

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

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PART 3 DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE RESEARCH DEGREES AND PROGRAMS

Note to users:

Part 3 of the revised Higher degrees by research: policy and procedures (Gold Book) was approved by Academic Board at meeting 02/4 on 24 June 2002. Amendments were approved at Academic Board meetings 03/1 (3 Feb 2003); 03/3 (5 May 2003); 04/7 (15 Nov 2004); 05/3 (2 May 2005); 05/4 (20 June 2005) and 06/1 (30 January 2006). This edition supersedes the Gold Book published in January 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 this date unless otherwise indicated or required by University legislation or policy. For advice on applicability of any requirements of this policy, please contact the secretary of the University Research Degrees Committee.

Administrative guidelines, forms etc relating to research candidature are available as appendices to the Gold Book. For advice on administrative matters please 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.

3.1 Introduction to Part 3

- 3.1.1** This Part of the policy describes the three *types of higher degrees by research* offered by the University: doctor of philosophy, professional doctorate by research and masters by research. The distinctive features of each degree and the programs (courses) leading to the degree are outlined, including particular requirements that apply to each program.
- 3.1.2** Distinctive features of the PhD degree and the PhD program are set out in section **3.2**. Section **3.3** deals with the professional doctorate by research degree and programs and section **3.4** deals with masters by research degree and programs.
- 3.1.3** Information provided in this Part of the policy is limited to that which is distinctive to a particular type of degree. Policy and procedures that are common to all degrees and programs are set out in Parts 5, 6 and 7 of this document. Cross-references are made where appropriate. In particular, admission requirements for each type of degree are linked to Part 5 and examination and completion requirements are linked to Part 7.
- 3.1.4** Information on individual doctoral or masters courses is provided in the relevant course documentation, including the Determination of Course Particulars, and summarised in the *University Handbook*.

- 3.1.5** University requirements for research degrees are summarised in *Principles to govern the restructure of postgraduate research courses* at <http://www.canberra.edu.au/research/policies/goldbook/appendices>

3.2 PhD

3.2.1 The degree of doctor of philosophy and the PhD program

- 3.2.1.1** The doctor of philosophy (PhD) is a higher degree oriented to research and presentation of work in a specialised area of academic study. It is designed to build on and to extend the objectives and achievements of the University's masters degree by research and/or undergraduate honours by research programs.

- 3.2.1.2** The purpose of the PhD is to:

- (a) provide opportunities for advanced study in a specialised field of research; and
- (b) develop research knowledge, skills and attitudes leading to the candidate being capable of independent research.

- 3.2.1.3** Candidates undertaking a PhD are expected to have a higher level of self-direction, will address their topics in greater depth and will make a contribution that is of a greater originality than those undertaking a masters degree by research.

- 3.2.1.4** During the period of their candidature, students are encouraged to publish or otherwise disseminate the results of the work done by them to date so that they may participate in debate in the wider academic community and the professions.

- 3.2.1.5** A PhD program:

- (a) shall have a research component normally occupying three years of full-time study or equivalent devoted to research in the chosen area; and
- (b) may have a small supporting studies component depending on the formal qualifications of the candidate (see 3.2.2.4-7).

- 3.2.1.6** Advanced standing may be granted to an applicant for admission to the PhD program. Provisions for advanced standing are set out in 3.2.4.15-16.

- 3.2.1.7** The results of the research component of a PhD program shall be presented as a thesis (or, as indicated below, where appropriate guidelines are approved by Academic Board for the relevant specialisation, its equivalent in another medium) which will be the sole method of assessment.

- 3.2.1.8** A PhD thesis must make a distinct and significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the area of the research and/or to the application of knowledge to the analysis of problems in the study area; and must afford evidence of originality shown either by the discovery of new knowledge or by the exercise of independent critical thinking. (Further information is provided in 3.2.5.2-9.)

3.2.1.9 A PhD thesis is assessed through submission to external examination against international standards.

3.2.1.10 The doctoral degree course by research is a single course leading to the award of “Doctor of Philosophy”. Unlike a masters degree or a professional doctorate, a PhD is conferred on a University-wide basis under a name that does not link it to a particular Academic Division, School or field of study.

3.2.1.11 Within the PhD course, there are designated specialisations or study areas in each Academic Division to which doctoral candidates are attached. The specialisations, which are identified and described in the *University Handbook*, indicate the fields of study in which PhD courses are available at the University. (See also 3.2.3.2)

3.2.2 Structure, content and duration of the PhD program

3.2.2.1 For administrative purposes, a candidate in the PhD program enrolls as a full-time or part-time student in the appropriate Doctoral Thesis unit (R level). The unit Doctoral Thesis R has been assigned the value of 72 credit points. This number of credit points equates with the number of credit points normally expected of three years of full-time study or its equivalent in part-time study.

3.2.2.2 As noted in 3.2.1.5, a PhD program may include supporting studies.

Research education program

3.2.2.3 Candidates in the PhD program are also required to complete a Research Education Program that enables them to acquire the generic skills and attributes identified as appropriate for graduates of postgraduate research programs at the University of Canberra.¹

Supporting studies

3.2.2.4 The DRDC, on the recommendation of the relevant course convener, may require a PhD candidate to include in the study program, as supporting studies, coursework in areas identified in the candidate’s Learning Plan.

3.2.2.5 The time taken to complete supporting studies is included in the period allowed to complete the degree (see Maximum duration below) and should only occupy a minor part of the program. The amount of supporting studies should normally be limited to three credit points of coursework at any level. The DRDC may approve up to six credit points of coursework as a condition of admission for an individual candidate, provided that the implications of undertaking additional requirements within the time allowed for the degree are clearly understood and accepted by the candidate.

¹ See the statement of *Generic skills and attributes of UC graduates from higher degree by research programs* at http://www.canberra.edu.au/uc/policies/acad/generic_HDR.html

3.2.2.6 Supporting studies may be assessed by written examination and the candidate may be required to pass the examination on the supporting studies before being permitted by the DRDC, on the recommendation of the course convener, to proceed with the thesis.

3.2.2.7 The results of the examination of the supporting studies will not be taken into account in the final assessment, which is based on the thesis alone.

Minimum duration

3.2.2.8 Subject to the following provisions, the minimum duration of the doctoral program is normally three years of full-time study or its part-time equivalent.

