Edith Cowan University

POLICY

Policy Title: **Management of Research Candidature in Bachelor Honours Degrees**

Policy Owner: **Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor**

Keywords: **Honours Supervision Grading Student Support Theses retention**

Policy Code: **PL228 [ac090]**

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1. **INTENT**

   This policy governs all aspects of the management of research programs in Bachelor Honours Degrees at Edith Cowan University.

2. **ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE**

   2.1 This policy applies to all staff involved in the management of research candidature in Bachelor Honours Degree courses and to Honours candidates.

   2.2 As this policy applies to research candidature in Bachelor Honours Degrees, it is not applicable to the Embedded Bachelor Honours (Pass) Degree described at 4.1.2 (b)

3. **DEFINITIONS**

TERM	DEFINITION
Associate Dean (Research)	A member of the School Executive who reports to the Dean and is responsible for the oversight of research activity within the School.
Associate supervisor	A supervisor appointed to support the Principal Supervisor and contribute in an academic or mentoring role to the progress and development of the student's candidature.
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	The national policy for regulated qualifications in the Australian education and training system.
Bachelor Honours Degree	An AQF Level 8 120 credit point (1 year) course which follows a Level 7 Bachelor Degree in the same discipline

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Bachelor Honours Degree (Embedded)	An AQF Level 8 480 credit point (4 year) course in which Honours is embedded in the final year. May be graded or pass, based on whether entry was granted on merit.
Executive Dean	An executive leader of a School of the University appointed by the Vice-Chancellor and includes the Director of WAAPA.
External supervisor	External supervisors are not employed by the University and are Adjunct, Honorary or Emeritus staff and persons who support the Supervisor Panel and can contribute in discipline knowledge, research methodology, or mentoring.
Grade	Final calculation of the marks awarded which is expressed as a Class.
Honours candidate	A student enrolled in a Bachelor Honours Degree and whose body of research work is incomplete or under examination.
Honours coordinator	An academic member of school staff who oversees the Honours candidate by providing support for Honours enrolment, supervisor allocation and thesis examination.
Mark	The numerical score awarded to the units which are used in the calculation of the grade
Principal Supervisor	The person who takes the lead in terms of overall accountability for a student's or candidate's research progress in the Bachelor Honours Degree.
Rules	University Rules: Admission, Enrolment and Academic Progress
Supervisory Panel	The principal supervisor and at least one other associate supervisor and/or external supervisor.
WAM	Weighted Average Mark

4.   POLICY CONTENT

4.1   Bachelor Honours Degree Structures

4.1.1 Students can complete either a Graded or a Pass Honours Degree.

4.1.2 The degree structures are as listed below. For further details consult the Curriculum Approval policy (PL127).
(a) Graded

- Standalone Bachelor Honours Degree – 1 year volume of learning. A merit entry degree for students with a WAM of 70% or above. Awarded with 1, 2A, 2B or Pass Honours.

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- Embedded Bachelor Honours Degree (Graded) – 4 years volume of learning. A merit entry degree for students with a WAM of 70% or above. Such students are invited to enroll in the Honours course at the end of the third year of their degree. Awarded with 1, 2A, 2B Class Honours.

(b) Pass

- Embedded Bachelor Honours Degree (Pass) – 4 years volume of learning. This is not a merit entry award. The degree is awarded with no grade attached.

4.2 Duration of the Research Program in the Bachelor Honours Degree

4.2.1 The duration of the research program and the process for approving any extension are mandated in the Rules.

4.3 Approval of the Research Proposal

4.3.1 Except where professional accreditation bodies allow, the proposal is reviewed by two independent reviewers, who may be internal or external to the University..

4.3.2 Approval of the candidate's research proposal requires the presentation and defence of the research proposal at a seminar or committee.

4.3.3 The research proposal is approved by the Associate Dean (Research).

4.3.4 Unless otherwise approved by the Associate Dean (Research), the research proposal together with appropriate ethics requirements must be approved within the first semester of equivalent full time study.

