

Policy Hierarchy link	Conditions for Award of Doctor of Philosophy Policy Conditions for Award of Master of Philosophy Policy		
Responsible Officer	Dean of Graduate Research		
Contact Officer	Director Graduate Research School		
Superseded Documents	Thesis Examination Procedures, version 2.0, approved by the Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on 18 December 2012		
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1. Purpose and Scope

This procedure describes the thesis examination procedures for all Higher Degree Research (HDR) Programs. It applies to all research candidates, supervisors, Postgraduate Research Coordinators (PGC), Faculty Committees and other positions responsible for management of HDR.

2. Procedure

This procedure must be read in conjunction with the relevant Conditions for Award and Admissions Policy.

2.1 Pre-submission Procedures

2.1.1 Thesis submission in less than the minimum number of semesters

The Faculty Higher Degree Committee (or Faculty Research Committee), hereinafter referred to as the Committee, may approve submission of a thesis for examination after less than the minimum number of semesters of enrolment, on consideration of the body of research completed and the recommendation of the supervisor and PGC.

2.1.2 Restricted access of the thesis

Application for restriction of access to a thesis for longer than 2 years after completion and for requesting confidentiality must be submitted at

least **6 months** prior to thesis submission. The restricted access application form and instructions are available on the Graduate Research School (GRS) website.

2.1.3 PhD in the format of a series of publications

Approval to submit a PhD thesis in the format of a series of publications must be given at least **3 months** prior to the expected thesis submission date by the Committee. See **Appendix B** for details.

2.1.4 Notification of intention to submit (NOITS)

NOITS must be completed at least **2 months** prior to the expected thesis submission date via the method outlined on the GRS website.

2.2 Preparation of the thesis

Guidelines and checklists as a guide on the format, number of copies and length of the thesis appropriate for the degree is provided for candidates on the GRS website.

2.2.1 Format and Number of Copies

- (a) Formatting requirements are set out in the GRS Guidelines for Thesis Format on the GRS website.
- (b) Candidates should also consult with their supervisors or other advisors within their enrolling unit on any disciplinary formatting requirements appropriate to the degree for which the thesis is being prepared.
- (c) Three (3) paper copies for the degree of Master by Research or Master of Philosophy and the PhD or other Doctoral degree must be submitted for examination. These may be in appropriate temporary binding as outlined in the GRS Guidelines.
- (d) At the completion of the examination and prior to graduation, every candidate who has satisfied requirements for the award of the degree will submit two digital copies (master and public) for deposit and preservation in the University Library. Candidates can opt to have their thesis placed under embargo for 2 years, in which case the thesis will be released by the library after 2 years elapses. See the Library Website and the GRS website for details.
- (e) A final bound copy of the thesis must be submitted to the supervisor and/or Head of School.
- (f) An abstract shall be included prior to the Table of Contents indicating the problem investigated, the procedures followed, the general results obtained and the major conclusions reached, but shall not contain any illustrative matter. Candidates shall 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.
- (g) All copies must include the Originality Statement as shown in **Appendix C** and the GRS Guidelines for Thesis Format on the GRS website.
- (h) The Copyright and Authenticity statements will be agreed to during the digital submission process and will be included in the Library deposit copy. These can be found in **Appendix C** and the GRS Guidelines for Thesis Format on the GRS Website
- (i) Where part of the thesis contains work which the candidate has had accepted for publication, or published, details of all publications must be clearly stated and appropriate Copyright permissions obtained.

