

HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH: POLICY AND PROCEDURES (THE GOLD BOOK)

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PART 7 THE THESIS, EXAMINATION AND COMPLETION

Note to users:

Part 7 of the revised Higher degrees by research: policy and procedures (Gold Book) was approved by Academic Board at meeting 02/7 on 18 November 2002. Amendments were approved in May 2003, June 2004 and November 2004. This edition supersedes the Gold Book published in 1999.

In accordance with Board resolution, this document came into effect on 1 January 2003 for students commencing studies in a course after 1 January 2003. It applies to students enrolled in their course before that date unless otherwise indicated or required by University legislation or policy. For advice on the applicability of any aspect of this policy, please contact the secretary of the University Research Degrees Committee.

Forms and administrative guidelines are made available as appendices to the Gold Book. For advice on administrative matters relating to research candidature, contact Imelda Anderson in the Office of Research and Research Degrees. Email Imelda.Anderson@canberra.edu.au Phone 02 6201 2142

Inquiries relating to this policy should be addressed to Gay Landau, secretary of the University Research Degrees Committee. Email gay.landau@canberra.edu.au Phone 02 6201 5228.

7.1 Overview and introduction to Part 7

- 7.1.1** This Part of the policy sets out requirements for the thesis and describes the process of final assessment in higher degrees by research, from appointment of examiners and submission of the thesis to course completion and award of the degree.
- 7.1.2** Examination and completion requirements that are specific to a particular type of research degree are set out in Part 3. Cross-references are made where appropriate.
- 7.1.3** The University Research Degrees Committee (URDC) is responsible for examination and completion in relation to doctoral candidates.
- 7.1.4** The Divisional Research Degrees Committee (DRDC) is responsible for examination and completion in relation to masters by research candidates. Some matters as indicated below may require URDC endorsement or approval.
- 7.1.5** In this Part of the policy, “the relevant committee” should be taken to refer to the URDC in regard to doctoral matters and to the DRDC in regard to master’s matters. Similarly, “the relevant administrative officer” refers to the research degrees administrative officer in the Office of Research and Research Degrees for matters relating to doctoral programs and to the secretary of the Divisional Research Degrees Committee for matters relating to masters programs.
- 7.1.6** Where the relevant committee is the URDC, the Committee will normally take into account advice and recommendation from the Divisional Research Degrees Committee.

- 7.1.7 Principles** governing examination and completion are set out in section **7.2**.
- 7.1.8 Requirements for the thesis** (and, where applicable, other forms of the research product) are set out in section **7.3**. Where appropriate the term “thesis” in this Part of the policy should be taken to include other forms of the research product.
- 7.1.9** The examination and completion process described in this Part of the policy includes:
- (a) **selection and appointment of examiners** (section **7.4**);
 - (b) **submission of the thesis** (section **7.5**);
 - (c) **the examination** itself (section **7.6**);
 - (d) **examiners’ reports** (section **7.7**);
 - (e) the process of considering examiners’ reports and **determining the examination result** by the relevant committee (section **7.8**); and
 - (f) procedures for certifying **completion of requirements for the relevant degree**, and granting and conferral of awards (section **7.9**).

7.2 Principles relating to examination and completion

Committee responsibility

- 7.2.1** The URDC is responsible for final assessment of doctoral candidates, including the appointment of examiners for the thesis, the examination process and determination of the examination result.
- 7.2.2** The DRDC is responsible for assessment of masters by research candidates, including appointment of examiners for the thesis, the examination process and determination of the examination result. URDC endorsement or approval is required where indicated.

Thesis requirements

- 7.2.3** The research product in a higher degree by research is normally a thesis. Subject to Academic Board approval, the research product may be in another form equivalent to a thesis, such as a creative work (7.3.4).

Examination of the thesis

- 7.2.4** The University recognises that thesis examination is both formative and summative. Feedback from examiners assists candidates to develop and improve their work. Candidates and examiners are encouraged to consider the formative opportunities of the examination process.¹

¹ See introduction to the Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDOGS) draft *National guidelines for the examination of Australian research higher degree theses* (2004), drawing on Mullins, G. and M. Kiley (2002). "It's a PhD, not a Nobel Prize': How experienced examiners assess research theses." *Studies in Higher Education* 27(4): pp. 369-386.

- 7.2.5** Each doctoral thesis is examined by a minimum of two examiners. All examiners will be external to the University. (7.4.1, also 3.2.5.11-14 (for PhD) and 3.3.5.12-15 (professional doctorate))
- 7.2.6** Each masters thesis by research is examined by two examiners, both external to the University. In exceptional circumstances the DRDC may approve additional external examiners. (7.4.1, also 3.4.5.11-15)
- 7.2.7** The candidate will be consulted on the choice of examiners for the thesis. The University makes the final choice of examiners. (7.4.1)
- 7.2.8** Each examiner of a thesis or creative work submits a report including a recommendation on the examination result. The relevant University committee determines the examination result on the basis of the examiners' reports and written responses to the reports from the candidate and supervisor. (section 7.8)
- 7.2.9** A higher degree research candidate may be examined on the original thesis and, if the thesis has to be revised, on only one revised thesis.

Completion of the higher degree by research program

- 7.2.10** The relevant committee is responsible for certifying that a candidate has completed academic requirements of the higher degree research program and recommending to Academic Board that the degree be granted.

7.3 The thesis

7.3.1 General requirements

- 7.3.1.1** These requirements apply generally to theses. In some higher degree research programs, the product of the research may be in a form other than a thesis, such as a creative work. Requirements for other forms of the research product are set out in 7.3.4. Unless clearly inapplicable, however, information in this section should be taken to apply to all forms of the research product.
- 7.3.1.2** In order to complete a higher degree by research successfully, a candidate is required to undertake research appropriate to the degree and complete a substantial thesis based on this research. The work should include:
- (a) a comprehensive and critical review of the literature, acknowledging in a consistent style all sources used by the candidate;
 - (b) significant experimentation and/or other systematic approaches to the acquisition and ordering of knowledge;
 - (c) the preparation of a substantial and well-ordered thesis demonstrating a thorough understanding of:
 - (i) the state of knowledge in the field of enquiry;

- (ii) the relationship of the research to the broader framework of the field of study designated for research;
- (d) a contribution to knowledge appropriate to the degree;
- (e) an appropriate methodology; and
- (f) a clearly argued conclusion.

7.3.1.3 The thesis (or its equivalent in another medium) should represent the candidate's own work, assisted only by the general aid obtained by discussion with the supervisors as to the most satisfactory way of developing and presenting the material. (See below for the extent of assistance permitted in the way of editing and/or statistical advice if required.)

7.3.1.4 To ensure a fair and high standard, a thesis will stand on its own merit and be examined with no accompanying explanatory notes or comments. The exception to this will be in the case of a doctoral or masters thesis which is presented as a creative work and requires an accompanying exegesis (see 7.3.4).

7.3.1.5 Any publications, papers or work (or summaries of such) or creative research products, for which advanced standing was granted, should be identified by reference or by inclusion in the thesis as appendices, as appropriate. (Provisions for advanced standing in each type of degree are set out in Part 3. See also guidelines on thesis length in 7.3.3.)

7.3.1.6 No candidate may submit, as the main content of a thesis, work that has already been submitted for any other degree unless:

- (a) it is incorporated as a minor portion of the thesis; and
- (b) the incorporation is expressly acknowledged.

7.3.1.7 Except as provided under 7.3.3 no candidate may submit, as the main content of a thesis, published material as such, or creative work that has been publicly available, unless it has been recast in suitable form for inclusion in the thesis. Work published or made publicly available during candidature may be included in the thesis within guidelines in that subsection.

