

# HDR Examinations Procedure

Version 5 – Approved 19 January 2024

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## Purpose

This procedure describes the process for examining HDR candidates. It applies to the University of Tasmania's higher degree by research (HDR) courses, to all HDR candidates and academic and professional staff of the University involved in the conduct, or preparation, submission and administration of the thesis examination. This procedure does not apply to coursework or higher doctorate degrees.

## Applicable governance instruments

Instrument	Section	Principles
<a href="#"><i>Research Training Ordinance</i></a>		
<a href="#"><i>Research Training Policy</i></a>	3 Academic support, resources and intellectual climate	3.1 – 3.3
	4 Candidature progression, development, and completion	4.1 – 4.2
<a href="#"><i>Research Policy</i></a>	2 Responsible conduct of research	2.1 – 2.2
	4 Research data and output	4.2
<a href="#"><i>Quality Assurance Policy</i></a>	1 Quality assurance	1.1
<a href="#"><i>Compliance Policy</i></a>	2 Conflict of interest	2.1
<a href="#"><i>People Policy</i></a>	2 Inclusion, diversity, and equity	2.2
<a href="#"><i>Data and Information Governance Policy</i></a>	1 Privacy	1.1
	4 Data and information management	4.1, 4.4
<i>University of Tasmania Act (1992)</i>		

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Related policies and procedures can be found at: <https://www.utas.edu.au/policy>

[Student Academic Integrity Ordinance](#)*Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act (2000)**Higher Education Support Act (2003) and Higher Education Standards Framework*[The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#)**Procedure****1. General matters**

- 1.1. Throughout this procedure the word **thesis** means using one or more media, a substantial and intellectually coherent product or product/s such as a thesis, dissertation and artefacts, or exegesis and portfolio of creative works and/or performance, for submission to external examination against international standards.
- 1.2. HDR candidates are assessed as follows:
  - a. a thesis, examined in accordance with the processes set out in this procedure and which may include:
    - i. an oral examination according to *Schedule A: Oral Examination*, and/or
    - ii. an exhibition or performance according to *Schedule B: Creative Arts Examinations*, and
  - b. any mandatory coursework components.
- 1.3. Research for examination will be unified and coherent in content and address a single, significant research question/theme in a field of study or area of professional practice.
- 1.4. A thesis will be a candidate's own work. Any contribution by other people, including co-authors of publications, must be clearly stated in the thesis.
- 1.5. A thesis submitted for examination will meet the minimum formatting requirements set out in the *HDR Thesis Presentation & Formatting Guidelines*.

**2. Acceptable thesis formats and compulsory inclusions**

- 2.1. The structure of a thesis will be decided in consultation with the primary supervisor and will conform to an acceptable thesis format for the relevant discipline. A thesis may include:
  - a. a written text with conventional chapters presented as typescript
  - b. a written text containing a combination of peer reviewed publications, articles undergoing peer-review or revision, and conventional chapters presented as typescript
  - c. a written text containing a combination of peer reviewed publications, and articles undergoing peer-review or revision, or
  - d. creative, visual or professional practice products (e.g., musical manuscript, audio-visual materials, models, designs, computer software, digital material or other nonwritten material) together with an exegesis, presented as typescript.
- 2.2. Where a candidate's thesis includes publications as set out in sections 2.1.b and 2.1.c, the research upon which the publications are based will have been undertaken during the candidate's period of enrolment in the HDR for which they are submitting the thesis for examination.
- 2.3. A thesis by prior publication will form a cohesive body of knowledge arising from a program of research; conform to the conditions set out in *Schedule C: Conditions related to publications to be included in a PhD by Prior Publication thesis* and be bookended by:

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- a. a comprehensive yet concise and critical introduction to the work showing how the individual publications are linked by a common theme
- b. substantial literature review (which may be a recent published narrative or systematic review by the candidate), and
- c. general discussion/conclusions chapter.

#### *Incorporating publications in a thesis*

- 2.4. Any publications will be included in accordance with the [Guidelines for Incorporating Publications into a Thesis](#) and the *Authorship Procedure*.
- 2.5. Regardless of the thesis format, a candidate whose research has been published (in whole or in part) prior to submission of the thesis will upload an electronic copy of the published articles/manuscripts along with the thesis.

#### *Declarations, statements, and acknowledgements*

- 2.6. A candidate will include declarations and statements in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance* and in this procedure, in the front matter of the thesis:
  - a. declaration of originality
  - b. statement of authority of access
  - c. statement regarding published work contained within the thesis (where applicable)
  - d. statement of co-authorship (where applicable), the statement must be:
    - i. endorsed by the primary supervisor and head of academic unit (HoAU), and
    - ii. included in all versions of the thesis.
  - e. statement of ethical conduct (where applicable)
  - f. acknowledgements (where applicable).
- 2.7. All statements and declarations will be signed<sup>1</sup> and dated.
- 2.8. Templates for statements and declarations and further guidance is provided in the *HDR Thesis Presentation & Formatting Guidelines*.

#### *Word limits*

- 2.9. A thesis will not exceed the maximum word limits stipulated:
  - a. Masters by Research Degree
    - i. thesis (dissertation only): 50,000 words
    - ii. exegesis: 20,000 words
  - b. Doctoral Degree
    - i. thesis (dissertation only): 100,000 words
    - ii. exegesis: 50,000 words
  - c. Professional Doctorate Degree
    - i. thesis (dissertation): 80,000
- 2.10. Word limits are inclusive of chapters and footnotes, but exclusive of thesis preamble, tables, maps,

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<sup>1</sup> Typing the name is accepted, provided that the identity of the person placing the signature is verified.

bibliographies, datasets, and appendices.

- 2.11. A thesis that exceeds the specified word limit will only be accepted for examination where:
- a. prior approval has been granted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Research (the Pro Vice-Chancellor), and
  - b. the nominated examiners have agreed to examine the over-length thesis.

### *Language of the thesis*

- 2.12. The thesis will be written in English.
- 2.13. Where a candidate requests approval from the Pro Vice-Chancellor for all or part of the thesis to be written in an Australian Indigenous language as set out in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance*, they will:
- a. present a case in writing to the Pro Vice-Chancellor prior to confirmation of candidature; and if approved
  - b. the thesis submitted for examination will contain an extended abstract in English that includes an introduction, chapter outline and conclusion
  - c. The extended abstract will be within:
    - i. 5,000 – 10,000 for Doctoral degrees, or
    - ii. 2,500 – 5,000 for Master by Research degrees.
- 2.14. Where a dual award thesis is written in a language other than English, the candidate must provide a full English translation of the thesis to GRO.

### *Editing the thesis*

- 2.15. The candidate will be responsible for editing their thesis.
- 2.16. The supervisory team will provide the candidate with editorial advice relating to:
- a. matters of substance and structure
  - b. language (including matters of clarity, voice and tone, grammar, spelling, and punctuation, specialised and foreign material), and
  - c. use of illustrations and tables.
- 2.17. Professional editorial intervention will be restricted to copy-editing and proofreading as described in the [Australian Standards for Editing Practice: Guidelines for editing research theses](#). The primary supervisor will oversee the process and monitor professional proofreading on an individual basis. Professional editorial advice will be acknowledged in the thesis.

## **3. Eligibility and notice of intention to submit thesis**

- 3.1. A candidate may submit their thesis for examination if they satisfy the eligibility criteria in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance*.
- 3.2. Coursework requirements that must be fulfilled at the time of thesis submission are:
- a. Masters by Research – XGR501 and one other unit
  - b. Doctor of Philosophy – XGR501 and three other units as stipulated in the course and unit handbook
  - c. Doctor of Philosophy (Quantitative Marine Studies and Quantitative Antarctic Studies programs) – XGR501 and seven other units as stipulated in the relevant course and unit

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handbook

- d. Professional Doctorates – XGR501 and other units as stipulated in the relevant course and unit handbook.

3.3. A thesis may not be submitted for examination if any of the following apply:

- a. it is substantially similar to a thesis or work previously examined, or assessed and rejected, unless the Pro Vice-Chancellor has given approval
- b. it is substantially similar to a thesis or work used in whole or in part to acquire any other qualification at a tertiary educational institution anywhere in the world except where the thesis is being submitted jointly to the University and another institution for a jointly awarded qualification under a formal conjoint arrangement
- c. it is substantially similar to a thesis or work that is under examination or assessment for any other qualification of a tertiary educational institution anywhere in the world, except where the thesis is being submitted jointly to the University and another institution for a jointly awarded qualification under a formal dual award arrangement
- d. the candidate's candidature has been terminated
- e. the appropriate Deed of Assignment of Intellectual Property Rights has not been provided (if required), or
- f. the appropriate ethics approval has not been given (if required).

