

Dear Professor Olekalns,

The University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association (GSA), and the undersigned students, call on the Academic Board to amend the Graduate Research Training Policy in the following ways (amendments in italics):

4.60 Lapsed candidature is only available to candidates *who were enrolled in their course* before 1 January 2018.

5.51 Applications to lapse are only available to candidates *who were enrolled in their course* before 1 January 2018.

5.58 This section applies to *all candidates who enrol in their courses from 1 January 2018*.

5.62 An application for late submission will only be granted if the criteria at 5.61 are satisfied, and the delay in submission is due to *compelling personal, medical or compassionate grounds* or research-related reasons beyond the candidates' control.

Research related reasons beyond the candidate's control may include:

GSA recognises and respects the University's intent to increase the percentage of candidates completing research degrees in a timely fashion. However, applying the recent changes to the Graduate Research Training Policy and the Courses, Subjects, Awards and Programs Policy to existing students unreasonably impacts students who progressed through their candidature with the understanding that lapse was available if necessary.

Additionally, by removing the option of extensions for compassionate reasons, the University disproportionately penalises the students who most need support. This includes students with chronic medical issues and those with caring responsibilities, who are already disadvantaged in undertaking and completing research degrees.

Research candidates contribute greatly to the production of knowledge at the University, and to the University community more broadly. We call on the Academic Board to recognise this value, and to adopt policies and practices that genuinely support candidates in completing their degrees.

On behalf of the undersigned students,

Georgia Daly

GSA President

30 August 2017

Summary of signatories

1,052 signatories

- 867 current or recently-completed RHD students
- 182 coursework students
- 3 academic staff

Student signatories by faculty

Faculty	RHD	Coursework
Architecture, Building and Planning	46	5
Arts	159	36
Business and Economics	62	3
Education	35	2
Engineering	63	8
Law	11	12
Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences	234	69
Science	223	42
Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences	23	3
VCA and MCM	11	2

Signatories

Enrolment details of signatories are available if required

A Debinski
Aakash Gupta
Aaron Mannion
Aaron Blanco
Aaron Chong
Abbas Ali Syed
Abbie Trott
Abdulaziz Murad
Abdullah Baky
Abebe Fola
Ada Kapetanovic
Ada Castle
Adalya Nash
Adam Thwaites
Adam Hembree
Adam Wood
Adrian Marshall
Adrian Ford
Adrian Cervantes
Adrian Agisilaou
Ahmad Issa
Ahmad Azri Zulkifli
Ahmed Sadek
Aida Shakouri
Ainslee Meredith
Ajanee Ranasinghe

Ajay Raina
Akhil Kottaram
Akram Abdul
Alaina Vaisey
Alan Weiss
Alan Tsai
Alan John
Alana Butler
Alec Cameron
Alessandra Vittorini Orgeas
Alex Norton
Alex McDonald
Alex Waddell
Alex Ballantyne
Alexander Zarebski
Alexei Trundle
Alexis Zhang
Alexis Ian Dela Cruz
Ali Shamsollahi
Alicia Flynn
Alicia Byrnes
Alireza Kashian
Alishiya Murali
Alison Brown
Alissa Robbins
Alissa Flatley
Alister Self
Alister Thorpe

Alona Elijah
Amal Ali
Amanda Hiorth
Amanda Shanks
Ame Christiansen
Ameer Taresh
Amelia Hyatt
Amie Sexton
Amin Mahdizadeh
Amir Behroozi
Ammar Aldaoud
Ammon Beyerle
Amy Shepherd
Amy Espeseth
Andre Gulyas
Andrea Pianella
Andreas Hendarto
Andres Aguirre
Andrew Foers
Andrew Lynch
Andrew Lau
Andrew Fuhrmann
Andrew Thomas
Andrew Buultjens
Andrew Murray
Andrew Elvey Price
Aneta Trajkoski
Angela Chen

Angela Rojas
Angela Khera
Angelica Rojas
Angeliki Balayannis
Angelina Duan
Angeline Ferdinand
Angus Robertson
Aninda Moezier
Anita Talberg
Ankita Batra
Anna Hartman
Anna van Koeverden
Anna Dziedzic
Anna Farre Orteu
Anna Genat
Anna Antinori
Anna Bornemisza
Anna Parlane
Anne Aulsebrook
Anneke Prins
Anne-Marie Bollier
Annika Neill
Annisa Hartoto
Anthea Greenway
Anthony Setiadi
Anthony Mihalopoulos
Antoinette Poulton
Anton Donohoe-Marques

Anwar Hossain
Aphrodite Vlahos
Apsari Dewi
Arabella Eyre
Arie Rahadi
Ariel Zeleznikow-Johnston
Armineh Hassanvand
Aruni Alahakoon
Asako Saito
Ashley Dungan
Ashley Marsh
Ashwani Kumar
Astrid Glaser
Audrey Rattray
August Hao
Avish Patel
Axel Newton
Axel Almet
Bahrudin Bahrudin
Behannis Mena Chalas
Belinda Spagnoletti
Ben Hines
Ben Wagner
Ben Goudey
Ben Kunkler
Benjamin Camm
Beth Sprunt
Bethany Phillips-Peddlesden

Bethany Miller
Bethany Taggart
Bethwyn Mell
Bhavana Prakash
Bianca Levis
Bing Dai
Blake Smith
Bogdan Manolache
Bonita Marie Cabiles
Boon Han Koh
Bowen Fung
Boyuan Pang
Brad Knight
Bradley Hoare
Brandon Jones
Brendan Rigby
Brian Long
Brianna Steed
Brodie Dakin
Bronwyn Dixon
Bronwyn Stevens
Bruce Hurst
Bruna Lima
Bryant Wong
Bryn Lampe
Buddhika Mannaperuma
Caio Seguin
Caitlin Selleck

Caitlyn Perry
Caitlyn Gourlay
Caja Gilbert
Caleb Dawson
Cameron Boyle
Camila Reyes
Camilo Cruz
Candice Chien-Yu Wen
Cara Hull
Carly Pettiona
Carol Henderson
Carol Luo
Carolina Munoz
Carolina de Oliveira e Silva Borges
Caroline Ong
Caroline Phillips
Casey Ah-Cann
Cassie DeFillipo
Catherine Wheller
Catherine Cheng
Catherine Cheah
Cathleen Rosier
Chad Stevenson
Chamara Senaratna
Chantal Attard
Che Stafford
Chihchung Chou
Chloe Green

Chloe Mackenzie
Chris Redman
Chris Pocknee
Chris Kingsbury
Chris Hallam
Chrissy Thompson
Christina Van Heer
Christine Mizzi
Christine Marie Habito
Christopher O'Neill
Christopher Haggarty-Weir
Chung-Huey Wu
Chunhe Gu
Cindy Chew
Claire O'Meara
Claire Grech
Claire Miller
Claire Miller
Claire Collie
Claire Jenkins
Claire Sayers
Claire Thomas
Clare van Balen
Clare Walton
Clare Pitkethly
Clare Weeden
Connor Wilson
Courtney Lane

Craig Martin
Craig Burton
Cristobal Escobar
Cynthia Brown
Cynthia Contreras
Cynthia Tso
Da Zhao
Dan Sandiford
Dan Zhao
Daniel Cameron
Daniel Flynn
Daniel Rosenblatt
Daniel
Danielle Christesen
Dany Zemeitat
Darleen Ngo
Daro Leas
David Griffiths
David Delacretaz
David Marks
David Whittle
David Liknaitzky
Deanna Virgilio
Debajit Dutta
Deborah Lin
Decky Junaedi
Denise Chau
Denise Heckmann

Desmond Anim
Desmonda Lawrence
Diana Nguyen
Diana Chung
Dilara Kaymakci
Dilek Aktepe
Dimitri Lafleur
Dini Fardila
Dom Thorn
Dominic Carroll
Dominique Waissbluth Kingma
Dongcheng Zhang
Doreen Kumar
Duncan Caillard
Dylan McConnell
Eddy Yang
Eden Christian
Eden Smith
Edward Hyatt
Edward Tsyrlin
Edward Chew
Edwin Chan
Ehtesham Mofiz
Eileen Sim
Elaheh Hosseini
Eleanor Lewis
Eleanor Latomanski
Elena Robertson