7.3.2 Thesis requirements for different types of research programs

7.3.2.1 Requirements for PhD theses are set out in Part 3, section 3.2.5.

7.3.2.2 Requirements for theses in professional doctorate programs are set out in section 3.3.5.

7.3.2.3 Requirements for theses in masters programs by research are set out in section 3.4.5.

7.3.3 Specific requirements for the thesis

Format and structure

- 7.3.3.1** Structurally a thesis will follow logical steps. However, structures will vary between disciplines and subject areas. Candidates are advised to consult the chair of their supervisory panel and the course convener on requirements of the particular discipline. Advice may also be available at Divisional level.
- 7.3.3.2** Administrative requirements for a thesis, including format, contents and presentation, with a summary of relevant responsibilities of the chair of the supervisory panel, are set out in an appendix to the Gold Book. The statement should be read in conjunction with advice in this section and in Part 3, and requirements for particular programs in the course documentation.
- 7.3.3.3** Unless otherwise specified in the course documentation (or approved by Academic Board for a specialisation in the PhD program), written approval of the relevant committee is required for the University to accept a thesis in a form substantially different from typescript or printing (eg three-dimensional artefact, sound/video recording, CD ROM). (See also 7.3.4 on other forms of the research product)

Length of the thesis

- 7.3.3.4** The length of the thesis for a higher degree by research will in part be dictated by disciplinary requirements. However, the University has set upper word limits for thesis length. Calculation of length may exclude footnotes, bibliography, tables and appendices etc. Footnotes should not be unnecessarily long, and appendices should be limited to material necessary to support the main argument of the thesis.
- 7.3.3.5** A PhD thesis should not exceed 100,000 words in length.
- 7.3.3.6** Depending on requirements of the discipline, the thesis or dissertation in a professional doctorate program by research would be expected to be around 60,000 words and should not significantly exceed that length.
- 7.3.3.7** The thesis for a masters degree by research should not normally exceed 60,000 words.
- 7.3.3.8** Candidates should seek advice from their supervisory panel and/or the course convener on disciplinary requirements in regard to thesis length that may apply within University guidelines.

Assistance to the candidate during the research program: statistical advice

- 7.3.3.9** Where significant statistical expertise is required to analyse data for the research, the candidate would be expected to undertake statistical training as part of the Learning Plan.
- 7.3.3.10** Candidates whose research requires statistical expertise are strongly encouraged to seek technical advice early in the research program, to avoid the possibility of

mistakes that may be difficult to correct later. The chair of the supervisory panel should recognise when statistical advice may be required and recommend this to the candidate.

- 7.3.3.11** The nature of assistance and extent of input to the thesis that is permitted through statistical advice is limited to advice on use of statistical techniques and graphical presentation of results and the conventions for using mathematical symbols and formulae.
- 7.3.3.12** The University offers statistical advice to research students through the services of a statistical consultant. Information is available from the Academic Skills Program or by email from statistical.consultant@canberra.edu.au
- 7.3.3.13** Responsibilities of the candidate and chair of the supervisory panel, and procedures, are the same in regard to statistical advice as for professional editing – see below.

Proofreading and editing

- 7.3.3.14** The candidate is responsible for the style and presentation of the thesis that is finally presented. This includes the editorial quality of the thesis.
- 7.3.3.15** The candidate should ensure that the thesis incorporates a high standard of proofreading, editing, spelling, grammar, sentence structure and consistent forms of referencing.
- 7.3.3.16** The chair of the supervisory panel is responsible for ensuring that the submitted thesis is properly presented, proofread and editorially acceptable (see 4.7.1.25(d) and (e)). A thesis that is not well edited will NOT be accepted for examination.
- 7.3.3.17** While a supervisor is not expected to be an editor of a thesis, it is expected that supervisors will provide editorial advice to their students. If a thesis requires editing, the supervisor should advise the candidate accordingly and, if appropriate, refer the candidate to support services available at the University or recommend professional editing. In particular, the chair of the supervisory panel should recognise when professional editing may be required and recommend this to the candidate.

Professional editing

- 7.3.3.18** University policy on thesis editing follows guidelines issued by the Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDoGS). The information below is mainly taken from *The editing of research theses by professional editors* developed by DDoGS in collaboration with the Council of Australian Societies of Editors (CASE).
- 7.3.3.19** Candidates may use a professional editor in preparing their thesis for submission, but they should discuss this with the chair of the supervisory panel and provide the editor with a copy of this policy before they commence work.
- 7.3.3.20** Professional editorial intervention should be restricted to Standard D, Language and Illustrations, and Standard E, Completeness and Consistency, in the *Australian*

standards for editing practice at www.case-editors.org . Where a professional editor provides advice on matters of structure (Standard C), exemplars only should be given.

7.3.3.21 Material for editing or proofreading should be submitted in hard copy. In electronic form it is too easy for the candidate to accept editorial suggestions without thinking about their implications.

Acknowledgement of assistance with editing or statistics

7.3.3.22 When a thesis has had the benefit of professional editing or statistical advice in any form, the name of the editor/adviser and a brief description of the service rendered, in terms of *Australian standards for editing practice*, should be printed as part of the list of acknowledgements or other prefatory matter. If the professional editor's current or former area of expertise is similar to that of the candidate, this too should be stated in the prefatory matter of the thesis.

7.3.3.23 The chair of the supervisory panel is responsible for:

- (a) ensuring that she or he is aware of the entire intellectual content (ie structure, logic and organisation) of the thesis before input from an adviser (eg professional editor or statistics expert);
- (b) overseeing any contribution to a thesis from an adviser;
- (c) ensuring that the adviser is directed on the nature of assistance and extent of input to the thesis permitted in accordance with this section;
- (d) being satisfied that the adviser has not introduced changes to the intellectual content of the thesis;
- (e) ensuring that any editorial or statistical assistance is properly acknowledged in the thesis; and
- (f) certifying that the final thesis submitted is the work of the candidate.

7.3.3.24 The University may provide financial assistance for professional editing of a candidate's thesis in special circumstances. On advice from the chair of a supervisory panel, the DRDC (or other appropriate authority) may approve the use of research funds for editing within the scope of these guidelines. Details should be recorded and Divisional expenditure for this purpose monitored.

Including published work in the thesis

7.3.3.25 Components of materials published during candidature (or of creative work that has already been publicly available during candidature) may be incorporated into a thesis provided that advice is sought from the chair of the supervisory panel to ensure that the thesis remains suitable for submission. Where appropriate, and subject to guidelines on thesis length above, candidates are encouraged to submit work published or made publicly available during the course of candidature as appendices to the thesis (see also 7.3.1.5). In the following circumstances a PhD thesis may largely comprise published material or work that has been publicly available.

Thesis consisting of published work

7.3.3.26 The main content of a PhD thesis may consist of published material (eg a series of papers), provided it is presented in suitable form for inclusion in the thesis and meets the following requirements. With agreement of the supervisory panel, a candidate may elect to submit the thesis in this form.

7.3.3.27 A PhD thesis consisting of published work must meet these requirements:

- (a) The articles or other published material must be prepared during the period of candidature (not prior to admission or used as part of the basis for admission).
- (b) The papers should be of a standard suitable for immediate submission to a peer-reviewed journal. In many cases, it is anticipated that the candidate would have submitted these papers to a journal at the time of submission of the thesis, and that some may be in print, in press or accepted for publication at the time of submission. (Where the papers are not submitted or where they have been submitted but not yet accepted for publication, the examiners of the thesis will consider whether the papers submitted in the thesis are of a standard suitable for immediate submission to a peer-reviewed journal. If a paper has been accepted for publication, or is in press or in print, the examiners should focus only on the quality of the research therein and how the work fits into the broader context of the overall thesis. Structural and editorial issues need not be considered.)
- (c) Peer-reviewed book chapters are acceptable, provided that they have been formally accepted for publication, in press or in print at the time of submission of the thesis.
- (d) Where one or more of the submitted papers are co-authored, they collectively should be preceded by a clear statement of the intellectual contribution of the candidate to the submitted papers. The contribution would need to be very substantial overall. Special attention should be paid to articles where the candidate is not the senior author.
- (e) The body of the thesis should comprise:
 - (i) a title page, an abstract of the entire thesis work (including the submitted papers), table of contents, list of figures, list of tables and acknowledgements,
 - (ii) an introduction where the aims, scope and objectives of the work are presented with sufficient background for the examiners to appreciate the significance of the aims and objectives,
 - (iii) a literature review, so that the work can be seen in the broader context of the discipline area to which it contributes and to establish the significance of the work,
 - (iv) a synopsis, where the individual contributions of the papers presented by the candidate are integrated to demonstrate clearly the original contribution of the candidate to the discipline, and
 - (v) literature cited.
- (f) Candidates are advised that the synopsis in particular is expected to be of a very high standard, and that its quality will have a special and important influence on the outcome of the examination. It is not meant to be a general discussion, nor should it be a repetition or summary of the discussion sections of the submitted papers.