3.4. A candidate will submit the iGRad Intention to Submit form to notify the GRO of their intention to submit the thesis for examination at least eight (8) weeks prior to the intended date of submission of their thesis. At this time, the candidate may request the exclusion of any external discipline experts from examining the thesis, along with a rationale for that exclusion.

#### **4. Appointment of the examiners and Chair of Examiners**

- 4.1. Appointment of examiners is in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance*, the *Conflicts of Interest and Gifts and Benefits Declarations Procedure* and *Schedule D: Conflict of Interest in the appointment of Examiners*.
- 4.2. An external examiner will not be involved in the examination of a thesis if there is a major (actual or perceived) conflict of interest between the examiner and the candidate, the supervisors, the University, the subject matter itself or another examiner. Any potential or perceived conflict of interest will be declared by the HoAU, the Supervisors and the Candidate.
- 4.3. Candidates will not be involved in the process of examiner nomination, and the identity of potential, nominated or confirmed examiners will not be released to the candidate until after the examination process is complete.
- 4.4. GRO will advise the primary supervisor of the names of examiners and the justification, that the candidate has requested be excluded from the examiner team (if applicable).
- 4.5. The primary supervisor (or Graduate Research Coordinator (GRC) for Creative Arts examinations that include a presentation) will contact potential examiners to gauge their interest and availability to examine the candidate's thesis prior to submitting the Nomination of Examiners form.
- 4.6. On submission of the Intention to Submit, or where new examiners are required according to Sections 11.4 or 13.1.a, the primary supervisor will, in discussion with the supervisory team, submit a Nomination of Examiners form. The nominated examiners will meet the criteria in accordance

with the *Research Training Ordinance*, hold equivalent higher degree qualifications to that being assessed and will comprise of:

- a. two external examiners, and
- b. one reserve external examiner.

4.7. The HoAU must:

- a. review and endorse the nominated examiners, and
- b. appoint a Chair of Examiners who is:
  - i. normally an academic Level C, D or E staff member within the Academic Unit
  - ii. familiar with the broad research discipline represented in the candidate's thesis, or in the case of an inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary thesis, be familiar with part of the broad research disciplines represented in the thesis, and
  - iii. otherwise free from major conflict of interest (refer to Schedule B of the *HDR Supervision & Academic Support Procedure*).

4.8. Where the HoAU is also a supervisor of the candidate, the relevant Associate Dean Research Performance (ADRP) will appoint the Chair of Examiners. Where the ADRP is also on the supervisory team, the Executive Dean of the College will appoint the Chair of Examiners.

4.9. Upon receipt of a completed and endorsed form, GRO will undertake a compliance audit, preliminary conflict of interest check and will advise the primary supervisor (or GRC where relevant) if additional nominations are required.

4.10. All communication with the appointed examiners about the examination will be undertaken by GRO. See Section 28.4 of *Schedule B: Creative Arts Examinations* where examination of a presentation of a creative component is required.

4.11. In cases where a confidentiality agreement is required, GRO will prepare and arrange execution of an examiner's confidentiality agreement prior to the thesis being sent.

4.12. All examiners will be informed of the thesis examination report and recommendation requirements and expectations of the University.

4.13. Examiners of a thesis will be paid an honorarium in accordance with Universities Australia's guide on amounts set annually for Doctoral and Masters theses.

## 5. Early submission for examination

5.1. Where a candidate seeks to submit their thesis for examination earlier than the minimum degree period the primary supervisor will submit a statement to GRO outlining the background of the request and confirm that:

- a. the candidate's research is of an examinable standard
- b. the candidate has satisfied all the requirements stated in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance*, and
- c. in their opinion, the candidate may submit for examination without prejudice.

5.2. GRO will submit this request to the Pro Vice-Chancellor for review, and will notify the candidate and supervisory team of the outcome.

## 6. Readmission for the purpose of examination

- 6.1. A candidate may apply to be re-admitted to an HDR for the purpose of examination in accordance with the *HDR Admissions, Selection and Enrolment Procedure*.

## 7. Academic integrity check

- 7.1. Prior to submitting the thesis for examination, a candidate will provide a Turn-it-in or iThenticate similarity report of their full thesis to their primary supervisor. The report will include an accompanying declaration to explain any legitimate text matching.
- 7.2. The report will be reviewed by the primary supervisor and GRC prior to the submission of the thesis in iGRad in accordance *Schedule E: Academic Integrity check flow chart*.
- 7.3. A candidate will not proceed to thesis submission until any concerns raised as a result of the academic integrity check have been resolved.
- 7.4. All documentation associated with the academic integrity check will be submitted with the thesis as supplementary material in accordance with Section 8 of this procedure.

## 8. Thesis submission

- 8.1. The thesis will be submitted in electronic format (including all supplementary material, including digital recordings of the creative component in accordance with *Schedule B: Creative Arts Examinations*) via iGRad. Where the file size is too large to be uploaded to iGRad, the candidate will contact GRO, who will provide the candidate with an alternative method for providing the files.
- 8.2. Where a presentation (e.g. performance) forms part of the examination, that performance will be recorded in accordance with *Schedule B: Creative Arts Examinations*.
- 8.3. Where an exhibition forms part of the examination all artefacts will be retained by the candidate until the final outcome of examination has been determined.
- 8.4. The HoAU, on advice from the primary supervisor, will within 10 working days of thesis submission certify in writing (via iGRad) that:
  - a. the thesis meets the University thesis preparation and integrity requirements as outlined in this procedure and is suitable for submission, and
  - b. the required statements and declarations made by the candidate in the front matter of the thesis are true and correct.
- 8.5. Where approval has been received from the HoAU and the thesis has been deemed to comply with all requirements, GRO will finalise the thesis submission.
- 8.6. Where the HoAU indicates that the thesis is not suitable for submission, the HoAU will notify the candidate, the primary supervisor, GRC and GRO of the reasons for the decision.

## 9. Aegrotat or posthumous thesis submission

- 9.1. The Pro Vice-Chancellor may consider an application to submit a candidate's research for an aegrotat or posthumous award in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance* within two (2) years of the candidate's injury, illness or death provided:
  - a. the candidate was successfully confirmation of candidature
  - b. the candidate was enrolled for at least 60% of the maximum degree period, and
  - c. the candidate or candidate's family has granted permission.

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- 9.2. A preliminary assessment will be conducted by the primary supervisor and one other assessor who:
- may be external to the University
  - is free from conflict of interest, and
  - has not been associated with the supervision of the candidate.
- 9.3. The assessors will submit a written report to the HoAU documenting:
- the evidence for the case that if the injury, illness or death had not occurred, the candidate would have:
    - satisfied the requirements of the award for which they were enrolled, or
    - in the case of a doctoral candidate would have satisfied the requirements of a Master by Research.
  - details of any work to be undertaken by the primary supervisor on the candidate's behalf, and
  - a completion plan with timelines.
- 9.4. The HoAU will consider the report and when:
- supporting the case will make a written application to the Pro Vice-Chancellor to consider aegrotat or posthumous examination
  - not supporting the case, will write to the candidate or the candidate's family explaining their decision and advise GRO to formally close candidature.
- 9.5. Where the Pro Vice-Chancellor approves an application from the HoAU, the Pro Vice-Chancellor will invite the primary supervisor to prepare and submit the thesis in accordance with Section 8 of this procedure.
- The Pro Vice-Chancellor may request the primary supervisor insert supplementary and/or explanatory material to facilitate the examiners' understanding of the candidate's contribution to the research, or to facilitate the production of the thesis or body of work in preparation for examination
  - Where the primary supervisor has undertaken work on the candidate's behalf a statement will be appended to the thesis to indicate the details of this work.
- 9.6. The examination of the thesis will occur as set out in Section 11, except for the following conditions:
- the examiners will be informed of the situation of the candidate and copies of all relevant information will be provided, and
  - the examiners will provide unequivocal advice as to whether the evidence exists to indicate that, if incapacity or death of the candidate had not occurred, the candidate would have satisfied the requirements for the award of the HDR.
- 9.7. Where the Pro Vice-Chancellor does not approve the application from the HoAU, the Pro Vice-Chancellor will advise GRO to formally close candidature and write to the candidate or the candidate's family explaining their decision.

## 10. Thesis submission without endorsement

- 10.1. A candidate may submit the thesis for examination against the advice of their supervisors and HoAU, provided all other requirements in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance* and this procedure have been met.