Elena Alonso Mira
Elena Balcaite
Elena Swift
Elham Ghazimatin
Elham M Shoorcheh
Elisabeth Vogel
Elise Gould
Elise Farrington
Eliza O'Donnell
Elizabeth Schilpzand
Elizabeth Duncan
Elizabeth Dixon
Elle Ketterer
Ellen Cottingham
Ellen Corrick
Elliot Patsoura
Elly Scrine
Ellycia Harrould-Kolieb
Els Van Burm
Elyse Passmore
Emilie van Baalen
Emily Wilson
Emily McDonald
Emily Fitzgerald
Emily Munro-Harrison
Emily Baldwin
Emily De Rango
Emily McColl-Gausden

Emma Morrish
Emma Barnard
Emma Townsend
Emma Koch
Eric Ireland
Eric Shen
Erin Lawrence
Erin Grant
Erina Rossi
Errol Lloyd
Estelle Boyle
Ethan Armitage
Ethel Villafranca
Eva Reda
Eva Birch
Evelyn Chen
Fabian Kong
Fabiana Barros
Fallon Mody
Fanqi Liu
Farahnaz Rahman
Farheen Farzana
Farley Connelly
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Farzana Hossain
Fatima Runa
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Fernando Jativa

Fiannuala Morgan

Filimon Haile

Fiona Hile

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Francis Puccio

Francisca Samsing

Frank Liu

Gabriel Caluzzi

Gabriel Cornell

Gemma Gransbury

Geoff Browne

George Howitt

George Rennie

Georgia Tsambos

Georgia Daly

Gerard Ryan

Gezelle Dali

Ghazaleh Dashti

Giang Nguyen

Giel Muller

Gijo Sebastian

Giles Fielke

Giles Adams

Giulia Gerboni

Glenys Osborne

Grace Gell
Grace Torcasio
Graham Palmer
Greg Bass
Gregor Sanders
Gretel Evans
Guan Guo
Habtamu Derseh
Haikun Zhan
Hamdi Saadi
Hamid Amouzad Khalili
Han Wang
Hana Fraser
Hanchao Hou
Hang Hu
Hanh Tran
Hannah King
Hannah Aroni
Hannah Stenton
Hannah Gould
Hannah Bromley
Hannah Fraser
Hannah Williams
Hannah Robertson
Harriet Dashnow
Harvey Tran
Hayley Greenberger
Hedi Karoui

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Himani Jayawardane
Holly Melland
Holly Gallagher
Holly Whitfield
Hou Nam U
Houda Elhassan
Hugh Davies
Hui-Shyang Lee
Huyen Tran
Iain McIntyre
Ilknur Spring
Imogen Milne
Ingrid Burfurd
Innes Bigaran
Isa Loo
Isabel Jackson
Isabelle de Luzy
Ivan Kapitonov
Jacinta Kong
Jack Scanlan
Jack Line
Jackie Ogier
Jacky Truong
Jacob Johnson
Jacob Calabria

Jacob Rodrigo
Jamaludin Malik
James Cooney
James Bond
James McCormack
James Korte
James Kai Tanter
Jana Perkovic
Jane Le
Jane Goller
Jasmine McBain-Miller
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Jennifer Lacy-Nichols
Jennifer Decolongon
Jennifer Donovan
Jennifer Keller
Jenny Sinclair
Jeremiah Lim
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Jeremy Lee
Jess Vovers
Jess Crowe
Jess Franks
Jess Stott

Jesse Shapiro
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Jia Sheen Nah
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John Foxcroft
Jon Xu
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Jong Jeong
Joost van der Linden
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Joseph Nguyen
Joseph Quine
Josephine Churk
Josh Iaquinto
Josh Douglas
Josh Hodge
Joshua Rivera
Joshua Foreman
Joshua Clothier
Josi Khatarina
Josie Reade
Juan Sepulveda
Juan Manuel Valero Rodriguez
Juan Pablo Villanueva Cabezas
Julia Tulloh
Julia Prier
Julianne Bell
Julie Lucille haber Del Valle
Julio Carrera
Jun Fu
Justine Corso
Ka Man Fung
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Kaitlyn Height
Kara Blakley
Karla Fischer
Karra Harrington
Katalina Bobowik
Kate Chalmers
Kate Saunders
Kate Davison
Kate Horrack
Kate O'Connor
Kate Mannell
Kate Brady
Kate Ritchie
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Katharina Voigt
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Katharine Senior
Katherine Allan
Katherine O'Flaherty
Katherine Catani
Kathryn Cooling
Kathryn Russell
Kathryn Snow
Katitza Marinkovic
Katrina Black
Kavitha Krishnan

Kaye Mullins
Keiken Munzner
Keit Loi
Kerryn Moore
Kerui Zhai
Kevin Vo
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Khalid Alaboudi
Kieran McInerney
Kim Truong
Kim Reid
Kim Howells-Ng
Kim Doyle
Kimberley Reid
Kimberly Thek
Kiran Paudyal
Kiri Sullivan
Kirsty Dempsey
Krysta Trevis
Ksenija Nesic
Kuiyin Wang
Kunzang Choden
Kylie G
Lachlan Pollock
Lachlan Dryburgh
Lakshmanan Madhu
Lakshmi J Mohan
Lan Anh Nguyen Khoa

Lanka Wickramaarachchi

Lariss Tittl

Larissa Ng

Laura Giesen

Laura Gransbury

Laura Conway

Laura Mckay

Laura Blandthorn

Laura Bird

Lauren Carpenter

Lauren Craig

Laurence Fusillo

Laxman Bablani

Leanne Higham

Lee Winter

Lee Engelstad

Leigh McLennon

Leila Alhagh

Lemuel Lopez

Leo Hutchings

Leonie Walter

Liam Parker

Lian Zhou

Liesl Forward

Lila Moosad

Lily Nguyen

Lily Bennion

Linda Riquelme

Linden Jensen-Page
Lindsay Dugan
Lisa Williams
Lisa Smithies
Lisa Arnaud
Lisa Mansfield
Liseth Burbano
Lixing Xu
Liz Martin
Lori Vullings
Louise Freijser
Luara Karlson-Carp
Luca Godenzini
Lucas Ferreira
Lucinda Davidson
Lucy McLay
Lucy Rose
Lucy Strang
Lucy Diritto
Luke van Ryn
Luke Bloomfield
Luke Barrett
Luke Govers
Lydia Rehnberg
Lynda Hanlon
Madeleine Thorpe
Mahdi Khansefid
Majid Khansefid

Mandy Freund
Manikkuwadura De Silva
Marcellin Martinie
Maree Maxfield
Margaret Pope
Margarita Escueta
Maria Halkias
Maria Ome-Kaius
Maria Hach
Maria Panagiotidou
Maria Carolina Correa Barbosa
Marina Bassilios
Marjolein Barendse
Marjorie Pereira
Mark Learmonth
Markus Hahn
Martin Wainstein
Maryam Raji
Maryam Hejazi
Matt Rees
Matthew Jones
Matthew Spong
Maureen Murphy
Maxime Garnery
Maxwell Lyons
Md. Kabir Uddin Sikder
Mebrahtu Tedla
Mee-Yung Shin

Megan Hirst
Megan Carroll
Megha Swami
Meirian Lovelace-Tozer
Melanie Stewart
Melissa Aar
Melissa Kennedy
Melissa Gamat
Menaka Malavita
Meribah Rose
Merry Chen
Michael Stutz
Michael Lydeamore
Michael Sievers
Michael Pan
Michael Cowling
Michael Silk
Michael Scholz
Michaela Plein
Michelle Walter
Michelle Strumila
Michelle Tew
Mikel Moss
Milad Chenaghlu
Milad Faizollah
Mina You
Miza Moreau
Mohamad Fakhrur Razi Ghazali

