Graduate 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 Graduate Research thesis. The Research Degree Subcommittee (RDSC) reviews and recommends actions to the Academic Senate Research Committee (ASRC) in relation to Graduate Research thesis preparation, submission and examination process.

Scope

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

a. Master of Research;
b. Master of Public Health (Research);
c. Master of Philosophy;
d. Doctor of Philosophy;
e. Cotutelle and Joint PhD with an approved partner university;
f. Combined Master of Clinical Psychology and Doctor of Philosophy;
g. Combined Master of Clinical Neuropsychology and Doctor of Philosophy; and
h. Combined Master of Organisational Psychology and Doctor of Philosophy.

(3) This Procedure applies to all Graduate Research (GR) students as well as to University staff engaged in the thesis preparation, submission and examination processes.

Section 2 - Policy

(4) Refer to the Graduate Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy.

Section 3 - Procedures

Part A - Thesis Preparation

(5) Students must prepare the thesis in accordance with the Graduate Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy.

Part B - Thesis Submission

(6) Students must be enrolled at the time of submission and cannot submit before the minimum course length specified in the Graduate Research Rules.

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(7) Students will submit their thesis and any other required documents on or before their Expected Work Submission (EWS) date.

(8) At the time of submission, students must indicate if they require:

a. a Confidentiality Deed Poll; and/or
b. an embargo on access to their thesis based on cultural, ethical, legal or commercial reasons.

(9) An MRes student who does not submit their thesis by their EWS date may be penalised one (1) percentage point from their final MRes thesis grade per calendar day until their thesis is submitted.

(10) The Principal (PhD/MPhil) or Research Masters Supervisor will review the thesis submission and complete the following steps:

a. conduct an iThenticate check:
    i. upload the thesis to iThenticate and generate an iThenticate originality report;
    ii. review the iThenticate originality report in line with the Graduate Research iThenticate Procedure; and
    iii. detail the iThenticate percentage of text overlap and document number in the examination system.
b. certify that the thesis has been prepared in accordance with the Graduate Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy and includes an appropriate abstract; and
c. endorse requests for Confidentiality Deed Polls or embargoes on access to the thesis based on cultural, ethical, legal or commercial reasons.

(11) If the Principal (PhD/MPhil) or Research Masters Supervisor declines to certify in writing that the thesis meets all the University preparation requirements, a student may submit a request to the Faculty Associate Dean, Research Training and Performance (AD-RTP) to submit their thesis for examination against the advice of their Supervisor. In consultation with the Research Training (RT) Director, the AD-RTP will determine if the thesis can be submitted. If the case cannot be resolved, the AD-RTP will escalate it to RDSC for a decision.

(12) The Head of Department/Dean or Head of School (HoD/S) (or nominee) will review the thesis submission and complete the following:

a. certify that the thesis has been prepared in accordance with the Graduate Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy and includes an appropriate abstract;
b. endorse requests for Confidentiality Deed Polls or Embargoes on access to the thesis based on cultural, ethical, legal or commercial reasons;
c. endorse examination of the thesis; and
d. in the case of MRes thesis submission, determine if a late penalty of one (1) percentage point per day should be applied to late submissions.

(13) In the case of PhD/MPhil thesis submissions, the AD-RTP will complete the following:

a. certify that examiners have been appointed to examine the thesis;
b. endorse requests for Confidentiality Deed Polls or Embargoes on access to the thesis based on cultural, ethical, legal or commercial reasons; and
c. approve examination of the thesis.

(14) In the case of MRes thesis submissions, the MRes Director will complete the following:

a. certify that examiners have been appointed to examine the thesis;

b. endorse requests for Confidentiality Deed Polls or Embargoes on access to the thesis based on cultural, ethical, legal or commercial reasons; and
c. approve examination of the thesis.

Part C - Thesis Examination

Nomination of Examiners

(15) The Graduate Research Academy (GRA) will advise Principal (PhD/MPhil) or Research Masters Supervisor and students of the need to nominate examiners for approval by the RDSC within the following time frames:

a. PhD and MPhil theses: three (3) months prior to the student's EWS date; or
b. MRes theses: two (2) months prior to the student's EWS date.

(16) Once notified, the Principal (PhD/MPhil) or Research Masters Supervisor and student should discuss the examination process and potential examiners, noting that the decision of the final examination panel should not be disclosed to the student.

