

## Resource Agreement for Thesis Students (RAfTS)

### 1. Preamble

- A. The Postgraduate Students' Association (PGSA) and Victoria University of Wellington (the University) have negotiated this agreement to clarify the resources that will be provided to all postgraduate research thesis students. This agreement applies to both full- and part-time students who are registered to carry out a degree by research: a PhD, a professional doctorate, or a Master's degree with a 90 or 120 point thesis. Furthermore, this agreement applies, with some conditions, to doctoral students who are under examination and to students who are making corrections to a thesis after it has been examined and before it is lodged in the library.
- B. The resource agreement is founded on the University's values of fairness, integrity, respect, responsibility and empathy. It is expected that both University staff and University students will embody those values in engaging with this agreement. It is further expected that staff or students will take the initiative to communicate with one another effectively, promptly, and in accordance with the University values, should there be any concerns about the provision of resources.
- C. A student is a member of an "institution", which may be a School, Institute or Centre. This is referred to as their "home institution", which sits inside the student's "home faculty". Doctoral students are also members of the Wellington Faculty of Graduate Research (FGR).
- D. Each institution appoints at least one Postgraduate Co-ordinator to act as a first point of contact for academic queries and research requirements for students in that institution. A list of these coordinators is available on the FGR's website:  
<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/fgr/prospective-phds/postgraduate-coordinators>
- E. Each institution has an Institution Manager who is responsible for administrative matters within a institution. Some institutions may employ a Postgraduate Administrator who will be delegated to deal with administrative matters relating to postgraduate students.
- F. Both the PGSA and the University encourage institutions to exceed the requirements recorded in this agreement wherever possible.
- G. To ensure that research students and institutions are aware of this agreement and institutions are complying with its provisions, either the PGSA or the University may request a review of compliance at any time during the tenure of the Agreement. Such a review will be undertaken jointly by the PGSA and FGR.
- H. If a student finds that the resources detailed in this agreement are not available, they should follow the steps outlined in section 9.

## 2. Definitions

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Dedicated desk                     | A desk that is for the sole use of a particular student. This is expected to be necessary only in circumstances in which there are reasons why that student must have sole access to that resource.                   |
| Guaranteed access to a desk        | A guarantee that a student will be able to use a desk when they need one. This agreement distinguishes guaranteed access to a desk as being different to having a dedicated desk.                                     |
| Head of Institution                | The member of academic staff who is in charge of the institution. This will normally be the Head of School or the Director of the Institute.  |
| Institution                        | The unit within which the student works. This will usually be a school or a research Institute.   |
| Institution Manager                | The member of professional staff who has oversight of the management of the institution. This will normally be the School Manager or Institute Manager.   |
| Postgraduate Administrator         | The person within an institution who is responsible for administrative matters relating to postgraduate research students. Usually a member of professional staff. May be the same person as the Institution Manager. |
| Postgraduate Coordinator           | The person within an institution who is responsible for academic matters relating to postgraduate research students. Usually a member of academic staff.  |
| Property services design standards | The standards currently being used by Property Services relating to various aspects of design.  |

## 3. Induction

- A. New thesis students receive key information about their studies and University services through the following:
  - a) University orientation event, at the beginning of trimesters 1 and 2.
  - b) Institution induction, organised by the home institution.
  - c) Doctoral enrolment and PhD induction sessions, organised by FGR.
- B. Home institutions and FGR will provide students with a hard copy or web links to this agreement, information about the PGSA, a list of services available to postgraduate students, and key contact information.

- C. Institution induction will provide thesis students with all institution-specific information required to embark upon their research.

## 4. Office Space and Furniture

- A. The University will provide all thesis students with suitable spaces for their research. These spaces will be configured differently according to type of research, configuration of existing buildings and availability of resources (e.g., closed offices, open plan offices, flexible learning spaces), but should provide environments to gather, analyse, develop, create and communicate the outcomes of research.
- B. The home institution will ensure that, subject to the exceptions in paragraph 4C, every thesis student in their institution is supplied with the following:
- Guaranteed access to a desk with an ergonomic chair and university computer;
  - Access to common rooms and kitchens on the same basis as staff in the home institution, except in situations, agreed in writing with the Dean FGR, in which it would be impractical to provide such access.

