

Appendix C:

Policy on the Appointment of Examiners and the Conduct of the Examination Process

1. A candidate's research project shall be examined by the submission and assessment of a thesis based on that research. Oral and written examinations, or both, related to such assessment, may be required by the University Research Committee (URC) on the recommendation of the examiners.
2. A candidate shall be given an opportunity by the principal supervisor to discuss the suitability of potential examiners. A candidate may neither demand nor reject the appointment of any particular examiner, but may offer reasons for inclusion or exclusion of potential examiners for consideration by the supervisor. A candidate may not either demand or reject the appointment of any particular examiner. It will be made quite clear to a candidate that there must be no contact between the candidate and the examiners during the examination period. Such contact may result in the URC appointing a replacement examiner.
3. For all research higher degrees, the principal supervisor shall provide to the Head of School and the Associate Dean (Research) of the relevant Faculty the names of at least three people who have agreed, in principle, to serve as examiners. The first two will be invited and the third used as a reserve.
4. For the research doctorate, examiners shall normally be external to the University and at least one shall come from outside Australia. For the master's degrees, at least one examiner shall normally be external to the University. A supervisor may not be appointed as an examiner.
5. Reports of examiners
Each examiner shall submit a report on the thesis, and shall recommend one of the following results:
 - A. Pass. The thesis should be classified as PASSED and the candidate awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy without amendment or further examination.
 - B. Pass subject to minor amendments. The thesis should be classified as PASSED and the candidate awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy without further examination but **subject to** the amendments detailed in this report being successfully completed.
 - C. Pass conditional on major amendments. The thesis should be classified as PASSED and the candidate awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy only after the **substantive** amendments detailed in this report are successfully completed.
 - D. Defer. The thesis should be classified as DEFERRED and the candidate be given up to twelve months (F/T) to revise and re-submit the thesis for examination.
 - *I am willing to be involved in the re-examination process; or*
 - *I do not wish to be involved in the re-examination process.*
 - E. Fail. The thesis should be classified as FAILED and the candidate should not be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, nor can the thesis be re-submitted for examination.

Other options:

- Pass (*Summa Cum Laude*). The thesis is of outstanding merit, in the top 5%.
- Awarded a minor degree. The thesis is not of Doctor of Philosophy standard but the lesser degree of the Master of Philosophy may be awarded. (My report has indicated the changes necessary for the achievement of a satisfactory Master of Philosophy degree).

6. The Associate Dean (Research) may, with the approval of the examiners, arrange for the candidate to be examined by oral or written examination, set by the examiners of the thesis. The candidate's written answers to any such examination will be sent to the examiners for comment. A candidate's answers to any such oral or written examination shall be taken into account by the examiners in their final assessment and recommendation.

7. After considering examiners' reports where both examiners have identified category A, B or C, the Associate Dean (Research) as a representative of the Research Training Standing Committee (RTSC) will recommend a course of action in accordance with the following procedures.

1. Pass: The student is expected to make the identified typographical changes which will be signed off by the supervisor.
2. Pass with minor amendments: The student is expected to make the minor amendments identified by the examiners and these will be signed off by the supervisor and the Associate Dean of the faculty in which the student is studying.
3. Pass with substantive amendments. The student will forward an amended copy of the thesis to an independent assessor nominated by the Head of School (or nominee). The report will be forwarded to the Associate Dean of the faculty (via the Research Office) who will approve the amendments if satisfactory or recommend further discussion at the next RTSC meeting.

NB: The awarding of the thesis as a *Summa Cum Laude* will be made only if both examiners have identified that category.

8. If there is a discrepancy between the two examiners, where the result is not clear, or where the result is likely to be other than a PASS, the matter will be referred to the next RTSC meeting.

Anonymous reports will be sent to all members of the committee. Reports will also be sent to the supervisors who will be invited to take part in the discussion.

The Committee will choose one of the options below. Once the overall result is determined, the student will be notified.

1. Pass with substantive amendments. The student will forward an amended copy of the thesis to an independent assessor nominated by the Head of School (or nominee). The report will be forwarded to the Associate Dean of the faculty (via the Research Office) who will approve the amendments if satisfactory or recommend further discussion at the next RTSC meeting.
2. Send thesis to third examiner.
3. Defer. The thesis should be classified as DEFERRED and the candidate be given up to twelve months (F/T) to revise and re-submit the thesis for examination by the deferring examiner(s).

The options open to the deferring examiner(s) will be PASS or FAIL. If the deferring examiner is not able to re-examine the thesis, a new examiner will be invited. He/she will be invited to approve the guidelines for re-writing, drawn up by the supervisors, before undertaking the task.

4. Fail. The thesis should be classified as FAILED and the candidate should not be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, nor can the thesis be re-submitted for examination.

The Principal Supervisor, Head of School and Associate Dean of the Faculty will decide the best course of action for communicating the news to the candidate. The candidate will also be given the information about any appropriate appeal process noting that an appeal against a failed thesis can only be made on procedural grounds

5. Award of a Master's Degree. (For PhD candidates only) The thesis cannot be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy but the lesser degree of the Master of Philosophy may be awarded.

This option must only be taken if at least one examiner has ticked this box and has outlined in his/her report the necessary amendments needed to achieve the standard of Master of Philosophy.