(17) The Principal (PhD/MPhil) or Research Masters Supervisor then completes the following steps:

a. discuss potential examiners with the supervisory team;
b. contact potential examiners to ascertain their availability to examine the thesis; and
c. nominate two (2) principal examiners and one (1) reserve examiner in accordance with Schedule 1 - GR Appointment of Examiners.

(18) The GRA will review the list of nominated examiners and complete the following:

a. confirm that the nominated examiners meet the appointment criteria specified in Schedule 1 - GR Appointment of Examiners; and
b. escalate the nomination for consideration by the HoD/S or nominee.

(19) The HoD/S (or nominee) will review the list of nominated examiners and complete the following:

a. confirm that the nominated examiners meet the appointment criteria specified in Schedule 1 - Graduate Research Appointment of Examiners; and
b. endorse the examination panel.

(20) The AD-RTP (or nominee) will review the list of nominated examiners and complete the following:

a. confirm that the nominated examiners meet the appointment criteria specified in Schedule 1 - Graduate Research Appointment of Examiners; and
b. in the case of PhD and MPhil thesis examiners, endorse the examination panel; or
c. in the case of MRes thesis examiners, approve the appointment of two (2) principal examiners and one (1) reserve examiner.

(21) In the case of PhD and MPhil thesis examiners, the RDSC will review the list of nominated examiners and complete the following:

a. certify that the nominated examiners meet the appointment criteria specified in Schedule 1 - Graduate Research Appointment of Examiners; and
b. approve the appointment of two (2) principal examiners and one (1) reserve examiner.

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(22) The RDSC will report the appointed examiners to the ASRC.

Thesis Examination

(23) Upon approval of the examiners and thesis submission, the GRA will:

a. check if the student has requested an embargo on access to their thesis and forward the request to the RDSC for approval;
b. in all cases, forward the thesis (and any relevant examination information) to the approved examiners; and
c. update the status in the student record to Under Examination (UX).

(24) Examiners are requested to provide a written report which addresses the examination criteria detailed in Schedule 2 - Graduate Research Thesis Examination Criteria and recommend one of the following outcomes:

a. Award: That the thesis meets all required standards in terms of the nature and quality of work undertaken, and the degree can be awarded without any further work by the student, other than the correction of typographical errors and small lapses of expression and presentation in the final copy; or
b. Award (after corrections): That the thesis meets all required standards in terms of the nature and quality of work undertaken, and the degree can be awarded without further examination once the student has made a number of corrections and clarifications in the thesis; or
c. Revise and re-examination: That the thesis does not yet meet all required standards for the award of the degree and the student should complete a further period of research and writing. The thesis will then be submitted for re-examination; or
d. Not award: That the thesis does not meet the required standards for the award of the degree and does not warrant a further period of research and writing.

(25) Examiners are requested to examine the thesis and return their report and recommendation within the following time frames:

a. PhD and MPhil theses: within 6 weeks of receiving the thesis; or
b. MRes theses: within 4 weeks of receiving the thesis.

(26) When all examiner reports have been received, the examination outcome will be determined through the following processes:

PhD/MPhil

(27) The GRA will forward all reports to the Principal Supervisor.

(28) In the case that all examiners recommend Award and/or Award with Corrections:

a. the Principal Supervisor will review the examiner reports and provide a recommendation of the examination outcome for consideration by the Chair of RDSC;
b. the HoD/S (or nominee) will review the examiner reports and supervisor's recommendation, and provide a recommendation of the examination outcome to the Chair of RDSC;
c. the Chair of RDSC will review the examiner reports and the supervisor and HoD/S's (or nominee) recommendations and will determine the recommendation of the examination outcome to ASRC.

(29) In the case that one or both examiners recommend Revise and Re-examination or Not Award:

a. the Principal Supervisor will review the examiner reports and provide:

i. a recommendation for the examination outcome; and
ii. a written report reviewing the critical points of relevance for consideration by RDSC;

b. the HoD/S (or nominee) will review the examiner reports and the supervisor's recommendation and report, and provide a recommendation of the examination outcome for consideration by RDSC;
c. the AD-RTP will review the examiner reports and supervisor and HoD/S's (or nominee) recommendations, and provide a recommendation of the examination outcome for consideration by RDSC;
d. the RDSC will review the examiner reports and supervisor, HoD/S (or nominee) and AD-RTP's recommendations, and will determine:
    i. a recommendation of the examination outcome to ASRC ; or
    ii. that the thesis will need to be examined by a third examiner (refer to clauses 33 - 38).