Mohammad Hoq
Mohammad Mahdi Sadrforati
Mohd Suffian Azizan
Molly Hoak
Molly Watchorn
Molly Culbertson
Momeneh Foroutan
Monica Nafria
Monika Dryburgh
Monika Raniti
Muhammad Hilman
Mukesh Soni
Myra McGuinness
Nagaraj Moily
Nagesh Panyam
Nanda Aryal
Naomi Bury
Naomi Francis
Nastasia Bartlett
Natalia Jevglevskaja
Natalie Langowski
Natalie Roadknight
Natal Bovopoulos
Natalya Turkina
Natasha Pracejus
Natasha Jansz
Nathan Gardner
Nathan Pittman

Nathaniel Cutter
Naveen Joseph
Neha Malik
Neha Mishra
Neha Swami
Neika Lehman
Neil Marchant
Nerida Sleebs
Ngoc Ho
Ngoc Nguyen
Nicholas Bauer
Nicholas Scott
Nicholas Parry
Nicholas Downing
Nicholas Owen
Nicholas Robinson
Nicholas Ryan
Nicholas Evans
Nick Read
Nicole Batten
Nicole Iturrieta
Nicole Davis
Nicole Nomikos
Nijoy John
Nikki Rubinstein
Nima Sobhani
Niro Kandasamy
Nitheesh George

Nitika Mathur
Niv Sarma
Noni Rupasinghe
Nonie May
Oleksii Vedernikov
Olga Drath
Oliver Leigh
Oliver Thomas
Oliver Eastwood
Oliver Stuart
Olivia Salthouse
Olivia Farrell
Oskar Lindenmayer
P R Soriano
Pamela Chen
Paolo Franco
Paris Day
Paris Hadfield
Pascale Bastien
Pathima Nusrath Hameed
Patricia Koh
Patrici Rarau
Patrick Elliott
Patrick Andersen
Patrick Clearwater
Paul Finn
Paul Giansiracusa
Pavan Harika Raavi

Pei-Wen Chung
Peng Xue
Perran Ross
Peter Eade
Peter Kriesner
Peter Ghin
Peter Somerville
Peter Edwin
Peter McNamara
Peter Braunsteins
Petra Quinlan-Turner
Petrina Killey
Petrina Loh
Philip Patterson
Phoebe Quinn
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Priscilla Savopoulos
PuXue Qiao
Rachael Munro
Rachael Booth
Rachel Kennedy
Rachel Stumpy
Rachel Gear
Rachelle Meyer
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Raisa Cassim
Randy Nandyatama
Rashaam Chowdhury
Raul Marino
Raveena Grace
Rebecca Clements
Rebecca Hethering
Rebecca Hetherington
Rebecca Hull
Rebecca Groenewegen
Rebecca Norris
Rebecca Hiscock
Rehan Scharenguivel
Rekha Srinivasan
Remi Kowalski
Remika Mito
Rhiannon Bezore
Rich Phan
Richard Liu
Rick Tankard
Rita Seumanutafa
Robert Owen
Robert Chin
Robert Keillar
Roberta Carluccio
Robyn Ho
Robyn Schenk
Rohan Venkatraman

Rohit Tiwari
Ron Baird
Roozbeh Valavi
Rose Maurice
Rose Burnfield
Rosie Yasmin
Rosie Barron
Ross Barham
Rowan Forbes Shepherd
Rowan Skewes
Rowena Sannang
Ruby Tolmer
Ruby Lipson-Smith
Rui Li
Rui Jin
Ruijie Xu
Rujuta
Ruvinie Withana
Ruwanthi Nawarathna
Ruwanthi Thambawita
Ryan Hoult
Ryan Toh
Ryan Davey
Sabrina Tabassum
Sabutay Fatullayev
Sadra Zekrgoo
Sally Wilkinson
Sally Olds

Salman Panahy
Sam Grimes
Sam Titchener
Sam Owen
Sam Lyons
Sam Shaw
Sam Boone
Samantha Croy
Samantha Chiew
Samantha Bannister
Samantha Marangell
Samantha Hamilton
Sampath Edirisinghe
Samuel Stephenson
Samuel Harvey
Samuel Eyamu
Sandra Hamlet
Sandra Richard
Sara Mahdizadeh
Sarah Griffith
Sarah Pihowich
Sarah McColl-Gausden
Sarah Kirby
Sarah Garner
Sarah Healy
Sarah Fischer
Sarah Richardson
Sarah Green

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Sareh Naji
Sasha Malignaggi
Savant Thakur
Scarlett Blewett
Scott Patton
Sean Jones
Sean Walsh
Seann Chia
Seb Rattansen
Sejal Bhikha
Selwyn Prea
Shahid Mahmood
Shaira Baptista
Shan Windsript
Sharon Kramer
Sharon Yahalom
Shashi Karunanethy
Shaun Hopper
Shayna Newman
Shazra Abbas
Sheikh Alif
Sheryl Ding
Sheryl Liew
Shijie Huang
Shirley Jackson
Shreemat Shrestha
Shrupa Shah

Shuaijun Guo
Shuci Liu
Shurong Lu
Siddhesh Godbole
Silvia Griselda
Simon Preston
Simon Kapitza
Simon Christie
Simon Davidson
Simone Park
Sina Khatami
Siobhan Motherway
Sir Jieh Howe
Skye Turner-Walker
Smriti Ghimire
So Yun Park
Sonia Poetrodjojo
Sonia Randhawa
Sonja Petrovic
Sonya Fiddes
Sook Jhee Yoon
Soon-Tzu Speechley
Sophie Moore
Sopia Lestari
Srivatsa Badariprasad
Srividya Neriyanuri
Stephanie Guiney
Stephanie Tell

Stephanie Trezise
Stephanie Byrne
Stephanie Bernard
Stephanie Stewart
Stephanie Spiridonidis
Stephen Elias
Stephen Pollard
Steve Siu
Steven Hampton
Steven Kambouris
Stri Nariswari Setiaji
Subhadra Mistry
Suneel Jethani
Susan Pyke
Susanna Collis
Sushma Reddy
Svenja Keele
Svetlana Danilkina
Tal Fitzpatrick
Tamar Primoratz
Tamarah King
Tammy Dennis
Tanya Alers
Tao Xue
Tara Lomax
Tara Jalali
Tara FitzGerald
Tayla McKechnie

Tayyab Ahmad
Ted Liu
Teresa Kelly
Teresa Hall
Tessa Toumbourou
Tessa Leach
Tessa Gould
Thanuja Panawannage
Thao Huynh
Thao Phan
Thao Nguyen
Tharini Ketharanathan
Thea Hewitt
Therese Thornton
Thirunesha Naidoo
Thomas Fellowes
Thomas Schmidt
Thomas Sayers
Thomas Forbes
Thor Taylor
Thu Pham
Tianxin Pan
Tiara Marthias
Tiffany Lee
Tiffany Leung
Tim Baxter
Tim Fletcher
Timothy Hyndman

Timothy Pollard
Timur Behlul
Tobias Dinh
Toby Davies
Todd Morris
Tom Baldwin
Tom Fairman
Tracey Smith
Trent Duan
Trent Newman
Trent Woodward
Triparna Gandhi
Tristan Ruggeri
Tung Mai
Urarang Kitur
Vanja Rozenblat
Vasanth Muthusamy
Vaughn Grey
Velyne Katharpi
Vendy Prasetyo
Vergil Dolar
Vhairi Mackintosh
Vickie Zhang
Vicky McGimpsey
Victoria Fanggidae
Victoria Hemming
Vikas Wadhwa
Vindhya Vasini Shatdarsanam

Vivian Ip
Warda Syeda
Wei Chaimanowong
Wei Chen
Wenjie Zhang
Wilford Goh
William Atkins
William Tuckwell
William Turner
Windy Triana
Xi Zen Yap
Xianglong Liu
Xiao Tan
Xiaoran Huang
Xin Dai
Xin Zhang
Xuan Cheng
Xue Jun Cheng
Yamni Mohan
Yan Zhuang
Yana Canteloupe
Yang Hu
Yann Robiou du Pont
Yao Mei Wang
Yasmin Blunck
Yau Chung Low
Ye Zhao
Yee Kee Ku

