to, withdraw an offer to, or cancel an enrolment of, an applicant who would otherwise be eligible for admission where they reasonably believe that:
- a) the applicant, or their presence, poses a risk to University students and/or employees, or the wider University community
 - b) the applicant may prejudice the University's reputation, management, or good governance
 - c) the applicant has acted in a dishonest and/or deceitful manner when applying for admission to the University or any other tertiary educational institution
 - d) the applicant would be lawfully prevented from entering University premises for all, or part, of the course because of a court order or any enactment or decision made under legislation
 - e) the University would be subject to sanctions under the [Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011](#) (Cwth), or the enrolment represents a relationship that is sanctioned under the [Australia's Foreign Relations \(State and Territory Arrangements\) Act 2020](#) (Cwth)
 - f) the applicant would be unable to meet the course requirements, including but not limited to attendance or group participation requirements.

Such decisions will be determined by the Dean School of Graduate Research in consultation with relevant senior management roles within the University.

Offer of admission

- 4.9 An applicant will only be admitted to the GCR where a suitable study and/or supervisory environment of research activity or other creative endeavour, inquiry, and scholarship can be provided.
- 4.10 If the applicant is deemed eligible for admission, the University will issue an offer of admission, which will contain:
- the date of commencement
 - the mode of study and campus location (for on-campus candidates)
 - details of the research supervisor/s
 - the timeline by which the course must be completed, and
 - any special conditions that the candidate may be required to fulfil.
- 4.11 The course will be deemed to have commenced on the date indicated in the offer of admission, and as confirmed by the candidate when accepting the offer of admission.

Enrolment

- 4.12 Candidates may commence the course of study at any time noting that offers of admission will be made subject to resource availability and administrative processes.
- 4.13 The standard course length is 0.5 [EFTSL](#), where 1 [EFTSL](#) is the equivalent of one year full time study. Course duration will be calculated from date of commencement to date of conferral of the award.
- 4.14 The course census date will be a minimum of 37 calendar days after course commencement for full-time enrolments, and a minimum of 74 calendar days for part-time enrolments. Candidates should be aware of

the implications of census date, in relation to tuition invoicing, fee reversals, and Student Services and Amenities Fees.

- 4.15 Retrospective requests for a change to enrolment details must be directed to the Dean School of Graduate Research, but will not be approved unless there are [compassionate and compelling circumstances](#).
- 4.16 For [international candidates](#) undertaking the course onshore, studies must be undertaken on-campus, and at a campus location where at least one member of the research supervision team is located. Online study mode is not available for onshore international enrolments.
- 4.17 For offshore candidates, either domestic or international, the only mode of study is online mode.
- 4.18 A candidate wishing to transfer between offshore and onshore enrolment may only do so by application to the Dean School of Graduate Research and subject to visa approval. Such requests will be approved only where the change provides the candidates with a suitable study and/or supervisory environment of research activity or other creative endeavour, inquiry, and scholarship.
- 4.19 [International candidates](#) must fully fund their enrolment into the GCR course, unless advised in writing by the University.
- 4.20 Recognition of prior learning for course credit, in part or in full, is not available within the GCR.

Study load

- 4.21 Applicants to the GCR may be accepted as either full-time or part-time candidates. [International applicants](#) intending to study onshore must comply with visa conditions in relation to attendance type, which may require full-time study mode.
- 4.22 Candidates would normally be expected to contribute between 35 and 40 hours per week to their research and study program for full time study, and between 17.5 and 20 hours per week for part-time study.
- 4.23 Leave of absence is not available in the GCR. Candidates who can demonstrate [compassionate and compelling circumstances](#) that have prevented timely progression in the course, may apply for withdrawal without academic or financial penalty using the [Consideration of Special Circumstances Application Form](#) (*internal student access only*).
- 4.24 Once the course census date has passed, candidates must remain in the study mode (i.e., part-time or full-time) selected at time of admission. Where [compassionate and compelling circumstances](#) can be demonstrated, the Dean School of Graduate Research may approve transition between study modes. Candidates should be aware that a change to study mode may incur tuition fees and impact on other study-related arrangements (such as eligibility for Commonwealth support payments and compliance with visa requirements). Candidates should seek appropriate advice from the relevant authority regarding such implications prior to requesting a change to study mode.

