

# Higher Degree Research Examination Procedure

## Purpose

This Procedure describes the examination process for all Higher Degree Research (HDR) programs at UNSW, which includes the conduct of written and oral examinations.

## Scope

This Procedure applies to all HDR candidates, their supervisors, Postgraduate Coordinators, Faculty Higher Degree Committees, Associate Deans of Research Training (or equivalent) and other positions responsible for the management of HDR programs at UNSW. It should be read in conjunction with the [Conditions of Award Policy](#) relevant to the program being examined.

## 1. Principles for examination

- 1.1. HDR examination is the assessment of a candidate's ability to undertake a research investigation or creative or practice-based project and write a thesis.
- 1.2. HDR examination has several components, each of which must be assessed as satisfactory before the degree can be awarded. This includes written examination of the thesis, oral examination of the thesis, and creative work examination where applicable.
- 1.3. The examination process must:
  - Establish that the candidate fully understands the work and its wider implications
  - Provide the candidate with an opportunity to reply to criticism or challenge
  - Enable the examiners to clarify issues in the thesis
  - Allow the examiners to decide on the nature, content and extent of any revisions which may be required
  - Authenticate the contribution made by the candidate to the thesis and
  - Ensure that the candidate and the written thesis demonstrates a clear understanding of the contribution of collaborators to the thesis.
- 1.4. All HDR candidates enrolled from T1, 2023 must engage in both the written and oral components of an examination.
- 1.5. HDR examination is undertaken independently and without bias.
- 1.6. UNSW is committed to open access of its research outputs and HDR theses are made publicly available in the library.

## 2. Examination criteria

- 2.1. Examiners assess the thesis component against the following criteria:
  - Does the candidate demonstrate a significant and original contribution to knowledge? (relative to the level of degree being sought)

- Does the candidate critically engage with the relevant literature and the work of others in the field?
  - Does the candidate demonstrate an advanced knowledge of research principles and methods related to the discipline?
  - Is there clarity in the statement of the overarching thesis, the presented research, its arguments and conclusions?
  - Is the thesis written to a standard appropriate to the discipline?
- 2.2. In cases where there is an oral component, examiners assess the oral component against the following criteria:
- Does the candidate demonstrate detailed knowledge of the thesis?
  - Does the candidate demonstrate the originality of the thesis and the contribution it makes to the state of knowledge in the field?
  - Does the candidate appropriately defend the methodology and conclusions of the thesis?
  - Does the candidate display awareness of limitations of the thesis?
  - How well did the candidate address the questions

### 3. Examination panel

- 3.1. An examination panel is appointed to administer each HDR examination. The role of the Panel is to:
- Review the thesis prior to the oral examination
  - Carry out the oral examination where required
  - Provide a written report to the Dean of Graduate Research on whether the degree should be awarded and the level of revisions required.
- 3.2. The examination panel will be composed of:
- A Chair, who will be a senior UNSW academic with experience in HDR supervision and
  - Two external examiners.

### 4. Responsibilities

- 4.1. The **HDR candidate** is responsible for:
- Preparing and submitting their thesis for examination
  - Ensuring the research described in the thesis was completed during the period of enrolment for the degree and that it is a true account of their own research and
  - Ensuring that the research was conducted in accordance with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and related UNSW policies and procedures.
- 4.2. The **supervisors** are responsible for:
- Providing formal advice on progress of the thesis to the candidate throughout the degree, especially before submission of the thesis
  - Ensuring that the thesis is in a format suitable for examination and that the candidate has followed the procedures required for thesis submission (in the case of primary supervisor)
  - Ensuring that the candidate is prepared for the oral component, where required
  - Ensuring the candidate understands [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)
  - Providing recommendations to the Postgraduate Coordinator on the nomination of suitable examiners of the thesis and
  - Supporting the candidate in addressing the revisions requested by the examination panel.
- 4.3. The **Postgraduate Coordinator** (PGC) is responsible for:
- Nominating suitable examiners to the HDC following recommendation from the supervisors