Yi Wan Quah
Yifan Zhang
Ying-Chen Soo
Yinzong Xiao
Yu Bai
Yung En Chee
Yunho Cho
Yuqing Pan
Zac Fehily
Zebedee Nicholls
Zeyu Zhou
Zhendong Huang
Zheng Zhang
Zhuo Li
Zoe Metherell
Zoe Wainer
Zoe Grant
Zulprianto Zulprianto

Comments from signatories

Comments have been edited lightly for clarity and to preserve anonymity

- A PhD can be extremely stressful on the students and is a well-documented trigger for mental health problems. The policy changes by the university seem not only to ignore this fact but seek to increase these stressors.
- These changes are completely unreasonable to put on current students. I would also encourage the uni to consult with some of the organisational psychologist they have in FBE about protective factors that can help students complete their PhD in a timely manner and without costing them their mental health.
- Although I will not be directly affected by this decision as I am soon to submit my thesis, I do know that due to serious mental health issues, it has taken more than the required amount of time to complete my PhD. Although I know it is not ideal to lapse past one's candidature and although I had not expected this to be the case during my PhD, it turned out that way. I am so grateful that I continued to have the support and encouragement from my supervisors for my important project, and had I not had the chance to use the extra time, it certain I would not have ever completed my thesis, or perhaps fallen into worse suicidal tendencies. The pressure on PhD students is already great enough without such abominable penalties. I fear for current and future students who will not be provided such provisions.
- Amendments to policy should not be implemented for students who are already currently enrolled in PhD.
- Any new amendments should be applied for students who will be enrolling not students who enrolled based on previous rules they agreed to
- Applying changes retrospectively would be unfair and any new change should only be applicable to new students and not those students who are making satisfactory progress towards completion of thesis and may face some unforeseen circumstances.
- Applying retrospective laws are accepted as unjust. Applying retrospective policies to students already enrolled is just as unfair. Inducing a Cortisol fuelled fear in current students isn't going to make them complete faster. It's just going to put more pressure on students and further marginalise vulnerable students. This policy says you care more about completion rates then student wellbeing. Congratulations Melbourne Uni.
- Applying the policy retrospectively is punitive and the removal of compassionate grounds for extension is, frankly, cruel. I am not opposed to strict submission

deadlines but it is unreasonable to change the system mid-way through people's candidature. I have made decisions about my life and this research based on a particular system and that system has been changed. This will disadvantage many people and is not an ideal way to achieve timely completions. Please reconsider the retroactive nature of the policy and the removal of compassionate extension.

- As a 'mature age' research student, I have caring responsibilities for my 3 (under school age) children. Students should be treated as is customary in the workplace in regards to unforeseen circumstances that can disrupt work deadlines. In other words, extension requests to completion timelines should be given decided given the student's real life circumstances.
- As a student with a chronic medical condition, it is very disappointing that the Academic Board are seemingly ignoring the immense challenges of undertaking and eventually completing a RHD for such students. This only demonstrates the lack of understanding and support for already marginalised students by the Academic Board.
- As a working mother trying to undertake her PhD with two young children, part time work and other family commitments, it is ridiculous that you would not support extensions based on compassionate grounds. While it would have been great to have started my PhD when I was in my 20s and did not have a family, I only feel like I now have the experience and maturity to undertake this important task. Whilst I am lucky to be a recipient of an APA Scholarship, the stipend (living allowance works out to be \$12.50 per hour of work) is insufficient to allow me to work fulltime on my PhD as a "job" as I need to work to support my family. As a University who calls itself an institute of knowledge, you are failing your researchers by not providing more options for successful completion, instead, instead, choosing again to penalise students who have other commitments.
- As graduate students, we are expected to not only work on our own research projects but to also develop and expand our skill base to make us more well-rounded and desirable future hires. This means that most if not all graduate students take on extra work as research assistants, collaborators, tutors, industry positions, lecturing positions, and so many other roles that while enhancing our skills, also take time away from our own work. We should not be penalized for having to take on these extra responsibilities by not being allowed the adequate time we need to also finish our graduate research, which is already significantly less time than in many other countries.
- As I was nearing completion of my PhD, I was struck down by an illness that forced me to discontinue work. My partner has ensured that both my (and his) enrolments

were continued via compassionate grounds. Not only did my illness force me to stop studying, I had to leave my full time, continuing lecturer position and abandon my (already-sold) novel. During my years at UniMelb, I taught numerous courses and have participated in, represented or led many committees, reading groups, and events. I believed I was investing my time and goodwill in the scholarly community. To be forced to discontinue my PhD when so close to the end would be devastating.

I may never recover enough to work or study again, but my partner has struggled to support us completely on his own with little outside help. While working enormous hours to support us, he is my sole carer. He has now also been given a hard deadline for submission which will be difficult to achieve.

Why is UniMelb rejecting compassionate grounds? I built a career--teaching, publishing, conferencing, winning prizes and awards-- while I advanced my PhD. So did my partner. The only thing worse than spending ten years getting a PhD is spending ten years NOT getting a PhD.

How can you change the rules now?

- I am disappointed at the lack of consultation and poor communication of this change of policy, which has left many students confused and some anxious about its implications.
- Australia's research community is already plagued with problems: lack of funding, lack of technical, resource, emotional etc. support and unreasonable expectations of postdoc fellows and professors. This will only make researchers suffer in what is already an isolating environment.
- Backdating this to current PhD students is unreasonable - projects have not been designed with this in mind, and this is causing unnecessary and serious stresses on students - ironically, these extra mental health stresses may actually increase lapses for thesis completion.
- Changes to the candidature extension should not be retroactive and also allow for compassionate reasons to extension
- Changing rules around lapsing, the effect of leaves of absence and the way part-time study impacts our final expected completion date has created unnecessary stress and anxiety in an already very stressful process. These changes have been communicated in a highly bureaucratic and depersonalised way, without any consideration for the very real and individual impact on current students. We all want the same thing: for us to submit our theses on time. This aim is not served by the current approach.
- Changing the allowed completion time is not fair, especially to those of us already a

significant way into our allotted time

- Completely unfair change. Retrospective changes unfairly affect different groups. Inadequately communicated or consulted upon. Why we can't grandfather existing arrangements has not adequately been explained (if at all).
- Creating a deadline that cannot be extended due to personal issues is inconsiderate and will both disadvantage Melbourne university students and deter potential future students.
- I have completed 2.5 years in my PhD and I am on a maternity leave of one year now. Although I am very excited to go back to work after my leave, I am also very scared with the new change made to submit my work. The new deadlines should not affect us since when we got into the program, we planned everything accordingly. Please consider our case so that I can finish my PhD.
- I would like to convey to you the significant stress that has resulted from the decision of the Academic Board. This decision seems punitive, and follows from some very flawed thinking. Please reconsider.
- Do not do this! It discriminates against mothers/parents returning to study who also have a responsibility to their children.
- Even if I think I will complete in a 'timely' fashion, these changes pose unnecessary levels of anxiety on students. They also disregard differentiated needs of diverse students.
- Everyone wants a timely completion. These days a PhD doesn't just require research towards a thesis. We must publish as first author in a high-ranking journal. We contribute to teaching and marking. We lead field trips. We speak to the community and advocate update in the sciences. This cannot be done in 3 years. If the PhD has gone on longer than normal, than an individual's circumstance should be taken into account. An abandoned PhD is a massive waste, especially if the cause of the non-completion is an arbitrary deadline, when earlier support or late-stage flexibility could have kept it alive.
- Four years is a fair deadline - a deadline that should only be imposed following fair warning. Notifying candidates half way (or further) through their PhD is not fair warning.
- How can someone put a deadline for making a scientific discovery? Stop making science another product of capitalism.
- I agree that students who are already disadvantaged should not be penalized further. They are the ones that need the most help.
- I am a 4-yr PhD student (international) who were affected by depression and anxiety throughout my PhD study here. While my progress is slow, I had never

stop working on my thesis. I am now being punished for having a mental disorder, to which I am sure I would not want to choose to live with or under my control, with the current regulations imposed by the University. The University of Melbourne failed to acknowledge the challenges that are faced by students with my condition. This is a total injustice and discrimination towards students with compelling circumstances.