- 10.2. The candidate will include a signed *Submission without Academic Unit Endorsement* form with a justification for the submission.
- 10.3. The HoAU will provide a justification for not supporting the progression of the thesis for examination.
- 10.4. The thesis will undergo internal peer review by a disinterested discipline expert with a report on the quality, standard and integrity of the thesis.
- 10.5. The Pro Vice-Chancellor will consider all three submissions and decide whether the thesis should proceed to formal examination with reference to the University's Risk Appetite Statements, University policy and procedure.
- 10.6. Where the Pro Vice-Chancellor supports proceeding to formal examination, the Pro Vice-Chancellor will appoint a Chair of Examiners to coordinate the examination process and report to the college any actions required to address the issues leading to the request to submit without endorsement, if appropriate.
- 10.7. The Chair of Examiners will nominate two external examiners taking into consideration:
  - a. the requirements of this procedure
  - b. requests for exclusion of a discipline expert from the candidate, and
  - c. any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest outlined in *Schedule D: Conflict of Interest in the appointment of examiners*.
- 10.8. Where the Pro Vice-Chancellor does not support proceeding to formal examination, the candidate will be provided with advice about the:
  - a. work needed to bring the thesis up to the required standard
  - b. support that will be made available to the candidate to complete the work
  - c. timeframe within which the work must be completed, and
  - d. the requirement to implement a Candidature Management Plan (CMP) in accordance with the *HDR Academic Progress Procedure*.
- 10.9. Where a candidate agrees to the requirements set out in Section 10.8, candidature will resume under the CMP.
- 10.10. Where a candidate does not agree to the requirements set out in Section 10.8, the candidate may:
  - a. request a review of academic decision in accordance with University approved procedure
  - b. apply for a leave of absence in accordance with the *HDR Candidature Management and Enrolment Variation Procedure*
  - c. withdraw from candidature, or
  - d. where they do not act on 10.10.a, 10.10.b, or 10.10.c the University may cancel their enrolment in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance*.

## 11. Thesis examination

- 11.1. A thesis will be examined by at least of two independent examiners as described in the *Research Training Ordinance*.
- 11.2. After thesis submission is finalised, a formal invitation will be sent by GRO to the nominated examiners. Reminders will be sent to examiners and followed up by GRO in accordance with standard operating procedures. Where an oral examination is planned, examiners will be notified

at the time of invitation (in accordance with *Schedule A: Oral Examination*), so they can make an informed decision about their capacity to act as an examiner.

- 11.3. Where one or more of the examiners fail to accept the invitation to examine, GRO will contact any additional potential examiners who have been nominated.
- 11.4. If no additional potential examiners have been nominated, GRO will request that the primary supervisor provide a new nomination of examiners form as per Section 4.6 of this procedure.
- 11.5. Once an examiner has accepted an invitation to examine a thesis, GRO will undertake a secondary conflict of interest check prior to providing them with relevant examination documents and supplementary materials electronically. Where a major conflict of interest exists in accordance with *Schedule D: Conflict of Interest in the appointment of Examiners* that examiner will be excluded, and the primary supervisor will be requested to nominate another examiner as set out in Section 4 of this procedure.
- 11.6. Thesis content will remain confidential during the examination period and the University reserves the right to request examiners to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement if deemed necessary.
- 11.7. Each examiner will individually and independently assess the merit of a thesis, prepare a written report in English to assist a candidate and make a recommendation to the Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- 11.8. The examiners will submit the completed recommendation form and examination report within the requested timeframe as advised by GRO:
  - a. within six weeks of receiving the thesis for examination for a Doctoral degree
  - b. within four weeks of receiving the thesis for examination for a Master of Research degree
- 11.9. Examiners will recommend one of the outcomes specified in:
  - a. *Schedule F: Examiner Recommendations for Doctoral Candidates, or*
  - b. *Schedule G: Examiner Recommendations for Masters by Research Candidates.*
- 11.10. An examiner who makes the recommendation:
  - a. 'A' – should highlight the strengths of the thesis in the written report
  - b. 'B' – will clearly state the specific corrections that a candidate is required to make
  - c. 'C1' or 'C2' – will clearly state the corrections that a candidate is required to make and the areas within the thesis that are required to be addressed
  - d. 'D1', 'D2', or 'E' – will clearly state the weaknesses and major shortcomings of the thesis which led to that recommendation.
- 11.11. The examination report will be complete in itself; annotations in the thesis are not a substitute for a written report.
- 11.12. Where Examination Reports are provided for a dual award thesis in a language other than English, GRO will be responsible for obtaining English translations by a translator registered with the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI).
- 11.13. Reminders will be sent to examiners and followed up by GRO in accordance with standard operating procedures.
- 11.14. A candidate will be informed of a delay to the examination outcome if the examination duration exceeds 12 weeks of their submission being provided to examiners.
- 11.15. If an examination report has not been received by the due date, GRO in consultation with the Chair of Examiners may appoint a replacement examiner who has been appropriately nominated and approved.

- 11.16. Upon receipt of all recommendation forms and examination reports, GRO will send de-identified copies of the examiners' recommendations and reports to the Chair of Examiners for consideration.

## 12. Determining the outcome of the thesis examination

- 12.1. The Chair of Examiners will consider the reports and recommendations made by all examiners and provide a recommendation to the Pro Vice-Chancellor on the outcome of the candidate's thesis. In making this recommendation, the Chair of Examiners will:
- a. consult with the supervisory team
  - b. analyse the congruence of the report and recommended outcome made by each examiner
  - c. take into consideration whether:
    - i. disparate recommendations have been made by the examiners, and
    - ii. an additional examiner is required.
  - d. provide a timeframe for corrections to be made, in line with Sections 12.4 and 12.6 of this procedure.
- 12.2. Where the Chair of Examiners recommends a 'C1' outcome, the names of the proposed internal review committee members, as set out in Section 16.3, will also be provided to GRO.
- 12.3. The Chair of Examiners will not re-examine the thesis and will confine any judgements on the candidate's thesis corrections to those raised by the examiner(s) in their reports.
- 12.4. The Chair of Examiner's recommendation is reviewed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor to ensure quality and standards consistent with the AQF requirements for the degree. The Pro Vice-Chancellor may approve the recommendation with or without conditions.
- 12.5. Where the Pro Vice-Chancellor approves a Pass classification recommendation of:
- a. *Passed (A)* – GRO will notify the candidate on behalf of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, attach the de-identified examination reports and invite the candidate to prepare a final copy of the thesis
  - b. *Passed subject to minor revisions (B)* – GRO will notify the candidate on behalf of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, attach the de-identified examination reports and provide instructions and a due date for submission of the thesis corrections (normally not more than six weeks) to the Chair of Examiners, or
  - c. *Passed subject to substantive revisions (C1)* – GRO will notify the candidate on behalf of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, attach the de-identified examination reports and provide instructions and a due date for submission of the thesis corrections (normally not more than three months) to the internal committee of review in accordance with Section 16.
- 12.6. Where disparate grades exist and a reconciled recommendation cannot be made, the Pro Vice-Chancellor will direct GRO to appoint a further examiner who has been appropriately nominated and approved. The candidate, supervisory team, GRC and HoAU will be updated on the progress of the examination.
- 12.7. Where the Pro Vice-Chancellor approves a Resubmit for Re-examination classification recommendation of:
- a. *Revise and resubmit for external examination (C2)*, or
  - b. *Revise and resubmit for external examination for the award of Masters (D2)*

GRO will first notify the supervisory team of the outcome and work with the supervisory team to schedule an appropriate time to send formal notification to the candidate to ensure that they have the appropriate support when receiving the outcome.

GRO will then notify the candidate, Chair of Examiners, supervisory team, GRC and HoAU of the examination outcome, attach the de-identified examination reports and provide instructions and a due date for resubmission of a thesis for re-examination (normally between six and twelve months).

- 12.8. Where a candidate is required to resubmit their thesis for re-examination, the candidate will be re-enrolled for the period of revisions up until resubmission.
  - a. for all candidates, iGRad action dates and milestones will be reinstated to support satisfactory progress of thesis corrections.
  - b. for international candidates, this may result in additional tuition fees.
- 12.9. Where the Pro Vice-Chancellor approves an Award the Degree of Masters classification recommendation of *Passed for the award of Master (D1)*, and:
  - a. where a candidate does not or is not permitted to request a review as set out in Section 18.1, or a review requested by the candidate upholds the examination outcome, GRO will withdraw the candidate from the Doctoral degree and transfer the candidate to the appropriate Master by Research degree, or
  - b. where a review requested by a candidate is successful and overturns the examination outcome, the candidate's thesis will be re-examined (without resubmission of the thesis), following the nomination of a new examiner team as set out in Section 4.6.
- 12.10. Where the Pro Vice-Chancellor approves a Fail classification recommendation, and:
  - a. where a candidate does not or is not permitted to request a review as set out in Section 18.1, or a review requested by the candidate upholds the examination outcome, GRO will finalise the examination with a result of Fail, or
  - b. where a review requested by the candidate is successful and overturns the examination outcome, the candidate's thesis will be re-examined (without resubmission of the thesis), following the nomination of a new examiner team as set out in Section 4.6.

