



Transfer Between Research Masters and Doctor of Theology

Approval Resolution No: RAB 0711/4/4 Date: Nov 2007

PART A: POLICY

1. Purpose and Scope

The following requirements apply to ACT candidates who are already enrolled in the MTh program and are desiring to transfer to the ThD program.

2. Policy Level

Academic/Management/Operational:

3. Background

The ACT has allowed candidates in the Master of Theology program to transfer to the Doctor of Theology program upon recommendation of their supervisor(s). To date no formal guidelines for this process have been developed or given to students and their supervisors. This policy is an attempt to redress that omission.

4. Definitions

ThD – ACT Doctor of Theology program

MTh – ACT Master of Theology program

Research project – the major thesis of the MTh or ThD program

Research Co-ordinator – the academic staff member in an affiliated college who has responsibility for oversight of research student training in the college and normally represents the college at meetings of the Research Awards Board.

5. Principles

Candidates considering a transfer to the ThD program should be advised that expectations, requirements and characteristics of research in masters and doctoral programs are different. Transition, particularly at an advanced stage in the masters program, may be difficult. Problems may be encountered in developing the research project to a new conceptual level or integrating research from the masters and doctoral programs into a coherent thesis.

Candidates and their supervisors should consider carefully the factors set out in the requirements for the ThD as listed in the ACT Postgraduate Handbook as well as the information in this policy.

6. Policy Content

A A candidate in the MTh program who has completed coursework components, who applies to transfer to the ThD program, should be advised that no recognition will be available for coursework units completed as part of the MTh program.

- B. Applications for transfer will not be considered until the candidate has been in the masters program for at least one (1) calendar year part time (or the full time equivalence) and has been confirmed as an MTh candidate.
- C. Before recommending a transfer, the candidate's supervisor(s) should give careful consideration to the applicant's potential to conduct doctoral level research, including whether the proposed development of the masters research project is likely to yield a thesis at doctoral level. Conversion should take into account the differences between masters and ThD objectives.
- D. The supervisor's recommendation to the Research Awards Board in the case of a transfer should specifically address these points:
 - D1. quality of the applicant's current work (including assurance that the applicant is progressing with work at a standard and rate which will be likely to ensure that a thesis of the required standard is submitted within the time remaining for candidature);
 - D2. potential of the applicant to conduct research at the doctoral level; and
 - D3. potential of the masters research project for upgrading to doctoral level.
- E. The student should submit to the Research Awards Board, with their supervisor's recommendation (see D above) a 2,000 word ThD proposal that includes a justification for their transfer from the MTh and a statement that indicates where the material to be externally assessed fits into the overall scope of the proposed doctoral research, and a bibliography.
- F. If on receipt of the ThD proposal the Board resolves that the candidate be granted leave to submit a piece of research to be assessed for the transfer, then the candidate will submit for external evaluation the following:
 - F1. substantial written work of at least 15,000 words which might take the form of a chapter of the thesis; and
 - F2. the ThD proposal approved by the Board, and any other information that the candidate or his/her supervisor(s) considers relevant.
- G. The submission (see F above) will be evaluated by one assessor chosen by the Dean or the Chair of the Research Awards Board (or their representative) who is qualified in the field, meets academic requirements for appointment as doctoral examiners and is not closely connected to the candidate or his/her supervisor(s). The assessor is expected to be external to the ACT.
- H. The assessor will submit a report recommending whether the transfer should proceed in principle and specific action to clarify any outstanding issues.
- I. The Research Awards Board will make a decision on the basis of the assessor's report in conjunction with other information that may be relevant, such as the candidate's annual progress reports.
- J. If the application for transfer to the ThD is successful, the time enrolled in the research component, but not the time spent enrolled in any coursework units of study, of the MTh will be deducted from the time allowed for ThD candidature.
- K. International students should be aware that a change of course may have implications for their visa and that they should ensure they have submitted the correct information to DIMA. The student will be issued with the amended documents by the ACT once the transfer has been confirmed.
- L. If the application for transfer is unsuccessful, the candidate should be advised of the regulations for appeals under the ACT *Policy on student appeals under research degree rules*.

7. Associated Documents

- A. *ACT Postgraduate Handbook*, especially the description of the MTh and ThD programs and their learning outcomes.
- B. *Policy on Student Appeals under Research Degree Rules* (Approval Resolution No: DEL 0705-024 Date: 21 May 2007)

8. Responsibility and Authority

Body/Position with authority to initially approve the policy and procedures and amend the policy:

Research Awards Board

Body/Position(s) with delegated authority to amend the procedures consistent with the policy:

Dean

Body/Position(s) accountable for:

Responsibility	Position
Development of the policy	ACT Academic Administrator
Provision of advice in development of the policy	ACT Academic Administrator
Distribution of the policy	ACT Student Administrator
Implementation of/Advice concerning the policy	ACT Academic Administrator / Research Coordinators, ACT affiliated colleges
Monitoring of and compliance with the policy	ACT Student Administrator, Research Awards Board
Evaluation and recommending amendment of the policy	Dean

9. Approvals

Document Title:	Transfer from MTh to ThD	Document Number:	
Approval Authority:	Dean / Research Awards Board	Approval Date:	19 11 2007
Resolution No:	RAB 0711/4/4	Effective Date:	19 11 2007
Document Administrator		Review Date:	November 2007
Revision History			
Authority	Action	Resolution No.	Date
2 May	Research Awards Board	RAB0805/7/1	2 May 2008

10. Communications

Date	Recipient	Purpose	Mode
3 August 2007	Members of the RAB	Provision of first draft	paper
19 Nov 2007	Members of the RAB	Provision of final draft	paper

PART B: PROCEDURES

1. Procedures

(A) Application Lodgement

- A1. The candidate must make the application in writing to the Research Coordinator of their primary sponsoring college. In the covering letter the candidate must set out fully the grounds for the transfer and provide documentary evidence in support of the application. The Research Coordinator must first obtain approval from their internal Research Board for the application to proceed to the ACT. The application should then be sent to the ACT's Academic Administrator for circulation to the assessors for submission to the Research Awards Board.
- A2. The candidate's supervisor must also furnish support for the proposed transfer in terms specified at 6D above.

(B) Submission to the Research Awards Board

- B1. Documentation from the supervisor in support for the transfer will be submitted to the Research Awards Board.
- B2. The candidate will submit a 2,000 word ThD proposal to the Board together with a justification for the transfer, a statement where the material fits into the overall scope of the proposed doctoral research, and a bibliography.

(C) Hearing the Application

- C1. On the resolution of the Board to grant the candidate leave to submit a written piece of 15,000 words for external assessment for the transfer it will be evaluated by one assessor chosen by the Dean or the Chair of the Research Awards Board (or their representative).
- C2. The assessor will return a report within three (3) weeks of being sent the proposal.
- C3. Once the report has been submitted it will be tabled at the next scheduled Research Awards Board meeting for a resolution.

(D) Outcome of the Application

- D1. Within five (5) working days of receiving the Board's decision, the ACT Academic Administrator will notify the candidate of the outcome of the application and provide the reasons for the decision.
- D2. If successful, the candidate will be transferred to the new program and the relevant report forms will be sent to him/her. In the case of international students, a new CoE will be issued.
- D3. If unsuccessful, the candidate will be reminded of their right to appeal decisions relating to research candidates.

Mark Harding
Dean
15 September 2008

policies/transfer mth to thd