3.2.2.9 With advanced standing the duration of a doctoral program may be reduced, normally to not less than two years full-time study or equivalent. Information on advanced standing is set out in the following paragraphs and in 3.2.4.15-16.

3.2.2.10 The URDC, on the recommendation of the DRDC, may make exceptions in special circumstances and on a case by case basis, to the requirement that students must have been enrolled in a doctoral course for a period of not less than two years prior to submission of the thesis for examination.²

3.2.2.11 Circumstances giving rise to a request for exception to minimum duration requirements as provided in 3.2.2.10 would normally be:

- (a) to allow a greater amount of advanced standing than otherwise permitted under 3.2.4.15-16 for a candidate transferring from doctoral studies at another university; or
- (b) to permit submission of a thesis before the minimum duration of the program has been reached. (A request for early submission would need to be justified by the candidate and have the unequivocal support of the chair of the supervisory panel that the thesis would not benefit from further work.)

Maximum duration

Note: The maximum period of enrolment in a research program as set out below is not to be confused with the period for which a candidate is funded, which may be different.

3.2.2.12 For candidates commencing enrolment in the PhD or a professional doctorate program by research from 2003, the maximum period of enrolment, including time taken to complete any required supporting studies, is four years for a doctoral degree undertaken full-time (or equivalent in part-time or part-time/full-time study).

3.2.2.13 For candidates enrolled in the PhD or a professional doctorate program by research before 2003, the maximum period of enrolment, including time taken to complete any required supporting studies, is five years for a doctoral degree undertaken full-time (or part-time equivalent), or on a pro-rata basis for a combination of part-time and full-

² *Courses and Awards (Courses of Study) Rules 2005*, paragraph 11(3) at <http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/legislation/rules/current/courses-awards-courses-study-rules05>

time. The DRDC in consultation with the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Academic Division may grant a further six months if, in its opinion, the candidate is likely to be able to submit the thesis during the additional period of candidature.

3.2.2.14 In accordance with the *Courses and Awards (Courses of Study) Rules 2005*,³ the URDC may, on the recommendation of the appropriate Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Division acting in consultation with the Divisional Research Degrees Committee, approve, in respect of a student, the extension of a period or periods specified in the Register of Courses in relation to a course undertaken by the student.

3.2.2.15 While the maximum period of enrolment is as specified above, normal University practice would seek completion of a doctoral course in three years of full-time study or equivalent.

3.2.3 Course accreditation and review of the PhD program

3.2.3.1 The PhD degree was accredited in 1990 and was reviewed in September 1996. PhD reviews are conducted by the University Research Degrees Committee in consultation with the Academic Divisions and are approved by Academic Board. (The program is subject to ongoing external evaluation through the thesis examination process.)

3.2.3.2 Study areas or specialisations within the PhD course (see 3.2.1.11) are approved by Academic Board following consideration of proposals from the Academic Divisions. To ensure consistency with University policy and research directions, proponents are asked to consult the Office of Research and Research Degrees (ORRD), through the URDC secretary, as proposals are developed. The approval path for new PhD specialisations is from the relevant academic area, with Head of School endorsement, to Divisional Executive, then the URDC, then Academic Board. The role of the URDC is to consider academic and strategic research issues covered by the Gold Book and the Research Strategic Plan.

3.2.3.3 The Division is required to demonstrate that it has the capacity, facilities and resources to accept candidates for research at doctoral level in the particular field or fields in an area of University research. Proposals should specifically address the rationale for the new specialisation; alignment with Divisional and University research strategies; location in an established research area; and viability in terms of supervisory expertise and critical mass, resources, the market, possible competition etc.

3.2.3.4 On recommendation of the Academic Division, Academic Board may approve special admission requirements for a study area consistent with admission requirements for the PhD program set out below.

3.2.3.5 The secretary of Academic Board should advise the University Research Committee of developments relating to the PhD degree including the approval of new study areas.

³ *Courses and Awards (Courses of Study) Rules 2005*, paragraph 17(3).

3.2.4 Admission to the PhD program

Admission requirements

3.2.4.1 Subject to 3.2.4.2, an applicant seeking admission to a PhD program will:

- (a) have a degree of bachelor with first or upper second class honours awarded by an Australian university or other recognised higher education institution; and
- (b) provide evidence of research training and aptitude for research.

3.2.4.2 An applicant seeking admission to a PhD program who does not satisfy the requirements of 3.2.4.1(a) will not be admitted to the program unless the DRDC is satisfied that the applicant:

- (a) holds an award or has completed work that has honours equivalence in accordance with guidelines below; and
- (b) has attained significant research ability and professional performance in accordance with 3.2.4.10.

3.2.4.3 Special requirements for admission of applicants will vary depending upon the particular area of research. The Division administering a study area or specialisation within the University's PhD program is responsible for determining any special admission requirements to that study area through the process of obtaining approval for the study area from Academic Board (3.2.3.2-3).

3.2.4.4 The DRDC may specify additional conditions of admission for a particular applicant (such as supporting studies) consistent with the requirements of this policy.

Honours equivalence

3.2.4.5 The following guidelines determine whether an applicant has qualifications considered equivalent to a First Class or Second Class Division 1 Honours degree. The guidelines may be used:

- (a) to establish eligibility for admission to the PhD program; and
- (b) in the ranking of applicants for scholarships.

3.2.4.6 For the purposes of 3.2.4.1(a), awards, work experience and publications listed in the relevant paragraphs below are considered equivalent to a First Class Honours degree and a Second Class Division 1 Honours degree respectively.

3.2.4.7 Candidates for whom Honours equivalence has been established are considered for ranking purposes to be exactly equal to candidates with the corresponding level of Honours, before consideration is given to other factors.

3.2.4.8 In cases where a candidate's equivalence is considered marginal, account may be taken of any refereed publications, relevant work experience, or other outstanding written contribution to a relevant profession.

3.2.4.9 Caution may need to be exercised in the case of applicants whose prior university results are ten or more years old. In some circumstances such results may be ignored, eg if an applicant's subsequent experience suggests the development of significant research potential.

3.2.4.10 Where an applicant is seeking admission to the PhD program on the basis of honours equivalence, the DRDC, on the recommendation of the course convener, will determine whether the applicant has attained:

- (a) significant research ability - on the basis of evidence of research training and a significant research output demonstrated, for example, by the applicant's publications record; and
- (b) significant professional performance - on the basis of evidence that the applicant had been required to work independently, exercising independent judgement.