Attendance at the University

- 4.25 Candidates must attend two compulsory online intensives (up to two hours each in duration), prior to submitting a linked assessment task. These intensives will be offered multiple times within the course duration to allow candidates to schedule their attendance.
- 4.26 The University encourages candidates to attend course tutorial sessions as offered throughout the year.
- 4.27 Information on the content and scheduling of Intensive and Tutorial sessions will be communicated to candidates via the course website or via the candidate's student email account with the University.
- 4.28 The University encourages candidates to attend its campuses (including regional and metropolitan campus locations, study hubs, and virtual spaces, as appropriate) and to be part of the University research community.
- 4.29 The Dean School of Graduate Research reserves the right to vary the agreed arrangements to require a candidate to attend on-campus or via virtual spaces for certain periods if such attendance is felt to be

necessary for the successful pursuit of study. Such variations will be discussed initially between the Dean, School of Graduate Research, candidate, supervisor, and/or Course Coordinator.

Supervision arrangements

- 4.30 Supervision will be provided from the date of course commencement. Supervisor/s will be appointed according to the [Research Higher Degree Supervision Policy and Procedure](#).
- 4.31 The responsibilities and expectations for supervision in the GCR differs to the supervision provided for a RHD candidate. Research Supervisors must interact regularly with their candidate/s to:
- establish a working research relationship and contribute to a positive candidate experience, and
 - provide contextual information and feedback from the disciplinary perspective, to support the candidate in developing their assessment tasks.
- 4.32 The [Research Coursework Teaching Team](#) will focus on delivery and assessment of learning outcomes relating to the process of research, rather than evaluating discipline-specific outputs and/or deliverables.

Academic requirements

Learning outcomes

- 4.33 The learning outcomes for the GCR are:
1. Describe the fundamental components of the research process and argue the interrelationships between them.
 2. Critically analyse and synthesise relevant theory, frameworks, and literature to develop and justify a research question.
 3. Compare and evaluate research methodology, design, and methods to conceptualise and justify a research strategy to answer a specific research question.
 4. Design an effective project management plan that integrates all components of the research process.
 5. Assess the significance and application of research outcomes to academic, industry, and community contexts.
 6. Adapt written and oral communication to translate complex ideas and arguments to expert and non-expert audiences.
 7. Critically reflect on performance and growth, and the need to work ethically, professionally, and collaboratively.

Course of study

- 4.34 The GCR features a course structure based on the candidate's progress towards achieving learning outcomes, rather than on basis of credit point accrual.
- 4.35 To be considered for conferral of the qualification, candidates must demonstrate all course learning outcomes have been met, by passing at least one task per learning outcome. Candidates will be provided with information regarding minimum task completion as part of the Curriculum Plan (CP).
- 4.36 Candidates must undertake all course-related research, assessment, and administrative tasks in English.
- 4.37 Candidates are encouraged to participate in relevant training offered to research candidates by the School of Graduate Research, on advice from the [Research Coursework Teaching Team](#). This training is not a formal course component but may enhance a candidate's research skills and acquisition of course learning outcomes and graduate attributes.
- 4.38 Assessment for some modules in the course may include a choice of assessment tasks. Detailed information about particular assessment tasks required for each module will be communicated to candidates through their CP.

- 4.39 Conferral of the qualification will not occur before the candidate has served the minimum time in the active enrolment period. This period will be equivalent to 0.5 [EFTSL](#) or one full term of study (15 weeks of full time enrolment; 30 weeks of part time enrolment), whichever is the earlier.

Curriculum plans (CPs)

- 4.40 All candidates must develop a CP in consultation with their Supervisor and the [Research Coursework Teaching Team](#). The CP will identify the candidate's assessment pathway through the course and submission timelines for each module.
- 4.41 Candidates must submit their CP for approval to the Course Coordinator no later than 30 calendar days after commencing the course.
- 4.42 Once approved, variations to the CP can be requested and approved by the Course Coordinator, which may include consultation with the candidate's research supervisor/s.

