

Higher Degree Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Procedure establishes the required actions for the preparation, submission and examination of a Higher Degree Research Thesis. The Research Degree Subcommittee (RDSC) of the Research and Research Training Committee (RRTC) reviews and recommends actions to RRTC in relation to the thesis preparation, submission and examination process.

Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to the preparation, submission and examination requirements for the thesis component of the following degrees:

- a. the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and all other doctorates by research; and
- b. the Master of Philosophy (MPhil).

(3) It does not apply to the Master of Research (MRes) for which a separate [Master of Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Procedure](#) is available.

Section 2 - Policy

(4) Refer to the [Higher Degree Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy](#).

Section 3 - Procedure

Responsibilities and Required Actions

(5) There is an [HDR Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Procedure Flowchart](#) available for this Procedure.

(6) This Procedure requires actions by the following:

- a. Candidate;
- b. Research and Research Training Committee (RRTC);
- c. Higher Degree Research Office (HDRO) Officer;
- d. Principal Supervisor; and
- e. Research Degree Subcommittee (RDSC).

Candidate

(7) Prepare the thesis in accordance with the [Higher Degree Research Rules](#) and the [Higher Degree Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy](#).

HDRO Officer

(8) Advise the candidate and Principal Supervisor of the need to nominate examiners for approval by RDSC at least three (3) months prior to the expected thesis submission date.

Candidate

(9) Approximately three (3) months in advance of the thesis submission date, discuss possible examiners with the Principal Supervisor and other supervisors and electronically confirm selection of the nominated examiners.

Principal Supervisor

(10) Discuss the nomination of examiners with the candidate approximately three (3) months before the expected thesis submission date.

(11) Contact possible examiners to ascertain their availability to examine the thesis.

(12) Submit an electronic examiner nomination to RDSC for review and approval. This normally includes a list of five (5) examiners for a doctoral degree and four (4) for a MPhil degree.

(13) Certify in writing that the thesis has been prepared in accordance with the [Higher Degree Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy](#), and includes an abstract of approximately 300-500 words.

(14) If the Principal Supervisor declines to certify in writing that the thesis meets all the University preparation requirements, a candidate may submit a thesis for examination against the advice of the Principal Supervisor, to RDSC. RDSC will receive and review the submission and make an appropriate recommendation to RRTC for determination.

Head of Department (or nominee)

(15) Review and endorse the list of nominated examiners.

Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research

(16) Certify that the examination panel conforms to all the requirements of the [Higher Degree Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy](#).

(17) Endorse the examination panel.

HDRO Officer

(18) Review the electronic nomination of examiners and escalate the nominated examiners for consideration and approval by RDSC.

Research Degree Subcommittee (RDSC)

(19) Review the list of examiner nominations proposed by the Principal Supervisor and candidate.

(20) For doctoral degrees, approve the appointment of three (3) examiners and one (1) reserve examiner in accordance with [Schedule 2 - HDR Appointment of Examiners](#). For master of philosophy degrees, approve the appointment of two (2) examiners and one (1) reserve examiner in accordance with [Schedule 2 - HDR Appointment of Examiners](#). RDSC may approve a panel without a reserve examiner.

(21) Report approved examiner nominations to RRTC.

HDRO Officer

(22) Inform the Principal Supervisor and Faculty HDR Office when the examiner nominations have been approved by RDSC.

Candidate

(23) Prepare the thesis in accordance with the [Higher Degree Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy](#).

(24) Submit the thesis and other required documents electronically in PDF format.

(25) In the case of a thesis re-submitted for examination, the candidate must also submit a detailed report outlining the exact changes made to the thesis during the period of re-enrolment (Corrections Report) for consideration by RDSC.

Principal Supervisor

(26) Review and approve thesis and abstract.

(27) Upload the thesis to iThenticate and generate an iThenticate originality report.

(28) Review the iThenticate originality report in line with the [Graduate Research iThenticate Procedure](#).

(29) Detail the iThenticate percentage of text overlap and document number in the supervisor comments section, and forward the thesis and associated documents for consideration and approval by the Head of Department (or nominee) and Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research, and forward to HDRO.

RDSC

(30) In the case of a re-submission, review the documentation and determine if the thesis is approved for re-examination.

HDRO Officer

(31) Forward the thesis (and any relevant examination information) to approved examiners electronically.