- I am a Doctor of Optometry student and the RHD candidates that are in the department of optometry and vision science put so much effort into helping us in our clinical training. This is on top of the research component that they do as part of their PhD. We are often told that in clinic, things will be beyond our control and the same can be said about a PhD. Life doesn't always conform to the plans we set out for ourselves. This new change in thesis submission policy is unfair and adds unnecessary stress to an already difficult and challenging pathway (towards a PhD).
- I am petitioning on behalf of my older brother who is currently undertaking a PhD with Engineering. He has put in so much effort into his project and has had so many setbacks, yet he is still powering through to complete his PhD. If the amendment for thesis submission is applied retrospectively, I feel that it would place him at undue disadvantage. We should be encouraging research and innovation. Gaining a PhD is not a walk in the park and ultimately, a successful completion will only serve to benefit the country as a whole. The amendment to thesis submission is unfair to be applied retrospectively. A law cannot be applied retrospectively, so why should the academic board apply a ruling in this manner?
- My research is part of an international collaboration. As a consequence, I do not set the deadlines for publication. If I am forced to finish my PhD in exactly 4 years I may not be able to submit a complete thesis and therefore won't be a competitive candidate for postdoctoral positions. These new rules will certainly lower the standard and reputation of graduates from Melbourne University.
- I am a Professor who strongly disagrees with the (i) retrospective nature and (ii) lack of compassionate grounds for extension.
- I am a senior research fellow. I am very concerned about the recent Academic Board changes to the Graduate Research Training Policy and the Courses, Subjects, Awards and Programs Policy ("Timely Completions"). I wish to put on record my objection to these changes, and express my support for the GSA petition calling on the Academic Board to amend the policy.
- I am doing a PhD in a foreign language so it's double the challenge. Please don't put more pressure on me.

- I am in my final year of the PhD and feel that sudden changes to the policies only add more pressure for final year PhD students. We all aim to have our thesis completed on time and wouldn't want to prolong it. However, research students have an increasing pressure to publish while they are doing their PhD and the publication process can consume a lot of our time and may not always with a successful outcome for publication. Moreover, students may also have personal problems or other research related problems that have not been listed in the exceptions, such as poor supervision. It is only fair that the university has compassion for their students and allow the option of lapse candidature. If not, then change the date this policy goes into place to a later date. If candidates are aware of such policies in place from the beginning of their candidature then this would allow them to plan for any contingencies.
- I am in the last semester of my PhD. However, due to severe supervisory issues, I had to change both of my supervisors after 20 months in my PhD. My reasons were robust enough that my department immediately accepted the change. I absolutely need some more time to submit my PhD thesis. I am an international student, and my husband works here in Australia. I just need 6 months of extension to complete my PhD thesis and submit my work in 4.5 years instead of 4 years. I am working days and nights since I changed my supervisors and I need every moment of this 6 month extension. The new policy on the maximum completion period has highly impacted me. This is absolutely not a policy to issue retrospectively. I had counted on an extra 6 months to submit my PhD and all of a sudden this new policy came in. This new policy is very harsh and unfair to apply to those already in their final months of PhD studies. We should have known about this rule at the start of the program. Therefore, I request for the policy to apply to students commencing their PhD in 2018.
- I am interested in furthering my education by pursuing a PhD at Melb Uni. If I get admitted into a doctorate program, these new rules would affect t me. If something unfortunate would happen to me, like a severe illness, I would like to be granted the ability to finish my program (via extension) given my circumstances if they are beyond my control. I would hope the same compassion would apply to other students in the same boat.
- I am one of the impacted students due to imposing a new policy on a new study timeline. Wisely speaking, the new policy should be appropriately run for new students after this regulation has been formally legalised. Therefore, the new students will set up their study timeline consciously.
- I am opposed to the hard cut-off date to submit the theses. While it is ideal to have

our PhD completed as soon as possible, unexpected incidents always happen, especially with experimental projects. If something goes wrong, then it can delay our progress for several months. I am working in a big collaboration and many data collecting and analyzing processes have been the delayed for weeks or months due to technical problems over the last year. Also, working in a big collaboration means your data or part of your analyses also depend on many other people's work, which is uncontrollable. Also whether some of our results are allowed to be published or not depends on the decision of the collaboration. I believe this also a problem with other research groups in Science. It is not fair for us to have such a hard deadline. Also, a hard deadline does not ensure a better quality thesis/research output. For example, some of our PhD students are working on 1 to 2 different projects in addition to their main PhD project because their side projects are also very beneficial to the collaboration and to the research field in general. They can work very hard and provide a large number of research papers from both the main and the side projects. They may take 6-12 months longer to submit their theses, but it doesn't mean they have slacked off. In contrast, they are a lot more productive and contribute more to Science than the students who finish within 3-4 years. At the end of the day, a thesis is not the only thing which is important to the research or science in general, but there are also other factors like the quality of the research, the amount of publications, and the applications and future prospects of our research.

Moreover, if this requirement takes effect, it should only apply for students starting after 1/1/2018. It is not sensible to apply a new rule for people already started because if there have been problems with our research project, we can't go back in time and change the plan.

Lastly, this hard deadline could give a number of negative impacts the quality of PhD projects at Melbourne University. The supervisors and the students may choose an easier project which they feel more certain to be finished within 3-4 years rather than a challenging and innovative project. The research outputs will decrease significantly: the number of publications will drop dramatically, and the number of PhD students participating in conferences/workshop/summer or winter schools will also drop, because the students will just focus on writing theses and try to finish their own project in time. This is not a good thing to science in general. The ranking of Melbourne University will definitely drop due to poor output research, and that may also lead to a drop in funding and grants for the university.

As a consequence, I don't think the hard deadline requirement is a good idea to improve our efficiency. Instead, the university should provide more support to the

students so that they can focus on their research. My suggestion would be: providing more funding/scholarships for students with difficulties and students with good achievements/research outputs, and providing more funding to the schools so they can afford equipment/books/travel funding for their staff and students.

- This change will disproportionately impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduate students. Supporting students to overcome barriers is a far more effective way to increase timely completion rates.
- I am trying to finish my doctoral thesis as a mum of a small child. Without flexibility to my candidature and, in particular, a lapse period, I will not be able to complete my thesis. My position is that enforcing stricter completion dates on students, especially current students, will force more students to drop out than to complete in a timely manner. I would be in the former category.
- I believe the changes are extremely unfair to all current PhD students but particularly international students such as myself.

As an international student I am unable to pause my PhD without my visa being cancelled. I am also unable to go part-time otherwise my visa will be cancelled. With less than 1 year to go, I am told that if I do not submit by 4 years then I will not gain my PhD after over 3 years of commitment to this project. If I had known about this from the beginning of my candidature then I would have been able to plan accordingly. For instance, I would not have spent months preparing a significant chunk of my thesis for publication. Instead, I would have used that time to write my thesis and never would have published during my PhD candidature. I do not think it is fully realised that these changes will significantly reduce the number of PhD students that will publish during their candidature.

Regardless, a PhD is a long-term project and any research or otherwise (but equally important) issues that arose at any time during a person's candidature should be taken into account retrospectively if these new rules are to stay for current students. Alternatively, and what I believe would be more fair, is that these new changes in 2018 are applicable only to new PhD students.

- I believe the policies on research degree completion are harsh and the way it was communicated and forced on to the students was not a good pathway.
- I believe these changes unfairly disadvantage students nearing the end of their PhD/Masters candidature who planned out their research timeline with the understanding that lapse was available to them if needed. I do not believe it is fair that these changes retrospectively apply to students in the final stages of their degree.