Submission and grading of assessment

- 4.43 The GCR course is self-paced with assessment deadlines specified by the candidate as part of their CP. Assessments cannot be accepted beyond the course end date.
- 4.44 Candidates must submit individual assessment tasks via the course Learning Management System (Moodle) site, as they progress through the course.
- 4.45 During the course, candidates may present a draft submission to the [Research Coursework Teaching Team](#) for formative feedback. Such feedback does not form part of formal assessment or grading. Feedback will be provided on a maximum of one draft and may only be sought on the first module and final module within the course.
- 4.46 The candidate's work will be formally graded according to the [Grades and Results Policy](#).
- 4.47 A candidate will be deemed to have passed the course only if all assessment tasks have been submitted and the overall mark across all course modules is more than 50 per cent.
- 4.48 The [Research Coursework Teaching Team](#) will be guided by the [Assessment Task Re-Attempt Guideline](#) when making decisions about, and implementing, re-attempts in assessment practice.
- 4.49 The [Research Coursework Teaching Team](#) will be guided by the [Assessment Policy and Procedure \(Higher Education Coursework\)](#) when managing requests for reasonable assessment adjustments.
- 4.50 Due to the rolling nature of enrolments, assessment submission and marking occurs on a year-round basis. Assessment moderation and validation will be undertaken on a bi-annual basis to ensure consistency across the cohort.
- 4.51 The Grade Point Average (GPA) score for the course will be calculated based on the final grade appearing on the transcript for the GCR unit (RSCH20003) only.
- 4.52 Candidates with a GPA score that is equal to or exceeding 6.0 will be eligible to be conferred 'with distinction', and to receive a testamur and academic transcript bearing that citation.

Study progress

- 4.53 Candidates must illustrate ongoing progress in their studies to maintain their enrolment. Candidates may be required to submit evidence of work completed to date or meet with the Course Coordinator to discuss or revise their CP if requested by the Course Coordinator, Deputy Dean or Dean School of Graduate Research.
- 4.54 Where it is determined that ongoing and satisfactory progress is not being met, the candidate will be given the opportunity to show cause why termination of enrolment should not be actioned.
- 4.55 The Dean School of Graduate Research reserves the right to terminate enrolment if there is no response to the show cause, the show cause response is inadequate, or satisfactory progress is not regained. To be deemed adequate, a show cause needs to include:

- an appropriate justification for the failure to meet course requirements to date, such as through demonstration of compassionate or compelling circumstances
- a demonstrated commitment and capacity of the candidate to apply due effort to their course of study
- a clear and feasible plan that demonstrates how the candidate will achieve completion of all modules in their CP before their course completion date, and
- support from the supervision team or other relevant University employees involved with the candidature.

Conferral of award

- 4.56 Where the candidate has met the requirements for the qualification (see [section 4.52](#)), the Course Coordinator will recommend the conferral of award to the Dean School of Graduate Research (or Vice-President (Research) where the Dean School of Graduate Research is unavailable or has a conflict of interest).

Readmission

- 4.57 Candidates applying for readmission following an indefinite exclusion from the University due to substantiated misconduct will only be considered once a minimum period of five years has elapsed since the date of exclusion. If an application for readmission submitted after the minimum exclusion period is refused, the student may apply for readmission following a further five-year exclusion period from the date of refusal. Applications for readmission following indefinite exclusion due to substantiated misconduct must be approved by the Vice-President (Research) (or nominee).

Financial arrangements

- 4.58 Candidates in the GCR should refer to the [Student Refund and Credit Balance Policy and Procedure](#) for information relating to the administration and management of student refunds and credit balances.

Candidate responsibilities

- 4.59 It is the candidate's responsibility to regularly monitor official University correspondence and communication channels to keep abreast of information and requirements relating to their course of study and student fees.
- 4.60 At any point during the course of study, the University reserves the right to require the candidate to make contact with the School of Graduate Research. Failure to make contact within the prescribed period will result in the candidate being asked to show cause why their enrolment should not be terminated.
- 4.61 Candidates will inform the School of Graduate Research of matters relating to their enrolment, attendance at the University, and academic progress.
- 4.62 Candidates will address requests for information or actioning from their Course Coordinator, supervisor, Deputy Dean (School of Graduate Research), Dean School of Graduate Research, or the School of Graduate Research.
- 4.63 These course rules do not cover issues of visa arrangements, deferments, confirmation of enrolment, or insurance. It is the responsibility of an [international candidate](#) to notify, and seek appropriate advice from, the Student Success Division, and appropriate authorities external to the University, regarding matters of on-campus study.