### 13. Revision and re-examination of the thesis

- 13.1. Where a candidate is required to Revise and Resubmit for re-examination:
  - a. the original examiners will be invited to re-examine the revised thesis. Where one or more examiners is unwilling or unavailable to re-examine the revised submission, appropriately nominated and approved replacement examiners will be appointed such that the revised work still receives assessment from two independent, external experts.
  - b. all material submitted, and recommendations made in the context of a re-examination supersedes all previous material and recommendations, except for the candidate's response to the examiners' remarks provided in the initial examination.
- 13.2. The academic unit of enrolment are responsible for ensuring the candidate receives the appropriate academic guidance and support required to address the examiners' remarks and complete the necessary revisions.
- 13.3. International candidates who are required to revise and resubmit their thesis, can do so in a way that does not require them to stay in/return to Australia.
- 13.4. Resubmission of a revised thesis and invitation of examiners will follow the same process as initial

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submission with the addition of a document from the candidate listing the amendments made to address the initial examiners' requirements and justification for any amendments not made at the request of those examiners.

- 13.5. Once an examiner has accepted an invitation to re-examine a thesis, GRO will provide them with all relevant re-examination documents and supplementary materials.
- 13.6. Each examiner will be required to individually and independently assess whether a candidate has adequately addressed the changes to the thesis requested in the original examiner reports, prepare a written report to assist the candidate and to make a recommendation to the Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- 13.7. The examiners will submit a completed recommendation form and examination report within four weeks of receiving the thesis for re-examination.
- 13.8. Examiners of a re-examination will recommend one of the outcomes specified in:
  - a. *Schedule H: Re-examination Examiner Recommendations for Doctoral Candidates*, or
  - b. *Schedule I: Re-examination Examiner Recommendations for Masters by Research Candidates*.
- 13.9. Upon receipt of all recommendation forms and examination reports, consideration and determination of an outcome will follow the same process set out in Section 12.
- 13.10. There is no option for further examination unless a new examination is required in accordance with Sections 12.7.b or 12.8.b.

#### **14. Thesis integrity / concerns about research integrity in the examined work**

- 14.1. In the event of an examiner or any other relevant party raising concerns about the integrity of the research or make an allegation of breach/es of research integrity during or after the examination process, GRO will immediately refer the matter to the Pro Vice-Chancellor:
  - a. GRO will suspend the examination and notify the examiners, academic unit and the candidate
  - b. a designated person will investigate in accordance with the *Research Integrity Complaints Procedure*
  - c. recommendations arising from the investigation may include application of penalties under *Student Academic Integrity Ordinance*, and
  - d. in all cases, all parties will be notified of the outcome.
- 14.2. Where an allegation of breach/es of research integrity is not upheld and:
  - a. the allegation was made during the examination, a new examiner will be appointed and the examiner who raised the concern will be excluded from the examiner team, or
  - b. the allegation was made after the examination, no further action is needed.

#### **15. Thesis corrections in response to examiner reports**

- 15.1. The candidate will undertake the revisions outlined in the examiners' reports (and oral examination report, if applicable) in consultation with the supervisory team as soon as possible and take no longer than the due date recommended by the Chair of Examiners.
- 15.2. Where a candidate disagrees with a recommended correction, an academic justification for not making the change will be provided.
- 15.3. A candidate, with the written support of their primary supervisor and the Chair of Examiners, may apply to the Pro Vice-Chancellor for approval of an extension to the corrected thesis due date, where the candidate cannot meet the due date for reasons that are beyond their control.

- 15.4. Failure to resubmit for re-examination or submit the corrected thesis for review within the timeframe granted, may lead to the examination being classified as 'Failed' and result in cancellation of enrolment in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance*. A candidate will be notified by GRO in writing if this process is at risk of being initiated.

## 16. Internal committee of review

- 16.1. Where a candidate's thesis requires substantial revisions (without re-examination), the Chair of Examiners will establish and convene an internal committee of review.
- 16.2. The role of the internal committee of review will be to determine whether a candidate has adequately addressed the examiner reports. The committee will not re-examine the thesis and will confine any judgements on the candidate's thesis corrections to those raised by the examiner/s in their reports.
- 16.3. The committee membership will include:
- the Chair of Examiners
  - a GRC (who is not already acting as Chair of Examiners)
  - an internal member of the academic unit of enrolment, and
  - at least one other disinterested research active academic from within the college.
- 16.4. The primary supervisor will act as a consultant to the committee but will not have voting rights.
- 16.5. Following the internal committee meeting, the Chair of Examiners will provide a final recommendation to GRO in accordance with Section 17.1.
- 16.6. Where the committee's recommendation is that further corrections are required, the candidate will be given a maximum of two (2) further attempts to address the concerns. Where the candidate does not adequately address the required corrections after the last attempt, a final recommendation of 'Fail' will be made.

## 17. Outcome of the thesis examination

- 17.1. The Chair of Examiners or internal committee of review will determine whether corrections have been made to their satisfaction:
- if satisfied, notify GRO in writing of their recommendation that corrections have been undertaken and that the degree be awarded, or
  - if further corrections are required, notify the candidate and supervisory team of the outstanding items to be addressed and a revised due date for submission of corrections. The Chair of Examiners will notify GRO that further corrections are required and the new due date.
- 17.2. The Pro Vice-Chancellor will consider the recommendations of the examiners and the Chair of Examiners and determine whether the candidate has satisfied the requirements for the award of the degree under the *Research Training Ordinance*.
- 17.3. Once all requirements have been met, GRO will notify the candidate on behalf of the Pro Vice-Chancellor and invite the candidate to prepare a final copy of the thesis for submission. At this time, the candidate will be advised of the identity of the examiners (unless already notified as part of an oral examination process in accordance with *Schedule A: Oral Examination*).

**18. Review against final examination results**

- 18.1. A candidate whose examination has been completed and who has a result of 'Award the Degree of Masters' (D2) or 'Fail' (E) may request a review of any perceived procedural irregularities in the conduct of their HDR examination.
- 18.2. A request to review by a candidate rejecting the academic assessment of the merit of their work is not permitted.
- 18.3. The request to review will be lodged in writing within 20 working days of being notified of the examination outcome according to the *Reviews and Appeals of Academic Decisions Procedure*.

**19. Submission of final thesis and requirements for graduation**

- 19.1. After a thesis has been approved and to become eligible to graduate, a candidate will:
  - a. provide an electronic copy of the final thesis and any supplementary materials (including a digital copy of creative works) for deposit in the University Library Open Repository
  - b. provide a thesis/exegesis access form
  - c. provide a 40-word summary/doctoral citation for the graduation program
  - d. provide an abstract of the thesis for the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS), and
  - e. pay any outstanding University tuition fees, charges, and/or fines.
- 19.2. The doctoral citation will be written in a manner such that the nature of the research, its significance or potential for impact may be understood and appreciated by a lay intelligent person with no specialist knowledge of the field or its technical terms.
- 19.3. GRO will provide a list of eligible HDR candidates to the Chair of Academic Senate for endorsement.
- 19.4. The Chair of Academic Senate will approve the award of the relevant degree.

**20. Conferral of an aegrotat or posthumous award**

- 20.1. Where the granting of an aegrotat or posthumous award has been approved by Academic Senate, the candidate (if applicable) or family of the candidate will be contacted by Events & Protocol to determine the procedure for conferring the award. The wishes of the candidate (if applicable) or the family of the candidate will dictate whether:
  - a. the degree is awarded in the absence of the candidate (if applicable) or the family of the candidate
  - b. the degree is awarded at a graduation ceremony to the candidate (if applicable) or to a family member on behalf of the candidate, or
  - c. the degree is presented to the family by a representative of the University at a private occasion that is mutually convenient.

