

JOHN PAUL II INSTITUTE FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY, MELBOURNE

in conjunction with the international John Paul II Pontifical Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family



Doctoral Handbook and Regulations as at October 2015

Approved: Academic Board
11 June 2008
Council
19 August 2008

Revised: Academic Board
19 May 2010

Revised: Academic Board
13 June 2012

Revised: Academic Board
22 October 2014

Revised: Academic Board
21 October 2015

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Introduction to the Doctoral Programme of the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, Melbourne

The Institute offers a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in its own right, accredited by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.

The degree is by major thesis. Coursework, if any, in the PhD programmes is normally as a pre-requisite for admission to candidacy or as an optional supplement to the student's studies to date.

Prospective students should contact the Dean on (+61 3) 9412 3378 or by e mail info@jp2institute.org to make an appointment to speak about their background and research inter-

ests. Questions concerning financial matters, including scholarships, facilities, accommodation and visa issues should be directed to the Registrar on (+61 3) 9412 3386 or by email info@jp2institute.org.

For more general information about the history, aims, objectives and ethos of the Institute, as well as the lists of Academic and General Staff of the Institute, please consult the general *Academic Handbook* (available from the Registrar) or visit the web-site at www.jp2institute.org

Academic regulations for the John Paul II Institute Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree

1. Preamble

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programme of the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, Melbourne, is similar in structure to PhD programmes in Australian universities and other higher education institutions, but invites research into Catholic philosophical and theological thought, as well as the human sciences and pastoral care, especially in the areas of marriage and the family, bioethics and religious education.

The PhD is a dissertation-based research degree of the Institute. Optional and required coursework allows for the programme to be tailored to the needs and interests of particular students. The programme is administered by the Dean according to policies formulated by the Academic Board.

The Institute believes that, in general, a research student benefits from the joint supervision of more than one supervisor with complementary interests and capabilities relevant to research. In some cases, joint supervision will involve professionally qualified persons appointed by the Institute specifically to meet the research supervision needs of a student.

Unlike the coursework degrees, applications are accepted at any time during the year and students may, with the agreement of their supervisor(s), commence work at any time.

Essential to the application and enrolment procedures are the processes which bring together the research ambitions of interested students with potential supervisors who are either within the Institute or appointed by it. The acceptance of any student to undertake research leading to a PhD degree is based not only on the qualifications of the candidate but also on whether the candidate's research interests fall broadly within the mandate of the Institute and whether supervisors professionally qualified to provide high quality supervision in the candidate's area of interest can be provided.

2. Degree Structure and Admission Criteria

- 2.1 The PhD is a research degree undertaken entirely by a dissertation of 80,000–100,000 words.
- 2.2 Entry to the doctoral programme requires an Honours or Masters degree with a significant research component relevant to the proposed topic in excess of 10,000 words and for which the student was awarded at least a grade at the level of Distinction or second class honours Division 1 or Division A.
- 2.3 Any potential PhD candidate for whom English is not the first language must comply with Regulation 2.5 of the Institute's *Academic Regulations*. Such students must demonstrate an ability to read and write in English at levels commensurate with doctoral candidates for whom English is a first language. Such proficiency will be taken to have been demonstrated by an overall IELTS (International English Language Testing System) score of 7.0 or equivalent.
- 2.4 The student's course is individually designed and built around the methodological requirements of the research and the nature of the topic to be investigated, taking into consideration the background of the candidate. Where, in the opinion of the Dean or the Academic Board, a candidate for admission to a doctoral programme is of sufficient academic standing to merit admission to that programme but lacks adequate foundation in a particular area, that student may be required by the Dean or the Board to undertake a subject or subjects offered in the Master of Arts (Theology), whether for assessment or for audit, or such other guided reading and/or assessment as the Dean or Board deems appropriate as a prerequisite to admission to the doctoral programme.
- 2.5 Where a student is required to undertake a subject (whether for assessment or for audit) as a pre-requisite to admission to a doctoral pro-

gramme, the Institute shall certify what grade the student must attain or that the student has audited the unit. Any assessment task required may be used wholly or in part as part of the student's doctoral research.

