



# Thesis Examination Procedure

## Purpose

This procedure describes the thesis examination processes for all higher degree research programs at UNSW Sydney.

## Scope

It applies to all higher degree research candidates, supervisors, Postgraduate Research Coordinators, Faculty

## **2.2. Supervisors**

2.2.1 Supervisors are responsible to:

- provide the candidature, and especially prior to submission of the thesis
- ensure 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)
- provide recommendations to the PGC on the nomination of suitable experts to examine the thesis.

## **2.3. Examiners**

2.3.1. Examiners are responsible to:

- provide a fair, independent and expert report to the HDC. This does not imply any further obligation on the part of the examiner directly to the candidate.

## **2.4. Postgraduate Research Coordinator (PGC)**

2.4.1. The Postgraduate Research Coordinator (PGC) is responsible to:

- nominate suitable examiners of the thesis to the HDC based on the recommendations of the supervisory team
- ensure that the nominated examiners are appropriate and that the examination can be carried out independently and free from perception of bias or preferential treatment.

## **2.5. Faculty Higher Degree Committee (HDC) or delegate**

2.5.1. The HDC or Delegate (such as the HDC Executive, the Faculty Associate Dean of Research Training (ADRT) or the Director of Postgraduate Research (DPGR) is responsible to:

- review nominations of examiners, confirming that the examiners are appropriate and free from perceived or actual conflict of interest and appointing the examiners
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Research about the outcome of the examination.

## **2.6. Dean of Graduate Research or delegate**

2.6.1. The Dean of Graduate Research is responsible to:

- implement the procedures
- determine whether a higher degree research candidate has satisfied requirements for the award of a degree.

## **3. Format of the thesis**

The thesis must be a coherent, scholarly body of work and must meet the specified format and standards.



released by the library after this period has elapsed (see Section 5.3). See the Library Website and the GRS website for full details.

- 5.1.4. An abstract must be included before the Table of Contents indicating the problem investigated, the procedures followed, the general results obtained and the major conclusions reached. The abstract must not contain any illustrations. Candidates must provide the abstract to the GRS by the method advised on the GRS website so that it can be appended as part of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement.
- 5.1.5. All copies must include the Thesis/Dissertation Sheet, Originality Statement and the Inclusion of Publications Statement (see section 5.2) as outlined in Appendix 2 and the GRS Guidelines. The Copyright and Authenticity Statements must be included in the final officially



## 5.5. Supervisor's certificate process

### 5.5.1 Approval of Supervisor's Certificate

Before the thesis can be sent for examination, the primary supervisor must complete the supervisor's certificate. Completion of the supervisor's certificate is not an endorsement that the thesis will pass examination. The supervisor's certificate must confirm that:

- the thesis is in a format suitable for examination
- the thesis abstract conforms to UNSW requirements and accurately represents the thesis
- the supervisor is satisfied with the quality of the writing of the thesis
- the thesis is free of any plagiarised material and the final version of the thesis has been reviewed using iThenticate to check for similarity and plagiarism and
- the required declarations on originality, authenticity and authorship have been made by the candidate and
- in cases where there are either sole author or co-authored publications that make up part of the thesis, the required declarations and signatures have been obtained by the candidate and included in the final version of the thesis for submission.

### 5.5.2 Supervisor's Certificate not Approved

In cases where the primary supervisor believes that they cannot sign the supervisor's certificate, the following process is required:

- they must advise both the candidate and PGC in writing of their reasons for not signing the certificate within 4 weeks following the thesis being submitted.
- If the candidate still wishes to submit their thesis against the recommendation of their supervisor, the PGC will request written submissions from both the candidate and the primary supervisor for review at the next available Faculty HDC meeting.
- The PGC provides a recommendation to the Faculty HDC on whether the thesis should be submitted for examination, and if not, what remedial action needs to be taken.
- If the HDC determines that the thesis be examined against the recommendation of the primary supervisor, they become responsible for the nomination of examiners and the examination process.
- If the HDC determines that the thesis should not be submitted, then the candidate is notified of this decision. The chair of the HDC will liaise with the Head of School (HoS) to arrange a meeting with the candidate, PGC and the primary supervisor to determine how to proceed.

## 6. Nomination of examiners

### 6.1. Selection process

- a. In advance of the planned submission date, the HDC shall appoint 2 examiners according to the Conditions for Award of the degree. The HDC may seek advice from the PGC, primary supervisors or t 395.32 8410r

- Be external to the enrolling institution.
- Be free from any real or perceived conflict of interest (COI), as per the UNSW [Conflict of Interest Disclosure and Management Policy](#) and the UNSW Higher Degree Examiner Conflict of Interest Guide. All real or perceived COI must be declared and explained on the UNSW Nomination of Examiners form (see Section 6.3);
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- c. If a COI arises during the examination, one or both examiners' reports may be annulled, in which case (a) replacement examiner(s) will be appointed as described in the process outlined in Section 6.1.