MRes

(30) In the case that all examiners recommend Award and/or Award with Corrections:

a. the GRA will forward all reports to the AD-RTP;
b. the AD-RTP, in consultation with the RT Director, examine the reports and;
    i. if the reports can be easily reconciled, give equal weight to the grades of the two reports, provide a recommendation of the thesis grade and examination outcome for consideration by RDSC; or
    ii. if the reports and grades cannot be easily reconciled, recommend to the Chair of RDSC that the thesis be sent to a third examiner.
c. the Chair of RDSC will review the examiner reports and AD RTP's recommendation and will determine:
    i. a recommendation of the examination outcome to ASRC ; or
    ii. that the thesis will need to be examined by a third examiner (refer to clauses 33 and 39 - 43).

(31) In the case that one examiner recommends Revise and Resubmit or Not Award, the GRA will send the thesis to a third examiner (refer to clauses 33 and 39 - 43).

(32) In the case that both examiners recommend Revise and Resubmit or Not Award, the GRA will forward all reports to RDSC.

Third Examiner

(33) When the third examiner report has been received, the examination outcome will be determined through the following processes.

PhD/MPhil

(34) The GRA will forward all examiner reports to the Principal Supervisor.

(35) The Principal Supervisor will review the examiner reports and provide:

a. a recommendation for the examination outcome; and
b. a written report reviewing the critical points of relevance for consideration by RDSC.

(36) The HoD/S (or nominee) will review the examiner reports and the supervisor's recommendation and report, and provide a recommendation of the examination outcome for consideration by RDSC.

(37) The AD-RTP will review the examiner and supervisor reports and supervisor and HoD/S's (or nominee) recommendations, and provide a recommendation of the examination outcome for consideration by RDSC.

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(38) The RDSC will review the examiner and supervisor reports, and the supervisor, HoD/S (or nominee) and AD-RTP's recommendations, and will determine the recommendation of the examination outcome to ASRC.

MRes

(39) The GRA will forward all examiner reports to the AD-RTP.

(40) The AD-RTP will forward the reports to the Research Masters Supervisor for a written response.

(41) The Research Masters Supervisor will review the examiner reports and provide:

a. a recommendation for the examination outcome; and
b. a written report reviewing the critical points of relevance for consideration.

(42) The AD-RTP will convene a Moderation Panel consisting of the AD-RTP, Faculty MRes Director, an AD-RTP from another Faculty and a researcher in a cognate discipline outside the Department of the student's enrolment.

(43) The Moderation Panel will review the examiner reports and supervisor's recommendation and report and will complete the following:

a. in the case that the panel agrees on a recommended outcome and straight average weighting of the thesis grade, provide a written report and recommendation of the examination outcome for consideration by the Chair of RDSC;
b. the Chair of RDSC will review the examiner, supervisor and Moderation Panel reports and will determine the recommendation of the examination outcome to ASRC.

OR

a. in all other cases, the panel is required to prepare a written report and escalate the case for discussion at the next RDSC meeting;
b. the RDSC will review the examiner, supervisor and Moderation Panel reports and will determine the recommendation of the examination outcome to ASRC.

Recommendation of examination outcome

(44) In all cases, the RDSC will determine the recommendation to ASRC in accordance with the Graduate Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy:

a. recommend to ASRC the award of the degree;
b. require that corrections to the thesis to the satisfaction of RDSC be carried out by the student before the award of the degree (refer to clause 50);
c. require that the student undertakes further study and research, and resubmits the thesis for re-examination by one (1) or more examiners (refer to clause 55);
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. recommend that the degree be not awarded; or
f. take such action as it deems appropriate before making a recommendation to ASRC on the examination outcome.

(45) In the case of MRes examination outcomes, the RDSC will also determine the recommendation of the final thesis grade as follows:

a. average the thesis marks;
b. re-weight an outlier grade by giving two grades a value of 40% in the final outcome and the outlier 20%; or
c. in exceptional cases, recommend that a grade can be discarded, and the result determined by the averaging of the other two grades. This option should only be taken when a report is demonstrably biased or there is a conflict of interest, or a demonstrable failure to critically engage with the thesis.