- I chose unimelb based on a certain set of rules. To change those rules once I've signed up is simply unfair.
- I commenced my course under a specific set of rules and guidelines and I hardly think it is fair to change the rules toward the end of my course. Please rethink this policy decision.
- I commenced my PhD at the end of 2013 and I do not think it is unreasonable to assume the conditions I commenced under will apply through the entire duration of my candidature. Changing the goalposts mid-way through is unfair and lacks understanding of the pressures PhD students are under. We teach classes, write papers and give the university a good name through our conference presentations. Some empathy wouldn't go astray from administration.
- I do not support these changes to policy - they are unfair to students who enrolled in courses with different expectations. The consultation and decision making process was not rigorous or expansive enough. This indicates that the university does not have student welfare as a priority. Systematic and institutional change is needed to change completion timelines, not punishing students who are already under stress (mental, financial, housing)"
- I feel these changes are highly counterproductive to successful PhD completion, and research output.
- I fully support becoming more stringent about thesis completions, however this needs to be grandfathered in, and not applied to candidates midway through their thesis.
- I had a number of serious health issues throughout my PhD but was advised not to take a leave of absence as I could still perform work (albeit not as efficiently). I was also financially dependent on my scholarship at the time so would not have been able to support myself if I had taken leave. This has been an incredibly stressful time period in my PhD and has made me feel very unsupported and undervalued by the university. I work part time as a tutor and have for the last 4 years and put a lot of time and effort into my teaching practices. If I had known this policy was to be enforced I would not have taken on any teaching this semester, but the timing of the announcement meant that I could not do this (I would have left my department without a tutor in 4 classes that I currently teach and have taught for the last 4 years). I did not want to put the department or my students in that position in the first week of semester. If I hadn't taught this semester it would have been a great financial strain on me, but the thought of not receiving my PhD after all of the hard work and dedication is far worse. I am still completely in the dark about what will become of my situation. I have just submitted a successful progress review (that

was received before this policy change) with my committee, but we are now very unsure of my future or the right course of action to take.

- I have a chronic health condition and made decisions (in full consultation with my supervisor) about leave based on the old policy.
- I have a chronic health condition, and was implicitly counting on the option of lapsing if my health worsens. I want to finish in a timely manner but my health is not under my control.
- I have a chronic illness. I am also a carer for family members (wife and 9 yo son) with chronic medical conditions. The University leave system for PhD students does not provide effective support for my situation. By imposing a hard deadline with no consideration of personal or health issues, this represents further discrimination against those with medical conditions and those with carer responsibilities, hardly consistent with the University's own policies.
- I have a toddler who was asked to leave childcare due to not settling; I must now presumably sit her in front of the TV and ignore her in order to be able to finish and submit by the deadline. This seems potentially irresponsible, given that it may indeed impact my toddler's development and accordingly disadvantage her.
- I have family commitments along with PhD.
- I have made strategic decisions around my candidature under the old PhD system. These decisions may now affect my ability to finish within the new timeframe and as a consequence may detrimentally impact the final quality of my thesis.
- I object to this policy being retrospective. I suffer from chronic fatigue and the last major bout affected me for 3 years. I made a decision to do the PhD being able to manage the condition and knowing that I should I fall into a bad period again, I could still complete the PhD. A leave of absence will not cover me should my condition get very bad.
- I support the University intention for students to complete their research degrees on time if the following issue below will be taken on board. Sometimes students might face challenges beyond research reasons (family constraints, loss of close relatives, sickness, etc.) which might affect candidate's study time frame, thus the new policy will penalize students who most need support beyond research related problems.
- I support the University's aim to increase on time completion. I also support clear rules to encourage completion on time. Implementation of changes to policy retrospectively is not helpful, nor is removing the possibility to extend the candidature based on compassionate grounds. A more effective incentive to encourage completion on time could be a more rigorous implementation of the

- current rules by providing better tools to supervisors to assist on-time completion.
- I support the University's decision to prioritise timely completion of the PhD, but feel it would be better for student welfare to focus on directly supporting students who are struggling to meet their deadline rather than focusing on a hard completion date. This hard line policy risks creating additional stress for PhD students who, during the course of their degree, are already at high risk of developing mental health related problems.
 - I think it is incredibly unfair that these changes will be applied retrospectively, affecting students who have already consumed some of their candidature. When I commenced my candidature it was with the understanding that I could lapse in good standing if unable to complete on time. I suffer from a chronic and debilitating illness and have required multiple surgeries and lots of time off sick. Whilst longer absences (>2 weeks) have been covered by leave of absence (sick leave) those less than this duration have eaten into my candidature. Many students have similar disruptions to their candidature, that are beyond their control, and it is unfair that they be penalised when what they need is compassion and understanding.
 - I think it is not fair to make a rule especially for those who are close to finish line.
 - I think sick leave should be taken into consideration.
 - I think the new completion regulations should apply to new students only.
 - I think the policy is not fair for those who are struggling in their candidature
 - I think the retrospective aspect of these changes is particularly harsh and unwarranted.
 - I totally agree with the fact that 'the changes to all current students unreasonably impacts the students who progresses through their candidature with the understanding that lapse was available if necessary'. Especially being a mother of two very young children and finding it extremely difficult to maintain a work-life balance, I totally agree that university should provide the option for extensions on compassionate reasons. With the ongoing efforts for encouraging women in research, the university should definitely understand our efforts in terms of maintaining the work-life balance. Otherwise, the very purpose of encouraging women in research is defied!
 - I understand changing the policy for new graduate students, but for the policy to apply to students who are already in their third year of a doctorate is not fair. We plan our work and output around the university's policies, and in some instances I know students have made decisions that will benefit the university, for example to prioritise publishing over submission of their theses, which they would not have

made if the new policies had already been in place.

- I understand that timely completion is an important thing for any University with higher degree research students and introducing a policy that is stricter may help to a degree. However imposing this new policy that begins January 2018 on countless current enrolled higher research degree students is unfair, unsupportive and illogical. This strict policy imposed on current students will only result in the university having a high percentage of incomplete higher research degrees that will reflect only poorly on the university and consequently also contradict the supposed logic and reasoning for a stricter timely completion policy. This should have been rolled out to NEW students only, NOT existing students who already had expectations in place. There should ALWAYS be an option for compassionate extension.
- I very much plan on finishing my PhD within four years. But I think it's unfair to enforce such a strict deadline when unforeseeable circumstances could have such a great impact on one's ability to submit on time.
- I was helped out by way of extensions to be able to complete my Ph.D. This included compassionate grounds in addition to medical.
- I work full time. I am about to commence a secondment and accepted this opportunity with the knowledge that I was slowly but surely publishing my work towards completing my thesis. My plans were made prior to this new policy and I have no ability to change them. This new policy will seriously jeopardise my ability to complete my PhD, which is very close, but will most likely require more time than allowed under this new policy.
- If students have made decisions with the expectation that they can lapse in good standing, then setting a hard deadline will only lead to sub-optimal outcomes.
- If this was true for my PhD, I wouldn't have a career in research
- I'm contemplating doing a PhD next year and these days PhDs always go over the 3.5 expected years.
- I'm not currently affected by these amendment but have friends who are, some of whom have chronic illnesses. At some point I will commence my PhD; this change would make me think twice about doing it at Melbourne Uni.
- In addition to disproportionately affecting those who need most support, and those who are well-established in their candidature, this change is also inequitable for mature-age students, many of whom are undertaking high-level research whilst also maintaining existing careers and families. Whilst any student may experience disruption during their candidature, older students are more likely to have ageing parents, professional engagements outside of the university, and multiple children.

These things do not devalue us as students, but inform our lives and our work. Eliminating the possibility of compassionate extensions or periods of lapse means you are going to exclude a greater number of mature-age students from completion due to circumstances outside of their control, and make your research centres less attractive as a post-graduate option for many of those potential candidates.

- In cases where data collection takes longer due to the nature of research project, pushing students towards strict time lines may jeopardise the quality of the thesis. Further, students need a fair amount of time to make publications or at least to submit in top tier journals before they graduate. This will make their presence stronger in their job market.
- In the last 4 years I have nursed my father through a year of cancer, managed his death and the wrapping up of his business; lost a close friend and colleague to cancer, travelled to the UK for the death of my father-in-law and, most importantly, become a full-time carer to my husband, who is already wheelchair dependent and cannot assist with the practicalities of raising an 11-year-old.