(32) Administer the thesis examination process electronically including reporting on progress to the Principal Supervisor and the candidate.

(33) Contact the Principal Supervisor when all examiner reports have been received and request comments from the Principal Supervisor on the reports received from the examiners.

Principal Supervisor

(34) Prepare a commentary of the examiner reports reviewing the critical points of relevance as indicated by the examiners. Submit the report for consideration and approval from the Head of Department (or nominee) and Faculty Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research, and forward to HDRO.

HDRO Officer

(35) Review the supervisor's commentary and forward to the RDSC for consideration, or in the case of an examiner recommending Revise and Resubmit, or Not Award, prepare the documents for consideration by RDSC.

Research Degree Subcommittee (RDSC)

(36) Review examiner reports and Principal Supervisor's commentary. If Principal Supervisor commentary is insufficient, request further information from them.

(37) Determine the recommendation to RRTC in accordance with the [Higher Degree Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy](#):

- a. recommend to RRTC the award of the degree;
- b. require that corrections to the thesis to the satisfaction of RDSC be carried out by the candidate before the award of the degree;
- c. require that the candidate undertakes further study and research, and resubmits the thesis for re-examination by one (1) or more examiners;
- d. in the event of substantial disagreement amongst examiners, appoint a further examiner, moderator or adjudicator or request that an oral examination be held;
- e. determine that an oral, written or practical examination be used to resolve concerns about the thesis;
- f. recommend that the degree be not awarded; or
- g. take such action as it deems appropriate before making a recommendation to RRTC on the examination outcome.

HDRO Officer

(38) Advise candidate of outcome of the determination by RDSC and RRTC referred to above as follows:

- a. If (a) advise candidate of the need to provide a copy of the final digital thesis and digital thesis submission form to the HDRO within one (1) month of the recommendation of RRTC.
- b. If (b) advise the candidate of the need to complete the corrections and submit the corrections report within two (2) months.
- c. If (c) advise the candidate they are to be enrolled for a period of twelve (12) months in order to complete the thesis revision.
- d. If a Joint Enrolment (Cotutelle) or an approved double-badged degree enrolment, advise RRTC of recommendation in accordance with contract requirements if any are specified. HDRO will advise the partner institution and the Graduations Unit of the examination outcome.
- e. If (d), (e) or (f) advise the candidate or the outcome and other options (if applicable).

Candidate

(39) If advised that the degree is to be awarded, submit a copy of the final digital thesis and digital thesis submission form to the HDRO within one (1) month of the recommendation of RDSC, and submit any hard-bound final copies of thesis to the Faculty if required.

(40) If advised that corrections are required, prepare and submit the corrections report electronically within two (2) months.

(41) If advised of enrolment for a further period of twelve (12) months, nominate a date of re-enrolment that falls within three (3) months of the recommendation of RDSC.

(42) A candidate who does not submit their corrections report and corrected thesis within the required time period will be deemed to have not satisfied the requirements for the award of the degree.

(43) A candidate may appeal a decision relating to the award of PhD or MPhil degree in accordance with the [Academic Appeals Policy](#). Appeals on this basis are limited to procedural grounds only. Candidates have 20 working days to submit an appeal following notification of the decision.

RDSC

(44) RDSC may, in its discretion, approve a thesis moratorium on application from the candidate and recommendation from the Faculty Executive Dean. If approved, the thesis will not be available for publication in the University online thesis repository until after the expiry of a period which shall not exceed three (3) years in total. Requests of up to twelve months per application will be considered.

(45) Review corrections undertaken and make a recommendation to RRTC of the examination outcome.

RRTC

(46) Determine that requirements for a Higher Degree Research award have been satisfied.

HDRO Officer

(47) Forward the electronic copy of the thesis to the Library.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(48) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(49) Definitions specific to this Procedure are contained in the [Higher Degree Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy](#).

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	21st February 2021
Review Date	21st February 2023
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	7th April 2020
Expiry Date	31st August 2024
Responsible Executive	Sakkie Pretorius Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) +61 2 9850 8645
Responsible Officer	Simon Handley Pro Vice-Chancellor, Graduate Research +61 2 9850 8030
Enquiries Contact	Louise Dwyer Operations Director, Graduate Research +61 2 9850 1891