#### **6.4. Nomination of examiners (NOE) form**

6.4.1. To appoint the examiners, the following process applies:

- a. the UNSW Nomination of Examiners form must be completed and submitted by the primary supervisor. A robust justification of the suitability of the examiner must be provided, along with the examiner's contact details and the declaration of any COI issues (see Section 6.3).
- b. The completed UNSW NOE form should be submitted to the PGC for endorsement ideally 2 weeks before the submission of the candidate's thesis.
- c. The PGC is responsible for reviewing the NOE. If they have additional questions about the justifications for an examiner's nomination, or any declared or undeclared COI, they will discuss this with the primary supervisor. Once satisfied with the NOE form, the PGC notifies the GRS of their approval.
- d.



## **7.2. Timelines**

- a. A candidate's thesis will typically be sent to examiners no later than one week after submission, provided that examiners have been approved, and all other requirements have been met.
- b. Examiners are asked to acknowledge receipt of the thesis and provide details for payment of the honorarium upon delivery of the thesis. The GRS will send a reminder to any examiners who are yet to confirm receipt of the thesis after 2 weeks.
- c. Examiners are expected to provide a report by a specified date, typically 6 weeks from the date of thesis dispatch. The GRS will send a reminder to examiners regarding the due date of their report 2 weeks prior to the due date.
- d. If any reports are not submitted to the GRS by the due date, the GRS will provide details of the overdue report(s) to the PGC, who will then contact the examiners regarding their overdue report.



8.5. Different reports

In some examinations examinations are terminated (naya, 8(b) and (d) (t9(v-9) (e10W\*m) 3r.32 8p--7/12

# In some e11

**8.9. Appeal of the decision**

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## Appendix 1

### Legislative Compliance

This policy is intended to ensure that UNSW complies with the:

- *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)*
- *Higher Education Standards Framework 2015*
- *Australian Qualifications Framework 2011*

### Supporting Documents

- *GRS Thesis Format Guide*
- *Oral Examination Procedure*
- *Admissions Policy*
- *Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure*
- *Student Complaint Procedure*
- *Roles and Responsibilities of Postgraduate Research Coordinators Guideline*
- *Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy*
- *Higher Degree Research Supervision Procedure*
- *Variation of Candidature Procedure*
- *Research Code of Conduct*
- *Copyright Ownership Guidelines*
- *Intellectual Property Policy*
- *Open Access and UNSWorks Guidelines*
- *Plagiarism Policy*
- *Research Authorship and Publication Dispute Management Procedure*
- *Research Misconduct Procedure*
- *Research Handling Research Material & Data Procedure*
- *UNSWorks Digital Preservation Policy*
- *UNSWorks Digital Preservation Procedure*

### Version History

- **Version 1.0** approved by Academic Board (ABO04/131) on 5 October 2004 effective 5 October 2004.
- **Version 2.0** approved by Academic Board (AB08/09) 5 February 2008 effective 5 February 2008. Full review and new attachment (page 4).
- **Version 1.0** approved by Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) on 27 March 2012 effective 1 April 2012. Revision, reformat using GS templates and addition of nomination of examiners information. *Preparation and Submission of Master by Research and Doctoral Theses for Examination* (AB08/09) was integrated with the Policy on Examination of Research Degrees (UNSW Handbook myUNSW) to create the *Thesis Examination Procedures*.
- **Version 2.0** approved by Vice-President and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) 18 December 2012 effective 18 December 2012. Addition of thesis embargo procedure at 2.2.1 (d) and minor edits.
- **Version 2.1** approved by Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Training)



### 3. Copyright and Authenticity Statements

The Copyright and Authenticity statements must be included in the final digital copies of the thesis submitted to the library.

#### Copyright Statement

I hereby grant the University of New South Wales or its agents a non-exclusive licence to archive and to make available (including to members of the public) my thesis or dissertation in whole or part in the University libraries in all forms of media, now or here after known. I acknowledge that I retain all intellectual property rights which subsist in my thesis or dissertation, such as copyright and patent rights, subject to applicable law. I also retain the right to use all or part of my thesis or dissertation in future works (such as articles or books).

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**Appendix 3: Flowchart outlining the Committee process for managing examination recommendations 8.1 - 8.4**