- 2.6 The dissertation should be an original, systematic and advanced-level investigation into a significant question. This investigation culminates in the submission and examination of a substantial research dissertation.
- 2.7 Admission to the PhD programme is determined by the Academic Board on the advice of the Dean.
- 2.8 Applicants for admission to the PhD programme must submit all the information required in the current Application Form of the Institute.
- 2.9 Although the above sections specify the requirements for admission in general terms, the Academic Board retains the right to refuse candidacy based upon its assessment of the suitability of the candidate to work at this level, its evaluation of the research supervisory arrangements available at the Institute and/or its view of the appropriateness of the proposed research to the specialisations of the Institute.
- 2.10 The Academic Board may approve the enrolment of candidates in an external or off-campus mode. In considering candidacies under these conditions the Board will require that supervisory contact meets the Institute's requirements and that the candidate has access to the sources necessary for his/her area of research.

In approving the enrolment, the Academic Board must also ensure that there is:

- (a) documented consultation with external sources in relation to the programme devised for the doctoral candidate,
- (b) definition of the roles of the principal supervisor and the associate supervisor and how they are to relate to each other. One of the su-

pervisors must be available at the location that the student normally accesses for his or her studies,

- (c) determination of the workload for the doctoral programme and the minimum hours that the student is expected to participate in studies toward the doctorate. Full-time students must not be engaged in more than twenty hours per week of employment. Part-time students must be able to demonstrate that they can devote sufficient time to complete the doctorate within a reasonable time frame (eight years).

3. Transfer from another institution

- 3.1 A person who has commenced working towards a research degree at another institution of higher education may apply to the Institute to continue the research with recognition of the previous work. Normally, admission will be granted only with the agreement of the other institution and the recognition of the previous supervisor's contribution. The Institute may invite the first supervisor to participate in joint supervision, if this is appropriate.

4. Probationary Status and Approved Research Proposal

- 4.1 All candidates are admitted initially on a probationary basis of one year in the case of full-time students and two years in the case of part-time students, at the end of which the student must have demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Dean of the Institute, sufficient competency in research to warrant full candidature and have completed the requirements of the Research Proposal. The period of probation may only be extended by agreement of the Academic Board.
- 4.2 On admission the student shall develop, in conjunction with his/her supervisor(s) a Research Proposal of at least 10,000 words which outlines the topic of the dissertation, its rationale, method of approach and bibliography. That Research Proposal may contribute wholly or in part towards

the student's doctoral research. Before continuation of the doctoral research the supervisor(s) must approve the Research Proposal and certify to the Dean that the student is ready to proceed.

- 4.3 The Dean may endorse subsequent substantial changes of the Research Proposal following recommendations from the supervisor(s).

5. Tuition Fees

- 5.1 The tuition fees for a full-time doctoral student are reviewed annually and published in the *Academic Handbook*; for part-time candidates tuition fees are half those for a full-time student. These fees are calculated as an annual fee recognising that research is a continuing activity not punctuated by semester time-tabling. The starting date of PhD candidature is normally the date that the candidate's admission is approved by the Academic Board. However, on the advice of the supervisor(s) a later starting date may be approved by the Dean. Fees will be invoiced on an annual basis in advance.
- 5.2 If a candidate does not complete the degree requirements within the minimum time, additional enrolments will accrue fee liability determined by negotiation.
- 5.3 The liability for the payment of tuition fees will cease only following the termination of candidacy, the temporary interruption of candidacy through leave of absence, or by the submission of a dissertation. If, following the examination of the dissertation, it is determined by the Academic Board that significant supervised work remains to be done then the fee liability will be determined by negotiation.
- 5.4 The tuition fee includes all the costs of examining the dissertation. It does not include any of the costs of producing the manuscript or of the temporary or permanent binding demanded by the Regulations.

