

# General Examiner Information

## Higher Degree Research Theses examinations

### The Thesis

The thesis will be made available to examiners within the University's online examination form.

**The candidate** is expected to have:

- Carried out independent research and made a substantial contribution to learning. (Where this is a PhD thesis, at a level that could reasonably be expected within a four year period).
- Demonstrated a capacity to relate the research to the broader framework of the discipline or disciplines within which it falls. (Where this is a PhD thesis this is at the standard internationally recognised for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy).

**The thesis** must be an original work that (whether it has been published during the program or not):

- Incorporates an account of research done during the program and its result.
- Demonstrates the relationship between the topics if the research is on more than one topic.
- Indicates the nature and extent of the candidate's contribution to the research if based on research conducted jointly with another person.

*Note: A candidate may submit a thesis for examination without supervisor support. Examiners are not informed that a thesis does not have supervisor support until the examination process is completed.*

A **standard thesis** can be up to 100,000 words in length for a PhD or 60,000 words for an M.Phil.

A **thesis by compilation** includes papers (e.g. articles, chapters) where the candidate is the sole or joint author, which are in the process of being prepared or approved for publication, have been accepted for publication, or have been published.

A thesis by compilation contains:

- a. An introduction to the field of study and the hypothesis or research questions, how these are addressed through the ensuing chapters, and a general account of the theory and methodological components of the research where these components may be distributed across separate papers/chapters.
- b. Linking text to establish the relationship between one chapter and the next, such as through a foreword to each chapter.
- c. A conclusion drawing together the published papers or works in a cohesive manner, and addresses how the individual publications link to the theory and methodology adopted and evaluate the contribution that the research in the submitted publications makes to the advancement of the research area.

A **thesis by creative works** is an original work which includes one or more of the following:

- multimedia or digital work
- film
- exhibition
- performance
- musical composition
- novel
- play
- series of poems
- creative art work

- other works considered acceptable by the Delegated Authority.

The written thesis accompanying the creative work may be a dissertation or an exegesis or a combination of both [as approved by the Delegated Authority]. Any written work accompanying a thesis by creative works must be substantial; between 30,000 and 60,000 words for a PhD or between 15,000 and 30,000 words for an M.Phil.

A **thesis by alternative format** is a thesis comprised of video recordings, film or other works of visual or sonic arts, computer software, digital material, or other appropriate non-written material (if approved by the Delegated Authority).

### The Examination

Unless advised otherwise, the thesis is the sole work on which the outcome of the degree will be determined. The circumstances in which an oral or written examination will be required are set out in [Research Awards Rule](#) and the [Procedure: Higher degree by research - Submission and Examination of Theses](#).

The University appreciates and acknowledges the time and commitment necessary in being an examiner of a higher degree research thesis. In accepting appointment, unless other arrangements are made, examiners agree to complete the examination **within the University's timeframe of two months from receipt of the thesis**. The written Examiner Report and payment information forms are to be submitted within that timeframe.

Examiners are paid according to the [Universities Australia](#) recommended fees for external examiners.

### The Examiners Report and Recommendation

The Examiner's Report will be collected in an online form and consist of a Quality of Work survey, the examiners recommendation for award and a detailed written report that provides a reasoned explanation of the basis of the examiner's recommendation.

- If an examiner recommends that the degree be awarded unconditionally (Recommendation 1), **the report should justify this recommendation.**
- If an examiner recommends that the degree be awarded subject to corrections or revisions in the thesis to be made to the satisfaction of the Delegated Authority in the copy intended for deposit with the University Library (Recommendation 2), **the report should clearly and precisely specify the proposed amendments.**
- If an examiner recommends that the candidate be permitted to submit a revised thesis for re-examination (Recommendation 3), **the report should clearly and precisely specify the proposed revisions.**
- If an examiner recommends that the degree not be awarded (and should be failed) (Recommendation 4), **the report should clearly state all reasons that the thesis does not meet the standard of the degree.**

The report must be written in English. Please note that, for practical reasons, the preferred option is that all comments and amendments which you wish to recommend need to be included within the online form. If possible, please avoid making comments in an examination copy of the thesis as uploaded documents must be edited to ensure your identity is not disclosed to the Candidate until the final decision is made and then only with your permission. When completing the report, it is important to ensure that no personally identifying information is included, as the report will be provided to the candidate. If you wish to provide supporting documentation, please email it to the HDR Examinations Office.

*Note: For a thesis by compilation, corrections and revisions normally refer to corrections and revisions to the thesis introduction, conclusion, or linking text, and not to the papers themselves where they have been published or submitted for publication.*

## Confidentiality

During the examination process:

- The candidate must not participate in the final decision about the appointed examiners and the identity of the examiners cannot be revealed to the candidate until the final outcome has been determined (unless required by an oral examination) and only then with the consent of the examiners.
- The identity of an examiner is not revealed to fellow examiners until the final outcome has been determined (unless required by an oral examination), and only on request.
- An examiner must not knowingly communicate directly or indirectly with another examiner, the candidate, or a person who is or has been a supervisor of the candidate during the program, about the research on which the thesis is based.

Examiners are invited to provide reports on the basis of a written understanding from the University that their reports will be treated in confidence. Access to such reports will therefore be limited to:

- The supervisor(s)
- Head of department/unit
- Delegated Authority (person appointed by the College Dean to act on his/her behalf under the Research Awards Rule)
- The Associate Dean of the College in which the candidate has been enrolled
- University committees (including individuals) otherwise involved in decisions on the examination process
- University committees dealing with appeals
- University committees considering the award of prizes for excellence (where appropriate).

Examiner reports are made available to the candidate, only after the Delegated Authority and Associate Dean have considered the reports. Examiners are asked to ensure that no personally identifying information is included in their reports.

The [Research Awards Rule](#) requires the University **to keep confidential the name of an examiner from both the candidate and other examiners of a thesis**, until the final outcome of the examination has been determined. **An examiner must expressly give consent** on the Recommendation of Examiner form for his/her name to be revealed by the University to the candidate and the other examiners of the thesis after that time.

## Conflict of Interest

Should you identify a conflict of interest with relation to the examination of this thesis, please contact ANU HDR Examinations Office. Following receipt of the thesis for examination you can provide details of any identified conflict of interest within the online form. Further information about conflict of interest can be found in the Research Awards Rule.

## Further Examinations

**Further examination** (such as an oral examination) of a candidate can occur when the candidate is enrolled in a program for a research award and:

- (a) at least one, but not all, of the examiners of the candidate's thesis recommend that the candidate be failed: and
- (b) based on the examiners' reports, the Delegated Authority considers that the candidate should be failed.

If the University decides to hold an oral examination the HDR Examinations Office, on behalf of the Registrar, will provide further advice about the process and arrangements.