4.3.5 The recruitment or data collection phase of the research must not be commenced until the research proposal and risk assessment plan have been approved and ethics requirements have been met.

4.4 Appointment of Supervisors

4.4.1 The Associate Dean (Research) must appoint at least one supervisor, before the commencement of any required coursework or research units.

4.4.2 Except in exceptional circumstances, as determined by the relevant Associate Dean (Research), at least the principal supervisor for each candidate will be a member of the full-time or part-time academic staff of the University employed under an ongoing or fixed- term contract.

4.5 Supervisor Requirements

4.5.1 All supervisors, whether principal, associate or external must carry out their responsibilities of supervisors in compliance with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

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4.5.2 Principal and associate supervisors must:

(a) Have a higher degree by research qualification, equivalent degree or significant research or professional experience judged to be equivalent by the Associate Dean (Research)

(b) Be currently research active, which can be demonstrated through competitive research income, research or creative activity outputs or equivalent, as determined by the Associate Dean (Research).

(c) Have recent successful experience in supervision of Honours candidates through to completion as a principal supervisor, unless otherwise approved by the Associate Dean (Research).

(d) Have undertaken appropriate training in higher degree by research or Honours supervision, updated every three years, unless otherwise approved by the Associate Dean (Research).

4.5.3 Associate supervisors may be appointed to support the principal supervisor and contribute in an academic or mentoring role to the progress and development of the student's candidature.

4.5.4 External Supervisors must have a higher degree by research qualification, an equivalent degree or significant research or professional experience judged to be equivalent by the Associate Dean (Research).

4.6 Supervisor Absence

4.6.1 Supervisors must ensure that the candidate has advanced notice about any planned extended leave (of four weeks or more) or retirement during their candidature. Suitable alternative supervisory arrangements should be negotiated with the Associate Dean (Research) and communicated to the candidate in writing.

4.6.2 With the approval of the Associate Dean (Research), the Associate Supervisor may assume the role of Principal Supervisor when the Principal Supervisor is absent for a period greater than two weeks but less than four or more consecutive weeks (see 4.6.1).

4.7 Principal Supervisor Roles and Responsibilities

4.7.1 The principal supervisor bears primary responsibility for oversight of the student's progress in the research program and will sign off on the nomination of the research proposal, reviewers and thesis examiners.

4.7.2 The principal supervisor and the Honours candidate must reach agreement concerning the authorship of publications and acknowledgment during and after the candidature. There should be open and mutual recognition of the Honours candidate's and the supervisor's contributions on all published work arising from the project, in compliance with the University's Authorship, Peer Review and Publication of Research policy.

The additional responsibilities of the principal supervisor at included at Attachment 1.

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4.8 Associate Dean (Research) Responsibilities

The Associate Dean (Research) is responsible for ensuring the following requirements are addressed at School or Research Centre level:

4.8.1 Appointment of an Honours Coordinator to oversee and coordinate the Honours program within the School or Discipline area. Honours Coordinator responsibilities are listed in Attachment 2

4.8.2 Provision of an Honours Guide for students, which sets out all procedures and requirements.

4.8.3 Ensuring a supportive research environment for Honours candidates, including liaison with research centres where appropriate.

4.8.4 Provision of adequate resources, space, services and facilities to support the Honours candidate through to the completion of the degree.

4.8.5 Provision of orientation/induction sessions for commencing Honours students, which will provide information about the research process, supervision, research funding support, access to general facilities, computing assistance and library services.

Induction must include training relating to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, research ethics, requirements for privacy and confidentiality, occupational health and safety, environmental protection and sustainability matters and the University's mechanism for dispute resolution.

4.8.6 Ensuring access to appropriate on-campus computer facilities adequately equipped with research and other software and other facilities such as printing. After-hours access to computer facilities should be available to all Honours students.

