

CANDIDATURE ASSESSMENT

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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Appendix 1- GRS Assessment Report Form

1. Introduction

The Doctoral and Masters Candidature Assessment procedures set out below are in accordance with University rule 11.14 and the Assessment Procedure Policy of the Graduate Research School (GRS). The Director of Research Programs, in association with Associate Dean, Research and Development, are deemed to be the Responsible Academic Officers (RAO) in the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology.

2. University Rules

11.14 Candidature assessment

- 11.14.1 *Each student is required to undertake a candidature assessment to ensure that he or she is equipped with the knowledge to carry out his or her research program, and has made sufficient progress to make it likely that he or she will finish within the prescribed time.*
- 11.14.2 *The candidature assessment will be completed in normal circumstances by the end of the first year of candidature for full-time students or by the end of one and one half years of candidature for part-time students.*
- 11.14.3 *In exceptional circumstances, the Graduate Research School Board may approve an extension of time for a student to complete the candidature assessment by no more than one half year.*
- 11.14.4 *The requirements of the candidature assessment for each course will be determined by each faculty, subject to the approval of the Graduate Research School Board and in accordance with guidelines as approved by the Graduate Research School Board from time to time. Such requirements will be published in relevant official University publications.*
- 11.14.5 *Any variation to the candidature assessment requirements in a particular course for an individual student or more generally must be approved by the Graduate Research School Board. Students must be notified in writing of any approved variation to their candidature assessment requirements.*

11.14.6 A student who does not satisfy the requirements of the candidature assessment:

- (1) may be permitted by the Graduate Research School Board on advice from the Responsible Academic Officer to undertake a second candidature assessment within a specified period of time; or
- (2) will have his or her candidature discontinued due to unsatisfactory progress (refer Rule 11.20.2).

3. Faculty Policy and Procedures

3.1 Objectives of Assessment

The main objective of candidature assessment is to ensure that the student has knowledge and skills to have made sufficient progress and to make it likely that he/she will finish in the prescribed time.

The specific aims are to ensure that:

- a) the candidate has gained the prerequisite knowledge and skills to allow successful and timely completion of the proposed research program;
- b) the candidate's progress is consistent with completion of the research program in the prescribed time and demonstrates potential to complete the work to the required doctoral or masters standard;
- c) candidates who, for any reason, are not equipped with requisites necessary to bring the proposed research program to a successful completion or have not demonstrated sufficient aptitude, are made aware of this assessment before they invest further time and money; and
- d) there is continued commitment by the Faculty for provision of adequate human and physical resources, including proper supervision where it is proposed (at a candidate's instigation) that the nature or scope of the research program be changed significantly.

3.2 Rules Regarding Assessment Timing

- a) Doctoral and Masters candidature assessments will be completed in normal circumstances after the end of the first year of candidature for full-time students and after the end of one and one half years of candidature for part-time students.
- b) There will be two main assessment periods per year, where the faculty will attempt to have the majority of students undergo their assessment. These assessment periods will take place in the Vice Chancellor's week of each semester. This allows the faculty to organise assessment seminars for students that coincide with the timing of the assessment periods, assists in fostering a research culture within the faculty and streamlines resources.
- c) If there is a valid reason for the student being unable to undertake their assessment during these designated periods, they are required to notify the Research Administration Officer, outlining the reasons and proposing an alternative time frame in which their assessment is to be held. This must be accompanied by a letter or email of support from the supervisor and is subject to approval by the RAO.
- d) If the assessment is not undertaken during the due semester and an extension is not requested, the student will be sent a reminder stating the rules relating to candidature assessment, and warned that they may face unsatisfactory progress.
- e) If the student does not complete his/her assessment within the approved extended timeframe, the student will be sent a formal warning letter stating that *his or her candidature may be discontinued due to unsatisfactory progress (refer Rule 11.20.2)* if they fail to present for the assessment or request another extension.

3.3 Organising the Assessment

The sequence of events in organising candidature assessment seminars takes place as follows:

- a) The Research Administration Officer notifies the students due for assessment and their respective supervisors of the timeframe in which the assessments are expected to take place. The School Research Coordinators (SRCs) are notified of the students from their respective schools who are due for assessment.
- b) The supervisor nominates panel member number 2 (as outlined in 4.1) and informs the SRC and Research Administration Officer of their details and any non-core panel members who have been invited to sit on the panel.
- c) The Supervisor liaises with the SRC, students to confirm a mutually convenient time for panel members to attend the assessment.
- d) The Research Administration Officer arranges a venue, IT and AV requirements for each assessment seminar once confirmed and notifies the student and all panel members of all details.