Grounds for Honours 1 equivalence

3.2.4.11 Grounds for Honours 1 equivalence are normally limited to:

- (a) *Advanced postgraduate diplomas*, with an exceptional level of results.* Units undertaken must include research methods and a project. Results for the project and research methods unit must be at High Distinction level for H1 equivalence to be granted.
- (b) *Masters by coursework, whether completed or incomplete*: at least one full year of subjects at postgraduate level by the end of the year of application, with an exceptional level of results.* Units undertaken must include research methods and a project. Results for the project and research methods unit must be at High Distinction level for H1 equivalence to be granted.
- (c) *Masters by research, if complete*: only acceptable as equivalent to H1 with evidence of superior performance, such as an award with Honours (First Class Honours if grades are awarded), or as shown by prizes, examiners' reports, refereed publications or conference papers based upon the research. In all cases, copies of examiners' reports and refereed or other publications must be provided.
- (d) *Masters by research, if incomplete*: at least one year full-time towards completion (or part-time equivalent) by the end of the year of application, with evidence of superior performance such as reports by supervisors, assessors' reports on seminars, refereed publications or conference papers based upon the research. In all cases, copies of supervisors' reports and refereed or other publications must be provided.

* *An exceptional level of results*: In this context, an 'exceptional level' could include results at High Distinction level in not less than 50% of subjects, or at Distinction level or better in all subjects, or other results approximately equivalent to this. Note that in all cases the results for the research methods and project subjects must be at High Distinction level for H1 equivalence to be granted.

Very good but not exceptional results are considered equivalent to Honours 2A, and could include results at Distinction level in not less than 50% of subjects, or at least at an average of Credit level in all subjects, or other results approximately equivalent to this.

- (e) *Masters qualifying programs*, with at least one full year of subjects at postgraduate level, with an exceptional level of results. * Units undertaken must include research methods and a project. Results for the project and research methods unit must be at High Distinction level for H1 equivalence to be granted.
- (f) *A four year degree where honours is not awarded*, if including a substantial research project and with an exceptional level of final year results. * Results for the project and for any research methods unit, if undertaken, must be at High Distinction level for H1 equivalence to be granted.
- (g) *Doctoral studies, if incomplete*: at least one year full-time towards completion (or part-time equivalent) by the end of the year of application, with evidence of superior performance such as reports by supervisors, assessors' reports on seminars, refereed publications or conference papers based upon the research. In all cases, copies of supervisors' and assessors' reports and refereed or other publications must be provided.
- (h) A degree plus a qualification from a Royal College, eg MBBS + MRACP.
- (i) *A degree of Second Class Honours at Division One (2A) level* in exceptional circumstances may be accepted as equivalent to H1 if a candidate also has a strong record of refereed publications (appropriate to the discipline), or a minimum of three years' relevant work experience in an appropriately supervised research environment, or other outstanding written contribution to a relevant profession, or some combination of these.

3.2.4.12 In exceptional circumstances, applicants may be assessed as having First Class Honours equivalence on grounds other than the above. Such exceptions will be considered by the University Research Degrees Committee on application by the relevant Divisional Research Degrees Committee. The DRDC will be expected to provide evidence to support the application based on the following grounds:

- (a) *A significant record of scholarly publication*: as appropriate to the discipline, demonstrated by a number of refereed articles in scholarly journals, a single-author research monograph, or publications of equivalent academic standing; or
- (b) *Significant relevant research work experience*: usually for a minimum of five years, involving responsibility for the conduct of research projects (not merely working as a research assistant) and resulting in outcomes for which the applicant has had major responsibility. While normally this would involve some form of publication, it is recognised that in some circumstances publication may not be possible and other evidence of outcomes may be acceptable; or
- (c) *Outstanding public recognition of a research contribution to a relevant profession*: a candidate who has been awarded prizes or medals or other significant public recognition for research in a relevant profession may be acceptable.

Grounds for Honours 2A equivalence

3.2.4.13 Grounds for H2A equivalence include items listed above for H1 equivalence, but at a very good rather than an exceptional level of achievement. * Account may be taken of

any refereed publications, relevant work experience, or other outstanding written contribution to a relevant profession.

3.2.4.14 In addition, *a pass degree* may be accepted as equivalent to H2A if a candidate has:

- (a) a good publication record as demonstrated by a number of refereed scholarly publications appropriate to the discipline; or
- (b) a minimum of three years' relevant work experience in an appropriately supervised research environment; or
- (c) other outstanding written contribution to a relevant profession; or
- (d) some combination of these; or
- (e) in the case of a four year degree where honours is not awarded, very good final year results.*

Advanced standing

3.2.4.15 Where the DRDC, on the advice of the relevant course convener, is satisfied that an applicant for admission to a PhD program has partly completed a doctoral or masters degree by research in the same field, the DRDC may admit the applicant to candidature with a reduction of the period of candidature to a minimum of two years.

3.2.4.16 In special circumstances the period of candidature for a doctoral program may be reduced to less than two years. Requirements relating to further reduction of the period of study for a doctoral degree on the grounds of advanced standing or on other grounds are set out in 3.2.2.10-11.

3.2.5 Examination and completion in the PhD program

3.2.5.1 The URDC is responsible for final assessment of candidates in doctoral programs. (For detailed advice on examination and completion in all programs see Part 7.) This responsibility includes:

- (a) appointing examiners;
- (b) overseeing arrangements for thesis examinations and the quality and efficiency of the examination process;
- (c) considering examiners' reports and deciding the examination result; and
- (d) certifying and reporting course completion to Academic Board to enable the degree to be awarded.

Thesis requirements

3.2.5.2 A PhD thesis:

- (a) must make a distinct and significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the area of the research and/or to the application of knowledge to the analysis of problems in the study area; and

- (b) must afford evidence of originality shown either by the discovery of new knowledge or by the exercise of independent critical thinking.