4.9 Bachelor Honours Degree Candidate Responsibilities

The primary responsibility for the undertaking active pursuit and completion of the research candidature rests with Honours candidates, whose responsibilities are listed in Attachment 3.

4.10 Appointment of Examiners

4.10.1 The Associate Dean (Research) shall appoint at least two examiners.

4.10.2 The Associate Dean (Research) shall appoint at least one examiner who is not the supervisor of the Honours candidate to be examined. Additionally, the Associate Dean (Research) will not appoint any person to be an examiner who they believe may have a conflict of interest.

4.10.3 The Associate Dean (Research) may, at the request of a candidate or at the request of an examiner, discharge the examiner and appoint another person in his or her place.

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4.11 Requirements of Bachelor Honours Degree Theses

4.11.1 The thesis must incorporate an account of research conducted during the course and the outcomes of the research.

4.11.2 The thesis may be in a written or non-standard form depending upon the format applicable to the discipline. In addition the length of a thesis can vary. As a guide:

(a) A standard thesis may range in length from 8,000 - 20,000 words.

(b) A non-standard thesis, which has a substantial body of creative work:

i. Practical work with accompanying scholarly exegesis may range between 5,000 - 10,000 words.

ii. Other media may be used such as exhibition, performance, novel, film and computer programs. While it is acknowledged that a performance cannot be replicated, it may be recorded via a script or a video of the work.

4.11.3 The Associate Dean (Research) may approve an amendment of the title of a thesis.

4.12 Grading Schema and Credit Points for Honours Units

The Grading Schema (as per Rule 4.5) to be used are as follows:

4.12.1 All coursework units in graded Honours courses must be a minimum of 40 credit points and will use Grading Schema 1.

4.12.2 Any units that comprise of a preparation thesis component will use Grading Schema 4 (pass/fail).

4.12.3 The final thesis units must be a minimum total of 40 credit points and will use Grading Schema 1, which will allow a mark to be recorded on a student's record for the thesis component and allow determination of the class of Honours awarded to the student.

4.12.4 All units in Embedded Honours courses will use Grading Schema 1.

4.12.5 Thesis units in Embedded Honours courses will be minimum 15 credit points.

4.13 Submission of the Thesis for Examination

4.13.1 At the time of submitting a thesis for examination, Honours candidates are required to submit:

(a) Two print copies or a digital copy of the thesis for examination.

(b) A digital copy of the entire thesis (text component of the thesis and, if

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applicable, any supporting material in digital form) in an electronic format approved by the University Library; and

(c) A signed copy of the thesis submission form and any supporting documentation.

(d) On submission for examination, students are required to affirm that their thesis may be included in the Library catalogue if they are awarded First Class Honours.

4.14 Examination of Bachelor Honours Degree Theses

4.14.1 The examiners shall report to the Associate Dean (Research) their assessment of each thesis within 4 weeks after submission.

4.14.2 **Defamatory Material:**
If an examiner believes that the thesis may contain defamatory material the process mandated in section 5.7 of the Rules must be followed.

4.14.3 **Examiners' Reports**

(a) Written Examiners' reports will include an evaluation of the Honours thesis and a percentage mark for the thesis in accordance with Grading Schema 1.

(b) The examiners' reports will include recommendation that the thesis be:
   i. accepted unchanged; or
   ii. accepted subject to minor amendments being made to the satisfaction of the supervisor; or
   iii. rejected.

4.15 Determination of the Outcome

4.15.1 After consideration of the examiners' reports, the Associate Dean (Research) will determine the outcome.

4.15.2 Where the two examiners' reports have a discrepancy of more than 10%, the thesis will normally be sent to a third examiner. In these cases, the final mark for the thesis component will be based on the average of the two closest marks. To clarify the application of this guideline, three examples are provided in Attachment 5.