2.3 Nomination of examiners

2.3.1 Selection

- (a) At least 6 weeks before the planned submission date, the Committee shall appoint three (3) external examiners, including a reserve, according to the Conditions for Award of the degree. The Committee may seek advice from the PGC, supervisor, co-supervisor, Head of School or other member of academic staff.
- (b) Prior to the appointment of examiners, the Committee shall ascertain in writing whether the candidate has concerns as to potential examiners. For this purpose, the Committee shall appoint the supervisor or another person who shall ask the candidate:
 - to provide the names of any persons about whose potential role as examiner the candidate may have concern, or
 - to identify any names on a panel of potential examiners about whose potential role the candidate may have concern.
- (c) Any concern raised by the candidate shall be placed on record with the Committee at the time of the appointment of examiners.
- (d) Where possible, the persons identified by the candidate should not be used as examiners. The Committee may appoint examiners even where the candidate has expressed concern. Where such an appointment occurs, the record of the candidate's concern shall be brought to the attention of the Committee again at the time the examiners' reports are considered.
- (e) Examiners are expected to be academically reputable in the field of the thesis, with a significant body of published work, or other publicly recognized output as appropriate for their discipline. Examiners should typically hold a qualification at least equivalent to the level of the award being examined.

2.3.2 Examiner Conflict of Interest

- (a) To ensure that the thesis is examined independently and free from perception of bias or preferential treatment, conflicts of interest must be avoided.
- (b) The *Conflict of Interest Policy* and Guidelines on potential sources of conflict outlined on the GRS website can be consulted to assist in assessing conflicts or perceived conflicts.

2.3.3 Information Provided to Examiners

- (a) The information provided to examiners on initial contact by the supervisor (or other person/s responsible for nomination) and prior to approval of examiners by the Committee should include the following elements:
 - the topic or title of the thesis
 - the degree for which the candidate is submitting the thesis
 - the planned submission date
 - the length of time available for the examination of the thesis
 - reference to relevant UNSW procedures for examination
- (b) After an examiner has accepted and the Committee approved their nomination, the Supervisor (or other person/s responsible for nomination) must notify the examiners of any changes to the planned submission date. If examiners are no longer available to examine the thesis after the amended date, GRS must be informed so that the reserve examiner can be contacted immediately.

- (c) The following information will be provided to the examiner by GRS at the time the thesis is sent:
- a letter outlining the contents of the thesis package and the contact details of the other examiner(s)
 - information for examiners of theses, including honorarium amounts
 - a thesis receipt acknowledgement and payment details form
 - an examiner's report form
 - notes for examiners for the relevant degree
 - the conditions for award of the relevant degree

2.3.4 Disclosure of Examiner Identity and Candidate Contact

- (a) When the University extends an invitation to examine a thesis, it expects the examiner to provide a fair, independent and expert report to the Committee. This does not imply any further obligation on the part of the examiner directly to the candidate.
- (b) As a general principle, examiner identity remains confidential until reports of the examination are submitted and considered.
- (c) The identity of examiners will not be disclosed to the candidate if anonymity is requested in the examination report or if the Committee or the Dean of Graduate Research determines that it would be in the interests of the University to withhold the name.
- (d) If a candidate infers the identity of examiner/s, they must not contact the examiner/s concerning the thesis after submission of the thesis for examination and prior to report. Violation of this requirement may be construed as an attempt to influence the examination and may give rise to a charge of academic misconduct.
- (e) At any other time, the candidate must seek permission from the supervisor or PGC before contacting the examiner/s. Any permission granted shall be in writing and require the prior agreement of the examiner concerned.
- (f) This procedure will be disclosed to examiners at the time the thesis is sent.

2.4 Thesis Submission

Candidates should review all of the information on the GRS website relating to formatting, associated documentation and approvals required before thesis submission.

2.4.1 Supervisor approval

- (a) The supervisor must review the thesis to assess whether it is in a format suitable for examination and confirm that the abstract conforms to UNSW requirements and accurately represents the thesis. These approvals form part of the Supervisor's Certificate. They are not an endorsement that the thesis will pass examination.
- (b) If a supervisor does not approve thesis submission they must advise the candidate and PGC in writing of the reasons for this assessment.
- (c) If a candidate wishes to submit the thesis against the recommendation of the supervisor, the Committee will consider submissions from the Supervisor and the candidate, via the PGC or Head of School to determine whether or not the thesis will be submitted for examination and if not, what remedial action needs to be taken.