The home institution will also provide the following on request from the student:

- A lockable storage unit;
- Access to shelving and pinboards.

Where appropriate to the research project or in exceptional personal circumstances, the home institution will also provide the following on request from the student:

- Access to whiteboards or equivalent;
- A dedicated desk.

- C. The University is conscious of its environmental impact. The University and PGSA acknowledge that space and resources are limited and that some students do not need to make substantial use of a desk within their home institution or Faculty. Therefore, a thesis student may choose to relinquish their guaranteed access to a desk. A student who has chosen not to have guaranteed access to a desk may at any time request to be re-assigned guaranteed access to a desk and such a request will be honoured. Conversations regarding desk arrangements should be had with the home institution's Postgraduate Administrator or Institution Manager, as appropriate for that institution. It is expected that either the school or the student will initiate a discussion about the need for a desk in the following situations:
- Students on suspension for a period exceeding two months.
  - Students working away from Wellington for a period exceeding three months.
  - Students who have an agreement to enrol as a doctoral distance student.
  - Doctoral students who have submitted their thesis and are under examination.
  - Students who have been examined and are making corrections prior to deposit in the library.
  - Students who choose to make little or no substantial use of their allocated desk space.

Students in these situations will not unreasonably refuse to relinquish guaranteed access to a desk.

- D. Facilities provided for students will be on the same campus as relevant academic staff, ideally within their home institution or, in cases where several institutions share a flexible learning space, within their home faculty. If this space is not close to space occupied by staff in the relevant institution, it will be in a student group environment.
- E. The University's facilities are not open every day of the year and some are not open 24 hours a day. Students will have access to their allocated facilities on campus (e.g., office, laboratory, studio) at the same times and on the same days as they are available to staff unless there are overriding and unavoidable security or health and safety issues.
- F. Specialised space (e.g., laboratory, studio) is arranged on the same basis as other specialised resources (see paragraph 5G).
- G. The University and PGSA acknowledge that it may be necessary for students to be asked to move desks and that such moves can be disruptive. The home institution is required to give reasonable notice of a move unless there are exceptional circumstances that mean that such notice could not reasonably have been given.

## 5. Resources and Support

- A. Thesis students, like other students, have access to general University services including library, career development and employment, student learning support, Wellington University International, Māori student services, disability support, accommodation services, student health, counselling, child-care, financial support and the recreation centre, and students should be informed of these during the induction process (see paragraph 2).
- B. The home institution will supply standard office consumables for research purposes, including pens, paper, notebooks, scissors and staplers. Institutions will advise students of any limitations regarding consumables.
- C. The home institution will provide printing and photocopying for research purposes. Institutions will advise students of any limitations regarding these services.
- D. Any use of a University phone for toll calls must be arranged through the home institution. There is no expectation that a home institution will pay for toll calls.
- E. University-provided computers will provide access to all library resources, the internet, and email. University-provided computers will have standard supported software. All students have access to the software available through the VUW Software Centre or via the University website. If any other software is required for research purposes, students must discuss the requirement with their supervisor(s) and make any arrangements for the supply through their home institution and Digital Solutions, recognising that access to such software cannot be guaranteed.
- F. It is vital that the University is able to contact the student through email. The University will email students via their preferred email address (as specified by the student in Student Records) and/or via their @vuw.ac.nz email address. Students are responsible for ensuring that they monitor their preferred email address and for keeping it up to date in Student Records. If

students do not monitor their @vuw.ac.nz email address, they must ensure that their @vuw.ac.nz email address forwards email to an account that they do monitor. Where a home institution uses email addresses other than the @vuw.ac.nz, it is the home institution's responsibility to advise students on their default email domain and of those other email addresses that are in operation.