4.16 Grading of Bachelor Degree Honours

The following process is not applicable for the Embedded Bachelor Honours Pass Degree.

4.16.1 The Honours grade is calculated using the marks awarded to the coursework and the thesis units.

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4.16.2 In all Bachelor Honours Degrees the weighting of assessment for these components is 50% for the coursework units and 50% for the thesis.

4.16.3 In all Embedded Bachelor Honours (Graded) Degrees the weighting is as listed in Attachment 6.

4.16.4 In all Bachelor Honours Degrees practicum units are not considered to be either coursework or thesis units for the calculation of the final Honours grade.

4.16.5 The Associate Dean (Research) will recommend to Board of Examiners the Honours grade using the overall calculated Honours mark per the following table:

First Class	80+
Upper Second Class	70 to 79.9
Lower Second Class	60 to 69.9

4.17 Submission and Retention of Honours Thesis after Examination

Candidates who are awarded First Class Honours will be invited to submit a digital copy of the entire thesis (text component of the thesis and, if applicable, any supporting material in digital form) in an electronic format approved by the University Library. These students will be asked to make corrections required by examiners. If a student chooses not to make these corrections, then a cover sheet added to the thesis will indicate that corrections have not been made (if corrections are made, the cover sheet will indicate that changes have been made).

Further information is at Attachment 7.

4.18 Appeal Process

A candidate who is dissatisfied with the assessment of their academic work or progress may appeal against the decision to the Student Appeals Committee in accordance with Rule 58 of the Rules.

4.19 Grievance Procedures

4.19.1 Where a student who is dissatisfied with their supervision, or who has slow/difficult progress resolving issues, has had discussions with their supervisor/s which have failed, the student is encouraged to make a private appointment with the:

(a) Honours Coordinator of their School; or
(b) Associate Dean (Research)

4.19.2 If there are any problems or any disagreements encountered during the candidature that cannot be resolved between the Honours candidate and the supervisor or with either of the above mediators, they should be dealt with in accordance with the Student Complaints Policy.

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4.20 Graduation and Recording the Result on the Statement of Academic Record and Testamur.

4.20.1 Once examiners' reports have been received and a grade determined, the student will be cleared for graduation by the relevant School Board of Examiners.

4.20.2 The grade of Honours will be printed on the final academic transcript and recorded on the student's official record in the student record system. The final percentage will be recorded in the student record system.

5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Policy Owner Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) has overall responsibility for the content of this policy and its operation in ECU.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

6.1 Other documents which are relevant to the operation of this policy are as follows:

- University Rules: Admission, Enrolment and Academic Progress Rules
- Curriculum Approval Policy (PL127)

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

Policy Owner	Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor
All Enquiries Contact:	Manager, Quality and Academic Governance
Telephone:	08 9304 2782
Email address:	j.mccaffrey@ecu.edu.au

8. APPROVAL HISTORY

Policy Approved by:	Vice-Chancellor
Date Policy First Approved:	11 March 2011
Revision History:	• September 2013 (AB54/13) • Reviewed and Updated – Approved by AB (AB85/17) and Vice-Chancellor 11 September 2017
Next Revision Due:	September 2020
TRIM File Reference	SUB/29550

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR

The Principal supervisor is required to:

1. Advise candidates of their procedural and substantive rights and responsibilities, contained in this policy

2. Ensure knowledge of and compliance with all University policies relevant to their research, including Occupational Health and Safety, Bio-safety, Human Research Ethics and Animal Ethics

3. Maintain regular contact with the candidate and negotiate and maintain a reasonable timetable of meetings, milestones and submitted work, which is reviewed regularly during the course of candidature. See Attachment 4 First Interview Checklist.