Appeals

- 4.64 A candidate, supervisor or examiner who has reasonable grounds for dissatisfaction with any formal decision made under these course rules may lodge an appeal by written request to the Deputy Dean (School of Graduate Research), within 20 working days of the date of issue of the decision. If this request is denied and the candidate or supervisor can demonstrate that due process was not followed or that new evidence is available, they may lodge a further internal appeal in writing to the Dean, School of Graduate Research within 20 working days.

- 4.65 With regard to matters relating to academic assessment, a candidate who has reasonable grounds for dissatisfaction with any formal decision may appeal, in writing, to the Academic Appeals Committee. An appeal will be received by that Committee within 20 working days of formal notification of the decision.
- 4.66 The University recognises the importance of providing prompt and fair complaint resolution procedures for candidates, without victimisation for initiating, or participating, in the settlement. The candidate's enrolment will be maintained (without additional tuition liability) while the appeals process is ongoing. For further information refer to the [Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#).
- 4.67 Candidates are encouraged to access a range of University support services during their appeals process, including the [Counselling and Wellbeing](#) and [Student Advocacy](#).

Course and teaching evaluation

- 4.68 The [Research Coursework Teaching Team](#), in liaison with the Deputy Dean (School of Graduate Research), will undertake an evaluation of teaching practice in the GCR at least annually. This review will be consistent with the University's academic governance approach (via Annual Unit Enhancement Reports), and may include some, or all, of the following elements:
- self-reflection
 - invited feedback from internal University stakeholders, with respect to course resources, curriculum, assessment, and teaching delivery, and
 - feedback obtained through exit surveys of graduates.
- 4.69 Candidate feedback will also be invited via a survey on course completion (or course withdrawal).

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring, and review

- 5.1 The Dean School of Graduate Research is responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing, and ensuring compliance with these course rules.

Reporting

- 5.2 Course enhancement reviews are used to undertake regular, interim monitoring of the quality of courses at the University. Annual review of the GCR will be completed through the University's Academic Information Management System (AIMS) workflow and will be presented for Research Course Committee for approval, and to Curriculum Committee for noting.

Records management

- 5.3 Employees must manage records in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping system.
- 5.4 Course and related candidate records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the relevant [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#) (*internal access only*). Before disposing of any records, approval must be sought from the Records Team (email records@cqu.edu.au).

6 DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

Terms and definitions

EFTSL: Equivalent full-time student load, one EFTSL is equivalent to one year of full-time study.

International candidate: for the purpose of these course rules, international candidates are those who do not hold Australian or New Zealand citizenship or permanent residency in Australia.

Research Coursework Teaching Team: academic employees of the School of Graduate Research or support areas, involved in the direct delivery or assessment of the GCR and other research-related coursework units.

7 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Animals Ethics Procedure](#)

[Assessment Policy and Procedure \(Higher Education Coursework\)](#)

[Assessment Task Re-Attempt Guideline](#)

[Assignment of Authorship Policy](#)

[Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

[Australian Qualifications Framework](#)

[Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011](#) (CwIth)

[Code of Conduct for Research](#)

[Consideration of Special Circumstances Application Form](#) (*internal student access only*)

[English Language Proficiency Requirements Policy and Procedure](#)

[Grades and Results Policy](#)

[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) (CwIth)

[Human Research Ethics Procedure](#)

[Intellectual Property and Moral Rights Policy](#)

[National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#) (CwIth)

[Research Data Management Policy and Procedure](#)

[Research Higher Degree Supervision Policy and Procedure](#)

[Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure](#)

[Student Refund and Credit Balance Policy and Procedure](#)

8 FEEDBACK

8.1 Feedback about this document can be emailed to policy@cqu.edu.au.

9 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Delegated Approval Authority	N/A
Advisory Committee	Research Committee
Required Consultation	N/A
Administrator	Dean School of Graduate Research
Next Review Date	16/04/2028

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Notes	