Awards for Academic Excellence Policy

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Appendix A – College minimum GPA by AQF Level (University Medal)

1. Purpose

a. The University recognises the academic excellence of students by making awards of medals, letters of commendation, and prizes.

b. This policy provides for the awarding of University Medals, Chancellor's Letters of Commendation, the Ken Wanganeen Medal and Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence to students whose academic performance meets the eligibility criteria for the award

c. Student prizes are awarded in accordance with the Prizes and Scholarships Policy.

2. University Medals

a. University Medals will be of such material and such design and be inscribed in such manner as may be approved by Council.

b. The award of a University Medal will be determined by the Director, Student Administration Services on the advice of the Vice-President and Executive Dean responsible for the degree in which the student is enrolled.

c. A University Medal will be awarded to graduates with outstanding academic performance within each College for awards (degrees) at Australia Qualifications Framework (AQF) levels 7 to 9 (excluding Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas). The Vice-President and Executive Dean will recommend to the Director, Student Administration Services for approval graduates who meet the criteria for outstanding academic performance as set out in s.2.1 below.

d. Medals may be awarded at graduation ceremonies to graduates who were conferred their degree in the period since the last graduation ceremony. If a recipient of a University Medal does not attend a graduation ceremony, the Medal will be sent to them.

e. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) will annually provide to the Academic Senate a report of University Medal recipients.

2.1. Eligibility Criteria

a. To be eligible for a University Medal a graduate must be in the top 1% of graduates in each AQF level for that cohort, who were conferred a bachelor (AQF level 7), 4-year bachelor with honours (AQF level 8), 1-year bachelor with honours (AQF level 8), Masters by Coursework (AQF level 9), and have:

   i. no more than one third of their completed AQF level degree consisting of credit from another institution

   ii. a minimum of 36 units of topics with grades

   iii. for AQF level 8 bachelor with honours students, received a first-class honours, and

   iv. met the minimum GPA as approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) on the recommendation of the College Dean (Education) – see Appendix A.

b. Colleges will be responsible for making the eligibility criteria known to students.

c. A graduate is eligible for only one medal at each AQF level where eligible degrees have been undertaken concurrently. In such cases, the medal will usually be awarded for the degree which has received the higher GPA.

2.1.1. Variations

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Enhancement) may approve a variation to the criteria and procedures described in this section where the variation is deemed to establish equivalent academic performance. Requests for variations may be approved for awards, or considered for individual students on a case-by-case basis.

3. Chancellor's Letters of Commendation

A Chancellor's Letter of Commendation will be awarded to a student whose academic performance in an undergraduate or postgraduate course (excepting higher degrees by research) in their most recent 36 units of study and within the last 10 years from the date of evaluation has been judged to be outstanding.

3.1. Eligibility Criteria

A student must normally have achieved a Grade Point Average of no less than 6.25, on a scale of 7.00, calculated to two decimal places, over the last 36 units not counted previously towards the same award. The last 36 units will be determined on the basis of the topic census date.

3.1.1. Non-Graded Pass Results

a. A grade of NGP in a topic will not be counted in determining the GPA for the student where that topic is normally graded only on an NGP/Fail basis, and the GPA consequently will be calculated using fewer units. A Fail result in an NGP graded topic will be counted in the same way as a Fail in a graded topic.

b. The GPA in the last 36 units of study once NGP graded topics are excluded will be calculated using the remaining, fewer units.

c. Where excluding the NGP graded topics would result in the GPA calculation comprising 18 units or less, and it is not possible to include units from a preceding period of study, a Chancellor's Letter will not be awarded.

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4. The Ken Wanganeen Medal

a. The Ken Wanganeen Medal is awarded in honour of the late Hurtle Kenneth Wanganeen, the first Indigenous honours graduate of Flinders University.

b. The Ken Wanganeen Medal will be of such material and such design and be inscribed in such manner as may be approved by Council.

c. The award of the Medal will be determined by the Director, Student Administration Services on the recommendation of the Office of Indigenous Strategy and Engagement.

