Divisional Approval Requirements for Postgraduate Admissions in Humanities

This document aims to clarify and confirm Divisional approval requirements and processes for postgraduate admissions administered through Student Administration for the Division of Humanities. It is effective from 1 January 2021.

Part A – Requirements:

1. **Level 10 Degrees - Doctorates**

   1.1 **PhD Out of scope**. This document does not cover PhDs in Humanities which are approved through the Online Approval process in eVision.

   1.2 **Professional Doctorates.** Divisional approval by the Associate Dean Graduate Studies (ADGS) is required in all cases for admission to Professional Doctorates in Humanities (e.g. DMA, EdD).

2. **Level 9 Degrees – Masters' Programmes**

   2.1 **General Rule – Divisional Approval by ADGS Required**

   Divisional approval is required for admission to *all Masters'* programmes in the Division of Humanities unless specified as an exception in section 2.2 below.

   > a. This includes domestic and international Masters' applicants.

   > b. This includes Research Masters', Coursework Masters' and combined Coursework and Research Masters' programmes.

   > c. Divisional approval follows prior approval by the Head of Programme or Co-ordinator.

   > d. The ADGS, as PVC nominee, will provide Divisional approval unless specified otherwise (see Section 2.2 below). Approval will be in writing; usually by email.

   > e. Where required, Student Administration will not issue Masters' 'offers' until Divisional approval has been obtained; however, 'declines' can be issued without Divisional approval providing the Programme has recommended admission be declined in writing.

   2.2 Exceptions – Divisional Approval Delegated to Programme Coordinators

   Masters' admissions in the following areas do *not* require approval by the ADGS for standard admissions (where admissions regulations are met, and no variation is required) because Divisional approval for standard admissions for these areas has been delegated to the relevant Programme Coordinator.

   1. **Education** postgraduate taught masters (Master of Teaching and Learning)
   2. **Social Work** postgraduate taught masters (Master of Community and Social Work Applied)
   3. **Planning** admission to MPlan first year and second year coursework path. ADGS approval is still required for the thesis pathway of second year.

The basis for the above 3 exceptions is that these areas have their own admissions committees, robust internal admissions processes, and external relations with professional bodies that already provide an additional layer of oversight.

Variations: Where applicants in these areas do *not meet* the admissions regulations and admission is sought under the 'alternative qualifications or experience' clause, Divisional approval by the ADGS is still required.

4. **MA (Coursework) – All Subjects.** The PVC nominee is the MA(Coursework) Coordinator and their approval is needed in addition to HoP or Co-ordinator approval in all cases and replaces approval by the ADGS.

3. Level 8 Degrees – Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificates, and Honours Programmes

3.1 General Rule – Divisional Approval Delegated to Programme

Divisional approval is delegated to the Programme HoP or Coordinator for Level 8 Degrees for standard admissions where all entry criteria in the admissions regulations are clearly met. In these cases, approval by the ADGS is not required.

3.2 Exceptions – ADGS Approval is Required

a. '**Alternative' Entry Criteria.** Divisional approval by the ADGS is always required where admission is based on 'alternative qualifications or experience' rather than the standard entry pathway and the alternative credentials must be 'acceptable to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor' (or similar wording). 'Alternative' credentials may include anomalous qualifying degrees or backgrounds, variations to GPA requirements, or other non-standard admission pathways. Commonly, this falls under Clause 1(b)(iii) of the Admission regulation, but numbering varies depending on the specific programme.

b. **Ambiguity (requirements not 'clearly met').** Divisional approval by the ADGS is also required where there is uncertainty about whether admission criteria have been met or where the outcome is borderline. If there is any question, the 'clearly met' standard is not satisfied and escalation for ADGS approval is required. The Division has identified the following as situations where uncertainty is common and escalation is advised (if not otherwise required):

(i) Complex international transcripts where interpretation can be difficult
(ii) Complex GPA calculations (international or otherwise)
(ii) Possible misinterpretation of the regulations by the HOP
(iii) Anomalous applicants with unusual education backgrounds
(iv) Applicants seeking entry with a Diploma for Graduates (DipGrad vs PGDip)

Part B – Process

The following processes will be followed to obtain Divisional approval where Divisional approval is required. Different degree categories have different contexts and therefore require different processes.

