

Version	4.2
Short description	This policy & procedure establishes the criteria for eligibility, assessment and presentation of Awards with Distinction, University Medals and University Doctoral Research Medals.
Relevant to	Graduands enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate higher education courses; and PhD graduates. Staff managing the implementation of this procedure.
Authority	Academic Board
Policy owner	Director, Student Administration Services
Responsible office	Student Administration Services
Date approved	27 November 2023
Date effective	29 November 2023
Review due	August 2028
Related Avondale documents	Appeal Procedure (Academic) Key-to-Grading.pdf
Related legislation	
Key words	award, award with distinction, distinction, GPA, medal.

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This document sets out Avondale University's (Avondale) policy and procedure for determining the eligibility for awards with distinction, University Medals and University Doctoral Research Medals. It also includes the administrative steps required for the award presentations.
- 1.2 The objectives of the policy are to:
 - a) Foster academic excellence in Avondale students;
 - b) Recognise outstanding academic performance by students/candidates graduating from undergraduate and postgraduate courses and the PhD program.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to:
 - a) graduands enrolled in Avondale's undergraduate and postgraduate higher education courses who complete at least 50% of the total credit points required for their award from enrolled units at Avondale;
 - b) PhD graduates; and
 - c) Staff managing the implementation of this procedure.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 **Academic integrity:** involves undertaking academic activity in a manner which ensures that information and ideas are generated and communicated with honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.
- 3.2 **Academic misconduct:** any conduct whether undertaken intentionally or unintentionally that attempts or succeeds to obtain an unfair academic advantage for the student, or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for another student.
- 3.3 **Appeal:** a request for a decision to be reviewed.
- 3.4 **Award:** the qualification conferred on a student when the requirements of the relevant accredited course have been met.
- 3.5 **Award with distinction:** the qualification conferred on an outstanding student who meets the requirements for the award.
- 3.6 **GPA:** grade point average. Avondale's GPA is reported on a scale of seven. Details regarding this grading calculation can be found at:
<https://www.avondale.edu.au/main/information/key-to-grading.pdf>
- 3.7 **Graduand:** A student who has been confirmed to have completed the requirements of an accredited course but who is yet to have the award conferred.
- 3.8 **Graduate (noun):** A student who has had an award conferred on them.
- 3.9 **University Medal:** A medal awarded by the Academic Board to each of the highest achieving undergraduate and postgraduate students in each School each year.
- 3.10 **University Doctoral Research Medal:** A medal awarded by the Academic Board to the PhD graduate whose doctoral research, thesis and/or publications/outputs are considered to be the most exceptional quality of those PhDs conferred in that year.

4. AWARDS WITH DISTINCTION

Eligibility

- 4.1 Graduands from undergraduate and postgraduate higher education courses who meet the required criteria of:
- a) a minimum GPA of 6.25; and
 - b) at least 50% of the total credit points required for their award have been completed from enrolled units at Avondale.

Nomination

- 4.2 Staff in Student Administration Services are responsible for producing a report of the potential recipients and the Director, Student Administration Services submits the report to the Academic Board.

Approval

- 4.3 Academic Board approves graduands who are eligible to graduate 'with distinction' at each graduation ceremony.

5. UNIVERSITY MEDALS

Eligibility

- 5.1 The undergraduate and coursework postgraduate graduands who have the highest GPA from all undergraduate degree courses and postgraduate courses from their School who meet the required criteria of:
- a) a minimum GPA of 6.25;
 - b) at least 50% of the total credit points required for their award have been completed from enrolled units at Avondale; and
 - c) have not been found guilty of academic misconduct during their enrolment in the course for which the award is being considered.

Nomination

- 5.2 Staff in Student Administration Services are responsible for producing a report of the potential recipients and the Director, Student Administration Services submits the report to the Academic Board.
- 5.3 The nomination and assessment processes are confidential. The nominees should not be aware of the nomination or the assessment process unless and until the award is approved and the recipient is notified by the Vice-Chancellor.

