Conferral and Certification Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University (‘the University’, ‘CDU’) takes pride in student achievements and provides robust processes for those achievements to be formalised, quality assured, documented and celebrated.

(2) Conferral and certification processes are designed to assure the integrity of CDU unit and course completions, ensuring that a CDU qualification is recognised and valued by employers, industries and professional bodies.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This policy outlines the University's approach to conferral and certification of awards, including graduation ceremonies.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This policy applies to all students enrolled in an award unit or course at CDU, and includes those in vocational and higher education and those enrolled with partner organisations.

(5) Higher degree by research students are advised to read this policy in conjunction with the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

Section 4 - Policy

(6) The University Council authorises the awarding of University qualifications and approves the scheduling of graduation ceremonies.

(7) Conferral and certification processes will ensure:

a. timely processing of student results and completions to minimise any delay in the use of certification to seek employment, register with professional bodies or access further study.
b. achievements can be celebrated at a graduation ceremony in the presence of family, friends, and peers.
c. awards may be conferred at the next available University Council meeting when required prior to holding a graduation ceremony (early conferral).
d. authenticity and integrity of award documentation, so that academic standards and the credibility of qualifications are upheld.
e. adherence to Australian Government legislative requirements including the Australian Qualifications Framework, National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements) Instrument 2025 and the Student Identifiers Act 2014.

Completion and eligibility for conferral

(8) The University will identify vocational and higher education students who have completed an award at the end date of each teaching period, assessing their progress against the requirements of the course.

(9) Once a student has been assessed as having completed their award, they will be assessed for eligibility for award conferral.

(10) A candidate for a Bachelor Honours degree who has reached the required standard of proficiency may be awarded a Bachelor Honours degree class in line with the Grading Policy.

(11) While a student may be completed, students will not be eligible for conferral (to receive documentation or graduate), where they have:

a. outstanding fees or payments owing to the university; and/or
b. not registered for a Unique Student Identifier (USI) or where the USI is unable to be verified.

(12) Students who are eligible for conferral and are assessed as having completed their course will have the following documentation issued to them within ten (10) working days.

a. Vocational education and training (VET) students will receive a qualification completion certificate and academic transcript.
b. Higher education (HE) students will receive an academic transcript.
    i. International students will also receive a completion letter.

Conferral

(13) An award can be conferred at a graduation ceremony or at a University Council meeting.

(14) Students must nominate their preferred method of conferral by the published deadline.

(15) Students who have not nominated their preferred method will be automatically conferred in absentia at the next graduation ceremony.

(16) Award conferral is public information and the University will publish graduate information in the official graduation program.

a. Students may contact Graduations for a list of graduate information published.
b. Students who do not wish to have their name published must contact Graduations in writing prior to their completion.

Graduation ceremony

(17) Graduands who have nominated to have their award conferred at graduation will be invited to attend a ceremony, usually with a minimum of six (6) weeks' notice. Graduands can elect to:

a. accept the invitation, or
b. decline the invitation, or
c. elect an alternate ceremony.

(18) Graduands are required to wear academic dress for their graduation ceremony, as detailed in the Academic Dress Procedure.

a. Australian First Nations graduands will be invited to wear a stole with the colours of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and a First Nations Graduate Pin, in addition to the required academic dress.
b. All graduands (from Australia and overseas) are encouraged to wear cultural or ceremonial attire in addition to the required academic dress.

Deferral to a future graduation ceremony

(19) Graduands may request to defer their attendance at a ceremony by up to twelve (12) months.

a. Students in double degrees who have completed the requirements for one degree, may request a deferral of longer than twelve (12) months so that they can graduate from both degrees at once.

Request to attend Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education presentation ceremony

(20) Graduands may request to attend the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) presentation ceremony in Batchelor or Alice Springs, instead of a CDU graduation ceremony, if they:

a. are an Australian First Nations student;
b. completed at least one (1) unit of their course with BIITE at the Batchelor or Alice Springs locations; and
c. can have their award conferred by CDU prior to the next scheduled BIITE ceremony.

(21) In electing to attend a BIITE presentation ceremony, graduands are authorising CDU to transfer required personal information and documentation to BIITE for the purpose of participating in the ceremony.

(22) The University will provide BIITE with a list of graduands (and their official CDU documentation) as soon as is practicable after the cut-off date for each graduation round, for publication in the BIITE presentation program.

(23) Graduands electing to attend a BIITE presentation ceremony will:

a. be recorded as conferring 'in absentia' for the purpose of the CDU ceremony; and
b. be required to wear the BIITE academic dress.

(24) Graduands are not eligible for Away from Base funding to travel to a graduation or presentation ceremony.

Student awards

(25) Successful recipients of student awards under the University and Chancellor's Medals - HE Student Award Procedure and University and Chancellor's Medals - VET Student Award Procedure, will be:

a. notified in writing
b. invited to attend a graduation ceremony and
c. presented with the award at their chosen graduation ceremony (or in absentia).

Certification documentation

(26) The University will issue official certification documentation (see Table 1) to graduands in accordance with the Australian government AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy, the RTO Compliance Standards 2025 and associated guidelines.

a. Graduands will receive a printed testamur upon conferral at a graduation ceremony.
b. Graduands who are conferred in absentia can contact Graduations to collect their documents from Casuarina campus up to one (1) week following the graduation ceremony.

c. A digital certified copy of testamurs, academic transcripts and AHEGS (HE only) will be available via My eQuals.