**21. Restriction of access**

- 21.1. The University will make the thesis, and supplementary material, publicly accessible online subject to the conditions of the Statement of Access contained within thesis and the thesis/exegesis access form.
- 21.2. A candidate will identify copyright material and other content in the thesis which they do not have

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the right to make publicly accessible for proprietary or legal reasons. This may include for example third party owned images, data compilations or substantial amounts of text such as published articles. Candidates should refer to the *Authorship Procedure* for further guidance.

- 21.3. Access will not be restricted for more than two (2) years without prior approval from the Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- 21.4. A candidate may apply to the Pro Vice-Chancellor to defer publication or restrict access to a thesis for a period of time greater than two (2) years to facilitate the commercial development of material or for other compelling reasons. The request will be made on the thesis/exegesis access form and will state reasons for the request and the period for which access is to be restricted.

## 22. Reporting and quality assurance

- 22.1. A list of all approved HDR candidates and their respective degrees will be formally noted in Academic Senate agenda papers.
- 22.2. The Pro Vice-Chancellor may conduct ad hoc and/or regular reviews of:
  - a. examiner report grades and final examination outcomes
  - b. Chair of Examiners practice, and
  - c. any failures in supervision/candidature management.

## 23. Prizes, awards and medals

- 23.1. Colleges and academic units may award prizes, awards or medals to any candidates for meritorious examination outcomes as they see fit.

## 24. Miscellaneous obligations

- 24.1. All research data and primary materials collected as part of an HDR conducted at the University will be stored, retained, made available for use and reuse, and disposed of, according to legal, statutory, ethical and funding bodies' requirements in accordance with the *Research Data Management Procedure*.

## Related procedures

*HDR Academic Progress Procedure*

*Reviews and Appeals of Academic Decisions Procedure*

*Authorship Procedure*

*Research Integrity Complaints Procedure*

*Research Data Management Procedure*

## Versions

<a href="#">Version</a>	Action	Approval Authority	Responsible Officer/s	Approval Date
Version 1	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Dean of Graduate Research	3 Dec 2020
Version 2	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Dean of Graduate Research	13 Oct 2021
Version 3	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Dean of Graduate Research	10 Oct 2022
Version 4	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Dean of Graduate Research	9 October 2023
Version 5	Minor amendments approved (position title changes)	Director Governance and Compliance	Pro Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Research	19 January 2024

## Definitions

[Graduate Research Office](#) | [iGRad](#)

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Definitions and acronyms can be found at: <https://www.utas.edu.au/policy/policy-definitions>

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## Schedule A: Oral Examinations

### 25. Oral Examination

This schedule sets out the standards and procedural elements of an oral examination when it forms part of the examination process.

- 25.1. The main objectives of an oral examination are to:
  - a. establish that a candidate fully understands the work and its wider implications
  - b. provide a candidate with an opportunity to reply to criticism or challenge
  - c. enable examiners to clarify issues in the thesis which may be unclear, and
  - d. authenticate the contribution made by a candidate to the thesis and ensure that the candidate has a clear understanding of the contribution of collaborators to the thesis.
- 25.2. In addition to Section 11.7, the oral examination will assess the candidate's ability to:
  - a. demonstrate detailed knowledge of the thesis
  - b. demonstrate the originality of the thesis and the contribution it makes to the state of knowledge in the field
  - c. defend the methods and conclusions of the thesis, and
  - d. display their awareness of the limitations of the thesis.
- 25.3. An oral examination will be held:
  - a. if it is a requirement of a dual award, and is articulated in the Candidate Agreement, or
  - b. in exceptional circumstances at the request of the examiner or the Pro Vice-Chancellor, or
  - c. by agreement with a candidate, supervisors and the Pro Vice-Chancellor, and that agreement is in place prior to the submission of the thesis, and
  - d. where the initial Chair of Examiner recommendation is a Pass grade as per Section 12.3.
- 25.4. In all cases outlined in Section 25.3, GRO will be notified of the Oral Examination requirement by the primary supervisor or the Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- 25.5. Only one oral examination is conducted.
- 25.6. The oral examination panel (the panel) is comprised of:
  - a. the Chair of Examiners, nominated as per Section 4.7.b, and
  - b. each examiner that has provided a written report.
- 25.7. Members of the supervisory team are not permitted to be part of the examination panel but may attend in the capacity of observers and support persons to the candidate. The candidate may invite an additional support person in accordance with Section 23.2 of the *Research Training Ordinance*.
- 25.8. Where an oral examination is planned, examiners will be notified at the time of invitation (Section 11.2), so they can make an informed decision about their capacity to act as an examiner.
- 25.9. The oral examination will only be scheduled after all examiner reports have been submitted. Where these reports and initial recommendations differ widely in their assessment of the thesis (i.e. disparate grades, Section 12.5), the report of a third examiner will be received prior to the oral examination proceeding.
- 25.10. At the time the candidate is notified of the examination reports (as per Section 12.4), the candidate is:
  - a. advised of the examiner identities

- b. provided with the examiner reports, and
  - c. advised of the scheduled date/time of the oral examination.
- 25.11. This notification will be at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled oral examination.
- 25.12. The oral examination will normally be conducted via video conferencing, with the candidate and CoE in one location, and the examiners appearing by video conference. The time of day the oral examination is scheduled for will take account of differing time zones and will normally be in favour of the candidate.
- 25.13. At the beginning of the oral examination, the CoE will explain to the candidate the composition of the panel, and the order of proceedings. The oral examination will normally consist of 30 minutes for the candidate seminar and 30 minutes of questions per examiner. The CoE will ensure breaks are taken if the examination exceeds two hours in duration.
- 25.14. The candidate will provide a seminar of their thesis work to the panel, typically no more than 30 minutes in duration. This presentation should:
- a. identify the core component of the thesis, its methods, and its significant outcomes, and
  - b. establish the originality of their work in relation to previous scholarship in the area.
- 25.15. At the conclusion of the seminar, the candidate and the panel will conduct a closed interview during which time the panel will discuss the thesis with the candidate. It is expected that once discussion is underway, this will flow naturally with questions in no particular order. It will remain the CoE's responsibility to facilitate a robust and respectful discussion.
- 25.16. When the panel are satisfied that issues raised in the written reports, as well as any other concerns and interests, have been adequately covered, the CoE will bring the interview to an end.
- 25.17. The panel will then meet in the absence of the candidate to discuss the outcome and produce a written report that will be submitted to the Pro Vice-Chancellor within two working days. This report will contain a recommendation on the outcome of the oral examination. If there are comments in this report that are substantially different from the written reports of the examiners a justification of these differences will be included in the report.
- 25.18. The Pro Vice-Chancellor will consider the combined written and oral reports, and the recommendation made by the CoE, and determine an outcome in line with *Schedule F: Examiner Recommendations for Doctoral Candidates* or *Schedule G: Examiner Recommendations for Masters by Research Candidates*.
- 25.19. Examination will then continue from Section 15 of this procedure.

## Schedule B: Creative Arts Examination

This schedule sets out the expected standards of a research exegesis with a creative component and the process for presentation, when required, and examination.

### 26. Components of a creative arts thesis

- 26.1. The thesis for a creative arts candidate consists of two parts, the creative component (folio of work/s) and the exegesis.
- 26.2. The creative component will:
- a. be a substantial, coherent and resolved body of work that demonstrates a comprehensive exploration of the artistic form and content
  - b. demonstrate a professional level of knowledge and understanding of contemporary work in the field
  - c. use appropriate methods and techniques in the execution of the work
  - d. identify and address the research aims and objectives
  - e. demonstrate a high standard of literary, visual, digital, musical or performance literacy and quality
  - f. meet professional presentation standards, and
  - g. only include work that has been created during the formal candidature period.
- 26.3. The exegesis will:
- a. be a scholarly written work of critical analysis that rigorously argues the case of the overall thesis and will provide a critical context for the contribution to knowledge made through the creative component
  - b. provide a rationale for the techniques and strategies adopted in the creative component and situate them in a theoretical and/or cultural context, and
  - c. be of an appropriate length as set out in Section 2.9.
- 26.4. The combined work (creative component and exegesis) will:
- a. demonstrate an appropriate and substantiated interface between each component, and
  - b. be scholarly, coherent and rigorous.
- 26.5. The creative component may or may not require a presentation to the examiners.
- 26.6. The purpose of a presentation (eg exhibition or performance) is to allow the examiners to assess the creative component in a professional setting. This presentation will normally be in a public forum.
- 26.7. A creative component that requires a presentation will be:
- a. presented in a gallery, performance hall or other appropriate venue/space that can be attended by the examiners (either in person or virtually), and
  - b. at a date/time on or before the candidate's maximum degree period (or the expiry date of any approved extension).
- 26.8. The costs associated with the presentation and the source of that funding will be the responsibility of the academic unit.