- (d) If the Committee determines that the thesis be examined against the recommendation of the Supervisor, they will be responsible for nomination of examiners

2.4.2 Where to submit theses

- (a) Hard copies of theses must be submitted to the GRS office or the UNSW Canberra Research Student Unit. One copy is held by UNSW for reference and as a backup copy.
- (b) All required documents and approvals must be provided prior to the thesis being sent to examiners.

2.5 Examination Process and Timelines

- (a) The thesis will typically be sent to examiners no later than one week after submission on the condition that examiners have been approved. Examiners are asked to acknowledge receipt of the thesis and provide details for payment of the honorarium upon delivery of the thesis.
- (b) Examiners will be asked to provide a report by a specified date approximately 6 weeks following likely receipt of the thesis. A reminder is sent by GRS two weeks prior to the due date.
- (c) If any reports are not received by the due date details of the overdue report(s) are provided to the School to contact the examiner(s).
- (d) If it is not possible to renegotiate a reasonable revised due date for the report the reserve examiner may be required to examine the thesis.

2.6 Examination Outcomes and Appeal

- (a) To assist in formulating the final examination recommendation for implementation, the Committee may:
 - seek further advice on the thesis from an assessor or panel of assessors who are independent of the preceding examination process, or
 - require the candidate to submit to an oral examination. A guideline is available for the Committee on the GRS website
- (b) in exceptional cases, the Committee may appoint an additional examiner.
- (c) When an assessor or new examiner is appointed, additional to the required examiners, the Committee will provide them with previous examination reports and candidate responses unless issues are raised that justify withholding previous documentation.
- (d) For examinations where recommendations of **Award** and **Minor Corrections**, only are received, reports will be released on receipt of all reports required and identification of examiners will occur unless anonymity is requested.
- (e) For examinations that include one or more recommendations of **Further Work, Revise and Re-examine** or **Non-award**, the examiners identity will not be disclosed until the Committee has made a recommendation on the examination.
- (f) For a recommendation of **Further Work**, the Committee will determine whether the candidate has conducted this to their satisfaction. They may seek additional expert advice from an assessor or panel of assessors on the further work that has been performed.
- (g) For a recommendation of **Revise and Re-examine**, the Committee will determine whether the revised and re-examined thesis has satisfied the conditions for the award of the degree and to do this may seek further advice on the examiners' reports and the revised thesis as specified in 2.6 (a).

- (h) If one or more of the original examiners decline to re-examine the thesis the Committee must determine the process for re-examination as outlined in 2.6 (a) and (b).
- (i) In the case of a **Non-Award** recommendation for a PhD, the Committee may consider whether the candidate has satisfied the conditions for the award of a Masters by Research degree. The candidate must be given written notification of the reasons for this recommendation, and must be provided with the opportunity to make a written submission to the Committee.
- (j) A flowchart outlining the process that the Committee follows to manage thesis examiners recommendations is given in Appendix D.
- (k) The candidate has the right to appeal to the UNSW Student Conduct and Appeals Officer. This appeal may only be lodged on grounds of procedural fairness.

3. Review & History

This Procedure is due for review three years from its date of effect.

Appendix A: History

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1.0	Academic Board (AB04/131)	5 October 2004	5 October 2004	
2.0	Academic Board (AB08/09)	5 February 2008	5 February 2008	Full review and new attachment (pg.4).
1.0	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)	27 March 2012	1 April 2012	Revision, reformat using GS templates and addition of nomination of examiners information
2.0	Vice-President and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)	18 December 2012	18 December 2012	Addition of thesis embargo procedure at 2.2.1 (d) and minor edits
2.1	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Training)	29 April 2014	29 April 2014	Removal of requirement for bound copy of thesis to the Library (refer AB13/7)

Note: in 2012 the *Preparation and Submission of Master by Research and Doctoral Theses for Examination*, version 2.0 (AB08/09) was integrated with the Policy on Examination of Research Degrees (UNSW Handbook myUNSW) to create the *Thesis Examination Procedures*, version 1.0.

Appendix B. PhD thesis submitted in the format of a series of publications

In exceptional cases, and on approval by the Committee, a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) may submit a thesis for examination that comprises one or more published works.