(27) A minor, major, specialisation, or Honours class may appear on the graduand's academic transcript and/or testamur.

Table 1: Types of official documentation by course

Course	Official Certification Documents
Higher Education	1. HE graduation testamur 2. Academic transcript 3. Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS) 4. Completion letter (international students only)
Vocational Education & Training	1. Academic transcript 2. Qualification completion certificate

VET graduates will receive a digital VET graduation testamur. VET graduates will receive a physical VET graduation testamur if they attend a ceremony or request a copy from Graduations after conferral.

(28) Students who have an award conferred but then continue to the next level of a nested course (for example moving from a Graduate Certificate to a Graduate Diploma) will not be required to surrender their award.

Replacement certification

(29) Testamurs will be replaced (at no cost) upon surrender of the original testamur, where:

a. a legal name change is required within 6 (six) months of conferral, subject to relevant supporting documentation;
b. there is change in gender identity, subject to the submission of a statutory declaration or letter from a treating practitioner if applicable;
c. the testamur is damaged; or
d. the testamur is flawed.

(30) A testamur that is lost or stolen will be replaced (at no cost), subject to the submission of a statutory declaration or police report as relevant.

(31) Additional copies of certification can be requested and may be subject to a fee:

a. including where a legal name change is required 6 (six) months after conferral, subject to relevant supporting documentation.

Conferring higher education awards posthumously or in the event of permanent incapacity

(32) The University may confer an award or certificate on a student before completion if circumstances prevent the student from completing their course. These circumstances include:

a. The death of a student; or
b. The permanent incapacitation of the student, preventing them from completing their studies, due to injury or illness.

(33) The Council may confer an award if:

a. The student was enrolled at the University at the time of their permanent incapacity or death; or

b. The recommendation for conferral is made with the consent of the individual or their family or a person holding power of attorney.

(34) If a student, a student's family, or a person holding power of attorney for a student would like to request the conferral of an award in the case of the death or the permanent incapacity of a student, they should contact Graduations.

(35) Graduations will pass the request to the student's faculty for consideration.

Minimum requirements – coursework

(36) A coursework student may be considered for an award if they have completed at least two-thirds of their course and was likely to have satisfied the requirements for the award if they had been able to continue their studies.

(37) Students who had not completed two-thirds of their course but were in good academic standing may be considered for a Certificate of Achievement.

(38) The relevant Associate Dean Learning and Teaching may apply to the Provost, who will make a recommendation to Council.

Minimum requirements – higher degree by research

(39) An HDR candidate may be considered for an award if the Research Committee judges that the candidate had completed sufficient documentation in the form of data and publications and would have satisfied the requirements of the award if they had been in a position to continue their work.

(40) Where a student does not meet the criteria above, but has made progress towards their research studies and was otherwise in good standing with the University, may be considered for a Certificate of Achievement.

(41) The relevant Associate Dean Research may apply to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection, who will make a recommendation to the Council.

Revocation of an award

(42) Council may consider the revocation of an award only where:

a. there is information that the award was improperly conferred due to error, including where the University conferred the award despite the student not having completed all course requirements; or
b. a student misconduct investigation finds that the award was obtained or retained in circumstances materially inconsistent with the integrity, reputation or objects of the University and recommends that Council revoke the award.

(43) Before Council considers a recommendation for the revocation of an award, the award holder must be notified in writing of the evidence relied upon, the potential consequences, and the award holder's right to respond orally or in writing.

(44) Council must consider the recommendation and determine to:

a. take no further action;
b. impose a proportionate alternative outcome;
c. revoke the award; or
d. refer the matter for further investigation.

(45) Council must inform the award holder of its decision, which should include a statement of reasons. In the case of an award being revoked due to an error, Council may permit the award holder to rectify the error by completing the required units to obtain the award.

(46) The decision of Council is final and not subject to an internal appeal. However, Council may reconsider the revocation of an award where a material procedural defect is identified or significant new evidence emerges that may have affected the decision.

(47) The Vice-President Governance and University Secretary (VPGUS) must notify Graduations of Council's decision, and Graduations must update the relevant student records.

(48) If Council decides to revoke an award, the award holder must be directed to return their graduation documents to the VPGUS or destroy them and to delete any electronic versions they have saved.

(49) Notification, in accordance with the Material Change Procedure, to the relevant regulators may be required following the revocation of an award.

Record Management and Reporting

(50) The University will maintain official records of all conferrals, including testamurs issued.

a. Records will be disposed of in accordance with the Records and Information Management Policy and Procedure.

(51) Graduation programs are an official record of all graduates (including recipients of all award types), and may be amended from time to time with the approval of the Chancellor.

(52) The University maintains a register in accordance with the AQF Qualifications Register Policy of all:

a. AQF qualifications authorised for issue; and
b. AQF qualifications and VET statements of attainment issued to VET students;

(53) Award conferral and revocation data will be reported periodically to relevant governance committees.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(54) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Employees or the Code of Conduct - Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct - Students.

(55) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(56) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	15th September 2026
Review Date	15th September 2029
Approval Authority	Vice-President Governance and University Secretary
Approval Date	14th September 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Louise King Provost
Implementation Officer	Maria Kammas Manager Graduations
Enquiries Contact	Maria Kammas Manager Graduations Student and Academic Services

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Faculty" - An organisational and academic unit in the University that delivers courses and conducts research.

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.