4. Identify any shortcomings in a candidate's background and suggest appropriate training

5. Ensure that the proposed Honours research project is appropriate for the Bachelor Honours Degree

6. Ensure appropriate methods of research data management are identified and undertaken in compliance with University policy

7. Monitor the performance of the Honours candidate relative to the work agreement and the standard required, and ensure that the candidate is made aware of whatever the supervisor may regard as inadequate progress or work below the standard generally expected

8. Provide appropriate, helpful, and explanatory feedback to the candidate on any submissions, return such feedback in reasonable time, and assist candidates to develop solutions as problems are identified

9. Provide opportunities for candidates to develop the skills necessary for academic writing appropriate to reporting research in the discipline or area of study and to develop their presentation skills

10. Support and mentor candidates to further develop Graduate Attributes and provide career advice

11. Advise the Associate Dean (Research), and/or the Honours Coordinator of the names and credentials of suitable reviewers and examiners

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ATTACHMENT 2

HONOURS COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Within the School or Research Institute, the Honours Coordinator is required to:

1. Work with the Associate Dean (Research) to oversee Honours candidature.

2. Provide support for Honours enrolment, supervisor allocation, proposal review and thesis examination.

3. Represent the Honours area at University and School meetings and committees.

4. Communicate and disseminate relevant administrative, educational, policy, rules, and guidelines to Honours students, supervisors, reviewers and examiners.

5. Promote Honours to the undergraduate cohort.

6. Offer support and oversight in the development and refinement of Honours programs and initiatives.

7. Convene ad hoc working parties on Honours as needed.

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ATTACHMENT 3

RESPONSIBILITIES OF BACHELOR HONOURS STUDENTS

Students in the Bachelor Honours Degree are required to become familiar with the procedural and substantive rights and responsibilities of Honours candidates at the University, including the following:

1. Attend a meeting between candidate and supervisor(s) to complete the First Interview Checklist as outlined in Attachment 4.

2. Comply with all University policies relevant to Honours candidature, including Occupational Health and Safety, Biosafety, Human Research Ethics and Animal Ethics.

3. Negotiate with the supervisor(s) appropriate ways of documenting meetings including agreed actions arising from supervision sessions.

4. Maintain regular contact with the supervisor(s) and negotiate and maintain a reasonable timetable of meetings, milestones and submitted work, which is reviewed regularly in the course of candidature.

5. Present required written material in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussions before scheduled meetings.

6. Discuss with the supervisor(s) the most useful type of help required for successful completion of the degree.

7. Undertake appropriate training or remedial work identified by the supervisor(s), should this be necessary.

8. Manage research data in accordance with University policy.

9. Accept responsibility for final copies of the thesis and submit a thesis which meets School requirements on presentation and content.

10. Comply with the academic rules and policy relating to authorship, peer review and publication of research.

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**FIRST INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE SUPERVISOR AND THE STUDENT –
FIRST INTERVIEW CHECKLIST**

At the first meeting, the Supervisor and Honours Candidate should discuss the *Management of Research Candidature in Bachelor Honours Degrees Policy* with particular reference the responsibilities of the Principal Supervisor and the student. The student and Principal Supervisor should come to an agreement on the items listed below:

Objectives and Key Contacts:

- Honours research program objectives.
- Details of key contact people within the School or Discipline area, including the Associate Dean (Research).

Role of supervisors and students:

- The duration, location and timing of future meetings

- The structure of future meetings and the responsibilities of the candidate and supervisors.

- Processes for submission of work e.g. whether material should be submitted before meetings.

- Whether to keep a diary of meetings or another method of record keeping.

Key Dates & Schedule:

- A broad timetable for the complete thesis showing key milestones and any foreseen intervening matters such as required coursework or fieldwork.

- Oral presentations.

- Timetabling of the ethics application.

- Submission for examination of Thesis or Research Project.

Training, resources, support services for Honours students:

- What access to equipment, study space, computer/software, access to email and funds is available to the candidate from the School? Where these are and will be available? Are there any likely resource implications?

- Is there any financial or material assistance?

- If training is required then an agreed timetable for completion to be negotiated

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- Which research centre would be most closely affiliated with this research?