- (g) The synopsis should not normally exceed 15,000 words. No new data or results should be included in this component, though results or data presented in the attached papers may be reworked or integrated with results and data from literature in order to develop argument presented in the synopsis. Whereas the submitted papers may have other contributors as authors, this component of the thesis must be solely the work of the candidate.
- (h) Before submission the candidate should seek advice from the chair of the supervisory panel to confirm that the thesis is suitable for submission.

7.3.3.28 Where a PhD thesis is submitted in the form of published work, examiners of the thesis will be provided with the University guidelines above.

7.3.3.29 The model of a PhD thesis consisting of published work is particularly applicable to research in scientific disciplines.

7.3.4 Other forms of the research product

7.3.4.1 In some higher degree research programs, the product of the research may be in a form other than a thesis, such as a creative work. Where this is the case guidelines for the research product will be set out in the course accreditation document (or, for a specialisation in the PhD program, approved by Academic Board in accordance with procedures in section 3.2.3). The guidelines should be made available to candidates and examiners, and contain advice on all relevant matters including the following:

- (a) form or medium of the research product;
- (b) expectations regarding length or scope (indicating minimum and maximum requirements if possible);
- (c) theoretical foundation for the work, including how this will be presented by the candidate;
- (d) explanation of the context of the work and how it relates to other works as influences or points of departure;
- (e) requirements for the accompanying exegesis which should analyse the content of the work, reflect on its relevance and address points (c) and (d) above; and
- (f) other relevant issues (eg guidelines for the research proposal, any special examination arrangements within University guidelines etc).

Creative works

7.3.4.2 Research is taken in the wider sense to include the creation of knowledge through various creative practices, as well as more traditional academic forms of scholarship. The research product can refer to the creative product that results from a higher degree by research, as well as traditional written discourse.

7.3.4.3 A thesis may incorporate creative production where this is appropriate within the terms of the project. Where a creative thesis is produced, the candidate will also provide an exegetical component of at least 10,000 words for a research masters degree and at least 30,000 words at doctoral level. In some cases the exegesis and

creative work may be integrated. The creative and exegetical components should be in a symbiotic relationship. *Staff and candidates should note that in a creative research project, the academic rigour of the exegesis is critical to determining whether the “thesis” meets the requirements of the research degree.*

7.3.4.4 Where the research product is likely to involve an installation, exhibition or performance, examination arrangements should be fully resolved when the project is approved, ie at the final research proposal and initial seminar stage if not earlier. These matters should be discussed and clarified as far as possible at the time of admission, to ensure that the project is appropriate for the degree and that resource implications (such as the cost of bringing examiners to Canberra) are understood and accepted by the academic Division and the candidate.

7.3.4.5 Where a thesis incorporates creative production, the creative component must be prepared during the period of candidature (not before admission or used as part of the basis for admission).

7.3.4.6 The creative component should:

- (a) demonstrate a sophisticated and innovative approach to the medium; and
- (b) demonstrate strong technical and professional qualities.

7.3.4.7 The exegetical component should:

- (a) provide a theoretical foundation which complements and grounds the creative work; and
- (b) analyse, critically annotate, and/or reflect on the creative component.

7.3.4.8 At the masters level, the creative thesis is expected to show evidence that the candidate is fluent in creative practice and in the theoretical discourse of the area. The degree and program will be consistent with the research masters description in 3.4.1.

7.3.4.9 At the PhD level, in accordance with University policy, candidates should give evidence of an original contribution to knowledge and/or practice. The degree and program will be consistent with the description of the PhD in 3.2.1.

7.3.5 Authorship, copyright and intellectual property

7.3.5.1 The copyright of a thesis is deemed to be vested in the author. Candidates are advised to claim copyright to the thesis by adding the copyright mark to the front of their thesis (with the candidate’s name and the year) before submission for examination. Special copyright provisions will apply to the thesis as a manuscript.

7.3.5.2 The candidate and the chair of the supervisory panel should reach agreement at the outset of the research program about authorship of publications that may result from the research, and acknowledgement of contributions during and after candidature. There should be open and mutual recognition of the candidate’s and supervisor’s contributions on all published work arising from the project. In normal circumstances it is expected that the candidate will be the senior author on publications that arise

directly from the thesis, except where another arrangement is either mutually agreed or within the normal practices of the discipline area.

7.3.5.3 A thesis submitted for examination will be accompanied by the candidate's statement certifying to the original authorship of the thesis (Form B).

7.3.5.4 The chair of the supervisory panel should ensure that the candidate is aware of the requirement for members of staff to complete a statement of authorship in respect of each paper submitted for publication during the candidature² and the final thesis.

7.3.5.5 Responsibilities of the chair of the supervisory panel in relation to authorship and intellectual property are set out in 4.7.1.24.

7.3.5.6 For further information on copyright, staff and students are referred to the UC copyright site at <http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/copyright/>

Intellectual property

7.3.5.7 In some circumstances, ownership of the intellectual property in a research project and/or a thesis may be assigned to the University or to another entity such as a company or organisation. Such research may also be subject to a confidentiality agreement.

7.3.5.8 Higher degree research candidates should be provided with a copy of the University's intellectual property policy at the time of enrolment. The policy is available at http://www.canberra.edu.au/uc/policies/acad/ip_plcy.html

7.3.5.9 University policy on intellectual property is consistent with Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) principles. The following information is largely taken from statements of "Practice for maintaining and monitoring academic quality and standards in higher degrees" in the AVCC publication *Universities and their students: principles for the provision of education by Australian universities*.³

7.3.5.10 If a candidate is to be involved in work which could result in the generation of intellectual property and/or is funded by a contractual arrangement, the candidate should be fully informed by the chair of the supervisory panel, in writing, of any particular conditions or contracts which could either restrict disclosure or affect the extent to which communication with colleagues is possible during the course of the work or on its completion. For example, students working in Cooperative Research Centres or funded by Australian Postgraduate Awards (Industry) or industry scholarships should be clearly informed at the beginning of their candidature about arrangements concerning intellectual property which may conflict with or override the University's policy in this area.