- G. Discipline and subject-specific research resources, including lab supplies, equipment and dedicated research space, are made available by the home institution. Students should discuss and formally document their space, equipment, and resource requirements with their supervisors, as those requirements arise throughout the courses of their research. Students and supervisors will have ideally identified any special requirements at the time of application. If the space, equipment, or resources required to complete the research are not already available, students and supervisors must discuss, at the earliest possible stage in the research, the feasibility of providing it with the appropriate responsible person in their home institution (depending on the institution, this could be the Postgraduate Co-ordinator, the Postgraduate Administrator, the Institution Manager, or some other person).
- H. FGR training courses and any coursework specifically required for the research degree are included in the fees charged for the research degree. Other courses and training for professional development are paid for at the discretion of the funding provider (e.g., the supervisor or the home institution may have appropriate funding). Such requests are decided on a case-by-case basis by the funding provider.
- I. Students and their supervisors are expected to be familiar with the responsibilities of doctoral supervisors and candidates, as laid out in documents available on the FGR website:  
<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/fgr/policies-and-resources/regulations,-policies-and-guidelines>

## 6. Design of New Office Space

- A. The PGSA and the University agree that the University should move towards providing “flexible learning spaces” where possible, with the understanding that students should ideally have access to spaces that are designed to create a sense of community and support a wide range of research-related activities. This section guides the design of new flexible learning spaces. This section is aspirational and should not be read as specifying the design of existing research spaces.
- B. The University will consult representatives from PGSA and the students in the affected institution(s) when major projects to create or redevelop postgraduate workspaces are undertaken.
- C. In the design of such flexible learning spaces, the PGSA and the University agree that, where possible, best practice reflects all of the following, with the starred items\* being considered essential.

| Principles   | Design Guidelines   |
|--|---|
| Spaces support a range of research activities and are designed to create a sense of community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space for quiet study or work at a desk (usually with a computer)*.</li> <li>• Space for quiet study or reading in a comfortable environment (e.g., a couch in a reading room).</li> </ul> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Places to have work-related and potentially private conversations.</li> <li>• A suitable kitchen area.</li> <li>• Common areas for socialising with peers and staff.</li> </ul>  |
| Spaces will be designed with environmental comfort in mind. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound mitigation appropriate for the type of space. For example, higher specifications in areas intended for quiet work.</li> <li>• Lighting that complies with Property Services' design standards*.</li> <li>• Heating and cooling that complies with Property Services' design standards*.</li> </ul> |
| Spaces will be designed with community safety in mind.      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The University will endeavour to make flexible learning spaces accessible only to those assigned to the area and to appropriate staff.</li> </ul>  |
| Research spaces will be supported by appropriate amenities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kitchens and common areas that are appropriate and sufficient for the number of people assigned to an area.</li> <li>• Toilet facilities that comply with Property Services Design Standards within reasonable proximity*.</li> </ul>  |

## 7. Policy

Students and supervisors are expected to abide by all relevant University policies:

[http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/policy.html](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/policy.html)

## 8. Term of the Agreement

Unless superseded, this agreement will be in place for a period of five years from the date of last signature.

## 9. Protocol for Addressing Concerns

Thesis students with concerns that the provisions of this agreement are not being met should follow the steps below until the matter is resolved. Such concerns should be dealt with, by all parties, following the principles outlined in paragraph 1B.

1. Contact your home institution's Postgraduate Co-ordinator or Postgraduate Administrator with the details of the provisions that are not being met.
2. Escalate to the Institution Manager or Head of Institution if the matter cannot be resolved through the Postgraduate Co-ordinator or Postgraduate Administrator.
3. Bring the matter to the attention of the FGR, with details of all prior communication.
4. If the matter cannot be resolved through the FGR, it may be brought to the attention of the Vice-Provost (Research) for resolution.
5. At any time during the process, the student may contact the PGSA for appropriate student-focused support and guidance or contact the VUWSA advocacy service ([advocate@vuwsa.org.nz](mailto:advocate@vuwsa.org.nz)) for impartial advice.



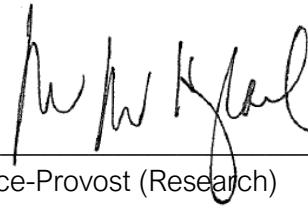
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President  
PGSA

3 December 2021

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Date



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Vice-Provost (Research)  
Victoria University of Wellington

3 December 2021

Date