These are all circumstances entirely out of my control. I cannot fathom how future PhD students will fare under the proposed changes if they face any of these circumstances, let alone all of them. I am indebted to the excellent pastoral care and support I have received and am on track to submit my PhD, but only due to the flexibility offered by the previous system and by my wonderful PhD panel. Current and future students deserve the same support and flexibility under a system that recognises candidature extensions due to compassionate grounds.

- It doesn't make sense to apply the new rule for currently enrolled students who started with a different rule and never agreed with the new rule. The new rule should be applied only to the newly commencing students.
- It is absolutely ridiculous that such drastic new rules can be introduced so late in the game for students. If such detrimental rules are changed, they should not be allowed to apply retroactively. Students already have plenty to stress about and lapsing is not a choice students make. Don't punish students for a lack of support. This will only achieve flooding the market with sub-par PhDs and also alienate students that do not end up passing despite years of hard work.
- It is ridiculous for PhD student to have a cut-off line of their research work. And it is not consistent with the rules that we knew during the application and acceptance of the offer. If there is a hard cut-off, it will definitely decrease my interest in the PhD program in University of Melbourne.
- It is unfair and counterproductive to discriminate against carers and the unwell. Diversity matters.

- It is unfair to apply this policy retrospectively.
- It is unfair to change the rules on students already enrolled. We should have the same completion rules as those at the commencement of our course. New rules should only apply as new students commence a course.
- It should also be noted that the roll-out of this policy was nothing short of a complete shambles which is completely unacceptable for something as important as final cut-off dates for research students.
- It's going to take me 6 years to complete my Masters and I would like to do a PhD but have extenuating circumstances and I already know it will take me a very long time. Punitive move!
- Many students in my research cluster started ambitious empirical projects with the knowledge that if things went badly (e.g. weather, lack of availability of equipment or research assistants at critical times, or unviable experiments), we could always take some more time to fill in the missing pieces and ensure that we come away with a strong thesis. This new rule means that no sensible RHD student will take on a project with any degree of uncertainty (the kind of novel work that moves science forward), and is downright unfair for students who enrolled and planned out their thesis under the previous rules.
- Mid-candidature I was struck by a car, and since then have suffered chronic pain. I am hoping to finish in a timely fashion, but can equally see how an accident such as this could have wiped out my entire candidature under the new provisions. This is neither fair nor equitable.
- Much of my PhD involved managing my lab, supervisor, department and the ambition of my lab's project; the possibility of lapsing was always a major factor. Had this rule been in place the whole time, I would not have persisted with my course of research. You've taken 3 years of work from me.
- MU's program of first year coursework significantly undermines student research by taking graduates away from their substantive research responsibilities. This in effect penalises MU students compared to their colleagues at other universities not burdened with additional coursework. The new change in policy further undermines and disadvantages MU research students struggling to complete in a timely manner.
- No consultation on this policy. More effort should be put into support measures not punishment
- Not only do I believe that the research output will be more "safe"/less innovative, I also believe the university will suffer in other areas that have not been thoroughly considered. It will be more difficult to find, train, and retain demonstrators for

undergraduate lab practicals, for example; this is only one casualty that affects undergraduates and postgraduates, alike. Research students are less likely to engage in various activities that benefit the student body, staff and faculty, and UniMelb as a whole.

- People should know what they are signing up for. Introducing these changes retroactively could adversely affect current students and I think more completions would be lost than gained by applying these changes to students already enrolled.
- PhD is a long journey and due to the nature of the study, it probably should be a long journey. In this journey, so many things could happen along the way, we can hardly put ourselves in a vacuum space and only focus on PhD. I lost my father during my PhD candidature. Although I took a few months leave, I found it extremely challenging for me to concentrate on my PhD from time to time. I understand where the university's perspective from, but I do hope they could treat the issue case by case!
- PhD research can throw unexpected curve balls at various times over the candidature and despite a student's best intentions and solid work ethic timelines can blow out. Sometimes life happens too. PhD students do not need more pressure (they are under enough already) but require support and a little flexibility to ensure successful and timely completions. Also a little late is better than not at all.
- Please don't put this extra pressure on RHD students; we are actually committed to our work and want that mutual success for all stakeholders that comes with completion.
- Please make the changes as per this petition. I am a mother who has had fertility treatment and one child during my candidature so far. This has seriously disrupted my progress but not my resolve to finish. I would also like to be able to extend my candidature to spend time with my only child before he goes to school and this is something I can't delay until later. It would be unfair that I would have to choose between completing my PhD and my family, especially as this was not the conditions I agreed to when I commenced.
- Regardless of how it affects me, this is an unconscionable decision and I oppose it for its injustice.
- Retroactive legislation is a non-ethical act when graduate students plan their research agenda for the upcoming years based on the promises which university makes at the start.
- Retrospective changes to currently enrolled students are very unfair, and do not acknowledge that graduate research students often have work and family commitments that cannot be ignored.

- Retrospective changing of a candidate's rules is unfair and inappropriate.
- Retrospective penalty laws are morally unjustifiable.
- Rushing students through their PhD candidature or master's degree will certainly not result in better research, let alone in better theses. Inflexible finishing times might serve the university, but patently cannot serve students, who are subject to forces and imperatives outside their studies, these forces and imperatives (changes in living circumstances, job loss, money problems, illness, ill-luck, study-related or other stress) often being completely beyond their control.

I urge the university to reinstate/adopt more realistic and humane policies towards its graduate students -- not only for their sake, but for the sake of research- and thesis-quality long-term, and ultimately for the sake of the university's reputation.

- Stop letting money drive the management of unimelb.
- The changes to RHD course deadlines will have the unintended consequence of forcing students into 'safe' research projects guaranteed to produce publishable outcomes before the deadline (particularly within the sciences). As well as greatly reducing the opportunity for us to learn how to direct our own research, this will diminish our contribution to our fields.
- The decision to implement this policy is of great concern, in that it doesn't take into account students disadvantaged through a number of reasons. One of the chief of these being continued illness that might interrupt their progress, including both physical health and mental illness.

Additionally it disadvantages students who do not have the benefit of receiving a scholarship and have needed to work throughout the period of their thesis. This is often the case for those who are of a more mature age with commitments to mortgages and who have families, or already come from areas of disadvantage.

This leaves the possibility open for many that they simply will not complete their thesis at all, being unable to submit and thus will have put many years (and have had money put into them by the university) with no result.

- The idea of a fixed four year PhD has made me totally reconsider my plans to stay in at The University of Melbourne next year. I have no doubts other students feel the same way. It is exactly this type of pointless policy that is driving Australia's brain drain.
- The major change was rolled out with very poor communication from the University.
- The new changes disproportionately impact people who are carers, which means that women are disproportionately affected. Issues beyond carers concerns don't fit into neat institutional deadlines. It is unreasonable to change the terms of

candidature mid-way through for research students.

- The new policy was not well drafted; it was ambiguous and introduced in the most inept and inconsiderate fashion, causing undue stress for students. Making the policy effective for students currently mid-way through their research was completely unfair and against the principles of natural justice. By setting a fixed completion time frame and not allowing for extensions for 'human' reasons (not connected to research) is a clear case of putting timeliness (and budgetary considerations) ahead of quality and human wellbeing.

A colleague of mine recently completed her PhD in 5 years and she received top marks; no amendments were made to her thesis. At the 4 year mark, she was still rewriting her thesis. She could not have completed her thesis to the same quality if she had been subject to the new policy.