² See UC guidelines for the Research Publications Collection for DEST at <http://www.canberra.edu.au/research/publications/publications.html>

³ AVCC *Universities and their students: principles for the provision of education by Australian universities* at http://www.avcc.edu.au/policies_activities/teaching_learning/guidelines_codes/index.htm

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- 7.3.5.11** If the candidate agrees to take part in such a project, a written agreement on the conditions of disclosure and related matters should be concluded over the signatures of the candidate, chair of the supervisory panel and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). The University will advise the candidate that he or she may seek independent legal counsel before signing any agreement relating to ownership of intellectual property.
- 7.3.5.12** Any company involved in such a project will be clearly informed of University policy regarding student involvement. The University has a responsibility to ensure that the research program is not unreasonably influenced by commercial or industrial factors.
- 7.3.5.13** Any delay in publication, eg while patentability is investigated and patent specifications are drawn up and lodged, should be as limited as possible. Delay in publication due to such factors should not exceed twelve months.
- 7.3.5.14** The candidate, chair of the supervisory panel and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) must meet and produce a written understanding should patentable intellectual property be generated unexpectedly and hence in the absence of an initial agreement.
- 7.3.5.15** In some circumstances intellectual property considerations may affect the examination process and/or storage and access to the thesis once the research project is complete. Any proposed confidentiality requirements of the examination process, including provision for confidentiality agreements with examiners should that be deemed necessary, are subject to approval by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). Agreements should be concluded over signatures of the candidate, the examiners, the chair of the supervisory panel and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research).
- 7.3.5.16** Restricted access to theses is dealt with under Retention of theses by the University, below.
- 7.3.5.17** In principle, University policy and practice in relation to intellectual property should not prevent candidates from meeting all requirements of the higher degree research program.

7.3.6 Retention of theses by the University

- 7.3.6.1** Copies of theses submitted for higher degrees by research are retained by the University. In particular, the University has the right to retain a copy of each thesis for which a higher degree has been awarded in the University Library, and to make it available to other scholars. (Access may be restricted in exceptional circumstances as set out below.)
- 7.3.6.2** At the completion of the examination process, the candidate will submit an electronic copy of the thesis, two hardcover bound copies and one unbound copy of the successful thesis (ie confirmed as meeting academic requirements of the particular program) to the relevant committee, for University records. (Where the thesis contains

written and creative components, copies of the creative component should also be provided.)

7.3.6.3 The candidate will sign and submit a Retention and Use of Thesis form (Form C) with the copies of the final thesis after all corrections and revisions have been made.⁴

7.3.6.4 The unbound copy and one bound copy of the thesis will be deposited in the University Library. Copies of the thesis deposited in the Library are normally made available for loan and the original is kept in store by the Library. Conditions of storage and use may vary if intellectual property in the thesis is encumbered and/or subject to a confidentiality agreement. The second bound copy of a masters research thesis is retained in the relevant Division⁵, and the second bound copy of a doctoral thesis is kept by the Office of Research and Research Degrees, for University records. The University Library keeps the electronic copy.

7.3.6.5 A copy of each failed thesis or of each original thesis that is later revised should be kept for University records, in accordance with the University's standard record-keeping procedures.

Electronic copy of the final thesis

7.3.6.6 Electronic submission (in addition to the printed copies) applies only to the final form of the thesis incorporating all required corrections and revisions. It does not apply to theses submitted for examination.

7.3.6.7 Candidates should submit the electronic thesis directly to the University Library by email, floppy disk or CD ROM. (Advice on suitable formats, and related issues such as converting research products not in standard print to electronic format, is available from the Library.) Library staff advise ORRD when the electronic thesis is received, and ORRD informs the Division as required.

7.3.6.8 Subject to the candidate's written agreement (through Form C, see appendix), a thesis submitted in electronic form may be made available through the Australian Digital Theses (ADT) Program database. The ADT program is a national database of online theses by postgraduate research students of Australian universities providing global access through the web to research undertaken by Australian students. Mounting theses on the database benefits students (providing free online publishing, free and simple access to the work at UC and for the worldwide research community, and electronic preservation of the thesis) and the University (enhanced research profile). At UC, the University Library takes responsibility for mounting theses on the ADT database. Further information on ADT is available in a brochure from the Library and from the Australian Digital Theses Program website at <http://adt.caul.edu.au/>

⁴ Form C should be submitted earlier if there is an application to restrict access to the thesis – see 7.3.6.7(a).

⁵ The DRDC in consultation with Divisional Executive is responsible for establishing Divisional practice in regard to retention and storage of masters theses and ensuring that arrangements are adhered to.

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7.3.6.9 The University encourages all candidates to make their thesis available through the ADT Program, but candidates may choose not to add their thesis to the database if they wish. Candidates indicate this preference through Form C.

7.3.6.10 Inquiries about electronic submission of theses and the ADT database should be directed to a Library staff member at the email address e-theses@canberra.edu.au

Restricted access to a thesis

7.3.6.11 Restricted access to a thesis will be considered only when a case is made, and agreed to only in compelling circumstances. Such circumstances could include commercial confidences or other privacy considerations, but not simply the denial of access by other scholars to what purports to be an advance in knowledge. When granted, restricted access should be for a limited time, and as short a period as possible.

7.3.6.12 A candidate who, for whatever reason, wishes to impose special conditions limiting access to or usage of the thesis should seek the agreement of the relevant committee. The chair of the supervisory panel would normally make such an application on the candidate's behalf. The application should:

- (a) be made as early as practicable, so that conditions are established and agreed in writing at the time of submission of the thesis;⁶
- (b) support the request for restricted access with evidence such as any confidentiality agreement in relation to the research;
- (c) specify the period of confidentiality, taking into account that access should be restricted for as short a period as possible; and
- (d) specify particular conditions of storage or access as applicable. (The electronic copy of a thesis to which access is restricted will be stored in the Library's closed access area with the print copies.)

7.3.6.13 Where access or usage of a thesis is restricted, a statement of the conditions should be attached to the thesis and noted on the candidate's file.

7.3.6.14 Candidates should note that the Library will make the thesis available for access after the initial period of restriction has expired unless a written request is received for an extension. The onus is on the candidate to maintain the embargo if necessary.

⁶ The Retention and Use of Thesis form (Form C) is usually submitted with the final copies of the thesis after corrections or revisions have been made. Where restricted access to the thesis is sought, Form C should be provided with the application for special conditions before or when the thesis is submitted for examination.
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7.4 Thesis examiners

7.4.1 Selection and appointment of examiners

7.4.1.1 Each doctoral thesis is examined by a minimum of two examiners. The URDC may approve additional examiners on DRDC advice. All examiners will be external to the University.

7.4.1.2 Requirements for examiners of PhD and professional doctorate theses are set out in Part 3 (sections 3.2.5 and 3.3.5 respectively). In the case of a professional doctorate the URDC, on recommendation of the DRDC acting on advice from the candidate's supervisory panel, may appoint a jury or other professional panel to examine a creative professional work.

7.4.1.3 Each masters by research thesis is examined by two examiners, both external to the University. In exceptional circumstances the DRDC may approve additional external examiners.

7.4.1.4 Requirements for examiners of masters theses are set out in Part 3, section 3.4.5. Where the research product of a masters research program may take a form other than a thesis, such as a creative work, the DRDC, acting on advice from the chair of the supervisory panel and course convener, may appoint a jury or other professional panel to examine the creative work.

7.4.1.5 The selection of examiners is of critical importance to the fairness of the examination and the future candidate's career. Examiners should be chosen for their particular knowledge of the academic area and, when applicable, the professional area of the thesis.

7.4.1.6 The examiners of a thesis should be likely to be in general agreement with the candidate's approach to the topic and the methodology adopted. Persons with methodological or theoretical positions incompatible with the candidate's approach should not be selected.

7.4.1.7 Care should be taken to ensure no conflict of interest between the examiners and the candidate, supervisor or research project. A member of the candidate's supervisory panel, or any person with close links to the candidate, may not examine the candidate's thesis. Examiners should have had no formal attachment to, or significant presence in, the University for three years preceding nomination. Adjunct staff members are not normally eligible for appointment as examiners, although exceptions may be considered where the person has had no contact with the candidate and limited involvement with the academic area.

7.4.1.8 An examiner of a thesis would normally be expected to hold a research degree at the level sought by the candidate.

7.4.1.9 At least one examiner of a thesis should be a member of academic staff at a tertiary institution.

7.4.1.10 All examiners should have recognised research or professional reputations in the relevant field.

7.4.1.11 To ensure their knowledge of the field is current, examiners should normally be still active in research/scholarship or in the professional field of the thesis. Evidence of continuing relevant research work may be needed where a proposed examiner's current activity is unclear from submitted information (eg for a retired scholar).