- Ensuring that the examiners are appropriate for the thesis and that the examination can be carried out independently and free from perceived or actual bias and
  - Nominating the Panel Chair to the HDC.
- 4.4. The **examiners** are responsible for:
- Providing a fair, independent and expert assessment against the examination criteria and a written report evaluating the thesis
  - Providing a fair, independent and expert assessment against the examination criteria and a written report evaluating the creative or practice-based project
  - Being the academic lead in the oral component of the examination, asking questions of the candidate on the subject of the thesis as well as matters relevant to the field/s to which the thesis belongs and
  - Discussing with the candidate the issues raised in the initial written report.
- 4.5. The **examination panel chair** 'Panel Chair' is responsible for:
- Ensuring that all aspects of the examination proceed appropriately
  - Ensuring that the examiners have reached a consensus on the final recommendation in an oral exam and
  - Based on the examination component/s, providing a recommendation on the award of the degree.
- 4.6. The **Faculty Higher Degree Committee** (HDC) or **delegate** is responsible for:
- Reviewing the nomination of examiners, confirming that the examiners are appropriate and free from perceived or actual conflict of interest (COI)
  - Appointing the examiners
  - Managing the examination process in situations where the primary supervisor has not signed the supervisor certificate and
  - Reviewing thesis revisions for recommendations of Further Work
- 4.7. The **Dean of Graduate Research** is responsible for:
- Ensuring this Procedure is appropriately carried out and
  - Determining whether the HDR candidate has satisfied the requirements for the award of the degree.

## 5. Minimum thesis requirements

- 5.1. The thesis must be a coherent, scholarly body of work and must meet the following minimum requirements for a thesis to be submitted for examination:
- An abstract which outlines the problem being investigated, the procedures followed, the general results obtained, and the major conclusions reached
  - An introduction that contextualises the research in relation to current knowledge in the field
  - Chapters that are in a logical and coherent sequence presenting an argument that supports the main findings of the thesis
  - A discussion that integrates the significant findings of the thesis and
  - A conclusion that summarises the findings and articulates the new contribution to knowledge in the discipline
- 5.2. In some disciplines, creative work may form part of the thesis. Faculty HDC will provide guidance on any discipline-specific requirements.

## 6. Thesis format

- 6.1. The [Thesis Format Guide](#) outlines the requirements for the format, length and submission process appropriate to the HDR degree. This is available from the UNSW HDR Hub in SharePoint.
  - Candidates should consult their supervisors on any disciplinary formatting conventions
  - Additional discipline-specific requirements are provided by Faculty HDCs
- 6.2. The Thesis for examination must be submitted to the Graduate Research Information System (GRIS) with the following certifications:
  - A thesis title and an abbreviated abstract which will ultimately appear on the AHEGS.
  - An Originality Statement which declares the work has been undertaken by the candidate and that any contributions to the research will be explicitly acknowledged in the thesis
  - An Inclusion of Publications Statement which outlines whether publications have been included in the thesis and the candidate's contribution
- 6.3. Written permission must be obtained to reproduce third-party material in the thesis. This must be completed before the thesis is submitted for examination.
- 6.4. UNSW is supportive of candidates publishing their research during their candidature. A publication for the purposes of inclusion in the thesis is defined as work that has either been published, submitted for publication, or in a format that would be suitable for publication. Candidates should publish high quality peer reviewed research outputs appropriate to the discipline.
- 6.5. If publications are to be used in lieu of chapters in the thesis, there should be linking text such as short chapters inserted between publications to contextualise how the work contributes to the overall argument/structure of the thesis.
- 6.6. Publications that are used in lieu of chapters must meet the following criteria:
  - The research was conducted during the candidature for the current HDR program
  - The candidate contributed greater than 50% of the content in the publication and is the primary author
  - The publication is not subject to any obligations or contractual agreements with a third party that would constrain its inclusion in the thesis
  - The supervisor and the PGC must approve any publications which are incorporated into the thesis in lieu of chapters and
  - In cases where co-authors are also HDR candidates and may want to include the work in their thesis, both parties must present the work in the thesis in the conventional way, with clear acknowledgement of author contributions.

