

Conferral and Graduation Policy

Section 1 - Policy Statement

(1) This Policy describes the conferral of awards and graduation at the Australian Catholic University (ACU) in line with [Statute 6.1 - Conferral of Awards](#).

Section 2 - Policy Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all members of the University including students, staff, office-bearers of the University and members of Senate who participate in university graduation ceremonies in an official capacity.

Section 3 - Definitions

(3) Terms used in this Policy and the associated procedures are consistent with the [Glossary of Student and Course Terms](#). In addition, the following words and expressions in this Policy have the meanings listed below:

| Term | Definition |
|-------------------|---|
| Award | A degree, diploma or certificate, or other qualification, which is approved by the Academic Board or Senate of the University and is conferred upon completion of the relevant course requirements. |
| Course Completion | Course completion occurs once the requirements to complete have been verified by the authorised officer of the University. |
| Graduand | A student who has met the requirements for course completion but is yet to have the award conferred. |
| Graduate | A student who has successfully completed the requirements for a degree, and that degree has been conferred. |

Section 4 - Principles

(4) Awards will be conferred in accordance with [Statute 6.1 - Conferral of Awards](#).

(5) A graduation ceremony will be conducted each year at the following locations:

- a. Ballarat
- b. Brisbane
- c. Canberra
- d. Melbourne
- e. Sydney

(6) A graduate may elect to attend a graduation ceremony.

(7) All reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate students or staff with a disability, or long-term illness, to allow full participation in graduation ceremonies.

Section 5 - Conferral of Award

(8) An award will only be conferred in the following circumstances:

- a. where a student has completed the requirements of their award and that completion has been ratified; or
- b. where there are exceptional / compassionate circumstances as outlined in clause (14) of this Policy.

(9) Completion of the requirements of the award will be determined through the following process:

- a. the Faculty will confirm that the academic course requirements for eligibility for the award have been met for coursework programs;
- b. The University Research Committee will confirm that the academic requirements for eligibility for the award of research higher degrees have been met;
- c. the Academic Registrar will confirm that all other administrative requirements have been met.

(10) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) is responsible for ratifying that research higher degree students identified as course complete may be put forward for recommendation for conferral.

(11) The Executive Dean is responsible for ratifying that all coursework students identified as course complete may be put forward for recommendation for conferral.

(12) The Chair, Academic Board certifies the ratified list of all graduands and recommends to the Vice-Chancellor and President that the awards be conferred.

Honorary Degrees

(13) The Vice-Chancellor and President, or other Presiding Officer, may confer an Honorary degree following resolution of Senate in accordance with [Statute 6.1 - Conferral of Awards](#).

Awards conferred under compassionate circumstances

(14) Awards may be conferred in the following special circumstances, consistent with [Statute 6.1 - Conferral of Awards](#) and in accordance with the provisions of Section 5 of the [Conferral of Awards Procedure](#):

- a. posthumous awards, where a student has satisfied the course requirements.
- b. awards where a student has died or become incapacitated, and their course requirements are not fully satisfied.

Section 6 - Awards Presented at Graduation Ceremonies

Honorary Degrees

(15) Consistent with [Statute 6.2 - Admission to Honorary Degrees](#), will normally be presented at an official graduation ceremony.

(16) There will be only one Honorary Doctorate presented at any one graduation ceremony.

Medals and Special Awards

University Honours Medal and University Medal

(17) Academic Board may award University Honours Medals and University Medals in recognition of outstanding academic merit. The Medals may be presented to students at the relevant graduation ceremony each year.

Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Doctoral Training

(18) The Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Doctoral Training may be presented at the relevant graduation ceremony.

Executive Dean's List

(19) Students who are Executive Dean's Awardees for Academic Excellence will be listed in the graduation program, consistent with the Executive Dean's Awardees for Academic Excellence and Faculty Commendation Protocols.

Other Academic Awards

(20) Other academic awards may be presented in exceptional circumstances.

Section 7 - Attendance at Ceremonies

(21) A graduate may register to attend the designated ceremony for their Faculty.

(22) A graduate may defer their attendance at a graduation ceremony for up to a maximum of 12 months.

Section 8 - The Graduation Ceremony

(23) For each graduation ceremony there will be standard procedures, protocols and requirements as detailed in the [Graduation Ceremonies Procedure](#).

(24) For all graduation ceremonies the following must be in attendance:

- a. a Presiding Officer;
- b. a Presenting Officer;
- c. the Executive Dean(s) (or nominee(s) (Heads of School or above)); and
- d. the Academic Registrar (or nominee).