7.4.1.12 The candidate *must* be consulted on the choice of examiners. The University makes the final choice of examiners.

7.4.1.13 Candidates are not told the examiners' names while the examination is in progress. Confidentiality is necessary to maintain the integrity of the examination process.

Appointment procedures

7.4.1.15 The relevant committee appoints examiners for a higher degree research thesis on recommendation of the chair of the supervisory panel.

7.4.1.16 The chair of the supervisory panel should begin the process of appointing examiners several months before the thesis is submitted, so that the thesis can be sent for examination as soon as it is ready. The chair is responsible for:

- (a) considering suitable examiners well before the thesis is submitted and consulting the candidate on possible choices (7.4.1.17);
- (b) discussing possible examiners with members of the supervisory panel and others as appropriate;
- (c) confirming the suitability etc of prospective examiners and inviting selected persons to examine on the understanding that appointment is subject to committee approval (7.4.1.18);
- (d) obtaining curriculum vitae and evidence of suitability of selected examiners to place before the committee;
- (e) presenting a recommendation and documentation to the DRDC for approval (7.4.1.19) (for doctoral theses, the DRDC will forward its recommendation to the URDC for approval); and
- (f) keeping the final nominations and appointments confidential (7.4.1.22).

7.4.1.17 The chair of the supervisory panel will compile a list of suitable examiners for the thesis after discussing with the candidate the field from which they are chosen. The candidate must be given the opportunity to offer names of possible examiners and to name persons who they believe would be inappropriate (giving reasons where possible). (Candidates should be advised, however, that the final choice of examiners rests with the relevant committee on the supervisor's recommendation.)

7.4.1.18 The chair of the supervisory panel will approach potential examiners to confirm their suitability as examiners for the thesis topic, willingness, and availability to undertake

the examination *within two months*, before making a recommendation to the committee. Proposed examiners are particularly asked:

- (a) to state any contact they may have had with the candidate as an adviser or critic of drafts;
- (b) to declare that there is no conflict of interest with the candidate, supervisor or research project;
- (c) if they have been the examiner of a thesis at the same level before; and
- (d) to provide a short curriculum vitae.

7.4.1.19 The chair of the supervisory panel will provide the committee with:

- (a) completed Appointment of Examiners form and supporting evidence checklist (see appendix); and
- (b) brief (preferably 1-2 pages) up-to-date curriculum vitae on each proposed examiner including, as a minimum, contact details, present position, qualifications, research and professional activities emphasising recent activity, and selected publications.

7.4.1.20 Where the research product is a creative work (7.3.4), the chair of the supervisory panel should advise the committee accordingly and ensure that examiners are provided with the appropriate guidelines for the research product and the examination form for creative works.

7.4.1.21 Chairs of supervisory panels must ensure the relevant committee has access to sufficient information on each proposed examiner to confirm the person's suitability as an examiner *for the particular research project*. Appointments will not be processed without documentation. Unnecessary delay in appointing examiners prolongs the examination process and disadvantages the candidate and the University.

7.4.1.22 The final selection of examiners will not be communicated to the candidate before or during the examination of the thesis. With the agreement of the examiners, names may be released after the examination (ie when the relevant committee resolves course completion for Academic Board).

7.4.2 Anonymity of examiners

7.4.2.1 Examiners have the opportunity to indicate on the examination report form if they do not wish their name to be released to the candidate after the examination. Examiners are advised, however, that in the light of the ACT *Freedom of Information Act 1989* the University cannot guarantee anonymity to examiners.⁷

⁷ The Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDoGS) makes the following comment on anonymity in its draft *National guidelines for the examination of Australian research higher degree theses* issued in 2004: "Because one of the benefits of the Australian system of examining is that it inducts graduates into the research community, and provides networking opportunities for candidates, and because transparency is desirable, anonymity is **not** a preferred option and examiners should consider very carefully before requesting it."

7.4.3 Payment of examiners

7.4.3.1 Examiners of theses are paid honoraria. The University follows the amounts set by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee each year as a guide for universities.⁸

7.5 Submission of the thesis

7.5.1 Requirements for submission

7.5.1.1 A submitted thesis will meet formal requirements for presentation set out in the statement of *Administrative requirements for the thesis* (see appendix).

7.5.1.2 Provided that the minimum duration for the relevant type of degree has been met (see Part 3), a thesis will normally be submitted when the candidate and the supervisory panel agree that the thesis is ready for examination.

7.5.1.3 On occasion a candidate may wish to submit a thesis despite the opinion of the chair of the supervisory panel that the thesis is not ready for examination. Provided that the minimum duration of the relevant degree and formal requirements for thesis presentation are met (see Part 3 and appendix), at the express request of the candidate a thesis will be sent for examination against the advice of the supervisory panel. In fairness to the candidate, neither the supervisor nor the relevant committee is authorised to refuse such a request. No indication will be given to the examiners of the view of a supervisor as to the readiness of a thesis for examination.

7.5.1.4 A candidate who is considering submitting the thesis against the advice of his or her supervisory panel is strongly advised to discuss this course of action with the chair of the supervisory panel first.

7.5.1.5 Where a candidate submits a thesis for examination against the advice of the supervisory panel, the chair of the panel should inform the relevant committee in writing and the committee will formally note this advice.

7.5.1.6 In order to submit a thesis the candidate should be enrolled. Theses may, however, be submitted up until the census date in the semester following the last semester in which the candidate was enrolled. Re-enrolment is required after that date. Candidates to whom this information applies should consult the Divisional administrative officer to ensure that University requirements are met.

7.5.2 Submission procedures

7.5.2.1 A doctoral candidate should submit three copies of the completed thesis (or four if three examiners are used) to the DRDC secretary, to be forwarded to the

⁸ Information is available from the Office of Research and Research Degrees on the rates set by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) as a guide for universities and approved for this University by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). Different rates apply for examination of masters and doctoral theses.

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administrative officer in the Office of Research and Research Degrees (ORRD) who arranges the examination. A masters research candidate should submit three copies of the thesis to the DRDC secretary, who will arrange the examination. Candidates submitting their research product wholly or partly in a form other than a thesis (see 7.3.4) should discuss requirements with the course convener.

7.5.2.2 The thesis to be examined should be presented in a soft cover, *securely* bound in such a way that it will lie flat when opened (see the appendix on administrative requirements for a thesis). The thesis must be accompanied by:

- (a) Certificate of Completion (Form A), completed by the chair of the supervisory panel and, if the candidate is submitting against the supervisor's advice, by the candidate; and
- (b) Certificate of Authorship of Thesis (Form B) completed by the candidate and supervisor, and bound into the thesis.

7.5.2.3 For doctoral theses only, the chair of the supervisory panel should submit with Form A a brief summary (40-50 words) describing the research and its results, including the practical value of the work where appropriate. This summary is intended to be read at the graduation ceremony.

7.5.2.4 A third form, the Statement on Retention and Use of Thesis (Form C, see appendix), is a requirement for course completion. As Form C relates to the final version of the thesis (incorporating all corrections or revisions at the end of the examination process) it is normally provided with the final copies of the thesis rather than when the thesis is submitted for examination.⁹ Form C also allows the candidate to indicate whether the electronic copy of the final thesis will be added to the Australian Digital Theses database.

7.5.2.5 The administrative officer should acknowledge receipt of the thesis in writing and take the opportunity to check the candidate's enrolment status and current contact details, so that the candidate can be reached during the examination process if necessary and after the examiners' reports have been received.

7.6 The examination

7.6.1 Information for examiners

7.6.1.1 The University provides examiners with guidelines to assist with the examination including:

- (a) a description of the relevant type of degree, its thesis requirements and requirements for examiners (taken from Part 3 of the Gold Book¹⁰);

⁹ Form C should be provided earlier if special conditions are sought for storage or access to the thesis – see 7.3.6.