6. Simultaneous Enrolment

- 6.1 A candidate may not be enrolled in a PhD course whilst simultaneously enrolled in another higher degree. They may however take a course in a language related to the doctoral research.

7. Supervisors

- 7.1 All candidates are assigned a principal supervisor and may also have associate supervisor(s). In cases of joint supervision one person will be appointed as the supervisor and the other(s) will be associate supervisor(s). The supervisor and associate supervisors must be registered supervisors of the Institute (see *Register of Supervisors and Associate Supervisors Policy*).
- 7.2 The supervisor or associate supervisor may be members of the faculty of the Institute or may be external to the Institute but approved for the purpose of supervision. Under normal circumstances the supervisor taking responsibility for reporting to the Dean will be a member of the faculty of the Institute. The Board shall define the roles of the principal supervisor and the associate supervisor and how they are to relate to each other.
- 7.3 At any time during the research student's candidacy the Academic Board may change a candidate's supervisory arrangements after consultation involving the candidate, the supervisor(s) and the Dean.

8. Progress of the Research and the Dissertation

- 8.1 Candidates are expected to maintain satisfactory progress throughout their candidacy. The candidate and the supervisor(s) are jointly responsible for regular discussions on the research and on progress against the objectives established in the Research Proposal.
- 8.2 The annual Progress Report on Research provided by the student and his/her supervisor(s) is the means by

which the Dean and the Academic Board formally supervise the progress of PhD research.

- 8.3 Any candidate who fails to maintain satisfactory progress will be placed on conditional status. The conditional status will include clear definitions of short-term goals which, if not met, will lead to the termination of candidature.
- 8.4 The supervisor(s) in exercising their responsibility to the candidate should be constantly observant of the progress of their candidates, provide them with advice and, where concerns exist about the progress of candidates, report these concerns to the Dean.
- 8.5 Where circumstances warrant, a candidate may, with the endorsement of the supervisor(s), apply to the Academic Board for a period of leave from candidacy. Normally the Board will not grant leave for a period in excess of 12 months. Such leave will not be accounted in the assessment of the period of candidacy and in the calculation of the subsequent liability for the payment of tuition fees.

9. Duration

- 9.1 The minimum period for completion of the PhD degree is normally three years for a full-time candidate or six years for a part-time candidate.
- 9.2 The maximum period for completion of the PhD degree is normally four and a half years for a full-time candidate and eight years for a part-time candidate. An extension may only be granted by the Academic Board on the recommendation of the supervisor(s), endorsed by the Dean.

10. Characteristics of Dissertation

The learning outcomes at this level include a substantial original contribution to knowledge in the form of new knowledge or significant and original adaptation, application and interpretation of existing knowledge. These characteristics of learning outcomes may be based on a comprehensive and searching review of the literature,

creative work with exegesis or other systematic approach or may be based on advanced, searching and expansive critical reflection on professional theory and practice.

A graduate of a Doctoral Degree programme is able to:

- carry out an original research project, or a project(s) addressing a matter of substance concerning theology, philosophy or bioethics at a high level of originality and quality; and
- present a substantial and well ordered dissertation for submission to external examination against international standards.

11. Submission of the Dissertation for Examination

- 11.1 The format, preparation and presentation of the dissertation will conform to the Institute's *Guidelines for the Presentation of Essays and Theses*.
- 11.2 The candidate is required to submit to the Registrar's Office:
- sufficient copies of the dissertation in temporary binding to provide one to each supervisor and one to each examiner;
 - an abstract of not more than 350 words;
 - a cover sheet which declares the agreement by the supervisor(s) that the dissertation is in the form and of the standard acceptable for examination; and
 - a statement to the effect that the dissertation is the work of the candidate alone, that due acknowledgment has been made of all sources used, and no part of the work has been submitted previously in respect of any other academic award at this or any other institution.

12. Dissertation Examination

- 12.1 The Academic Board, on the advice of the Dean, appoints at least two examiners, who must be ex-

ternal to the Melbourne Institute. The supervisor(s) will supply a list of four suitable examiners to the Dean together with their curriculum vitae and a justification for their nomination.