(25) The main components of each graduation ceremony are:

- a. Academic Procession:
 - i. The Academic Procession will be made up of staff of the University, members of Senate, invited members of clergy and recipients of Doctorates, Honorary Doctorates or special awards.
 - ii. When senior academics from other universities or former senior academic staff of ACU accept an invitation to attend a graduation ceremony, Graduations and Protocol may invite them to join the Academic Procession subject to space availability.
 - iii. All members of the Academic Procession must wear full academic dress, with the exception of members of clergy who may opt to wear ecclesiastical vestments, and any invited speaker for whom academic dress is optional.
 - iv. The Academic Procession includes the Bible and the Ceremonial Mace.
- b. Acknowledgement of Country:
 - i. An Acknowledgement of Country will be delivered at each graduation ceremony.

- c. Liturgical Element:
 - i. Liturgical elements consisting of a prayer, blessing of the graduates, a final blessing and the processing of the Bible will be standard at each graduation ceremony.
- d. Occasional Address:
 - i. An occasional address may be delivered at each graduation ceremony.
- e. Presentation of Graduates and Awards:
 - i. Graduates, University Medallists and other award recipients will be presented to Presiding Officer.
- f. Graduate Vote of Thanks:
 - i. A graduate will present a vote of thanks on behalf of all graduates at the end of each graduation ceremony.

Section 9 - Fees and Charges

- (26) Fees and charges relating to graduation will apply and are detailed in Schedule 1.
- (27) All fees and charges must be paid in full prior to a graduate participating in their graduation ceremony.
- (28) Cancellation fees will normally apply and are outlined in Schedule 1.
- (29) There are no fees or charges for continuing and fixed term ACU staff participating in a graduation ceremony.
- (30) The hiring of ACU academic dress to external organisations is at the discretion of the Academic Registrar, is subject to availability and will incur relevant fees, as outlined in Schedule 1. Such hire arrangements are only available where the hire is for graduates of ACU.
- (31) Fees and charges will be determined on an annual basis by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Corporate) on the recommendation of the Academic Registrar.

Section 10 - Recordkeeping

- (32) There will be a University register of awards conferred.
- (33) The register will be maintained by Graduations and Protocol for each conferral period and will be submitted to the Legal, Assurance and Governance Directorate after each conferral period.
- (34) The Register will comprise:
 - a. details of graduates for all awards conferred in the conferral period; and
 - b. details of all award rescissions and revocations.

Section 11 - Responsibilities

- (35) The Academic Registrar is responsible for the implementation of this Policy and associated procedures, and management of the University's graduation ceremonies.
- (36) Graduations and Protocol is responsible for setting graduation ceremony dates and determining ceremony venues. This will be done in consultation with the Academic Registrar, the Legal, Assurance and Governance Directorate and external venues. Dates are submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Corporate) and Academic Board for noting.

(37) The Academic Registrar is responsible for submitting a conferral report to Senate, via the Legal, Assurance and Governance Directorate, for noting, in accordance with [Statute 6.1 – Conferral of degrees](#).

(38) Graduations and Protocol is responsible for submitting a report on graduation ceremonies to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Corporate) and Academic Board, for noting, at the end of each ceremony cycle.

(39) Operational responsibilities relating to conferral processes and graduation ceremonies are detailed in the associated procedures.

Section 12 - Schedule 1 Fees and Charges

| Graduation Item | Comments | Rates |
|--|---|--|
| ACU graduation ceremony fee | Graduates must wear the prescribed academic regalia for their award - refer to the Academic Dress and Regalia Policy . Continuing or fixed-term ACU staff members who are graduating will be exempted from all fees. Regalia hire by ACU staff attending a ceremony as part of the academic procession will be complimentary, provided that the regalia is returned immediately following the ceremony. | The following cost structures (including GST) apply: Graduates 2022: \$175 per graduate which includes the cost of hire of academic regalia, two guest tickets and post ceremony refreshments. *Indigenous graduates will be provided with an ACU Indigenous Stole at no charge |
| Additional guest tickets | Graduates are provided with three guest tickets as part of the graduation fee. Additional guest tickets may be requested however, due to venue capacity, additional tickets are subject to restrictions. | \$30 for each additional guest ticket (non-refundable). |
| Cancellation Fees | Cancellations received more than two weeks prior to the allocated graduation ceremony. Cancellations received less than two weeks prior to the allocated graduation ceremony. Failure to attend. | 20% of fee paid 100% of fee paid |
| Postage Fees | Fee for re-posting of Testamurs or other academic documents returned to ACU. | \$15 Domestic postage \$25 International postage |
| Fees applying for hire of regalia by external organisations (See clause (30) of this Policy) | Fees will be levied on a per item basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Hood/Stole Freight/courier costs will be levied. | \$25 plus GST |

Section 13 - Associated Information

(40) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

Status and Details

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| Status | Current |
| Effective Date | 23rd October 2025 |
| Review Date | 18th September 2029 |
| Approval Authority | Governance Officer |
| Approval Date | 15th October 2025 |
| Expiry Date | Not Applicable |
| Responsible Executive | Helen Murnane Academic Registrar |
| Responsible Manager | Katrina Wood National Manager, Graduations and Protocol |
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