## 7. Early submission requirements

- 7.1. In exceptional circumstances, a candidate who demonstrates outstanding research performance may request submission of the thesis in less than the minimum time. For doctoral programs (PhD and ProfDoc), this is less than 3 FTE years. For Masters programs (MPhil and MRes), this is less than 1.5 FTE years.
- 7.2. A candidate may apply for early submission to the Faculty HDC. An application must include the following:
  - Evidence of outstanding research performance in the discipline including publication of a substantial body of work in leading international journals
  - Supporting documentation from the primary supervisor and PGC confirming that the candidate will not be academically disadvantaged by an early submission and
  - Confirmation via the Research Progress Review process that a high level of achievement throughout the candidature has been attained.

## 8. Thesis submission requirements for candidates

- 8.1. At least 2 months prior to submission of the thesis, the candidate must complete a [Notification of Intention to Submit](#) form in the Graduate Research Information System so the University has time to appoint examiners.
- 8.2. Candidates may request a thesis embargo of up to two years when the digital copy of the thesis is deposited to the library. If the candidate needs an embargo for longer than two years they must request approval prior to thesis submission. Such requests will be reviewed by the Dean of Graduate Research for approval.
- 8.3. There may be situations where the candidate or a third party requires a certain level of legal protection in the thesis examination. For example, the thesis may contain material that is commercial-in-confidence, it may give rise to a patent, or may be legally or culturally sensitive. In such cases, a candidate can request a confidential examination through the Notification of Intention to Submit process. The supervisor must assess whether a confidential examination is required and approve/not approve. If approved, the GRS will:
  - Advise the examiners that a confidential examination has been approved
  - Facilitate the non-disclosure agreements with the examiners and
  - Advise the candidate of the thesis embargo limits at UNSW.

## 9. Thesis submission requirements for supervisors

- 9.1. Before the thesis can be sent for examination, the primary supervisor must complete the Supervisor's Certificate on GRIS. Through this process, the supervisor is confirming that:
  - The thesis is in a format suitable for examination in accordance with Section 5 of this Procedure
  - The written quality of the thesis is at an examinable standard
  - The thesis is free of plagiarised material and the final version has been reviewed using iThenticate to check for plagiarism
  - The required declarations on originality, authenticity and authorship have been made by the candidate
  - Any publications are included in the thesis in accordance with Section 6 of this Procedure and
  - The data generated from the research has been stored appropriately in accordance with UNSW policies and procedures.
- 9.2. In cases where the supervisor does not approve the thesis for submission, the process is as follows:
  - The supervisor must advise the candidate and the PGC in writing of the reasons for not approving the submission
  - If the candidate still wants to submit their thesis without their supervisor's approval, the candidate and the supervisor must provide written responses to the PGC. The PGC reviews the case and makes a recommendation to the Faculty HDC about a possible pathway to submission
  - If the HDC approves the thesis for examination, the HDC is responsible for the nomination of examiners, panel chair, and remaining examination process
  - If the HDC does not agree that the thesis is ready for examination, the Associate Dean of Research Training (ADRT) will notify the candidate and arrange a meeting with the candidate and PGC to determine the level of work required for the thesis to be ready for examination.

## 10. Nomination of Examiners

- 10.1. Before the planned thesis submission date, the Faculty will appoint two external examiners and a Panel Chair.
- 10.2. To ensure the best outcome for the candidate, the thesis must be examined independently and free from perceived or actual bias. The primary supervisor should consult members of the supervisory team and the candidate about potential examiners to ensure there are no actual, perceived or

potential COIs.