4.1. Eligibility Criteria

a. To be eligible for consideration for the award of a Medal a student must:

   i. be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in accordance with the Commonwealth definition which requires that the student: be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent; and, identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; and, be accepted as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the community in which they live or have lived.

   ii. have completed a bachelor degree comprising 108 units or more or a graduate entry bachelor degree comprising at least 72 units in the year prior to the award of the Medal.

b. The Medal will be awarded to the student with the best overall academic performance in a completed bachelor degree, which is judged on the basis of the GPA for the final 72 units of the course.

c. In the event of two or more students receiving the same GPA, the Selection Committee may select one of those students to receive the Medal on the basis of their GPA in the course as a whole. In the event that no student is considered to be of sufficient merit, the Office will recommend that no award be made.

d. Previous recipients are not eligible for the award of a further Medal.

4.1.1. Non-Graded Pass Results

For the purpose of determining academic performance for the ranking of students for the Medal, the calculation of Grade Point Average will be modified as follows:

a. a grade of NGP in a topic will not be counted in determining the GPA for the student where that topic is normally graded only on an NGP/Fail basis; but a Fail result in that topic will be counted in the same way as a Fail in a graded topic

b. the calculation of the GPA once NGP graded topics are excluded may be undertaken in one of two ways. The method employed must be applied consistently to each cohort of students and in all succeeding years:

   i. calculate the GPA using the remaining, fewer, units, or

   ii. units from the preceding period of study may be imported into the calculation to make the total up to 72 units.

c. where excluding the NGP graded topics would result in the GPA calculation comprising 36 units or less the second method would normally be employed.

5. Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence

a. The medal for the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence will be of such material and such design and be inscribed in such manner as may be approved by the Vice-Chancellor.

b. The Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence will be determined by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). A maximum of twelve awards across the university will be made each year.

c. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will ensure that the University Higher Degrees by Research Committee (UHDRC) monitors on an annual basis the number and quality of students awarded the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence to ensure that students meet a suitable standard, consistent with the standards of previous years' recipients. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will report to Academic Senate on the monitoring of these standards.

5.1. Eligibility Criteria

a. To be eligible for consideration for the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence a student must have completed their degree in the year prior to the year of the award. PhD by Prior Published Work and Higher Doctorate students are not eligible for consideration for this award.

b. The following academic merit criteria apply:

i. thesis examiners' reports and recommendations (see s.5.1.1 below)

ii. publications stemming from the thesis, or equivalent research outputs (for example, patents, exhibitions, performances and other creative works). Unrelated publications will not be considered

iii. other recognition of the quality of the research undertaken (for example, prizes or awards, recognition by professional organisations, or invitations to prestigious conferences), and

iv. where A/B nominations are considered (see s.5.1.1 below):

- timely completion of the degree
- strength of the case made by the nominator, including the extent of revisions required to the thesis.

5.1.1. Examiners' Reports and Recommendations

To be eligible for nomination, a student must have received recommendations from two external examiners that the degree be awarded without amendments to the thesis (A/A). Where insufficient A/A nominations are received, and notwithstanding s.5.2.d, a student who has received one recommendation for award without amendments and one recommendation for minor amendments (A/B) may be considered where a case is made by the nominator to the UHDRC.

5.2. Nomination and Selection

a. A student must be nominated for the award by one of their supervisors or the College HDR Coordinator using the prescribed form.

b. Examiners will be informed of the award at the commencement of thesis examination and may indicate in their report that the student should be considered for the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence. This information will be considered by the UHDRC when recommending the award recipients to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

c. The selection committee will comprise voting members of the UHDRC.

d. The UHDRC will refer up to twelve nominations for the award to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) for consideration. Fewer than twelve nominations may be referred where there are insufficient eligible or meritorious candidates.

6. Related Links

University Medals Recipients

Ken Wanganeen Medal Recipients

Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence Recipients

Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Responsible Officer	Senior Director, Student Experience and Management for University Medal, Chancellor's Letters of Commendation and Ken Wanganeen Medal Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) for Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence
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Appendix A – College minimum GPA by AQF Level (University Medal)

College	Bachelor (AQF level 7)	Bachelor with Honours (AQF level 8)	Masters degree by coursework (AQF level 9)
Business, Creative Arts, Law and Social Sciences	6.5	6.5	6.0
Human Sciences and Culture	6.5	6.5	6.0
Medicine and Public Health	6.5	6.5	6.0
Health and Enablement	6.5	6.5	6.0
Science and Engineering	6.5	6.5	6.0

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