¹⁰ See 3.2.1 and 3.2.5 for PhD, 3.3.1 and 3.3.5 for PD, and 3.4.1 and 3.4.5 for masters by research.

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- (b) where the thesis does not constitute the whole academic content of the degree, advice of the expectations which the particular program places on the thesis, by indicating the proportion of the degree occupied by the research;
- (c) other information pertaining to the particular research program if required (eg guidelines for creative works);
- (d) information on any confidentiality requirements relating to the research project and thesis;
- (e) procedures for the conduct of examinations (from sections 7.4 to 7.6) and the University process for determining the examination result (sections 7.7 and 7.8); and
- (f) instructions on how to complete the examiners' report form.

7.6.2 Conduct of examinations

7.6.2.1 Examiners are asked to complete the examination and submit their reports within two months of receiving the thesis. Reminders will be sent as required.

7.6.2.2 The candidate must not initiate contact with the examiners during the examination period.

7.6.2.3 If during the examination an examiner:

- (a) wishes to consult other examiners concerning the thesis; or
- (b) requires further information from the candidate or the supervisor;

the examiner should contact the relevant administrative officer, who will inform the Chair of the DRDC. The DRDC Chair should discuss the request with the examiner and take action bearing in mind the interests of all parties and the need to maintain integrity of the examination process. Notes should be kept and, if appropriate, the DRDC advised when the candidate's examination reports are considered.

7.6.2.4 Oral examinations do not normally form part of the examination of theses. However, University policy allows for an examiner of a doctoral thesis to recommend in a particular case that the candidate be examined orally (see 3.2.5.13-15). Oral examination is not an option for masters theses.

7.6.2.5 Examiners are advised that it is inappropriate for any information contained in a thesis to be referred to or extracted without the permission of the author. The content of a thesis has no official status until the thesis has been passed and is in the public domain. Special copyright provisions apply to the thesis as a manuscript.

7.6.2.6 Where an examiner has marked recommended changes in the thesis, it should be returned to the University for the candidate's attention.

7.6.2.7 Otherwise, except where the thesis is tied to an intellectual property agreement, or confidentiality applies (formally negotiated by the supervisor for the research project and/or for the thesis examination process when the thesis is submitted for examination – see section 7.3.5), or the candidate has expressly requested return of the thesis,

examiners are not required to return their copy of the thesis after examination. In accordance with paragraph 7.6.2.5, however, examiners should continue to treat the thesis under examination as nothing more than a manuscript until such time as they are advised that the degree has been awarded with no rewriting or revision required. If any rewriting or revision was required, an examiner wishing to make use of the candidate's thesis should obtain a copy of the final thesis from the candidate (via the University if necessary).

7.7 Examination reports

7.7.1 Submission of reports

7.7.1.1 Each examiner of a thesis will submit a report. Where a jury or panel examines a candidate's creative work, each panel member will submit an individual report on the work.

7.7.1.2 Examiners' reports are submitted on the University's standard Report on Examination form for each type of program (see appendix).

7.7.1.3 Reports should be submitted to the administrative officer for the relevant committee (administrative officer in ORRD and DRDC secretary for doctoral and masters theses respectively).

7.7.1.4 Examiners' reports are treated as confidential until the examination process is complete.

7.7.2 Contents of examiners' reports

7.7.2.1 The examiner's report consists of two parts (see appendix). Part 1 includes summary judgements on the thesis and a recommendation on the result. Part 2 (on plain paper) provides open-ended judgements, comments and recommendations including any changes the examiner recommends should be made to the thesis. (Minor corrections may be marked on the thesis itself.) In acknowledgement of the dual function of thesis examination (see 7.2.4), examiners are asked to separate clearly required changes to the thesis from their formative comments on the work.

7.7.2.2 The summary judgements in Part 1 of the report indicate whether in the examiner's opinion the thesis meets the criteria for the relevant type of degree. (See requirements for a PhD thesis in section 3.2.5, PD thesis in 3.3.5 and masters research thesis in 3.4.5.)

7.7.2.3 Examiners are asked to select one of five recommendations on the examination result. Guidance is provided on the meaning and implications of each recommendation. The examiner recommends that:

(a) the candidate be awarded the degree; *or*

- (b) the candidate be awarded the degree **subject to corrections to the thesis of an editorial nature only**, as specified in the report; *or*
- (c) the candidate be awarded the degree **subject to revisions to the thesis** as specified in the report; *or*
- (d) the candidate be required to **resubmit the thesis in revised form for examination** after a specified period of study and/or research, the nature of which is specified in the report; *or*
- (e) the candidate not be awarded the degree.

7.7.2.4 Examiners are also asked:

- (a) if they wish their name to remain on the copy of the report referred to the candidate (in any case the identity of the examiner is not disclosed to the candidate until the examination process is complete);¹¹
- (b) whether they are willing to act as an examiner of a revised and resubmitted thesis should this be necessary;
- (c) whether they agree to their report (without identification) being used by the University for quality assurance purposes in the future; and
- (d) for monitoring purposes, an indication of the number of theses they have examined and candidates they have supervised.

7.8 Determining the examination result

7.8.1 Overview

7.8.1.1 The URDC considers examiners' reports and determines the examination result for doctoral theses, taking into account advice from the DRDC. The DRDC considers examiners' reports and determines the result for masters theses.

7.8.1.2 The final result for a thesis examination, after changes have been made to the thesis in accordance with the decision of the relevant committee, is an ungraded pass or fail.

7.8.1.3 The University process to determine the final result of a thesis examination once examiners' reports are received may be summarised as follows:

- (a) Before committee consideration, the candidate and the chair of the supervisory panel are asked to respond to the examiners' reports in writing to assist committee consideration (7.8.2).

¹¹ The Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDoGS) makes the following comment on anonymity in its draft *National guidelines for the examination of Australian research higher degree theses* issued in 2004: "Because one of the benefits of the Australian system of examining is that it inducts graduates into the research community, and provides networking opportunities for candidates, and because transparency is desirable, anonymity is **not** a preferred option and examiners should consider very carefully before requesting it."

- (b) The relevant committee considers the examiners' reports and responses from the candidate and the supervisor, makes an overall decision expressed as one of the categories of recommendation used by examiners (see 7.7.2.3), and specifies changes required to the thesis if applicable (7.8.3).
- (c) The candidate amends the thesis, if required, in accordance with committee decision (7.8.4).
- (d) On advice that all amendments have been made the committee resolves the final examination result (pass or fail) and, subject to advice that other academic requirements have been met, completion of academic requirements for award of the degree (7.8.5 and 7.9).

7.8.1.4 After all examiners' reports have been received, the process to determine the final examination result and completion of the candidate's program should be as efficient as possible allowing for committee schedules etc. The chair of the supervisory panel should ensure that action required of the supervisor and/or the candidate is taken promptly. The candidate should stay in contact with the supervisor and accept responsibility for responding to the examiners' reports and amending the thesis in a timely fashion to complete the degree.

7.8.2 Before committee consideration: the candidate's response

7.8.2.1 The relevant administrative officer initiates this action when all examination reports have been received.

7.8.2.2 If no changes to the thesis are necessary (ie both/all examiners recommend *That the degree be awarded*), the examination reports may be submitted directly to the relevant committee. Copies of the reports will be sent to the chair of the supervisory panel.

7.8.2.3 If either or both examiners recommend changes to the thesis, the examiners' reports will be forwarded to the chair of the supervisory panel, to send on to the candidate, in confidence. Both the candidate and the supervisor are asked to respond to the reports in writing. The response(s) will assist the committee to reach a decision on the examination result and the nature and extent of any changes required to the thesis. (If for any reason the chair of the supervisory panel does not wish to involve the candidate at this stage, the chair should discuss this with the Chair of the DRDC.)

