



# Oral Examination Procedure

## Purpose

Postgraduate Research Coordinators, Higher Degree Committees and other positions responsible for management of higher degree research, their supervisors,

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## Introduction

Higher Degree Research examination has a number of components, each of which must be assessed as satisfactory before the degree can be awarded. This includes examination of the thesis, oral examination or creative work examination.

This procedure must be read in conjunction with the [Conditions of Award of Master of Philosophy Policy](#) and the [Thesis Examination Procedure](#) which outlines the processes for the preparation, submission and examination of the thesis component.

This procedure explicitly applies to the Master of Philosophy degree which requires all candidates undergo an oral examination and describes how the oral examination process must be conducted. Candidates from other HDR programs may also elect to undertake the oral component of the examination process.

### 1. Purpose of Oral Examination

The oral examination forms part of the overall assessment of a HDR candidate’s ability to carry out a research investigation. It is used to assess both the candidate and the thesis submitted for the award of the HDR degree. In particular, the oral examination:

- establishes that the candidate fully understands the work and its wider implications
- provides the candidate with an opportunity to reply to criticism or challenge
- enables the examiners to clarify issues in the thesis which may be unclear
- helps the examiners to decide on the nature and extent of any revisions which may be required

- authenticates the contribution made by the candidate to the thesis
- ensures that the candidate has a clear understanding of the contribution of collaborators to the thesis.

## **2. Oral Examination Criteria**

The [Thesis Examination Procedure](#) details the examination criteria that the examiners are asked to use to assess the thesis. In addition, the oral examination assesses the candidate on the following criteria:

- demonstrates detailed knowledge of the thesis
- demonstrates the originality of the thesis and the contribution it makes to the state of knowledge in the field
- defends the methodology and conclusions of the thesis
- displays awareness of the limitations of the thesis.

## **3. Examination Panel**

### 3.1. Role of the Examination panel

An Examination Panel must be appointed to administer the examination. The role of the Panel is to:

a.

- b. Ensuring that the thesis is in a format suitable for examination and that the candidate has followed all the procedures required for thesis submission (in the case of the Primary Supervisor)
  - c. Providing recommendations to the Postgraduate Research Coordinator on the nomination of suitable examiners.
- 4.3. Postgraduate Research Coordinator
- The Postgraduate Research Coordinator (PGC) is responsible for:
- a. Nominating suitable examiners of the thesis to the Higher Degree Committee on the basis of the recommendations of the supervisory team
  - b. Ensuring that the nominated examiners are appropriate, and that the examination can be carried out independently and free from perception of bias or preferential treatment.
- 4.4. Chair of the Examination Panel
- The Chair of the Examination Panel (the Chair) is responsible for:
- a. Ensuring that the examiners have reached a consensus on the recommendation
  - b. Ensuring that the oral examination proceeds appropriately
  - c. Providing a final recommendation regarding the award of the degree.
- 4.5. The Oral Examiner
- The Oral Examiner is responsible for:
- d. Taking the academic lead in the oral examination, asking questions of the candidate on the subject of the thesis and on relevant matters in the field or fields to which the subject belongs
  - e. Discussing with the candidate issues raised in the examiners' reports and asking questions of the candidate on behalf of the other examiner(s).
- 4.6. Faculty Higher Degree Committee or Delegate
- The Higher Degree Committee (H88717b58) or Delegate (such as the HDC Executive, the Faculty Associate Dean of Research Training or the Director of Postgraduate Research) is responsible for:
- a. reviewing nomination of examiners, confirming that the examiners are appropriate and free from perceived or actual conflict of interest.
- 4.7. Dean of Graduate Research or Delegate
- The Dean of Graduate Research is responsible for:
- a. The implementation of these procedures
  - b. Appointing the examiners
  - c. Determining whether a higher degree research candidate has satisfied requirements for the award of a degree.

## 5. Nomination of Examiners

- 5.1. Selection
- a. In advance of the planned submission date, the H88717b58 shall nominate 2 examiners a8871s well as the Chair. The HDC may seek advice from the PGC, primary supervisor, co-supervisor, HoS or other member of academic staff.



a. The COI

## 6. Oral Examination Process

The examination has two components, the written examination and the oral examination.

### 6.1. Written Examination Component

- a. Examiners will be sent a copy of the thesis following thesis submission. Each examiner must submit a written report on the thesis and a recommendation on the thesis outcome with a strong justification. They must also provide a selection of questions to be addressed in the oral examination.
- b. Both examiners' reports will be considered by the Chair. The examiners' reports will also be sent to the supervisors on a confidential basis. Supervisors may comment on the reports in writing to the Chair on a confidential basis. The Chair may also request clarification of issues raised in examiners' reports from the examiners and supervisors. If the recommendations of the examiners are in conflict, the Chair will consult with the two thesis examiners and provide a written report or reports on the outcome of their consultations.

### 6.2. Oral Examination Component

- a. The oral examination should be scheduled approximately 8 weeks after the thesis has been submitted for examination.
- b. The timing and location of the examination will be finalised and all parties will be informed by the Chair.
- c.





## Appendix 1