4. Research Masters' Process

4.1 Admission Approval

a. Context:

Admission to thesis-only programmes is through the Online Approval system in eVision. This involves approval by the Primary Supervisor, Academic Approver, Resourcing Approver(s), Student Administration's 'Confirmation' check, and two built-in pathways for Escalated Approval by the ADGS (or GRS for PhDs). Guides for all Approver roles can be found on the GRS website.

The built-in escalation pathways area: (1) Automatic escalation whenever a variation is entered by the Academic Approver; these bypass Student Administration and go directly to the ADGS. (2) Manual escalation by Student Administration when an error or uncertainty is found in their 'Confirmation' check. To activate the 'Escalate' button, Student Administration must untick the relevant criteria box to indicate where the problem lies (e.g. missing documents, regulations are not met, etc).

Pathway 2 will be implemented for Humanities so that *all* cases can be escalated to the ADGS for approval (not just those involving problems).

b. Escalation Process:

(i) Student Administration:
In *all* cases, Student Administration will *untick all boxes* in the Confirmation check, select Escalate, and enter comments explaining the basis for escalation, indicating either

- No issues found; escalation is per standard procedure for Humanities
  or
- Issues found; the escalation issue is … [with text specifying the concern, e.g. GPA is below B+, assessment of international transcript is questionable, etc]

(ii) ADGS:
Where no issues were raised and the ADGS is simply confirming approval, this should be noted. Where issues were raised by SA, ADGS approval should include comments about how those issues were resolved. If the ADGS identifies new issues, these should be noted.

If, in exceptional circumstances, the ADGS wants to give 'conditional approval' (e.g. subject to completion of a qualifying degree, etc), this needs to be stated explicitly in the ADGS comments, and should include any specific terms/text to be included in the conditional offer letter.

4.2 Progression Approvals

a. Context:

Students already in a programme and progressing to the thesis following the coursework component need to go through the Online Approval process before they can enrol in the thesis. In Humanities, this includes students progressing to the thesis in the MPlan, MA (Geography), Master of Social Work, DMA and EdD. The Online Approval process in the 'progression' context is the same as in the 'admission' context but stops with the Resourcing Approver; Student Administration does not play a role in these approvals (because admission is not involved).

For progressing students, Online Approval is linked to re-enrolment and course approval rather than admission. In this context, completing Online Approval will 'unlock' thesis codes in Paper

Selection so that students can add the thesis to their programme and submit for course approval. (If online approval has *not* been completed, they will be blocked from selecting a thesis code in Paper Selection.)
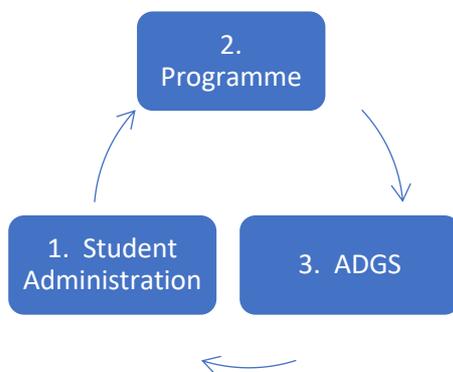
b. Process.

To facilitate escalation to the ADGS for students progressing to a thesis in Humanities, Academic Approvers are asked to tick the variation box in *all cases* (even if no variation is involved). This will automatically escalate approval to the ADGS, as per Divisional policy. When doing so, Academic Approvers should enter comments to indicate whether a variation is actually involved, or whether it is only being used for escalation purposes.

5. Coursework Degrees — Standard Process where ADGS Approval is Required

5.1 Scope. The following is the standard process for obtaining ADGS approval for all coursework and 'coursework + thesis' programmes in Humanities where ADGS approval is required. This covers all programmes that are *not thesis-only* programmes, including Professional Doctorates, Masters', Postgraduate Diplomas, Certificates and Honours degrees.

5.2 Approval Triangle. The standard process follows a triangular pattern where Student Administration sends the application and all supporting documents to the Programme. If they approve it, the Programme then *forwards* it with their approval in the text along with attached documents on to the ADGS for approval, who then makes the final decision and sends it back to Student Administration for actioning in eVision.

