

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. 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 **major** 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.
The examiner(s) may indicate their willingness to re-examine the thesis as follows:
 - *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 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 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 any 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 major amendments: The Associate Dean will follow the process outlined in 8.1 below.

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

8. The matter will be referred to the next RTSC meeting in each of the following circumstances where:
 - there is a discrepancy between the two examiners and at least one examiner has given a grade of C or below;;
 - the result is not clear;
 - the result is likely to be other than a PASS:

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 major amendments. An independent moderator* with appropriate expertise will be approved by the Associate Dean in consultation with the RTSC. The moderator will compile a written list of revisions, based on the examiners reports, which are considered to be required for the thesis to meet a PASS standard. The moderator will forward the revisions list to the Associate Dean of the Faculty who will provide it to the student and principal supervisor. The student will forward an amended copy of the thesis (together with a brief annotated response (action taken and page reference) to each of the required revisions to facilitate the moderation) to the Associate Dean who will forward it to the moderator. The moderator will respond to the Associate Dean to approve the

amendments if satisfactory. The Associate Dean then endorses the report and forwards it to Research Services with advice that the major amendments have been satisfactorily completed and that the thesis is passed.

If the amended thesis is not deemed satisfactory by the moderator, the Associate Dean will endorse the report and forward it to Research Services for further discussion at the next RTSC meeting. **Note: if the independent moderator appointed by the RTSC is the Associate Dean then the Dean will assume the usual responsibilities of the Associate Dean in the matter thereafter.*

2. Send thesis to third examiner.

The RTSC will consider the report of the third examiner and make a final decision.

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.