The thesis will be examined using the same procedures as a conventional thesis and therefore should draw together the research as a coherent body of work.

The following conditions must be satisfied:

- (a) Published work may only be included in the thesis if the research and its publication occurred during the course of candidature for the degree.
- (b) The thesis should include appropriate detail and the depth of analysis and interpretation in the publication/s should be appropriate.
- (c) The thesis should contain an Introduction/Literature Review Chapter that places the published works in the context of the appropriate field of study and provides an overview of the thesis topic as a whole.
- (d) If required, the thesis should have appropriate linking text in the form of short chapters inserted between published works to add to the cohesiveness of the thesis.
- (e) The thesis should contain a Conclusions/Recommendations Chapter that summarises the overall conclusions of the body of published work and articulates clearly the new contribution to knowledge in the discipline.
- (f) All Chapters except the Introduction/Literature Review and Conclusion/Recommendations should be work that has been either published or submitted or accepted for publication in discipline appropriate venues at the time the thesis is submitted.
- (g) Where the candidate is not the sole author of a publication acknowledgement must be made in the thesis to the contributions of others to the research, including the writing of the publications.
- (h) The thesis must be presented in such a way that the examiners can assess the requirements of the University for award of a PhD.
- (i) The student must obtain permission to reproduce copyright material where that right has not already been granted as part of the publication process by the copyright holder.

These are the minimum conditions. In addition, any Faculty specific Guidelines must also be met (see the GRS website for details of Faculty specific Guidelines).

Format of the thesis

- (a) Publications must be produced in high quality format. They may be included in the format provided by the publisher or may be presented in an alternate format using the original submitted files.
- (b) A specific declaration regarding contributions to each publication must be included at the start of each chapter or as an appendix.

Approval Process

- (a) Submission of a thesis by publication is approved by the Committee on the recommendation of the supervisor and Head of School who must confirm that University and Faculty conditions have been met and that this format would not disadvantage the candidature in terms of permitting examiners to identify the contribution of the candidate to the published work.
- (b) The Committee will take into account discipline specific issues related to publications in the field, including authorship order, the number of co-authors, and the number of publications and may set specific conditions appropriate to the discipline. They may request from the candidate additional supporting documentation.

Appendix C: Statements that must be included in the thesis

1. Thesis/Dissertation Sheet

All thesis copies shall contain in the preliminary pages, preceding the Table of Contents, a signed and witnessed Thesis/Dissertation Sheet containing an abstract of not more than 350 words which shall indicate the problem investigated, the procedures followed, the general results obtained and the major conclusions reached, but shall not contain any illustrative matter.

2. Originality Statement

All thesis copies shall contain an Originality Statement. The statement must appear on a separate page in the preliminary pages of the thesis, preceding the Table of Contents. The following wording will be used:

Originality Statement

'I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at UNSW or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom I have worked at UNSW or elsewhere, is explicitly acknowledged in the thesis. I also declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, except to the extent that assistance from others in the project's design and conception or in style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged.'

3. Copyright and Authenticity Statements

The following two statements will be agreed to during the digital submission process for the final approved thesis, and will be included in the digital copy and the Library deposit copy. The statement must appear on a separate page in the preliminary pages of the thesis, preceding the Table of Contents.

Copyright Statement

'I hereby grant the University of New South Wales or its agents the right to archive and to make available my thesis or dissertation in whole or part in the University libraries in all forms of media, now or here after known, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I retain all proprietary rights, such as patent rights. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation. I also authorise University Microfilms to use the 350 word abstract of my thesis in Dissertation Abstract International (this is applicable to doctoral theses only). I have either used no substantial portions of copyright material in my thesis or I have obtained permission to use copyright material; where permission has not been granted I have applied/will apply for a partial restriction of the digital copy of my thesis or dissertation.'

Authenticity Statement

'I certify that the Library deposit digital copy is a direct equivalent of the final officially approved version of my thesis. No emendation of content has occurred and if there are any minor variations in formatting, they are the result of the conversion to digital format.'

Appendix D. Flowchart outlining the Committee process for managing examination recommendations.