Approval

- 5.4 Academic Board normally approves the award of one undergraduate and one postgraduate Medal from each School.
- 5.5 If two candidates are deemed to be of equal merit for a particular Medal, a University Medal shall be awarded to each of them.
- 5.6 If there are no eligible undergraduate or postgraduate graduands in a School, that Medal will not be awarded.

6. UNIVERSITY DOCTORAL RESEARCH MEDALS

Eligibility

6.1 A PhD graduand who has:

- a) been conferred with their degree by Academic Board since the previous graduation; and
- b) has not been found guilty of academic or research misconduct during their PhD candidature.

Nomination

6.2 Thesis examiners will be requested to nominate a candidate for the University Doctoral Research Medal if they consider that the research, thesis and/or publications or other research outputs that arise from or relate to the thesis meet the following criteria:

- a) Exceptional quality of research;
- b) Exceptional quality of the written thesis and or published papers; and
- c) The research has potential international and/or national impact.

6.3 The majority of examiners, that is at least two of the three, must nominate the candidate for the Medal for them to be eligible.

6.4 Both the Examiner Report Template and the Examination Report Template include an option for examiners to tick this nomination.

6.5 Staff in the Research Services Office are responsible for producing a report of the nominated graduates for that year and the Director, Higher Degree Research submits the report to the HDR Committee.

6.6 If only one candidate is nominated by the examiners, the HDR Committee will assess the nomination as well as the candidate's performance throughout their candidature using the criteria in Section 6.2 and decide whether the candidate is suitable for recommendation for the Medal.

6.7 If more than one candidate is nominated by the examiners, the HDR Committee will determine which candidate should be recommended for the Medal based on the criteria in Section 6.2.

6.8 The Director, Higher Degree Research will submit the recommendation to Academic Board, together with supporting information.

6.9 The nomination and assessment processes are confidential. The nominees should not be aware of the nomination or the assessment process unless and until the award is approved and the recipient is notified by the Vice-Chancellor.

Approval

6.10 Academic Board normally approves the award of one University Doctoral Research Medal.

6.11 If two candidates are deemed to be of equal merit for the Medal, a University Doctoral Research Medal shall be awarded to each of them.

6.12 If there are no nominations, or if the top candidate is not of exceptional standard and equivalent to previous Medal recipients, then no Medal will be awarded.

7. AWARD PRESENTATION

7.1 The Director, Student Administration Services is responsible for ensuring:

- a) graduands who are approved by the Academic Board as being eligible to receive their award with distinction;
- b) graduands who are approved by the Academic Board as being eligible to receive a University Medal; and
- c) graduates who are approved by the Academic Board as being eligible to receive a University Doctoral Research Medal;

have their Testamurs, Australian Higher Education Graduation Statements and Transcripts of Academic Record endorsed 'with distinction' or 'with distinction and a University Medal' or 'with a University Doctoral Research Medal' as appropriate.

7.2 The Director, Student Administration Services is responsible for arranging the production of a Medal for each recipient and for the engraving of the year and recipient's name.

7.3 The Vice-Chancellor will notify the Medal recipients, the Head of School, the HDR Committee and the nominating examiners (as relevant), in writing as soon as possible after approval.

7.4 The Medal recipients will be presented with their Medals at a graduation ceremony or if possible, at another suitable location or by an alternate method, arranged by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor.

8. APPEAL PROCESS

8.1 No appeal is possible regarding the award of a University Medal or University Doctoral Research Medal.

8.2 Where a student believes the decision made in regard to graduating 'with distinction' is incorrect, an appeal should be submitted following the procedure outlined in the Appeal Procedure (Academic).

Table of amendments

Version Number	4.2	Replaces Version	V4.1, 30 August 2023
Date Published	29 November 2023	Scheduled Review Date	August 2028
Approving Body	Academic Board	Approval Date	27 November 2023
Policy Owner	Director, Student Administration Services	Date first introduced	9 October 2013
Short description of amendment	V4.2 Clause 7 adjustment to wording on academic documents V4.1 Minor changes made to improve clarity. V4.0 Added University Medal and University Doctoral Research Medal, changed the scope to include all postgraduate graduands, additional definitions and minor formatting & other changes.		