7.8.2.4 The candidate's response to the reports should be an **argued defence** of the thesis addressing all the examiners' comments. It should indicate changes proposed by the examiners that the candidate is willing to make and, if applicable, justify the rejection of any examiners' recommendations the candidate finds unacceptable.

7.8.2.5 The candidate is expected to discuss her or his response to the examiners' reports with the chair of the supervisory panel, who should also provide written advice for the committee. The chair may join in the candidate's response, comment on it or provide separate advice, as appropriate.

7.8.2.6 Administrative procedures to obtain the candidate's response are as follows:

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- (a) When all examination reports are received, the relevant administrative officer will copy three sets of the reports for the Division, one set with names of examiners and two with the names of examiners removed.¹² For doctoral candidates, an additional set of reports is retained for the URDC. A cover sheet summarises the examiners' recommendations and sets out the process to obtain the response.
- (b) The DRDC secretary retains the set of reports with examiners' names for Divisional records and forwards two sets without names to the chair of the supervisory panel, for the chair and the candidate. The secretary will also advise the DRDC Chair that reports have been received, and monitor progress in the Division in case follow-up is required.
- (c) The chair of the supervisory panel will arrange for the candidate to respond to the reports and forward the response with his/her own comments to the DRDC via the secretary.

Making changes to the thesis before committee consideration

7.8.2.7 It is normally advisable for the candidate to wait for committee consideration of the examiners' reports before making changes to the thesis. This will ensure that amendments are in line with committee decision. Sometimes, with the agreement of the chair of the supervisory panel, the candidate may wish to amend the thesis in advance of the committee decision (eg if all recommended changes are acceptable and/or minor). In this case the chair of the panel *must* advise the candidate that the amendments will be subject to committee confirmation of the examination result and changes that are required.

7.8.3 Committee consideration and decision

7.8.3.1 The DRDC will consider:

- (a) the examination report from each examiner with cover sheet summarising the recommendations;
- (b) the candidate's response to the reports; and
- (c) advice and recommendation from the chair of the supervisory panel.

7.8.3.2 After considering all available information the relevant committee will make a decision on the examination result expressed as one of the categories of recommendation used by examiners. If changes to the thesis are required the committee should also specify the changes in general or in detail. (In the case of doctoral theses, the DRDC will provide a recommendation to the URDC.)

7.8.3.3 Where both/all examiners have made the same recommendation the chair may resolve the result on behalf of the committee and advise the committee accordingly. If both/all examiners recommend that the degree be awarded with no changes to the thesis, the committee will resolve the examination result and certify the candidate's completion, subject to completion of any other requirements for the program (see 7.9).

¹² To maintain confidentiality, names of examiners are replaced by numbers (eg Ex1, Ex2 and Ex3) in the reports forwarded to the chair of the supervisory panel.

7.8.3.4 If the committee decides on the basis of the examination reports and the candidate's response that the degree *not* be awarded, the committee will resolve a Fail result for the thesis (7.8.5.2-3).

7.8.3.5 If the relevant committee is unable to reach a decision because of a serious difference of opinion between examiners, it will put into place a process to enable it to reach a decision (see Part 3, section 3.2.5 for doctoral examinations and 3.4.5 for masters).

7.8.3.6 After the committee has made its decision, the administrative officer should write to thank the examiners and inform them of the outcome of the examination.¹³

7.8.4 Amending the thesis

7.8.4.1 The secretary of the relevant committee will inform the chair of the supervisory panel of the committee's decision on the examination result. (For doctoral examinations the administrative officer in ORRD advises the DRDC secretary.) The chair of the supervisory panel informs the candidate.

7.8.4.2 The chair of the supervisory panel is responsible for:

- (a) discussing required changes to the thesis with the candidate, and providing encouragement, guidance and assistance as the candidate corrects or revises the thesis; and
- (b) confirming and advising the committee when corrections or revisions have been satisfactorily completed (see also 7.8.4.6).

7.8.4.3 Candidates are expected to complete amendments to the thesis promptly, within one semester at maximum unless major revision and resubmission are involved.

7.8.4.4 Amendments must be made to the thesis itself. Listing changes as Errata or in an addendum to the thesis is not acceptable.

7.8.4.5 When amendments have been completed the candidate should submit the amended thesis with a list of the changes that have been made and, if applicable, changes recommended by the examiners that have not been made, consistent with the committee's decision. This list is supplied to the committee and kept on the candidate's file.

7.8.4.6 Procedures for approving changes made to the thesis depend on the level of change resolved by the relevant committee:

¹³ The advice to examiners should indicate in general terms how the committee arrived at its decision. For example: "After consideration of all examiners' reports, the candidate's written response to the reports, comments from the supervisor and [for doctoral examinations] advice from the relevant Divisional committee, the Committee resolved that the degree be awarded subject to revisions to the thesis as specified by the examiners." More detailed explanation should be provided where appropriate, at the discretion of the Committee Chair.

- Editorial corrections must be made to the satisfaction of the chair of the supervisory panel.
- Revisions are made to the satisfaction of the chair of the supervisory panel and the Chair of the DRDC.
- Major revision and resubmission of the thesis involves the relevant committee through a second examination process.

7.8.4.7 The chair of the supervisory panel or the DRDC Chair, as applicable, should advise the Committee when amendments to a thesis have been completed. For doctoral theses, the DRDC secretary will advise the URDC.

Major revision and re-examination of a thesis

7.8.4.8 After consideration of the examiners' reports the relevant committee may resolve that a candidate be required to resubmit the thesis in revised form for examination after a specified period of study and/or research. A higher degree research candidate may be examined on the original thesis and, if the thesis has to be revised, on only one revised thesis.

7.8.4.9 Subject to the provisions below, procedures for resubmission and re-examination of a thesis should be as far as possible the same as for submission and examination of a thesis. (As the thesis may be re-examined only once the recommendations open to examiners will not include the option to revise and resubmit, which should be removed from the report form sent to examiners of a resubmitted thesis.)

7.8.4.10 University procedures for revised and resubmitted theses follow Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDoGS) draft *National guidelines for the examination of Australian research higher degree theses* (2004):

- (a) Resubmitted theses should be re-examined by the examiners who made this recommendation if possible.
- (b) Each examiner of a revised thesis will receive a copy of all the original reports, a comprehensive statement from the candidate outlining the substantive changes made to the thesis and a concise defence against any recommendations for changes that have not been accepted.
- (c) Examiners must be specifically requested to check whether the candidate has addressed the requirements for additional work specified by the original examiners *and* in the University's advice to the candidate.
- (d) Since a second Revise and Resubmit recommendation cannot be made, examiners will be advised that they should not introduce new areas of substantive concern in the re-examination.

7.8.4.11 A candidate who is revising a thesis for resubmission, involving one or two semesters' work under supervision, is normally required to re-enrol for the expected duration of the revision process. As an additional period of enrolment has implications for the Division and the candidate, the relevant committee should take this into account when arrangements for revision and resubmission are determined. For a

doctoral candidate, the URDC should obtain advice from the Division. Factors for consideration would include but not be limited to:

- (a) the period of re-enrolment (which may or may not be stipulated by the committee);
- (b) the candidate's HECS/RTS/fee status and liabilities; and
- (c) supervisory requirements.

7.8.5 The final examination result

7.8.5.1 When the relevant committee is satisfied, on the basis of advice from the chair of the supervisory panel and/or the DRDC, that corrections or revisions to a thesis are complete, the committee will record the final result for the thesis examination (ungraded pass or fail). The committee must confirm that any other academic requirements of the program have been met before resolving completion of the degree (see 7.9.1).

7.8.5.2 A Fail result for a masters by research thesis must be endorsed by the URDC. The DRDC should provide the URDC with evidence to support its decision including if necessary the examination reports. The URDC may endorse the decision or refer the matter back for reconsideration by the DRDC.