3.2.5.3 A PhD thesis should contain a substantial amount of material suitable for publication.

3.2.5.4 A PhD thesis will be well ordered and satisfactory in its literary presentation.

3.2.5.5 The criteria in 3.2.5.2-4 are used for the examination report on a PhD thesis. Each examiner is asked to indicate whether, in his or her judgment, the thesis:

- (a) makes a distinct and significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the area with which it deals and/or to the application of knowledge to the analysis of problems in the study area;*
- (b) affords evidence of originality shown either by the discovery of new knowledge or by the exercise of independent critical thinking;*
- (c) contains a substantial amount of material suitable for publication; and*
- (d) is well ordered and satisfactory in its literary presentation.*

3.2.5.6 The doctoral thesis should demonstrate:

- (a) the candidate's ability to conceive, execute and prepare to publication standard a scholarly piece of research on advanced theory or practice in a field of study covered by the research;
- (b) the candidate's thorough understanding of the state of knowledge in the field of enquiry and the relationship of the research to the broader aspects of the field of study; and
- (c) the candidate's technical capacity in the field of research.

3.2.5.7 General information on thesis requirements is provided in Part 7 and in an appendix to the Gold Book.

3.2.5.8 Where appropriate guidelines are approved by Academic Board for the relevant specialisation, the product of the research in a PhD program may take a form other than a thesis, such as a creative work. Guidelines for other forms of the research product are set out in 7.3.4.

3.2.5.9 The examination criteria set out in 3.2.5.5 are modified for a PhD thesis incorporating creative production or in the form of a creative work. In this case each examiner is asked to indicate whether, in her or his judgment, the thesis:

- (a) makes a distinct and significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the area with which it deals and/or to the application of knowledge to the analysis of problems in the study area;*
- (b) affords evidence of originality shown either by the discovery of new knowledge or by the exercise of independent critical and creative thinking;*
- (c) contains a substantial amount of material suitable for publication and/or exhibition;*

- (d) demonstrates that the creative and exegetical components are in a symbiotic relationship, in so far as the theory informs practice and vice versa; and
- (e) is well ordered and satisfactory in its presentation.

Submission of thesis

3.2.5.10 A doctoral candidate will submit three⁴ copies of the completed thesis to the relevant administrative officer, who will arrange the examination. Requirements for thesis submission are set out in Part 7.

Thesis examiners

3.2.5.11 There shall be a minimum of two examiners for each doctoral thesis. The URDC may approve additional examiners on advice from the DRDC as appropriate.

3.2.5.12 A person shall not be appointed to be an examiner of a doctoral thesis if the person:

- (a) has acted as the candidate's supervisor in any capacity; or
- (b) has provided substantial advice to a candidate in the preparation of the thesis.

3.2.5.13 All examiners of a doctoral thesis will be external to the University.

3.2.5.14 At least one examiner shall be a member of academic staff at a tertiary institution. At least one examiner shall have a doctoral degree. All examiners should have recognised research or professional reputations in the relevant field.

Oral examination

3.2.5.15 Oral examinations do not normally form part of the formal requirements of the examination of doctoral theses. However, before making a recommendation on the thesis (see Part 7), an examiner may recommend in a particular case that the candidate be examined orally. If the examiner proposes that an oral examination be conducted, reasons should be given as to why the recommendation is made, eg further clarification of the thesis.

3.2.5.16 If in the opinion of the URDC it is desirable and practicable to conduct an oral examination of a doctoral candidate as provided in 3.2.5.13, the Committee may agree that an oral examination should be conducted.

3.2.5.17 Procedures for conduct of an oral examination of a doctoral candidate are as follows:

- (a) The administrative officer in the Office of Research and Research Degrees will arrange for the candidate to be examined orally by a minimum of two examiners of the thesis.
- (b) The oral examination shall be on the substance of the thesis and the candidate's knowledge of the subject background.

⁴ Additional copies of the thesis will be required if the number of examiners exceeds the minimum of two.

- (c) The URDC will appoint a chair of examiners from among those attending the oral examination.
- (d) The URDC may nominate an independent assessor as an additional member of the panel.
- (e) Prior to the oral examination, any examiner who will not be present may submit questions in writing to be put to the candidate. The candidate's answers to such questions should be taped and a copy of the recording provided to the examiner.
- (f) In the event of any examiner not attending the oral examination, the chair of examiners will send a written report about the oral examination to the absent examiner for comment.
- (g) A candidate's answers to an oral examination will be taken into account by the examiners in their final assessment and recommendation on the thesis.

Resolving discrepant recommendations by examiners

3.2.5.18 If, on consideration of the examination reports, the URDC considers that there is a serious difference of opinion between examiners of a doctoral thesis that cannot be resolved by the Committee, it will:

- (a) seek clarification from one or more examiners to assist it to reach a decision;
and/or
- (b) appoint an additional examiner for the thesis; *or*
- (c) appoint an adjudicator.

3.2.5.19 If the Committee decides to seek clarification of the report(s) and recommendation(s) from one or more examiners, it will nominate a suitable member of academic staff (eg DRDC Chair, URDC Chair) to make contact and report back to the Committee.

3.2.5.20 An additional examiner would not normally be appointed if the thesis has already been examined by three examiners. If the Committee chooses this option, the DRDC Chair should discuss the matter with the chair of the candidate's supervisory panel and ask the supervisor to nominate another examiner as soon as possible. The new examiner will not be told that the thesis has previously been examined. The Committee will consider the report of the additional examiner in conjunction with the other reports to determine the examination result in the normal way (see 7.8.3 etc).

3.2.5.21 If the Committee decides to appoint an adjudicator, the DRDC Chair should consult the supervisor on possible choices. The adjudicator must be external to the University, a senior researcher in the field and experienced in the assessment of Australian doctoral theses. The URDC or URDC Chair will approve the appointment on recommendation of the DRDC Chair and the candidate's supervisor. The adjudicator will:

- (a) be provided with the thesis, the examiners' reports, and the candidate's and supervisor's responses to the reports, as well as University guidelines for thesis examiners;

- (b) be permitted to consult the examiners, the supervisor and/or the candidate if required; and
- (c) be asked to provide a report including a recommendation in terms of the usual examiners' recommendations (a) to (e) (see 7.7.2.3) and, if appropriate, specifying advice on changes that should be made to the thesis.

3.2.5.22 The URDC will resolve the examination result on the basis of the adjudicator's report (see 7.8.3 etc).

Examination result and course completion

3.2.5.23 At the completion of the examination process and after considering all relevant reports the URDC will determine the examination result for a PhD thesis. The result will be an ungraded Pass or Fail.