- What services/resources can the School offer?

- What services/resources can SSC and Scholarships Office offer?

- Contact details of the Student Support Offices (Student Services), School support officers and Librarian.

- Prizes, scholarships and grants.

- What other services are available from the University?

Policies – How do the following influence the research being undertaken?

- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research

- IP Intellectual Property Policy and the consequences candidate's research

- OHS and Ethics Policies (Human, Animal and Bio-Safety) and risk assessment requirements

- Authorship and Plagiarism

- Grievance Procedures as outlined above.

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GRADING AN HONOURS THESIS WITH MORE THAN TWO EXAMINERS

Example 1	• First examiner 80% • Second examiner 60% • Third examiner 76% In this case the two closed marks are averaged i.e. the first and third examiners, as the Second Examiner is considered to be the outlier. (80+76)/2 = 78% for the
Example 2	• First examiner 60% • Second examiner 80% • Third examiner 60% In this case the two closest marks are averaged i.e. the first and third examiners, as the Second Examiner is considered to be the outlier. (60+60)/2 = 60% for the thesis component.
Example 3	• First examiner 80% • Second examiner 60% • Third examiner 70% In this case where the Third Examiner's result is equidistant between the First and Second Examiners' scores, all three examiners marks are averaged as it is not possible to exclude an obvious outlier. (80+60+70)/3 = 70% for the thesis component.

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ATTACHMENT 6

Embedded Honours Course Calculations

Bachelor of Speech Pathology Honours

Weighted calculation as follows:

Thesis Unit	SPE5104	67%
Coursework Unit	SPE5102	33%

Note: Students need to have successfully passed PSY3303.

Bachelor of Science (Occupational Therapy) Honours

Weighted calculation as follows:

Thesis Unit	OCT5218	67%
Coursework Unit	OCT5217	33%

Bachelor of Engineering – All Honours Degrees

Thesis Unit   ENS5146
WAM achieved for final year units, including two Honours Thesis Units

The class of Honours will be awarded as follows:

Honours Class	Criteria
First Class	(Final year WAM ≥ 80) **and** (Thesis Mark ≥ 80)
Upper Second Class	(Final year WAM ≥ 70) **and** (Thesis Mark ≥ 70)
Lower Second Class	(Final year WAM ≥ 60) **and** (Thesis Mark ≥ 60)
Ungraded	(Final year WAM < 60) **or** (Thesis Mark < 60)

Bachelor of Laws (Honours)
Weighted calculation as follows:

Thesis Units	LAW5800 and LAW5801	50%
WAM of all 4th Year Units		50%

Bachelor of Social Work Honours

Thesis Unit	SWK5125	50%
WAM of all 4th Year Units		50%

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<div align="right">**ATTACHMENT 7**</div>

SUBMISSION AND RETENTION OF HONOURS THESIS AFTER EXAMINATION

1. The University Library shall deposit the digital master for permanent retention in the University Archives. Electronic full text copies of theses will be made available to all ECU staff and students via the Library Catalogue (password protected) and to the wider community via the Institutional repository (open access). Students can choose to limit or prevent online access to the thesis by nominating to opt out.

2. In making the thesis publicly available, the Library must give due regard to the protection of the candidate's or third parties' interests under laws relating to copyright, patents or industrial designs or considerations of confidentiality including those arising from the lodgement of a statement by the candidate under rule 6.10.4.

3. Where the Library is satisfied that an appendix to a candidate's thesis marked 'confidential' contains material obtained or produced by the candidate on condition that the material be kept confidential, the Library may authorise the candidate to prohibit access to the appendix for such period and on such conditions as the Library determines.

4. Where the Library is satisfied that the disclosure of the thesis, or some specified part of it, to any person including the University Library or Archives should be prohibited for a specified period, the Library may authorise the candidate to prohibit disclosure for that period.

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