**27. Discipline requirements**

- 27.1. The appropriate size and scope of a creative component will be discipline dependent and will be determined between a candidate and the supervisory team.
- 27.2. The following are broad definitions of the discipline requirements, and there may be other components that are acceptable. The appropriateness of the type of creative component will be established by the time of Confirmation of Candidature:
- a. *creative writing*: a substantial body of creative prose (fiction or non-fiction) equivalent to a substantial novel.
  - b. *fine art*: a substantial body of artwork/s produced within the context of a contemporary visual art practice.
  - c. *media*: a substantial body of creative work equivalent to a program or a series of programs suitable for broadcast television, radio or multimedia presentation.
  - d. *music (composition)*: a substantial body of compositions, recordings, presentations, or performances.
  - e. *music (performance)*: a substantial body of live or recorded performances of complete recitals.
  - f. *theatre*: a substantial body of work in the form of performance, a performance script, site-specific performance realisation, media time-based work or video multimedia work.
- 27.3. A candidate who produces a print-media or digital-media creative component, and where a presentation is not required, will submit these works and the accompanying exegesis electronically via iGRad (or the University's preferred service provider for transferring large files) and in accordance with Section 8 of this procedure.
- 27.4. Where it is agreed that a presentation of the creative component is required, the format will be documented and agreed between the candidate and supervisory team, and will be approved by the GRC, by the candidate's Confirmation of Candidature.

**28. Notice of Intention to Submit and Nomination of Examiners**

- 28.1. Prior to submitting a Notice of Intention to Submit in accordance with section 3.4, a candidate with an examinable presentation of the creative component will first seek formal review of their research project from the academic unit. This formal review will normally take place as a meeting between the candidate, supervisory team and GRC. The timing of this formal review will be:
- a. normally at least two (2) months before the presentation and thesis submission, or
  - b. at least three (3) months before the presentation and thesis submission where the presentation is scheduled for February.
- 28.2. Following approval to proceed, GRO will be advised of the date of the presentation, where applicable, and final thesis submission:
- a. the candidate will:
    - i. complete the Notice of Intention to Submit in accordance with Section 3.4, and
    - ii. include a presentation plan and/or electronic portfolio plan, and
  - b. the GRC or primary supervisor (depending on discipline) will submit a Nomination of Examiners form in accordance with Section 4 of this procedure.

- 28.3. In accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance* and section 4.10 of this procedure, the identity of examiners will not be disclosed to the candidate until after the examination process is complete.
- 28.4. Where examination of a presentation of a creative component is required, Section 4.10 of this procedure will not apply. Direct contact between the GRC, school administrative support staff and the nominated examiners will be permitted to coordinate logistical arrangements (such as travel and accommodation) and an escort into the examination presentation.

### **29. Presentation and recording of the creative component**

- 29.1. A good quality, enduring, digital record of the creative component and presentation (where relevant) will be included as part of the thesis for examination. The purpose of the digital record is to:
- a. inform and assist the examiners, and
  - b. provide a permanent record of the examinable works.
- 29.2. The candidate will be responsible for producing the digital record and ensuring that the highest possible standard for that record is obtained.
- 29.3. Where all relevant creative component elements are embedded in the exegesis, there is no need for a further digital record.

### **30. Examination of the creative component**

- 30.1. Where a presentation of the creative component is required, the examiners will attend (in person or virtually) and assess the same presentation.
- 30.2. The administration and costs associated with bringing examiners to the University (or external presentation site) will be the responsibility of the academic unit.
- 30.3. Each examiner will receive a copy of any supporting written documentation or tactile pieces of the presentation and the exegesis. The timing of the provision of this material (before or after the presentation) will be determined at the discipline level.
- 30.4. Examiners will not be permitted to conduct an oral examination with the candidate at the presentation. Oral examinations will be in accordance with *Schedule A: Oral Examination*.
- 30.5. Examiners will not be permitted to meet or confer with each other, the candidate, or the supervisory team.
- 30.6. No weighting or percentage of the total assessment is assigned to the creative component or the exegesis, and the thesis (as defined in Section 1.1) will be examined as an integrated whole.
- 30.7. Each examiner will submit an independent, written report on the thesis in accordance with section 11. The examiners must report on the creative component (including the presentation, if applicable) and the exegesis, and provide feedback on the extent to which both components meet the required standards.
- 30.8. Examiners may request that the creative component is re-presented or re-documented if it is considered that this component does not meet the standard required. Normally, this will accompany a recommendation as stipulated in Section 11.10.c or 11.10.d of this procedure.

**31. Thesis submission of a creative arts thesis**

- 31.1. The final version of the exegesis will be uploaded to iGRad within 24 hours of the finalising the preparation of the presentation (eg completion of the installation of the exhibition).
- 31.2. Any amendments to the exegesis specifically relating to the preparation/installation of the presentation, which are required to ensure the clarity of the overall thesis will be specified either within the body of the exegesis or an appendix. Such amendments will be included in the exegesis at the point of upload to iGRad, no later than 24 hours after the preparation/installation of the examination presentation is finalised.
- 31.3. Following formal submission of the thesis via iGRad, GRO will send the final copy of the exegesis to nominated examiners in accordance with Section 11 of this procedure.



**Schedule C: Conditions related to publications to be included in a PhD by Prior Publication thesis**

This schedule sets out the specific conditions for allowable publications that may be incorporated into thesis for the degree type 'PhD by Prior Publication' (refer to Section 2.3). This does not apply to a standard doctoral degree (PhD or Professional Doctorate) where publications are being incorporated into the thesis.

**32. Allowable publications for inclusion**

- 32.1. Only publications that contribute to the university's HERDC submission will be eligible for inclusion in a thesis (see the HERDC Publication Reference Types), including creative and other forms of research output, such as software.
- 32.2. Publications will have been produced from research conducted in accordance with the University of Tasmania Responsible Research Framework.
- 32.3. Publications submitted for the degree of PhD by Prior Publication will not have been submitted as part of, or arisen directly from, the research work performed within another award (eg Masters by Research, Fellowship, or similar research-based award).
- 32.4. With few exceptions, submitted publications will have been published within the six years immediately preceding the request to submit.
- 32.5. The candidate will obtain approval from the journal/book publishers to reproduce all publications to be included in the thesis.
- 32.6. All submitted publications will have the candidate as the primary author.
- 32.7. Where publications have multiple co-authors, publications will be accompanied by a statement of co-authorship that clearly shows the candidate was the major (50% or more) contributor to the work (conception and design of the project, analysis and interpretation of research data, drafting significant parts of the work or critically revising it so as to contribute to the interpretation).
- 32.8. All research projects referred to in the publications submitted for the award of PhD by Prior Publication will have been approved by the relevant University of Tasmania committee/s responsible for ensuring research integrity and ethics.

## Schedule D: Conflict of interest in the appointment of examiners

The purpose of this schedule is to ensure independence of research thesis examination process, in both fact and perception. The schedule is designed to protect the candidate, examiner, and the University against potential negative perceptions during and beyond the examination process.

Major conflicts of interest normally result in the non-appointment of an examiner whereas minor conflicts of interest do not normally, independently of other considerations, inhibit the appointment of an examiner but should be declared and explained.

Examiners will be impartial and free from bias either for or against the candidate. An examiner will not be involved in the examination of a higher degree research thesis if there is the potential for a conflict of interest to exist between the examiner and various parties, including the candidate, the supervisor, the University, the subject matter itself or another examiner. There are a range of circumstances that could lead to a conflict of interest. This schedule provides examples of the types of major and minor conflict of interest which may arise. This schedule is based on the guidelines endorsed by the [Australian Council of Graduate Research](#) in Australia.