- The sudden change in policy is extremely harsh on students who are already midway through their course, and are now faced by a new and imminent hard deadline. Vulnerable but capable students should be given more support, not less. I understand the reasons behind your change, but this is not the right way to implement it.
- The University of Melbourne has a hypocritical attitude overall in claiming that a PhD is a three year course when completion rate at 3 years is minimal. Given the average completion time, it is a systemic failure of the University and a hard deadline will only artificially increase that rate. The University should rather adapt its expectations regarding PhD projects to the level of support it provides.
- There is nothing in the changed policy that will reduce RHD attrition. I think more people will bail and the uni will have fewer completions to claim.
- These changes are being implemented after 3yrs 4 months of my degree. They will force me to submit a thesis of a significantly poorer quality than if I had the 4 extra months I had been planning. If I had been notified of this a year or two ago this would not be an issue.
- These changes are very harsh, do not account for varied life circumstances, and under no means should be retrospectively applied to already enrolled research students.
- These changes put the burden of timely completion entirely on students. They do not make sufficient allowance for compelling compassionate circumstances that might extend the duration of someone's candidature, e.g. mental health issues or extended bereavement. I also think they will reduce the quality of UMelb's research output; it will now be harder for UMelb's PhD graduates to compete with those from international universities, who often have more time to complete their studies.

- These changes should only be imposed to students enrolling in 2018
- This amendment changes policy with no support for ensuring students can finish in this time frame, particularly students who are already close to the end of their PhD. If this deadline is required then the university needs to provide more support to ensure that it is possible to finish. In addition to this, the scholarship is a very small amount of money for the hours of work required and students may be required to look for outside work, particularly towards the end of their PhD, which also can impact on their ability to finish on time.
- This change could potentially mean I won't be able to submit, particularly considering my department was recently close.
- This change should not apply retrospectively.
- This change of policy is too close to my due date.
- This decision will affect my course plan directly as I've been verbally assured I'll get an extension that may now not be available.
- This is a highly discriminatory policy and needs to be changed.
- This is a ridiculous policy change. A research degree is already stressful and difficult. But time and life don't stop while doing one. Does this policy take into account maternity leave, hospitalization, rehabilitation, death in the family, or a host of other circumstances? It should not be the University's policy to make research degrees even more stressful by penalizing its students for life events beyond their control.
- This is a ridiculous policy that completely alters the conditions to which we signed up to undertake a PhD. When the Melbourne Model came into effect a decade ago the changes were not introduced to our cohort because we preceded that model. The same should apply in this instance.
- This is a shocking decision that goes against the supportive research environment and makes efficiency the most important value. It's another symptom of business management models taking over universities. If this announcement had been made last year it would have cost me my PhD.
- This is a totally inappropriate measure to take in light the environmental conditions we physical scientists wrestle with, and 'Mother Nature's' impact on the timely completion of field work. Also, the age many PhD students are implies that family matters take priority at times.
- This is not a fair policy and I do not support this.
- This is not the agreement I signed up for, and I do not appreciate the lack of consideration shown to I and other PhD students by committing to cancel candidature past a strict cut-off date.

- This is quite unfair to the people who lose family members or close friends as well as the students who lose their homes, go bankrupt or are going through severe times of mental illness. As said in these petitions- these candidates need as much support as they can from their educational institutions. I hope these reforms do not pass for the sake of people's future.
- This is simply an unequitable decision. It is too sudden a change not giving the most vulnerable students a change to adjust.
- This policy change puts the onus for completing in a timely way firmly on students where I believe that supervisors are equally responsible. There needs to be a change in the way supervisors act to correspond with the shorter acceptable timeframe. Further, it seems ridiculous to not allow late submission for personal reasons.
- This policy has been implemented with a lack of transparent consultation with either staff or students. As it stands this policy will discriminate against people with disabilities and chronic medical conditions. For example, it fails to take into consideration the various reasons - including unexpected or chronic health issues - that research progress can be disrupted in ways that are not known until after the fact; these variables cannot be accommodated within the requirements for managing candidature by simply taking leave as this cannot be done retrospectively (especially within the limited flexibility allowed by for scholarships students to take leave and/or be able to afford to take leave).
- This policy is unbelievably unfair- no recourse for compassionate leave, chronically or mentally ill students, parents or carers to be given extra time. Not to mention it's unimaginable that in any other workplace a person can be told 'do your work whilst you are on leave'. The OH&S implications of leave of absence students being forced to be on campus to complete in time have been completely overlooked. Pulling the rug out from students who are behind through no fault of their own is a real slap in the face. The university has failed these students and is now punishing them for it instead of looking at the effectiveness of supervisors who are the real problem here. If the university wants timely completions, they should use a carrot not a stick. Especially not a stick that is currently beating the wrong person.
- This retrospective change seems unreasonable. My intention is to complete my PhD at the projected time but there may be factors that delay my completion.
- This retrospective deadline is unfair and deeply stressful for some current students and will limit the calibre of research. PhD projects should solve problems without clear answers and timelines. This policy will make sure people think within the box, rather than innovative.
- This rule will, perhaps inadvertently, discriminate against women and mature-aged

students who bear a disproportionate responsibility for young children and ageing parents, and may be most in need of compassionate grounds for extensions. That it applies to already enrolled students is also manifestly unfair.

- This sudden change is very unexpected, and jeopardises my chances of completion (exactly what the Uni doesn't want!)
- To have even the possibility of gaining academic employment, research students are encouraged to both take on a substantial load of teaching and publish widely. Research students who excel at the former assist the university's reputation with their outstanding teaching, while those who excel at the latter provide the university with one of its key measures for funding allocation.

It is grossly unfair to punish students who have been completing their degrees in an academic climate that requires us to do this PhD-external work, and it is counterproductive for the university. When approximately 50% of research students fail to complete 'on time', it is clear that the expectation for on-time completion is faulty. We do not want to remain research students longer than necessary, stuck in a limbo between studentship and being respected members of staff. We are not being lazy when we do not complete within (for example) four years, so rather than adding a hard deadline to an environment that does not promote on-time completion, you should be looking at how to provide the support students need. This is particularly so for students currently in their research degrees, who have spent time with both the culture of taking Lapsed status and the expectation of its availability. Punitive measures will not fix the problem of completion; they will only harm the university's reputation and publication records.

- To retrospectively change the rules for students that have already mapped out, made decisions and planned their degree based on the rules we signed up for is not fair.
- Very disappointed in the University of Melbourne for going in this direction. Business decisions seem to trump all else. Academic enquiry is neglected. The integrity of the institution is diminished.
- We need more incentives to complete NOT disincentives (especially in a faculty where funding for fieldwork and conferences are extremely limited).
- We really need time to keep calm and do the good research.
- While I am not opposed to amendments to course duration deadlines, I believe that the decision to retrospectively apply these changes to current RHD students, and to remove the option for extensions on compassionate grounds is profoundly inequitable. The latter, in particular, is of concern, as it seems to disproportionately

penalise the most vulnerable members of the university community.

- While I was able to finish my PhD within 4 years, I still think that there are too many unknowns in the duration of a PhD to force everyone to finish within that timeframe. The expectations are constantly rising, the projects more complicated and then there are a multitude of personal reasons for not being able to finish within 4 years. It would be a better idea to make the minimum thesis requirements very clear, so students AND supervisors can estimate better what is sufficient for completion.
- While there is some merit in the reasons behind the change, the sheer lack of consultation leading up to the change and, in particular, its retrospective nature based on the arbitrary of 1 January 2018, has created serious issues of fairness that reflect very poorly on the UoM and undermine trust. This has been compounded by restricting reasons for extending beyond the maximum completion date to research reasons only, treating students as commodities rather than people. For one of Australia's leading universities, one would expect better. Much better.
- While this does not affect me directly, it is unfair to future students.
- Whilst I am generally supportive of efforts to improve timely submission, I do not support changes that (a) are in effect retrospective, being applied to students who commenced their candidature under a different policy and (b) which appear to be punitive to students who may be experiencing hardship. It would be better to equip students and supervisors with incentives and tools for timely completion.
- Whilst it will not concern me, it seems only fair that these amendments are made.
- Without the knowledge that I could pursue my research in a way that allowed me to spend the necessary time thinking and preparing my thesis, I have no doubt that my work would not be to the same standard that it is today, nor would my contribution to the post-graduate community of the University of Melbourne been possible.