3.4 Assessment Seminar Procedures

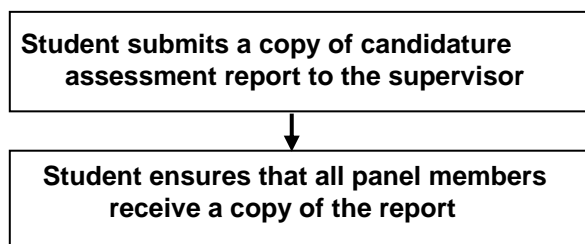
The components of the assessment are:

- Student assessment report – see 4.2.1.
- Seminar presentation – normally 30 minutes with additional 15 minutes for questions. This will be advertised and is open to the UTS community.
- Panel discussion -15 minutes
- Feedback to student by the panel

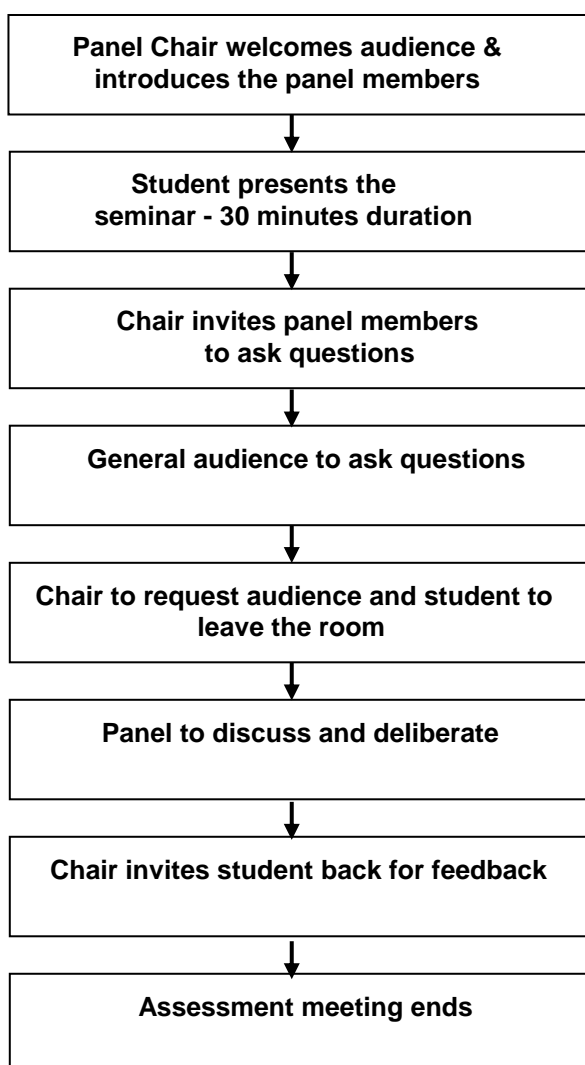
The following flow chart, Figure 1, highlights the components of the assessment process prior to and during the actual meeting.

Figure 1. FLOW CHART Suggested procedure for Doctoral/Master's Assessment Process

Two weeks prior to the 'Assessment Presentation':



On the day of the 'Assessment Presentation':



- a) The assessment result can be either “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory”, determined according to the criteria outlined in point 3.5 below. Continuation of candidature requires a satisfactory assessment. In the case of an unsatisfactory assessment, the faculty may recommend to GRS either (i) discontinuation of candidature, or (ii) an opportunity for reassessment in three to six months after the candidate has been notified of the unsatisfactory outcome.

- b) The decision will be based on a simple majority of panel members- the panel having an odd number of voting members (core members). The decision will be verbally communicated to the student following the conclusion of the assessment.
- c) A GRS Assessment Report form will be drafted and signed by the Chair, indicating the panel decision and summarising the comments of the panel. Immediately following the assessment, this is to be forwarded by the Chair to the Research Administration Officer, who will have the form endorsed by the RAO and forwarded to GRS. The other panel members may optionally complete the comments section of a duplicate of the GRS Assessment Report form as a means to provide extra feedback to students, but this will not be forwarded to GRS.
- d) The Research Administration Officer will notify the student and the GRS about the results with a copy of the reports within 2 weeks.

3.5 Criteria for Assessment

The candidate will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- a) ability to select, analyse, synthesise and evaluate relevant material pertaining to the field of study;
- b) understanding of key concepts, problems, issues in relevant literature;
- c) critical acumen and capability for critical appraisal of relevant research;
- d) substantiation of the choice of research topic and its significance as an original contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the fields of study;
- e) justification of proposed research methods;
- f) understanding of resource implications;
- g) understanding of social, ethical and environmental issues;
- h) adoption of a suitable theoretical or conceptual framework for the proposed study;
- i) demonstration of sufficient progress to date; and
- j) demonstrated capacity to complete the proposed research project.