### A. Conflict of interest with the candidate

Category of Conflict	Ref	Type of Conflict	Level of Conflict
Working relationship	A1	Examiner has co-authored a paper with the candidate within the last five years	Major
	A2	Examiner has co-supervised the candidate in the past five years	Major
	A3	Examiner has worked with the candidate on matters regarding the thesis	Major
	A4	Examiner has employed the candidate or been employed by the candidate within the last five years	Major
	A5	Examiner is in negotiation to directly employ or be employed by the candidate	Major
	A6	Examiner has acted as a referee for the candidate for employment	Major
Personal relationship	A7	Examiner is a relative of the candidate	Major
	A8	Examiner is a friend / associate / mentor of the candidate	Major
	A9	Examiner and the candidate have an existing or previous emotional relationship of de facto, are co-residents or are members of a common household	Major
Legal relationship	A10	Examiner is or was married to the candidate	Major
	A11	Examiner is legally family to the candidate (eg a stepfather, sister-in-law etc)	Major
	A12	Examiner is either a legal guardian or dependent of the candidate or has power of attorney for the candidate	Major
Business, professional and/or social relationship	A13	Examiner is currently in or has had a business relationship with the candidate in the last five years (eg a partner in a small business)	Major
	A14	Examiner is in a social relationship with the candidate, such as co-trustees of a Will or godparent	Major
	A15	Examiner has a current professional relationship with the candidate, such as shared membership of a board or committee (including editorial and grant decision boards) with the candidate	Major
	A16	Examiner has sponsored candidate's studies during the last five years or during the candidature whichever is longer (eg industry-funded scholarship)	Major
	A17	Examiner has had personal contact with the candidate that may give rise to the perception that the examiner may be dealing with the candidate in a less than objective manner	Minor <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> A conflict of interest exists where a potential examiner has worked with the candidate on matters of synthesis or analysis or has maintained a correspondence or other contact over an extended period in which the research has been discussed. The following valuable activities are not considered a COI as per ACGR Conflict of Interest Guidelines:

**B. Conflict of interest with each current and former Supervisor**

<i>Category of Conflict</i>	<i>Ref</i>	<i>Type of Conflict</i>	<i>Level of Conflict</i>
Working relationship	B1	Examiner has co-authored a research output with the supervisor within the last five years	Major <sup>3</sup>
	B2	Examiner and supervisor have published a book together within the last five years	Major <sup>4</sup>
	B3	Examiner was a candidate of the supervisor within the past five years or vice versa	Major
	B4	Examiner has co-supervised with the supervisor in the past five years	Major
	B5	Examiner holds a current grant with the supervisor or is currently co-writing a grant application	Major
	B6	Examiner has directly employed or was employed by the supervisor in the past five years	Major
	B7	Examiner is in negotiation to directly employ or be employed by the supervisor or vice versa	Major
	B8	Examiner holds a patent with the supervisor which is still in force and was granted no more than eight years ago	Major
	B9	Examiner has examined for the supervisor twice in the past 12 months and/or three times in the past five years	Major
Personal relationship	B10	Examiner is a relative of the supervisor	Major
	B11	Examiner and the supervisor have an existing or previous emotional relationship of de facto, are co-residents or are members of a common household	Major
Legal relationship	B12	Examiner is or was married to the supervisor	Major
	B13	Examiner is legally family to the supervisor (eg a stepfather, sister-in-law etc)	Major
	B14	Examiner is either a legal guardian or dependent of the supervisor or has power of attorney for the supervisor	Major
Business, professional and/or social relationship	B15	Examiner is currently in or has had a business relationship with the supervisor in the last five years (eg a partner in a small business)	Major
	B16	Examiner is in a social relationship with the supervisor, such as co-trustees of a Will or godparent	Major
	B17	Examiner has a current professional relationship with the supervisor, such as shared membership of a board or committee (including editorial and grant decision boards) with the supervisor	Minor <sup>5</sup>

•Candidate attending a conference organized by potential examiner, •Presenting papers in the department at which a potential examiner works, •Discussion with the potential examiner during a conference, •Submitting a paper to a journal edited by a potential examiner or refereed by a potential examiner.

<sup>3</sup> Mitigating circumstances may exist, such as when the paper has a large author list and the examiner and supervisor have not collaborated directly, or where the manuscript was submitted more than five years ago to a journal but accepted/published within five years period.

<sup>4</sup> Mitigating circumstances may exist, such as •when a large number of authors contributed chapters in the book and have not collaborated, •when the examiner is an editor of the book and supervisor has contributed chapter(s) in the book and vice versa and have no collaborated directly, •when the subject matter of the book is different from the candidate's Thesis and supervisor and examiner have worked independently during the book writing, •book draft/chapter contribution has been submitted more than five years ago but published within the last five years. There is a need to balance the benefit vs the risk. In some cases, the available pool of experts in a field can be so limited that all available experts have an association with the matter under consideration. A decision will be made by the Pro Vice-Chancellor that balance the benefit of having persons with expertise involved against the risks of their interests causing bias in a process.

<sup>5</sup> Mitigating circumstances may exist, such as when the examiner and supervisor contribute to the same committee/grant panel but have not collaborated directly (subject to all other conflicts)

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Definitions and acronyms can be found at: <https://www.utas.edu.au/policy/policy-definitions>

Related policies and procedures can be found at: <https://www.utas.edu.au/policy>

	B18	Examiner has had personal contact with the supervisor that may give rise to the perception that the examiner may be dealing with the candidate in a less than objective manner	Minor
	B19	Examiner has provided voluntarily information and/or free research samples to the supervisor for their independent research but not collaborated on research otherwise, and vice versa.	Minor

### C. Conflict of interest with the University

<i>Category of Conflict</i>	<i>Ref</i>	<i>Type of Conflict</i>	<i>Level of Conflict</i>
Working relationship	C1	Examiner is currently in negotiation with the University for a work contract (other than for examining a thesis)	Major
	C2	Examiner is a current member of staff or has a current voluntary or emeritus position with the University or has had such a position during the candidature of the candidate or in the past five years	Major <sup>6</sup>
	C3	Examiner is currently working for the University pro bono (eg on a strategic or commissioned review)	Minor
	C4	Examiner has examined for the University twice in the past 12 months and/or three times in the past five years	Minor <sup>7</sup>
Professional relationship	C5	Examiner has received an Honorary Degree from the University within the past five years	Major
	C6	Examiner has a current professional relationship with the University (for example, membership of a board or committee)	Minor
	C7	Examiner has a current visiting position with the University or has had such a position during the candidature of the candidate or in the past five years	Minor
Other relationship	C8	Examiner graduated from the University within the past five years	Major
	C9	Examiner has / had a formal grievance with the University	Major

### D. Conflict of interest with the subject matter

<i>Category of Conflict</i>	<i>Ref</i>	<i>Type of Conflict</i>	<i>Level of Conflict</i>
Subject matter	D1	Examiner has published works critical of the candidate's approach (naming the supervisor and/or candidate)	Major
	D2	Examiner has spoken publicly in a critical way about the candidate's work (naming the supervisor and/or candidate)	Major
	D3	Examiner has a direct commercial interest in the outcomes of the research	Major

### E. Conflict of interest with the other Examiner/s

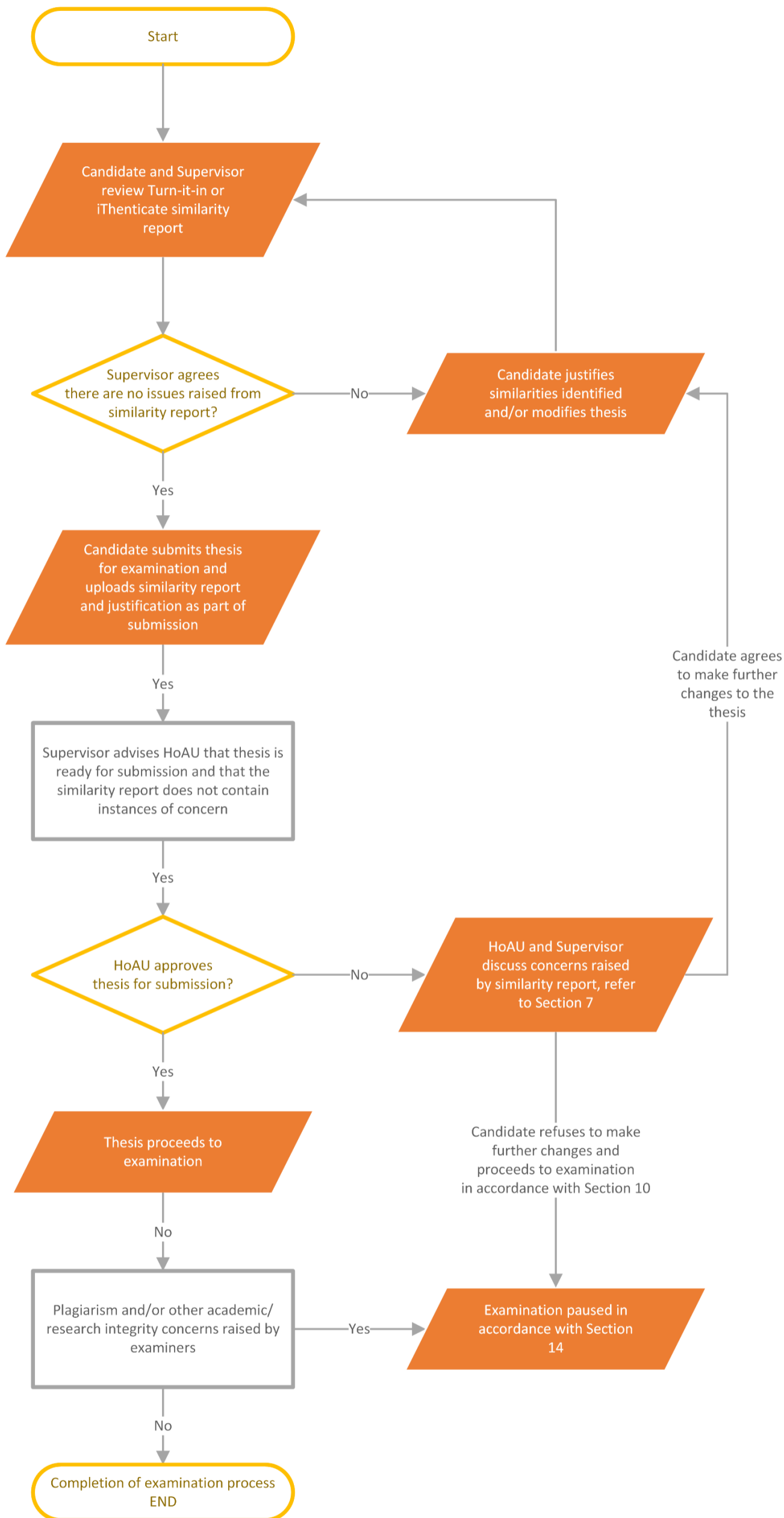
<i>Category of Conflict</i>	<i>Ref</i>	<i>Type of Conflict</i>	<i>Level of Conflict</i>
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<sup>6</sup> Mitigating Circumstances may exist, such as •when an examiner was a Research Advisor for another candidate in a different school of the University and do not share any supervision load, or •when an examiner holds an Adjunct/honorary position at a University other than UTAS where supervisor holds a second paid employment but never collaborated directly and vice versa.