- 10.3. If there are concerns raised by the candidate about a potential examiner, the supervisor must document the issue and avoid nominating the examiner where possible.
- 10.4. The nominated examiners must meet the following criteria:
  - Be experts in the discipline and academically reputable in the field of the thesis with a significant body of published work, or other publicly recognised output appropriate to the discipline
  - Be external to UNSW
  - Be independent of the conduct of the research, be free from any actual, perceived or potential COI
  - Typically hold a qualification at least equivalent to the level of award being examined
  - Have previous experience in HDR supervision and/or examination and
  - For doctoral theses, at least one examiner should be from outside Australia.
- 10.5. The *Nomination of Examiners* form will be completed by the supervisor, with a robust justification as to the suitability of each examiner against the criteria as well as a declaration of any potential COIs.
- 10.6. The PGC will review the *Nomination of Examiners* form and if there is a potential COI declared, they will liaise with the supervisor and update the nomination with further information where required. The PGC will also nominate the chair of the examination panel and provide a justification for their suitability and independence from the candidate and the research being examined.
- 10.7. The ADRT will review the *Nomination of Examiners* form including any declaration of possible COIs and approve the examiners and Panel Chair.
- 10.8. In cases where a COI has been declared, the *Nomination of Examiners* will be referred to the Dean of Graduate Research for an independent and objective assessment of any potential conflicts, and whether these can be managed via an appropriate management plan.
- 10.9. Examiners will be asked to declare any potential COIs. In cases where a COI has been declared, the *Nomination of Examiners* will be sent to the PGC and ADRT for review. This is then referred to the Dean of Graduate Research for an independent and objective assessment of any potential conflicts, and whether these can be managed.
- 10.10. Candidates will be notified of the names of the examiners and Panel Chair once the *Nomination of Examiners* process is complete. There must not be any contact between candidate and examiners during the examination process as this could compromise the independence and integrity of the examination. This commences once the *Nomination of Examiners* has been approved and concludes when the examination process is complete.
- 10.11. Examiners must not contact either the candidate or any members of the supervision team during the examination process.
- 10.12. If contact is made by either a candidate or an examiner with each other, the candidate or the examiner should contact the GRS for further advice. In some cases, the examination will need to be stopped, and new examiners will be sought.

## 11. Written examination process

- 11.1. All MPhil candidates and those HDR candidates who commenced from 2023 must complete an oral and written component for the examination. Those HDR candidates enrolled before 2023 (PhD, Prof Doc or MRes programs) will complete the written component only.
- 11.2. Examiners will be sent a copy of the thesis and the following information for the degree being examined:
  - Details of the examination panel members
  - A provisional timeline for the oral examination

- The [Conditions of Award](#)
  - Notes for examiners including information about the written and oral components
  - Payment information and forms.
- 11.3. The **written component** is an assessment of the thesis against the criteria for the level of the degree. Examiners will be asked to complete the following in 6 weeks:
- An examination criteria form
  - A detailed report on the thesis
  - A list of questions that the examiner would like addressed in the oral examination where applicable
- 11.4. If this is a written examination only, a recommendation on the outcome as in Section 13.3.
- 11.5. Where there is an oral examination, examiners will be asked to make a recommendation on whether or not to proceed to the oral component.
- 11.6. For candidates with an oral examination where the examiners recommend a **proceed to an oral examination**, the Panel Chair will advise the examiners of the date and time of the oral examination. This is expected to be 8 weeks after the thesis has been sent to the examiners. The Panel chair will:
- Request any clarification on the issues raised in the reports from the examiners and the supervisors
  - Arrange a meeting with the panel prior to the oral examination to confirm how it will be conducted
- 11.7. All candidates will proceed to the oral examination, however there may be exceptional cases where examiners feel it is not in the candidate's best interests to proceed. In such cases, the Panel Chair will:
- Consult both examiners to discuss the reports and whether the oral examination can proceed
  - Provide a report to the Dean of Graduate Research of the concerns.
  - The Dean will determine what will be required to revise the thesis to an examinable standard.