(46) The RDSC will make recommendations on the award of the Vice-Chancellor's Commendation for PhD theses to the ASRC for approval.

(47) The RDSC will determine the outcome of requests for embargo on access to theses based on cultural, ethical, legal or commercial reasons.

(48) If the student is undertaking a Cotutelle and Joint Research Degree, the GRA will:

a. advise ASRC of recommendation in accordance with contract requirements if any are specified;
b. advise the partner institution of the examination outcome; and
c. advise the Graduations Unit of the examination outcome.

(49) Upon recommendation by RDSC, ASRC will:

a. determine that the requirements for a graduate research degree have been met; and
b. approve the award of Vice-Chancellor Commendation for GR theses.

Corrections

(50) If a student is advised that corrections are required, they must prepare and submit their corrections report within the following time periods:

a. PhD and MPhil Students: within two (2) months of notification of “Award with Corrections”; or
b. MRes Students: within one (1) month of notification of “Award with Corrections”; or
c. Such period as determined by RDSC to adequately address the examiner comments. This period will commence once the student is notified.

(51) The Principal (PhD/MPhil) or Research Masters Supervisor will review the corrections report and make a recommendation to the HoD/S (or nominee).

(52) In the case of PhD/MPhil theses, the Chair of RDSC will review the corrections report and make a recommendation to ASRC of the examination outcome.

(53) In the case of MRes thesis corrections, the AD-RTP or MRes Director will review the corrections report and make a recommendation to ASRC of the examination outcome.

(54) A student who does not submit their corrections report within the required time period will be deemed to have not satisfied the requirements for the award of the degree.

Revise and Re-examination (R&R)

(55) If a student is advised that they are required to revise their thesis and submit it for re-examination, they will be automatically re-enrolled into their course for the following time periods:

a. PhD Students: twelve (12) months from point of notification that further research and resubmission is required;
b. MPhil Students: nine (9) months from point of notification that further research and resubmission is required;

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c. MRes Students: three (3) months from point of notification that further research and resubmission is required.

(56) Students will submit their revised thesis and a detailed report outlining the exact changes made to the thesis during the period of re-enrolment on or before their new Expected Work Submission (EWS) date. The submission approval process will follow clauses 7 – 14 of this Procedure.

(57) Upon approval by the AD-RTP/MRes Director, the following steps will occur:

a. the Chair RDSC will review the revised thesis and detailed report and will approve that the thesis be sent for examination;
b. the GRA will check if the original examiners are available to examine the revised thesis. If one or more examiners are unavailable, the GRA will advise the supervisor to commence the Nomination of Examiners process in accordance with clauses 15 – 22.

(58) The thesis examination process will be conducted in accordance with clauses 23 - 25 of this Procedure. It is not expected that examiners of the revised thesis will recommend that new areas of research investigation should be undertaken by the student for the finalisation of the thesis.

(59) The examination outcome for a revised thesis will be determined in accordance with clauses 26 – 49 of this Procedure, with the following exceptions:

a. in the case of MRes theses, the final thesis grade will be determined by the averaging of the grades provided by the original examiners. A maximum grade of 64% can be awarded for a thesis, which after re-examination, has been determined to meet the standard for the award of the degree. If the average grade is below 50%, then the final grade will be raised to 50% for a revised thesis which after examination, has been determined to meet the standard for the award of the degree.
b. in all cases, students will not be provided with an examination outcome of revise and re-examination.

(60) A student who does not submit their R&R corrections report and revised thesis within the specified time period will be deemed to have not satisfied the requirements for the award of the degree.

Final Degree Requirements

(61) Students must submit a final digital copy of their thesis within one (1) month of receiving an outcome of Award or after their corrections report has been approved.

Part D - International Students

(62) The University will report any international students who have more than four (4) weeks left on their Visa when their thesis examination outcome is finalised under Section 19 of the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 and will notify them of any potential impacts under the ESOS National Code. Students are responsible for following the advice and required actions in their notification.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(63) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(64) Definitions specific to this Procedure are contained in the Graduate Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and

Examination Policy.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	1st September 2024
Review Date	1st September 2029
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
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