3.2.5.24 The URDC will resolve the appropriate advice and recommendation concerning course completion for Academic Board.

3.2.5.25 In exceptional circumstances, where academic requirements for a doctorate have not been met following examination of the thesis, the URDC may recommend to Academic Board that a masters degree be awarded to a doctoral candidate. Procedures for this contingency are set out in 7.8.5.5-6.

3.3 Professional doctorate by research

3.3.1 The degree of professional doctorate by research and PD programs

3.3.1.1 The professional doctorate is a higher degree oriented to the informed and critical application of knowledge to problems and issues concerning the professions or professional practice. It is designed to complement the objectives and achievements of the University's PhD program. The professional doctorate is offered in academic areas recognised as having particular professional expertise.

3.3.1.2 The purpose of the professional doctorate is to provide advanced study and reflection on practice in a professional field for professionals of standing by both drawing on their professional experience and expertise and extending it. The professional doctorate therefore provides the opportunity to bring together, in a scholarly submission, professional work done over a period of time. The professional doctorate is also intended to develop closer links and associations between the University and senior professionals and contribute to the understanding and development of professional practice in various fields.

3.3.1.3 The University of Canberra offers professional doctorates by research and by coursework. Professional doctorates by research are those programs that meet the DEST definition of a higher degree research course, ie for which at least two-thirds of the student load for the course is required as research work and not more than one-

third as coursework. Policy and procedures in this document relate only to professional doctorates by research. Information on professional doctorates by coursework is provided in the policy statement *Policy and procedures for courses leading to postgraduate coursework degrees*⁵ and in the course accreditation documents for individual courses.

3.3.1.4 The policy framework for professional doctorates by research at the University is provided by UC *Guidelines for offering professional doctorates* (1994).⁶ Information on individual PD by research programs is available in the course accreditation document including the Determination of Course Particulars.

3.3.1.5 A professional doctorate program by research:

- (a) shall have a component devoted to creative professional work or research, depending on the professional field, occupying a minimum of the equivalent of two years of full-time study; and
- (b) may have a coursework component normally occupying no more than the equivalent of one year of full-time study depending on the formal qualifications and academic experience of the candidate.

3.3.1.6 Advanced standing may be granted to an applicant for admission to a professional doctorate program by research. Provisions for advanced standing are set out in 3.3.4.4-8.

3.3.1.7 The results of the creative professional work or research referred to in 3.3.1.5(a) shall be presented as a thesis or its equivalent in another medium.

3.3.1.8 If the results of the creative professional work or research are presented in a medium other than a thesis, the candidate shall also provide an exegesis which:

- (a) explains the contextual and theoretical underpinning of the creative work; and
- (b) analyses its content and/or offers reflection on its relevance in professional practice.

3.3.1.9 A professional doctorate thesis or its equivalent in another medium must demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of its area of investigation comparable to a PhD. It must afford evidence of originality shown by creative work, either the discovery of new knowledge or the application of independent critical thinking to an existing body of knowledge. (Further information is provided in 3.3.5.2-10.)

3.3.1.10 A professional doctorate thesis or its equivalent in another medium is expected to make a distinct contribution to the improvement of professional practice or policy.

3.3.1.11 A professional doctorate thesis or its equivalent in another medium is assessed through submission to external examination against international standards.

⁵ *Policy and procedures for courses leading to postgraduate coursework degrees* at https://guard.canberra.edu.au/policy/policy.php?pol_id=3029

⁶ University of Canberra *Guidelines for offering professional doctorates*, recommended by Academic Board at meeting 94/3 on 16 May 1994 and accepted by Council at meeting No. 32 on 25 May 1994 (Resolution C32/19).

3.3.1.12 A professional doctorate is conferred under an award name that links it to a particular field of study.

3.3.2 Structure, content and duration of PD programs by research

Research thesis or equivalent creative work

3.3.2.1 The equivalent of at least two years of full-time study (48 of the 72 credit points) in a professional doctorate program by research will be devoted to a research thesis or equivalent creative professional work, depending on the professional field.

Coursework component

3.3.2.2 Up to one-third of a professional doctorate program by research (24 of the 72 credit points) may be coursework. Normally, the coursework component is expected to be completed successfully before the commencement of the doctoral thesis or equivalent creative work. All coursework which forms part of the assessment of a higher degree by research must be taken at PG (Postgraduate) level. (Other supporting studies, if required, can be taken at any level.)

Research education program

3.3.2.3 Candidates in PD programs by research are also required to complete a Research Education Program that enables them to acquire the generic skills and attributes identified as appropriate for graduates of postgraduate research programs at the University of Canberra.⁷

Minimum duration

3.3.2.4 Requirements relating to the minimum duration of doctoral programs, including PhD and professional doctorate programs by research, are set out in 3.2.2.8-11.

Maximum duration

3.3.2.5 Requirements relating to the maximum duration of doctoral programs, including PhD and professional doctorate programs by research, are set out in 3.2.2.12-15.

3.3.3 Course accreditation and review of PD programs

3.3.3.1 Except where indicated, advice in this subsection applies to both professional doctorates and masters programs by research.

⁷ See the statement of *Generic skills and attributes of UC graduates from higher degree by research programs* at http://www.canberra.edu.au/uc/policies/acad/generic_HDR.html

3.3.3.2 Procedures for course accreditation are set out in the policy document *Procedures for the introduction and accreditation of new courses, course and subject change*.⁸

3.3.3.3 A discipline area wishing to establish a new professional doctorate program by research in a University research area must demonstrate professional acceptance for the course and clear linkage between professional practice and academic study.

3.3.3.4 Proponents of new or modified professional doctorate and masters programs by research are asked to consult ORRD (through the URDC secretary) early and throughout the development process, to ensure compliance with DEST and University policy and research directions. It is also recommended that course proponents consult the Chair of the DRDC.

3.3.3.5 The approval path for new and modified PD and masters research course proposals is from the course convener, with Head of School endorsement, to:

- (a) Divisional Education Committee;
- (b) Divisional Executive;
- (c) URDC for consideration of academic and strategic research issues, and VCAC Academic Programs Committee for consideration of resource issues (*Note: As at April 2007, the role of VCAC and its committees is under review and this step in the process is likely to change*);
- (d) Academic Board.