5.3 Approval Triangle Steps:

- ***Student Administration***: Sends 'complete' applications (along with the SA template and all supporting documents) to the relevant Programme Head/Co-ordinator for assessment. If scholarship applications are also involved, this will be noted in the SA template.

- ***Programme Approval***: If admission is recommended by the HOP/Co-ordinator, the application is forwarded (with the SA template and all supporting documentation) to the ADGS for Divisional approval. If alternative qualifications/experience or variations are involved, the HOP/Co-ordinator should 'make the case' for consideration by the ADGS. Declines can be returned (using the email template) directly to Student Administration for actioning.

- ***ADGS Approval:*** If approved by the ADGS, final approval is sent by the ADGS to Student Administration, using the SA template email. If the ADGS has questions or concerns about

the approval, the ADGS will liaise directly with the HOP/Co-ordinator until they are resolved, then send the final decision to Student Administration using the SA template. Where the ADGS is approving admission under alternative experience or qualifications requiring PVC approval, the ADGS will note this explicitly in their approval.
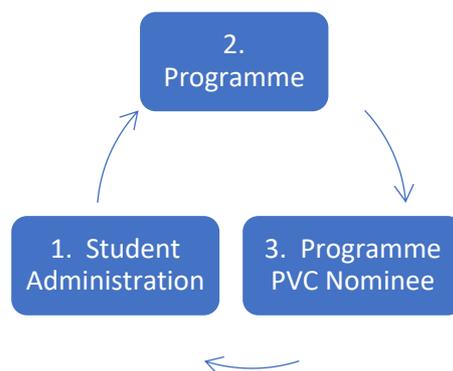
- ***Student Administration:*** Will process in eVision 'accept' decisions received from the ADGS and 'decline' decisions received from the HOP/Co-ordinator.

5.4   Errors. If ADGS approval is required but missing (and Programme approval is sent directly to Student Administration), these will be returned to the Programme and the Programme will be asked to forward them to the ADGS (along with the SA template and all documentation) as per the standard process. This will ensure that the ADGS receives the necessary documentation, will enable the HOP/Co-ordinator to 'make a case' for ADGS approval where needed, and will facilitate a clear and continuous audit trail.

6. Coursework Degrees - Standard Process where Divisional Approval is Delegated to the Programme

6.1 Scope. This process applies to those programmes where Divisional approval has been delegated to the Programme Co-ordinator, as outlined in Part A, Section 2.2 above. In these cases, the Programme Co-ordinator is the PVC nominee and gives Divisional approval rather than the ADGS.

6.2 Delegated Approval Triangle. The process for obtaining Divisional approval where it has be delegated to a Programme PVC Nominee is the same triangle process as used with ADGS approval. The only difference is that in these cases the Programme forwards the application (and supporting documentation) to the Programme PVC Nominee rather than to the ADGS. Where the Programme Co-ordinator is also the PVC Nominee, Programme and Divisional approval occur simultaneously (and forwarding is not necessary).

6.3 Delegated Approval Triangle Steps:

- *Student Administration:* Sends complete applications (with the SA template and all supporting documentation) to the Programme for assessment.

- *Programme Approval:* If approved by the Programme, the application (with the SA template and all supporting documentation) is forwarded to the Programme PVC Nominee for Divisional approval. Declines can be returned directly to Student Administration for actioning.

- *Programme PVC Nominee Approval:* Final decisions approved by the Programme Coordinator/PVC Nominee are sent to Student Administration (using the SA template) for actioning. Where admission is under variation or admission clauses requiring PVC approval, the Programme PVC Nominee will note this explicitly in the approval.

- *Student Administration:* Will process in eVision 'accept' decisions received from the Programme PVC Nominee and 'decline' decisions received from the HOP/Co-ordinator.

6.4 Errors. If Programme PVC Nominee approval is required but missing (and Programme approval is sent directly to Student Administration without it), these will be returned to the Programme and the Programme will be asked to forward them to the Programme PVC Nominee (with all documentation) as per the standard process. This will ensure that the necessary documentation is provided, will enable the HOP/Co-ordinator to 'make a case' for Divisional approval where needed, and will facilitate a continuous and clear audit trail.