## 12. Oral Examination Process

- 12.1. The **oral component** is an opportunity for the examiners to discuss issues from the written component of the examination to help finalise the recommendation.
- 12.2. The **oral component** also provides an opportunity the candidate to give a presentation to the panel to demonstrate:
- The core component of the thesis, its methodology, and its outcome
  - The originality and significance of their work in relation to other/previous scholarship and practice in the field.
- 12.3. The oral examination can be held face to face, online, or in a hybrid format. For online and hybrid meetings, if serious technical issues arise during the meeting, the examination should be stopped and rescheduled later to not disadvantage the candidate. Any technical issues should be documented by the Panel Chair.
- 12.4. Both examiners should be present for the oral examination, however if an examiner is unable to attend, the oral examination will proceed with the remaining examiner. The Panel Chair will ensure all comments and questions from the absent examiner are addressed.
- 12.5. The Panel Chair will send the examiner reports and the list of questions to the candidate and the Primary supervisor no later than one week prior to the oral examination date.
- 12.6. The oral examination will have the following elements:

- The Panel Chair will introduce the candidate to the examiners and explain how the examination will unfold.
  - The candidate will give their presentation on their thesis
  - The examiners will ask the candidate questions related to the written reports and oral presentation
  - The Panel Chair will ensure that all examiners' comments and questions have been covered.
- 12.7. The oral examination will normally last between one to two hours and the Panel Chair must ensure that breaks are taken and the candidate is not at a disadvantage if the examination exceeds two hours in duration.
- 12.8. When the examiners are satisfied that all issues and questions have been adequately covered, the Panel Chair will bring the examination to an end. The candidate will be asked to leave the room/online meeting and the panel will discuss and draft the final report and recommendation. The final report from the examination panel must:
- Address the performance of the candidate in the oral examination
  - Address the criteria outlined in Section 2.2 of this Procedure and document the outcome of the questions asked
  - Provide detail of any revisions required so that it is clear what is expected for the candidate to be awarded the degree.
- 12.9. The candidate will be invited back into the meeting and will be advised of the panel's provisional recommendation and the next steps.

### 13. Examination outcomes

- 13.1. For candidates with both a written and oral examination, the examination panel will provide a written report to the Dean of Graduate Research. The report must provide a strong justification for one of the final recommendations, as listed in 13.3 below. The report will outline the revisions required before the degree can be awarded.
- 13.2. For candidates with a written examination only, the examiner reports will be sent to the Panel Chair for a review and a recommendation. The Panel chair provide a recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Research as listed in 13.3 below.
- 13.3. The recommendations are:
- a) **Award** - award the degree with no further changes
  - b) **Minor Corrections** – award the degree after specified minor revisions have been made to the satisfaction of the Dean of Graduate Research
  - c) **Further Work** – award the degree subject to revising part or parts of the thesis to the satisfaction of the Dean of Graduate Research
  - d) **Revise and Re-examine** – permit the candidate to revise the thesis and resubmit it for examination on one further occasion only.
  - e) **Non-Award** – the thesis does not merit the award of the degree and does not demonstrate sufficient merit to warrant resubmission.
- 13.4. In responding to examiners report(s), candidates must address the issues raised by the examiners in a [Response to Examiners](#) form as well as make the required corrections to the satisfaction of the supervisor and Panel Chair.
- 13.5. The award of the degree occurs once appropriate corrections have been made to the satisfaction of the Dean of Graduate Research and the recommendation to award the degree is approved.

### 14. Recommendation of 'Award'

- 14.1. Where the oral examination recommendation is 'Award', the degree can be awarded once the final

version of the thesis is submitted.

- 14.2. For candidates with a written examination only, if both examiner reports recommend 'Award', the degree can be awarded once the final version of the thesis is submitted.

## 15. Recommendation of 'Minor Corrections'

- 15.1. Where the oral examination recommendation is 'Minor Corrections', the candidate must make the required corrections to the thesis and [Response to Examiners](#) form to the satisfaction of their supervisor and the Panel Chair.
- 15.2. For candidates with a written examination only, if both examiners recommend 'Minor Corrections', or a combination of 'Award' and 'Minor Corrections', the candidate must make the required corrections to the thesis and [Response to Examiners](#) form to the satisfaction of the supervisor and Panel Chair.
- 15.3. The Panel Chair will review the corrections and [Response to Examiners](#) and if satisfied, make a final recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Research to award the degree.
- 15.4. Candidates have 2 weeks to make the required corrections.

