

Policy Redesign Project

All policies and procedures are being reviewed as part of this project. This document is pending review, but remains in effect until the review is carried out.

Awards for Academic Excellence

Establishment:	Council, 28 October 1994
Last Amended:	Academic Senate, 21 November 2018
Nature of Amendment:	Amendments to procedures for Chancellor's Letters of Commendation
Date Last Reviewed:	November 2018
Responsible Officer:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) 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 Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) under delegated authority from Academic Senate and on the advice of the board of the Faculty responsible for the degree in which the student is enrolled.

1.3 To be eligible for consideration for the award of a University Medal a student must have completed a bachelor program comprising 144 units or more or a 72 unit graduate entry bachelor degree program, and have undertaken an honours program if one is available. A student who has completed a combined or

double-degree program comprising 144 units or more is not eligible unless he/she has undertaken honours as a fifth year program.

1.4 A University Medal will be awarded only if the academic performance of a student is outstanding. The Faculty Board will recommend to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) for approval all students who meet the criteria for outstanding performance in accordance with approved procedures.

1.5 The Academic Senate will monitor the number of students awarded University Medals to ensure that students meet a suitable standard, consistent with the standards of previous years' medallists.

1.6 Medals may be awarded at all Graduation ceremonies.

2. Procedures for the Award of a University Medal

2.1 Section 1.4 of the Policy

The Faculty Board must ensure that academic merit is the basis of its recommendation. The performance of a student will be judged on the basis of results achieved at Flinders University in the final 72 units of the course, with the exclusion of certain topics as indicated in clause 2.2 below. Normally at least 72 units must have been completed at Flinders. This may include credit from another Flinders degree in which the student was previously enrolled. To satisfy the requirements of Clause 1.5 of the policy the following minimum standards will normally apply:

2.1.1 A student must have achieved an outstanding level of performance in the final 36 units of the course, as demonstrated by results equivalent to a Grade Point Average of 6.25, on a scale of 7.00, or above, calculated to two decimal places. Where an honours program forms part of the course, a student must have achieved the award of first class honours.

2.1.2 In the preceding 36 units of the course, a student must have achieved a Grade Point Average of 6.1 or more on a scale of 7.00, calculated to two decimal places.

2.1.3 Where a judgement is required in order to determine which units are to be included in the 'final' or 'preceding' 36 units the highest year level topic should be preferentially selected. Where all options are at the same year level, the units in which the student achieved the highest grade should be preferentially selected. First year level topics will not be counted in determining the GPA, and higher level topics substituted.

2.1.4 A student is eligible for only one medal where two eligible degrees have been undertaken concurrently.

2.2 Non-Graded Pass Results

For the purpose of determining the academic performance of medallists, the calculation of Grade Point Average will be modified as follows.

2.2.1 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.

2.2.2 the calculation of the GPA or the 'final' or 'preceding' 36 units 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 36 units.

Where excluding the NGP graded topics would result in the GPA calculation comprising 18 units or less the second method would normally be employed.

2.3 Variations

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) may approve a variation to the criteria and procedures described in 1.1 to 1.4 and 2.1 to 2.2 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.

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 Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) 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);

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- 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](#)