3.3.3.6 The Divisional Education Committee is responsible for initial consideration of course developments at Divisional level. For research course proposals, the Committee will specifically consider academic content, the place of the proposed course in the Division's academic program and its relationship to coursework courses offered by the Division, and, as far as possible, other matters set out below.

3.3.3.7 The URDC will consider academic and strategic research implications of course developments, particularly issues covered by the Gold Book and the Research Strategic Plan including:

- (a) alignment with University and Divisional research priorities and location in an established research area;
- (b) compliance with DEST requirements for research degrees and University policy for the relevant type of degree (criteria, admission requirements, advanced standing, thesis requirements etc set out in Part 3 of this document);
- (c) adequacy of Divisional supervisory capacity and resources as presented in the proposal; and
- (d) any other relevant matters.

⁸ *Procedures for the introduction and accreditation of new courses, course and subject change* at https://guard.canberra.edu.au/policy/policy.php?pol_id=3026

3.3.3.8 The secretary of Academic Board should advise the University Research Committee of matters relating to professional doctorate and masters programs by research including the consideration and approval of course development proposals.

3.3.3.9 Reviews of professional doctorate and masters programs by research are determined by Academic Board. (As with the PhD, programs are subject to ongoing external evaluation through the thesis examination process.)

3.3.4 Admission to PD programs by research

Admission requirements

3.3.4.1 Admission requirements for professional doctorate programs by research are intended to be as rigorous as entry to the PhD program. However, consistent with the applied focus of the professional doctorate and practice at other Australian universities, the admission criteria take into account significant professional experience at high level.

3.3.4.2 Admission requirements to a professional doctorate program by research are:

- (a) a masters degree or a bachelor honours degree (first or upper second class) or equivalent, in accordance with 3.3.4.3; and
- (b) demonstrated capacity to undertake significant research in the proposed doctoral field, in accordance with 3.3.4.4.

3.3.4.3 For the purposes of 3.3.4.2(a) only, equivalence to the masters or honours degree would be established by a degree of bachelor in the relevant professional field, *and* at least five years professional practice in a relevant field, *and* submission of a resume demonstrating relevant professional experience of high professional standing and an appropriate level of research experience.

3.3.4.4 As evidence of 3.3.4.2(b), applicants would be expected to produce a resume showing:

- (a) research ability – on the basis of evidence of research training, skills or experience or research-related professional experience; and
- (b) significant professional performance – on the basis of evidence that the applicant has been required to work independently, exercising independent judgement; and
- (c) any relevant publications, reports etc, particularly research publications.

3.3.4.5 In relation to 3.3.4.3 and 3.3.4.4, it is noted that in some professional areas, research project activity and publications are attributed to the organisation, rather than to the individual contributors. In these cases the applicant should include a clear statement of their role in and contribution to the research project or publication.

3.3.4.6 The DRDC may specify additional conditions of admission for a particular applicant consistent with the requirements of this policy. This may include, but is not limited to, completion of research training units as a pre-requisite at a designated standard before proceeding to the dissertation stage of the professional doctorate.

3.3.4.7 In considering applications, the DRDC will take into account accepted variations in norms and expectations between different professional and academic discipline areas.

Advanced standing

3.3.4.8 Advanced standing (credit) in regard to an application for admission to a professional doctorate program by research should only be granted on a unit-by-unit basis for any coursework or research training component, and may only be granted for units undertaken at PG level. Except in the case of an applicant with a partly completed higher degree by research in the same field (see 3.3.4.11) advanced standing is not available for any part of the two-thirds research component of the program.⁹

3.3.4.9 Subject to the academic requirements of the program, the DRDC, on the recommendation of the relevant course convener, may grant advanced standing for part or all of the coursework component of a professional doctorate program by research (ie up to one-third of the program or a maximum of 24 credit points in a 72 credit point program), to an applicant who has successfully completed units at PG level which have contributed to the development of research skills and higher degree work.

3.3.4.10 Where advanced standing has been granted in accordance with 3.3.4.9, details should be recorded in DRDC minutes. Documentary evidence (including the course convener's recommendation) should be retained on the student's file.

3.3.4.11 Subject to compliance with DEST requirements in regard to the research content of a research course,¹⁰ advanced standing may be granted for part of the research component of a PD program to an applicant with a partly completed research degree in the same field (eg a student transferring from another institution). (See also requirements relating to course transfer in Part 5.)

3.3.4.12 In special circumstances the period of candidature for a doctoral program may be reduced to less than two years. Requirements relating to further reduction of the period of study for a doctoral degree on the grounds of advanced standing or on other grounds are set out in 3.2.2.10-11.

3.3.5 Examination and completion in PD programs by research

3.3.5.1 The URDC is responsible for final assessment in doctoral programs. (For detailed advice on examination and completion in all programs see Part 7.) This responsibility includes:

- (a) appointing examiners for the thesis;

⁹ See DEST definition of a higher degree research course and guidelines on what may and may not be included in the research content in 1.2.2.

¹⁰ See DEST definition of a higher degree research course and guidelines on what may and may not be included in the research content in 1.2.2.

- (b) overseeing arrangements for thesis examinations and the quality and efficiency of the examination process;
- (c) considering examiners' reports and deciding the result of the thesis examination; and
- (d) certifying and reporting course completion to Academic Board to enable the degree to be awarded.

Thesis requirements

3.3.5.2 As noted in 3.3.1.7, the results of the creative professional work or research in a PD program by research shall be presented as a thesis or its equivalent in another medium.

3.3.5.3 If the results of the creative professional work or research are presented in a medium other than a thesis, the candidate shall also provide an exegesis which:

- (a) explains the contextual and theoretical underpinning of the creative work; and
- (b) analyses its content and/or offers reflection on its relevance in professional practice.

3.3.5.4 A professional doctorate thesis or its equivalent in another medium:

- (a) must demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of its area of investigation comparable to a PhD; and
- (b) must afford evidence of originality shown by creative work, either the discovery of new knowledge or the application of independent critical thinking to an existing body of knowledge.

3.3.5.5 A professional doctorate thesis or its equivalent in another medium is expected to make a distinct contribution to the improvement of professional practice or policy.