## 16. Recommendation of 'Further Work'

- 16.1. If the oral examination recommendation is 'Further Work', the final report will outline the level of changes required.
- 16.2. For written examination only, if one or both examiners recommend 'Further Work', the reports will be sent to the Panel Chair to review. The Panel Chair will send the reports to the candidate and the supervisor.
- 16.3. The candidate will make the corrections and complete the [Response to Examiners](#) form to the satisfaction of their supervisor. The supervisor will submit this to the Panel Chair for review.
- 16.4. If satisfied that the corrections and [Response to Examiners](#) form are at the standard required, the Panel Chair will provide the HDC with a recommendation.
- 16.5. The HDC will review the Panel Chair recommendation, the corrections, and the [Response to Examiners](#) form, to determine whether they are at an appropriate level for the degree. If the HDC believes that additional corrections are required, this will be documented, and the Panel Chair will advise the candidate and supervisor what is required.
- 16.6. Once satisfied with the changes that have been made, the HDC will make a final recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Research to award the degree.
- 16.7. Candidates have 6 weeks to complete the corrections.

## 17. Recommendation of 'Revise and Re-examine'

- 17.1. If the outcome of the oral examination or written examination is 'Revise and Re-examine' (i.e. both reports indicate this outcome), the report/s will be sent to the Dean of Graduate Research to ensure the process has been conducted in accordance with this Procedure.
- 17.2. The Panel Chair will make a recommendation on the amount of time the candidate needs work on the revisions. It is expected that the candidate will need to re-enrol for at least two terms (FTE) to complete the work. If more time is required, the Panel Chair can recommend a longer period of enrolment up to a maximum of 1 year (FTE)
- 17.3. The Dean will review the case and confirm with the candidate the period of re-enrolment permitted. The candidate will be provided with the examination report(s) which will outline the work required to revise the thesis to the required standard.

- 17.4. Once re-enrolled, the candidate is subject to the same UNSW policies and procedures as for any currently enrolled candidate. This includes undertaking Research Progress Reviews.
- 17.5. The original examination panel will be used to re-examine the thesis where possible. The examination panel will be sent all components of the previous examination.
- 17.6. The candidate resubmits the thesis for re-examination and the oral examination should proceed as outlined in Section 11 and 12 of this Procedure.
- 17.7. A candidate is permitted to revise and be re-examined once. As such, the outcome of the second oral or written examination can only be 'Award', 'Minor Corrections', 'Further Work' or 'Non-Award'.
- 17.8. The final examination report(s), [Response to Examiners](#) form and recommendation will be sent to the Dean of Graduate Research on whether to award the degree.

## **18. Recommendation of 'Non-Award'**

- 18.1. If the outcome of either the oral examination or written examination is 'Non-Award' (i.e. both reports indicate this outcome), the report/s will be sent to the Dean of Graduate Research to ensure the process has been conducted in accordance with this Procedure.
- 18.2. For doctoral candidates, the examiners must have considered whether the candidate can meet the requirements for a Masters by Research program as an alternative recommendation to 'Non Award'.
- 18.3. The report(s) will be sent to the Panel Chair for review and discussion with the primary supervisor and the candidate. The Panel Chair will provide a report to the HDC with a recommendation.
- 18.4. The HDC will review the case and provide a recommendation with a comprehensive justification to the Dean of Graduate Research.
- 18.5. The Dean of Graduate Research will review the HDC recommendation and examination materials and may use an Independent Assessor to assist with the decision. The Dean will notify the candidate, supervisor and Panel Chair of the final outcome.

## **19. Divergent reports (candidates with written examination only)**

- 19.1. There may be cases of divergent reports for candidates. For example, one examiner recommends the thesis can be awarded (with or without corrections) and the other examiner recommends either a 'Revise and Re-examine' or a 'Non-Award'.
- 19.2. These cases will proceed to an oral examination which must be conducted with the original examiners in accordance with Section 12 of this Procedure.
- 19.3. If the outcome of the oral examination is a 'Revise and re-examine', the process outlined in Section 17 of this Procedure must be followed.