7.8.5.3 If the URDC resolves a Fail result for a doctoral thesis it may investigate the option of awarding the candidate a masters degree.

Recommendation for award of a masters degree to a doctoral candidate

7.8.5.4 In exceptional circumstances, and on a case-by-case basis, the URDC may recommend to Academic Board that a masters degree be awarded to a doctoral candidate, where academic requirements for a doctorate have not been met following examination of the thesis.

7.8.5.5 Procedures for the URDC to reach this recommendation are:

- (a) The award of a masters degree to a doctoral candidate may be considered only when a doctoral thesis has been examined, processes for determining the result are completed and, in the light of all available information, the URDC concludes that a pass result cannot be recommended for the thesis. The Committee may then decide if it wishes to investigate the option of awarding the candidate a masters degree.
- (b) If the URDC wishes to consider the option of a masters degree, it will refer the matter to the DRDC for advice as administration of masters by research programs is a Divisional responsibility. The DRDC should be provided with a copy of the thesis and all relevant paperwork. The DRDC will be asked to advise:
 - (i) which masters by research degree, if any, could be appropriate given the topic of the thesis;
 - (ii) whether revision and/or another examination process would be needed before requirements for the relevant masters degree could be met (taking into

- account all requirements of the program *and* University policy that a thesis may only be re-examined once);
- (iii) if the thesis has not previously been re-examined, what revisions would need to be made to the thesis, and proposed arrangements for the revision and second examination process if required; and
- (iv) any other matters the DRDC considers relevant, eg choice of examiners.
- (c) In preparing its advice and recommendation for the URDC, the DRDC would be expected to consult, in confidence, the chair of the candidate's supervisory panel and other staff as appropriate.
- (d) On receipt of DRDC advice the URDC will determine whether the option to award a masters degree should be pursued. The URDC may seek further advice from the DRDC and/or consider additional factors (eg desirability of involving the candidate's doctoral examiners in the process). If the URDC decides not to proceed, the Committee will recommend a Fail result for the thesis.
- (e) If the URDC decides to pursue the option of a masters degree, the URDC and DRDC together should resolve details of the process to be followed. Matters for determination would include the nature and timing of advice to the candidate; role of the supervisors; choice of examiners and information to be provided to examiners in the event of a second examination; re-enrolment of the candidate if applicable and implications for RTS/fees/HECS status; administrative issues etc. Consultation with other staff (eg ORRD or Student & Academic Services) will be needed.
- (f) The agreed action should be implemented by the DRDC, which will advise the URDC of the outcome.

7.8.6 Appeal against examination result

7.8.6.1 In view of the complex and special role of examiners of research degrees, the University has established a procedure which gives candidates, in certain circumstances, the right of appeal against the examination process and evaluation of their candidature.¹⁴

7.8.6.2 An appeal may be lodged only against a decision *not* to award a higher degree by research or a decision not to allow a thesis to be revised and resubmitted for a second examination.

7.8.6.3 Appeals are permitted on procedural grounds only. Appeals may not be made on academic grounds (ie the candidate's rejection of the examiners' assessment of the merit of their work) or on the grounds of inadequacy of supervisory or other arrangements during the period of study, unless the candidate can show that persistent efforts to deal with these issues were not adequately addressed. (University grievance procedures¹⁵ may be available in relation to these matters. See also advice on managing the supervisor-candidate relationship in 4.8.2.)

¹⁴ The process described here is based on AVCC guidelines in *Universities and their students: principles for the provision of education by Australian universities*.

¹⁵ *Student Grievance Resolution Procedures* at http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/studgriev_proc.html

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7.8.6.4 The only grounds permitted for an appeal against a decision not to award a higher degree by research or not to allow submission of a thesis for re-examination, are:

- (a) procedural irregularities in the conduct of the examination that may have had an effect on the outcome of the examination;
- (b) documentable evidence of prejudice or of bias on the part of one or more of the examiners; and/or
- (c) failure to consult the candidate about the choice of examiners.

7.8.6.5 The candidate must appeal in writing to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), within one month of the relevant committee's decision being made known to the candidate. The candidate must set out fully the grounds for the appeal and provide documentary evidence in support.

7.8.6.6 On receipt of the appeal, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) will, in the first instance, refer the matter to the relevant committee for advice on the circumstances of the case and, if appropriate, reconsideration of its decision in the light of any information provided by the candidate that was not known to the committee at the time it made its original decision. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) will consider the advice from the committee and decide whether a case for appeal exists.

7.8.6.7 If the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) determines that a case does exist, the appeal, together with the advice received from the relevant committee, will be referred to the Student Appeals Committee for determination. The Committee will limit itself to considering the matter on one or more of the grounds in 7.8.6.4 only, and will not consider the academic merits of the examination. Unless they are relevant to particular points made in the case put forward by the candidate, the examiners' reports will not normally be placed before the Committee.

7.8.6.8 The Committee may determine that the appeal be dismissed or, if it finds that one of the grounds for appeal is satisfied, refer the matter back to the relevant committee, through the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), with a direction that the examination result leading to the decision to appeal be disregarded and the thesis be submitted for examination or re-examination, as the case may be.

7.8.6.9 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) will advise the candidate of the outcome of the appeal.

7.9 Completion of requirements for the degree

7.9.1 Procedures for certifying completion

7.9.1.1 When the relevant committee is satisfied that a candidate for a higher degree by research has successfully completed academic requirements for the degree, it will certify accordingly and forward the appropriate advice to Academic Board.

Completion is normally resolved at the same time as the committee confirms the final result for the thesis examination (7.8.5).

7.9.1.2 The relevant administrative officer is responsible for checking, advising the committee and recording in committee minutes that the candidate has met all academic requirements for the higher degree research program including:

- (a) a pass for the thesis examination;
- (b) satisfactory completion of any coursework requirements of the program; and
- (c) presentation of the final research seminar (see 6.4.4).

7.9.1.3 The administrative officer should ensure that the candidate has submitted the required copies of the final thesis for retention by the University including the electronic copy (see 7.3.6) with the Retention and Use of Thesis form (Form C in the appendix). Doctoral candidates also need to provide the Details for Graduation form (see appendix). This information should be recorded on the student's file.

7.9.1.4 On advice that all academic requirements have been met, the relevant committee will formally resolve to:

- (a) *advise Academic Board that the candidate has completed the academic requirements for the appropriate degree;*
- (b) *recommend that the Board grant the degree to the candidate; and*
- (c) *recommend that the Board ask Council to admit the candidate to the appropriate award.*

7.9.1.5 For doctoral candidates, the ORRD administrative officer forwards completion advice directly to Academic Board. For masters candidates, the DRDC may provide formal advice through the Divisional Education Committee and/or Student & Academic Services.

7.9.1.6 After the committee resolves completion, the administrative officer will arrange for the candidate to be advised of the identity of thesis examiners who agreed that their names be released (see 7.4.2.1) and advise the examiners of the examination result if this has not already been done (7.8.3.6).

7.9.2 Granting and conferral of award

7.9.2.1 Council has delegated to Academic Board the power to grant awards to candidates who have been certified as meeting the requirements of an academic program.

7.9.2.2 On receipt of advice from the relevant committee or Student & Academic Services that a candidate has completed requirements for a particular degree, Academic Board will:

- (a) note the advice;
- (b) exercise its authority under Rule 7(1) of the *Conferring of Awards Rules 1995* and grant the named award to the student; and

- (c) ask Council to exercise its authority under Rule 7(2) of the *Conferring of Awards Rules 1995* and admit the student to the named award, subject to the student's compliance with the Statutes and Rules of the University.

7.9.2.3 Awards are usually conferred at graduation ceremonies each year but may be conferred *in absentia*.

7.9.2.4 A successful candidate may begin to use the appropriate title only after the award has been conferred.