3.3.5.6 A professional doctorate thesis should contain a substantial amount of material suitable for publication.

3.3.5.7 A professional doctorate thesis will be well ordered and satisfactory in its literary presentation.

3.3.5.8 The criteria in 3.3.5.4-7 are used for the examination report on a professional doctorate by research thesis. Each examiner is asked to indicate whether, in her or his judgment, the thesis:

- (a) makes a distinct and significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the area with which it deals and/or to the application of knowledge to the analysis of problems in the study area;*
- (b) affords evidence of originality shown either by the discovery of new knowledge or by the exercise of independent critical thinking;*
- (c) contains a substantial amount of material suitable for publication; and*
- (d) is well ordered and satisfactory in its literary presentation.*

3.3.5.9 The doctoral thesis should demonstrate:

- (a) the candidate's ability to conceive, execute and prepare to publication standard a scholarly piece of research on advanced theory or practice in a field of study covered by the research;
- (b) the candidate's thorough understanding of the state of knowledge in the field of enquiry and the relationship of the research to the broader aspects of the field of study; and
- (c) the candidate's technical capacity in the field of research.

3.3.5.10 General information on thesis requirements, including guidelines on other forms of the research product (such as creative works) where applicable, is provided in Part 7 and in an appendix to the Gold Book.

Submission of thesis

3.3.5.11 A doctoral candidate will submit three¹¹ copies of the completed thesis to the relevant administrative officer, who will arrange the examination. Requirements for thesis submission are set out in Part 7.

Thesis examiners

3.3.5.12 There shall be a minimum of two examiners for each doctoral thesis. The URDC may appoint additional examiners on advice from the DRDC as appropriate. In the case of a professional doctorate, the URDC, on the recommendation of the DRDC acting on the advice of the supervisor, may appoint a jury or other professional panel of three or more members to examine a creative professional work.

3.3.5.13 A person shall not be appointed to be an examiner of a doctoral thesis if the person:

- (a) has acted as the candidate's supervisor in any capacity; or
- (b) has provided substantial advice to a candidate in the preparation of the thesis.

3.3.5.14 All examiners of a doctoral thesis will be external to the University.

3.3.5.15 At least one examiner shall be a member of academic staff at a tertiary institution. At least one examiner shall have a doctoral degree. All examiners should have recognised research or professional reputations in the relevant field.

Oral examination

3.3.5.16 Requirements and procedures relating to oral examination of a doctoral thesis are set out in 3.2.5.15-17.

¹¹ Additional copies of the thesis will be required if the number of examiners exceeds the minimum of two.

Resolving discrepant recommendations by examiners

3.3.5.17 Procedures for resolving differences of opinion between examiners that cannot be resolved by the Committee, if required as part of the doctoral thesis examination process, are the same for PhD and professional doctorates by research – see 3.2.5.18-22.

Examination result and course completion

3.3.5.18 The URDC will consider the examination reports and determine the examination result for a professional doctorate by research thesis or its equivalent in another medium. The result will be an ungraded Pass or Fail.

3.3.5.19 The URDC will:

- (a) determine the result of the professional doctorate program by considering the recommended result for the thesis (or its equivalent in another medium) together with advice from the DRDC that the coursework component of the program and any other requirements such as the final seminar have been satisfactorily completed; and
- (b) resolve the appropriate advice and recommendation concerning course completion for Academic Board.

3.3.5.20 In exceptional circumstances, where academic requirements for a doctorate have not been met following examination of the thesis, the URDC may recommend to Academic Board that a masters degree be awarded to a doctoral candidate. Procedures for this contingency are set out in 7.8.5.5-6.

3.4 Masters by research

3.4.1 The degree of masters by research and masters degree programs

3.4.1.1 Masters degrees by research are those which involve at least two-thirds of the overall credit point value of the program (ie, for a two year program, at least 33 of the 48 credit points¹²) being devoted to a research project and thesis.¹³

3.4.1.2 Participation in a masters program by research is intended to:

- (a) develop a candidate's knowledge of a chosen field beyond that of a coursework degree;
- (b) allow the candidate to become aware of recent contributions to that field;

¹² In courses that are not yet restructured on the basis of units that are 3 credit points or multiples of 3 credit points, the minimum research content will be 32 credit points.

¹³ Masters degrees *by coursework* are defined as those which are undertaken wholly by coursework or a combination of coursework and thesis, the thesis component comprising less than two thirds of the overall credit point value of the course. Masters degrees by coursework are administered internally by each Academic Division. Policy for Masters by coursework is set out in *Policy and procedures for courses leading to postgraduate coursework degrees*.

- (c) provide the opportunity for the candidate to extend that field through a contribution to knowledge or a new presentation of existing knowledge; and
- (d) train the candidate in research methodology and techniques.

3.4.1.3 Candidates in a masters program by research are encouraged to:

- (a) appreciate the relevance of their work in the broader context of society and the workplace;
- (b) present their findings in a format that can be readily understood and applied by an informed professional on the periphery of the candidate's immediate area of interest;
- (c) develop skills for marshalling support for projects; and
- (d) develop skills for interacting with other researchers and professionals and so be able to contribute constructively to a research or professional team.

3.4.1.4 The research component of masters programs by research will consist of investigation, developmental or creative work supervised by the University. The programs allow similar work to be undertaken in industrial, commercial or governmental organisations.

3.4.1.5 The results of the research component of a masters program by research will be presented as a thesis or, where appropriate guidelines are provided in the course documentation, its equivalent in another medium such as a creative work.¹⁴ The thesis or creative work will either be the sole method of assessment or will be assessed as forming a substantial part of the program.

3.4.1.6 A masters degree thesis:

- (a) will display a sound knowledge of the field of the thesis including recent contributions to that field;
- (b) will demonstrate analytical and critical evaluation skills of a high order;
- (c) will include a substantial critical review of the field; and
- (d) should include an original contribution in the form of a contribution to knowledge or a new presentation of existing knowledge.

3.4.1.7 A masters degree thesis is assessed through submission to external examination.

3.4.1.8 A masters degree is conferred under a name that links it to a particular field of study.

3.4.1.9 The University offers masters degrees by research with honours in certain professional fields.

3.4.1.10 Information on individual masters programs by research is available in the relevant course accreditation document including the Determination of Course Particulars and in the *University Handbook*.

¹⁴ See information on other forms of the research product in 7.3.4.