## **20. Independent assessor**

- 20.1. In cases where additional advice on the examination is needed, an assessor who is independent of the process may be appointed to help the Dean of Graduate Research with the recommendation.
- 20.2. The Independent Assessor can be tasked with any of the following:
  - Reviewing the examination process and providing advice to the Dean of Graduate Research on whether the examination has been carried out in accordance with this Procedure
  - In cases where a candidate is required to 'Revise and re-examine' and the original examiners may no longer be available to re-examine the thesis.
  - In cases of 'Non-Award' for doctoral candidates, whether the degree of Masters by Research is possible and what changes would be required to achieve this.

- 20.3. The Independent Assessor should consider all the material provided and weigh up the reports from the examiners. The Assessor is not being asked to examine the thesis, but to consider all the material and make a recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Research on the examination outcome.
- 20.4. The Independent Assessor will provide a report with recommendations to the Dean of Graduate Research. The Dean will notify the candidate of the final examination recommendation and the next steps

## 21. Non availability of examiners

- 21.1. Where an examiner has not provided a report by 8 weeks, a new examiner may need to be appointed so as not to disadvantage the candidate with unnecessary delays to the examination process.
- 21.2. Examiners will be appointed as in the steps outlined in Section 10.

## 22. Appeal of 'Non-award' outcome

- 22.1. If the candidate receives a final examination outcome of 'Non-Award', they may appeal to the University via the complaints process described in the [Complaints Management and Investigations Policy & Procedure](#). The appeal can only be lodged on the grounds of procedural fairness.

**Effective:** 03 March 2026

**Responsible:** DVC Research & Enterprise

**Lead:** PVC Research Training & Dean of Graduate Research

## Appendix

### Legislative compliance

This policy is intended to ensure that UNSW complies with the:

1. Australian Qualifications Framework, 2011
2. Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015
3. Higher Education Support Act, 2003

### Supporting documents

- [ACGR Good Practice Guidelines for Disclosing and Managing Interest in Graduate Research](#)
- [Code of Conduct and Values](#)
- [Complaints Management and Investigations Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Conditions for Award Doctor of Philosophy Policy](#)
- [Conditions for Award Professional Doctorates Policy](#)
- [Conditions for Award Master by Research Policy](#)
- [Conditions for Award Master of Philosophy Policy](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Disclosure and Management Policy](#)
- [Copyright Ownership Guidelines](#)
- [Disclosure Policy](#)
- [Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy](#)
- [Higher Degree Research Supervision Procedure](#)
- [Information Governance Policy](#)
- [Intellectual Property: Disclosing and Exploiting Intellectual Property Procedure](#)
- [Open Access Policy](#)
- [Plagiarism Policy](#)
- [Research Authorship, Publication and Dissemination Policy](#)
- [Research Authorship and Publication Dispute Management Procedure](#)
- [Research Progress Review and Confirmation of Candidatures Procedure](#)
- [Roles and Responsibilities of Postgraduate Research Coordinators Guideline](#)
- [Variation of Candidature Procedure](#)
- [UNSWorks Digital Preservation Policy](#)
- [UNSWorks Digital Preservation Procedure](#)

| Definitions and acronyms |                                                  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ADRT</b>              | Associate Dean Research Training                 |
| <b>AHEGS</b>             | Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement |
| <b>COI</b>               | Conflict of Interest                             |
| <b>GRIS</b>              | Graduate Research Information System             |

|              |                                     |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>GRS</b>   | Graduate Research School            |
| <b>HDC</b>   | Faculty Higher Degree Committee     |
| <b>HDR</b>   | Higher Degree Research              |
| <b>NOE</b>   | Nomination of Examiners             |
| <b>NOITS</b> | Notification of Intention to Submit |
| <b>PGC</b>   | Postgraduate Coordinator            |

### Version History

- **Version 1.0**, approved by the ProVice-Chancellor (Research Training) on 22 January 2025, effective 22 January 2025. New Procedure superseding Thesis Examination (3.7) Procedure and Oral Examination Procedure (1.1).
- **Version 1.1**, approved by the Director of Governance on 03 March 2026, effective 03 March 2026. Administrative updates to document links and titles for Supporting Documents.