In arriving at its recommendation, the Assessment Panel will take into account the supervisors' assessment of:

- the candidate's progress since initial enrolment;
- the candidate's assessment report; and
- resource implications of the proposed project.

4. Guidelines

4.1 Assessment panel members

The assessment panels will comprise three voting core members, with the option for the supervisor to nominate additional non-voting members:

Core Members:

1. the principal supervisor,
2. one other member of academic staff of the University with principal doctoral supervision experience close to the student's research area,
3. the School Research Coordinator (SRC) from the principal supervisor's school. The SRC will be chair of the panel. If the SRC is in a position of conflict of interest (e.g. s/he is one of the student's supervisors) then either the RAO, the Associate Dean, Research and Development or their nominee may be appointed as chair.

Optional Members:

1. the alternate supervisor, co-supervisor or external supervisor,
2. an external panel member (from industry or other tertiary institution).

4.2 Responsibilities

4.2.1 Student

The responsibilities of the student are to:

- a) work diligently, in consultation with their supervisors throughout the period prior to assessment, on developing and understanding issues related to their research.
- b) prepare a comprehensive assessment report. The report is normally approx 10,000 words in length.

The assessment report normally includes:

- Title
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Background
- Research question and its contribution to knowledge
- Research objectives and scope
- Comprehensive literature review
- Proposed research methodology and justification

- Ethics and risk consideration. You are required to demonstrate an awareness and understanding of social, ethical and environmental implications via the *Postgraduate Students' Research Information Form* including an Ethics Committee Submission*, if appropriate.
- Research plan. Show (1) a timeline of the steps you will take to ensure you complete your research program in the prescribed time; and (2) any resource requirements for the research.
- Progress to date
- References

*Check GRS website for more information.

- d) ensure each panel member receives a copy of the assessment report at least two weeks prior to the assessment.
- e) give a formal oral presentation before an audience and a selected assessment panel.

4.2.2 Principal supervisor

The responsibilities of the principal supervisor are to:

- a) ensure that the student meets the criteria and is ready to undertake the assessment.
- b) nominate panel member number 2. (as detailed in 4.1) to the SRC and Research Administration Officer. The SRC will assist with this task if required.
- c) liaise with the SRC, students to confirm a mutually convenient time for panel members to attend the assessment.

4.2.3 Panel Chair (SRC)

The responsibilities of the Chair (SRC) are to:

Prior to the assessment:

- a) communicate to the Research Administration Officer the blocks of time in which they will be available to chair assessments during the assessment period.
- b) if requested by the supervisor, assist in nominating panel member number 2. (as detailed in 4.1).

During the assessment:

- c) ensure that the process of the assessment is carried out with rigour and fairness according to figure 1. Flowchart on page 4 of these guidelines.
- d) complete the comments section and section C "Panel Decision" in the GRS Assessment Report form, based on consensus of the panel members.
- e) ensure that the GRS Assessment Report form is signed and that all assessment documents are immediately forwarded to the Research Administration Officer following the assessment.

4.2.4 Panel Members

The responsibilities of the panel members are to:

- a) read the student's report before arriving at the assessment.
- b) attend the seminar presentation.
- c) actively engage in asking questions of the student.

- d) participate in panel discussion.
- e) provide individual written feedback, by completing a duplicate of the comments section of the GRS Assessment Report form and forwarding to the Chair (this is optional but preferable, as the student is provided with more detailed feedback).
- f) make a recommendation to the Chair as to the outcome of the assessment (satisfactory or unsatisfactory)

4.2.5 Research Administration Officer

The responsibilities of the Research Administration Officer are to:

- a) notify students, supervisors about assessments due and notify SRCs of the groups of students from their respective schools due for assessment.
- b) organise rooms, IT and AV equipment required and inform all panel members of all details once confirmed.
- c) Send Candidature Assessment Procedural Guidelines and GRS Assessment report forms to all panel members.
- d) collect thesis titles and abstracts from students confirmed for assessment and broadcast details of the assessment seminars to the faculty.
- e) collect and collate all assessment documents and forward to student and the GRS

4.2.6 Responsible Academic Officer (RAO)

The responsibilities of the Responsible Academic Officer are to:

- a) assume the role of panel chair or appoint a nominee in the event that the SRC is in a position of conflict of interest.
- b) approve student requests for an extension to assessment date.
- c) oversee special student cases and appeals.
- d) endorse the panel decision for the assessment and sign the GRS Assessment report form.

5. Additional information

Additional information regarding 'Appeal against discontinuation of candidature' is available from the GRS website. Faculty will ensure GRS rules are followed for such issues.