
Awards for Academic Excellence

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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

The University recognises the academic excellence of students by making awards of medals, letters of commendation, and prizes. 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 has been outstanding. The University will also award prizes as provided separately by Council Policy.

The following rules shall apply for the award of University Medals, Chancellor's Letters of Commendation, the Ken Wanganeen Medal and Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence:

1. University Medals

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

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

1.3 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 section 2 below.

[Note, the criteria for a University Medal set out at section 2 will apply from 2023. However, during 2023 graduates who meet the [previous eligibility criteria](#) will also be awarded a University Medal to ensure procedural fairness through the change in criteria.]

1.4 Medals will 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, they will be contacted to make arrangements for the Medal to be sent to them.

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

2. Eligibility Criteria for the Award of a University Medal

2.1 To be eligible for a University Medal, a graduate must:

- have been conferred a bachelor (AQF level 7), bachelor with honours (AQF level 8) or postgraduate by coursework degree (AQF level 9 Masters by coursework awards only), and
- within each College, be in the top 1%¹ of graduates for that AQF level for that cohort², subject to meeting a minimum GPA as approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) on the recommendation of the College Dean (Education) – see [Appendix A](#), and
- have completed at least 75% of the AQF level degree being awarded at Flinders University.

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

2.3 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.

2.5 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

3.1 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.

4. Procedures for the Award of a Chancellor's Letter of Commendation

4.1 In determining such awards:

- 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.

¹ Where the calculation of the top 1% results in a fraction number, it will be rounded up e.g. if the top 1% equals 2.6, it will be rounded up so that the top three graduates are eligible for a University Medal.

² The cohort is all graduates, for that AQF level, who were conferred their degree in the period since the last graduation ceremony. That is, for an April graduation ceremony, all graduates who were conferred their degree between December and March, and for a December graduation ceremony, all graduates who were conferred their degree between April and November.

4.2 Non-Graded Pass Results

4.2.1 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.

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

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.

5. The Ken Wanganeen Medal

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

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

5.3 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.

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

5.4.1 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 he or she lives or has lived.

5.4.2 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.

5.5 The Medal will be awarded to the student with the best overall academic performance in a completed bachelor degree, in accordance with the procedures at 6.1. below.

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

6. Procedures for the Award of the Ken Wanganeen Medal

The following procedures must apply when the Office of Indigenous Strategy and Engagement is preparing a recommendation.

6.1 Clause 5.5 of the Policy

Academic performance will be judged on the basis of the GPA for the final 72 units of the course. 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.

6.2 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:

6.2.1 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;

6.2.2 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.

- Calculate the GPA using the remaining, fewer, units; or
- Units from the preceding period of study may be imported into the calculation following the principles at 2.1.3 above to make the total up to 72 units.

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

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

7.1 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.

7.2 The Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence will be determined by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) under delegated authority from Academic Senate.

7.3 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 of this award.

7.4 A maximum of twelve awards across the university will be made each year.

7.5 The following academic merit criteria for the Award will apply:

- Thesis Examiners' Reports and Recommendations (see clause 8.1 of the procedures for the Award of the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence);
- Timely completion of the degree (for A/B examination determinations);
- Extent of revisions required to the thesis;
- Publications stemming from the thesis or publication equivalents and other appropriate research outputs (for example, patents, exhibitions, performances and other creative works). Unrelated publications will not be considered; and
- Other recognition for the quality of research undertaken for the thesis (for example, prizes and awards conferred, recognition by professional organisations, invitations to prestigious conferences).

The points above will be considered relative to the student's project and/or discipline.

7.6 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will ensure that the University Higher Degrees by Research Committee 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.

8. Procedures for judging applicants for the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence

8.1 In addition to Clause 7.5, to be eligible for nomination for the award a student will normally have received recommendations from two external examiners that the degree should be awarded without amendments to the thesis (A.A). Students passed with minor amendments (B) may also be considered on the basis of a case made by the nominator to the University Higher Degrees by Research Committee.

8.2 A student should be nominated for the award by one of their supervisors, the College HDR Coordinator or another suitably qualified academic staff member on the university prescribed form.

8.3 Examiners will be informed of the award when the thesis examination commences. Examiners are to indicate in the report that they would like the student to be considered for the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence. This information will inform the University Higher Degrees by Research Committee (UHDRC) when recommending the award recipients to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

8.4 The selection committee will comprise voting members of the UHDRC, which includes but is not limited to the Dean of Graduate Research, HDR Coordinators from each College and two student representatives.

8.5 The UHDRC will refer up to twelve nominations for the award to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) for consideration.

Related Links

[University Medals Recipients](#)

[Ken Wanganeen Medal Recipients](#)

[Vice-Chancellor's Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence Recipients](#)

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 Government and Law	6.5	6.5	6.0
Education, Psychology and Social Work	6.5	6.5	6.0
Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences	6.5	6.5	6.0
Nursing and Health Sciences	6.5	6.5	6.0
Medicine and Public Health	6.5	6.5	6.0
Science and Engineering	6.5	6.5	6.0