<sup>7</sup> Mitigating circumstances may exist, such as when an examiner has examined candidates across different Schools of the University.

Working relationship	E1	Examiner works in the same University/Organisation as the other examiner/s	Major
Professional /personal relationship	E2	Examiner is married to, closely related to or has a close personal or professional relationship with the other examiner/s	Major
	E3	Examiner has a professional relationship with the other examiner/s	Minor

Schedule E: Academic Integrity check flowchart



### Schedule F: Examiner Recommendations for Doctoral Candidates

Examiners will provide one of the following recommendations for Doctoral candidates: That the degree be:

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Short Description</i>	<i>Detailed Description</i>
PASS	A	Passed	The thesis be <b>PASSED</b> No changes required; or only minor edits required, such as minor textural change, formatting issues or other corrections that have no bearing on the quality of the overall argument. Time guideline of <1-2 days (Full-time equivalent FTE) to complete amendments.
	B	Passed subject to minor revisions	The thesis be <b>PASSED, SUBJECT TO MINOR REVISION</b> . Changes as indicated in the examination reports are undertaken to the satisfaction of the Chair of Examiners. Time guideline of <3 months (FTE) to complete revision.
	C1	Passed subject to substantive revisions	The thesis be <b>PASSED, SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE REVISION</b> Changes as indicated in the examination reports are undertaken to the satisfaction of the Research Committee of Review (as convened by the Chair of Examiners). Time guideline 3-6 months (FTE) to complete revision.
RESUBMIT FOR EXAMINATION	C2	Revise and resubmit for external re-examination	The thesis be <b>NOT YET</b> passed Candidate be permitted to <b>REVISE</b> the thesis in response to the examiners' reports and <b>RESUBMIT</b> it for re-examination. Time guideline of up to 6-12 months (FTE) to complete revision under supervision.
AWARD THE DEGREE OF MASTER	D1	Passed for the award of Master	The thesis <b>NOT</b> be passed for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy but be <b>PASSED for the appropriate degree of MASTER</b> .
	D2	Revise and resubmit for external re-examination for the award of Master	The thesis <b>NOT</b> be passed for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy but the candidate be permitted to <b>REVISE</b> the thesis and <b>RESUBMIT it for re-examination at the appropriate degree of MASTER</b> . Time guideline of 6-12 months (FTE) to complete revision under supervision.

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Related policies and procedures can be found at:

<https://www.utas.edu.au/policy>

FAIL	E	Failed	The thesis be <b>FAILED</b> and the candidate <b>NOT</b> be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy <b>OR</b> the degree of Master and the candidate <b>NOT</b> be permitted to resubmit the thesis for either degree.
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### Schedule G: Examiner Recommendations for Masters by Research Candidates

Examiners must make one of the following recommendations for Masters by Research candidates. That the degree be:

Classification	Grade	Short Description	Detailed Description
PASS	A	Passed	The thesis be <b>PASSED</b> No changes required; or only minor edits required, such as minor textural change, formatting issues or other corrections that have no bearing on the quality of the overall argument. Time guideline of <1-2 days (Full-time equivalent FTE) to complete amendments.
	B	Passed subject to minor revisions	The thesis be <b>PASSED, SUBJECT TO MINOR REVISION</b> . Changes as indicated in the examination reports are undertaken to the satisfaction of the Chair of Examiners. Time guideline of <3 months (FTE) to complete revision.
	C1	Passed subject to substantive revisions	The thesis be <b>PASSED, SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE REVISION</b> Changes as indicated in the examination reports are undertaken to the satisfaction of the Research Committee of Review (as convened by the Chair of Examiners). Time guideline 3-6 months (FTE) to complete revision.
RESUBMIT FOR EXAMINATION	C2	Revise and resubmit for external re-examination	The thesis be <b>NOT YET</b> passed Candidate be permitted to <b>REVISE</b> the thesis in response to the examiners' reports and <b>RESUBMIT</b> it for re-examination. Time guideline of up to 6-12 months (FTE) to complete revision under supervision.
FAIL	E	Failed	The thesis be <b>FAILED</b> and the candidate <b>NOT</b> be awarded the degree of Masters by Research and the candidate <b>NOT</b> be permitted to resubmit the thesis for either degree.

### Schedule H: Re-examination Examiner Recommendations for Doctoral Candidates

The Examiner of Review will make one of the following recommendations. That the degree be:

Classification	Grade	Short Description	Detailed Description
PASS	A	Passed	<p>The thesis be <b>PASSED</b></p> <p>No changes required; or only minor edits required, such as minor textural change, formatting issues or other corrections that have no bearing on the quality of the overall argument.</p> <p>Time guideline of &lt;1-2 days (Full-time equivalent FTE) to complete amendments.</p>
	B	Passed subject to minor revisions	<p>The thesis be <b>PASSED, SUBJECT TO MINOR REVISION.</b></p> <p>Changes as indicated in the examination reports are undertaken to the satisfaction of the Chair of Examiners.</p> <p>Time guideline of &lt;3 months (FTE) to complete revision.</p>
AWARD THE DEGREE OF MASTER	D1	Passed for the award of Master	<p>The thesis <b>NOT</b> be passed for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy but be <b>PASSED for the appropriate degree of MASTER.</b></p>
FAIL	E	Failed	<p>The thesis be <b>FAILED</b> and the candidate <b>NOT</b> be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy <b>OR</b> the degree of Master and the candidate <b>NOT</b> be permitted to resubmit the thesis for either degree.</p>

### Schedule I: Re-examination Examiner Recommendations for Masters by Research Candidates

The Examiner of Review will make one of the following recommendations. That the degree be:

Classification	Grade	Short Description	Detailed Description
PASS	A	Passed	<p>The thesis be <b>PASSED</b></p> <p>No changes required; or only minor edits required, such as minor textural change, formatting issues or other corrections that have no bearing on the quality of the overall argument.</p> <p>Time guideline of &lt;1-2 days (Full-time equivalent FTE) to complete amendments.</p>
	B	Passed subject to minor revisions	<p>The thesis be <b>PASSED, SUBJECT TO MINOR REVISION.</b></p> <p>Changes as indicated in the examination reports are undertaken to the satisfaction of the Chair of Examiners.</p> <p>Time guideline of &lt;3 months (FTE) to complete revision.</p>
FAIL	E	Failed	<p>The thesis be <b>FAILED</b> and the candidate <b>NOT</b> be awarded the degree of Masters by Research and the candidate <b>NOT</b> be permitted to resubmit the thesis for either degree.</p>