12.2 All examiners are informed that their reports will be made available anonymously to the candidate. After the examination is complete and the candidate has passed, they may be asked whether the candidate can be informed of their identity.

12.3 At the discretion of the Academic Board the examiners shall conduct an oral examination ('viva' or 'defence') of the candidate on the subject matter of the dissertation within three months of receiving the dissertation. An overseas examiner can take part via an audio or video link. The supervisor(s) or others may attend the oral examination as observer(s).

13. Examiners' Reports

13.1 Each examiner shall submit, within one month of the oral examination or, if there is no oral examination, within three months of receiving the dissertation, a written report on the examination of the dissertation. This report will recommend that the dissertation be classified as:

- passed unconditionally;
- passed conditionally, subject to minor modifications, completed to the satisfaction of the Dean, but without the requirement of re-submission to the examiners;
- requiring substantial modification, further supervision, and re-submission for examination; the second examination will normally involve at least one examiner of the dissertation in its original form; or
- failed.

13.2 If a nominated or appointed examiner is unable to complete the

examination within a satisfactory time another examiner may be appointed.

13.3 In the case of a serious difference of opinion between dissertation examiners, the Dean will refer the issue to a designated sub-committee of the Academic Board. The sub-committee will be given copies of the dissertation and the examiners' reports and may:

- (a) seek consultation with and/or between the examiners to resolve the issue;
- (b) not re-examine the dissertation but make a recommendation to the Dean based upon the advice found within the conflicting examiners' reports;
- (c) ask the candidate to re-submit the dissertation 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 dissertation and the examiners' reports. The adjudicator's report will be provided to the sub-committee for it to make a final recommendation to the Academic Board.

13.4 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.

13.5 A candidate may be permitted to re-submit their dissertation no more than twice.

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

13.7 The Dean will provide a written report and final recommendation

to the Academic Board for its endorsement.

- 13.8 The Academic Board shall classify the candidate as having passed or failed.

14. Binding and Distribution of the Dissertation

- 14.1 When the candidate is confirmed as passed, he/she shall provide two permanently bound copies of the dissertation, in its final approved form, one to be lodged in the Mannix Library and the other to be lodged with the Registrar. The supervisors and examiners may retain their temporary-bound copies.

- 14.2 The student shall lodge with the Registrar a copy of the dissertation, in its final approved form, in digital format to be lodged on the understanding that it may be distributed to other sessions of the Institute.

15. Graduation and Degree Conferral

- 15.1 The candidate will be eligible for graduation and degree conferral only after:

- the final dissertation has been endorsed, the candidate passed by the Academic Board and the permanently bound copies of the dissertation lodged with the Library and the Registrar;
- the Council and the Archbishop (as President of the Institute) have accepted the Academic Board's recommendation for the conferral of the degree; and
- all outstanding fees have been paid.

16. Appeals

- 16.1 Appeals against any of the decisions outlined above may be made via the Dean to the Complaints Sub-Committee appointed

by the Academic Board. The Complaints Sub-committee appointed by the Academic Board is comprised of external members of the Board (members with no direct involvement in administration or teaching at the Institute).

The Complaints Sub-committee of the Academic Board moderates complaints about the performance of the teaching, research or administrative staff that have not been resolved by the management of the Institute to the satisfaction of the complainant.

- 16.2 Grounds for appeal will normally be restricted to irregularities in the conduct of an examination or documented evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of one or more of the examiners.

- 16.3 In all appeals the decision of the Complaints Sub-Committee appointed by the Academic Board will be final.

17. Human Research

- 17.1 If the research proposal would involve human participants in the research and the research is more than low risk, then it must be approved by a Human Research Ethics Committee that operates according to the NHMRC *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007). Application is to be made to another institution that has such a committee.

- 17.2 If the research proposal involves human participants in the research and the research is no more than low risk, then ethical approval from the Academic Board may be given in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research provided that the Academic Board complies with the conditions specified in section 5.1 of the NHMRC *National Statement*.