3.4.2 Structure, content and duration of masters programs by research

Research content

3.4.2.1 In accordance with the DEST definition of a higher degree research course, at least two-thirds of the academic content of a masters program by research (ie 33 of the 48 credit points¹⁵) will be devoted to research work in the form of a research project and thesis. Masters programs by research at UC may be wholly research work or a combination of research and coursework.

Coursework units

3.4.2.2 A masters program by research may include coursework units provided that the overall credit point value of the coursework units is not more than one-third of the overall credit point value of the program, ie for a two-year program, up to 15 of the 48 credit points.¹⁶ All coursework which forms part of the assessment of a higher degree by research must be taken at PG (Postgraduate) level. (Other supporting studies, where required, can be taken at any level.)

3.4.2.3 As a general rule, any required coursework undertaken in a higher degree program by research is expected to be successfully completed before commencing the bulk of the research.

Research education program

3.4.2.4 Candidates in masters programs by research are also required to complete a Research Education Program that enables them to acquire the generic skills and attributes identified as appropriate for graduates of postgraduate research programs at the University of Canberra.¹⁷

Research methodology

3.4.2.5 Masters programs by research will include training in the methodology of research and investigation. This will be addressed as part of the Research Education Program in each candidate's Learning Plan. Formal coursework may be included in the academic requirements for particular research courses.

Minimum duration

3.4.2.6 Subject to the following provisions, the minimum duration of a masters program by research is two years of full-time study or its equivalent in part-time study.

¹⁵ The minimum research content in a course that has not yet been restructured on the basis of units that are 3 credit points or multiples of 3 credit points will be 32 credit points.

¹⁶ The credit point value of the coursework units in a course that has not been restructured on the basis of units that are 3 credit points or multiples of 3 credit points may be up to 16 credit points.

¹⁷ See the statement of *Generic skills and attributes of UC graduates from higher degree by research programs* at http://www.canberra.edu.au/uc/policies/acad/generic_HDR.html

3.4.2.7 The duration of a masters program by research may be reduced with advanced standing (credit). Requirements relating to advanced standing are set out in 3.4.4.6-10.

3.4.2.8 Academic Board may approve exceptions to the normal requirement that, even with the granting of advanced standing, a student must have been enrolled in a masters course by research for a period of not less than one year.¹⁸

Maximum duration

(Note: The maximum period of enrolment in a research program as set out below is not to be confused with the period for which a candidate is funded, which may be different.)

3.4.2.9 For candidates commencing enrolment in a masters program by research from 2003, the maximum period of enrolment for the degree, including time taken to complete any required coursework units, will be two years of full-time study (or part-time equivalent), or pro rata for a combination of part-time and full-time.

3.4.2.10 For candidates enrolled in a masters program by research before 2003, the maximum period of enrolment for the degree, including time taken to complete any required coursework units, will be three years of full-time study (or part-time equivalent), or pro rata for a combination of part-time and full-time. The DRDC may grant a further six months if, in its opinion, the candidate is likely to be able to submit the thesis during the additional period of candidature.

3.4.2.11 In accordance with the *Courses and Awards (Courses of Study) Rules 2005*,¹⁹ the DRDC may, on the recommendation of the appropriate Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Division, approve, in respect of a student, the extension of a period or periods specified in the Register of Courses in relation to a course undertaken by the student.

3.4.2.12 While the maximum period of enrolment is as specified above, normal University practice would seek completion of a masters course by research in two years full-time study or equivalent.

3.4.3 Course accreditation and review of masters programs by research

3.4.3.1 Procedures for course accreditation and review of masters programs are the same as for professional doctorate programs by research – see 3.3.3 above.

3.4.4 Admission to masters programs by research

Admission requirements

3.4.4.1 An applicant seeking admission to a masters degree program by research shall:

¹⁸ *Courses and Awards (Courses of Study) Rules 2005*, paragraph 11(3) at

<http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/legislation/rules/current/courses-awards-courses-study-rules05>

¹⁹ *Courses and Awards (Courses of Study) Rules 2005*, paragraph 17(3).

- (a) have completed a bachelor degree with honours or an honours degree at H1 or H2A level in an appropriate field of study; and
- (b) have had such practical or work experience as is specified for admission to a particular program in the Determination of Course Particulars and published in the *University Handbook*;

OR

- (c) have completed –
 - (i) a three-year bachelor degree (or an award deemed to be its equivalent) with above average performance in an appropriate field of study, *or*
 - (ii) a four-year bachelor degree in an appropriate field of study, *or*
 - (iii) an honours degree at H2B or H3 level in an appropriate field of study, *or*
 - (iv) a three-year degree in any field of study followed by a graduate diploma in the same field as the masters program by research; *and*
- (d) meet any other academic requirements such as bridging studies; *and*
- (e) demonstrate capacity and/or aptitude for research in accordance with 3.4.4.2; *and*
- (f) have had such practical or work experience as is specified for admission to a particular program in the Determination of Course Particulars and published in the *University Handbook*.

3.4.4.2 Capacity and/or aptitude for research as specified in 3.4.4.1(e) may be demonstrated through:

- (a) honours work or a research project completed as part of the bachelor degree or graduate diploma; or
- (b) research-related work experience that demonstrates capacity for research; or
- (c) evidence that the applicant –
 - (i) has the ability to use clear written and oral communication skills in order to outline a complex idea clearly, and to present an argument logically, and
 - (ii) has analytical and conceptual skills, and
 - (iii) has the ability to organise their own learning and apply new skills, and
 - (iv) has the ability to take responsibility and to carry out agreed tasks and to meet deadlines.

3.4.4.3 On the recommendation of the Academic Division, Academic Board may approve special admission requirements for a specific masters program by research consistent with requirements for the program as a whole. The relevant Division is responsible for determining any special admission requirements to a specific program through the course accreditation process.

3.4.4.4 Although the University does not offer masters qualifying courses, in some cases it provides a postgraduate diploma course which is designed as the entry point for a masters program by research. In these and other instances, the University may also provide graduate diplomas or bridging programs (see 3.4.4.11). These are intended to

facilitate entry for international candidates or candidates whose initial tertiary qualifications are in a field other than that of the masters degree program.

3.4.4.5 Where an applicant does not hold the necessary formal qualifications but:

- (a) has achieved a level of membership of an appropriate professional body where that level is normally granted to graduates, and/or has made an outstanding contribution in the relevant professional field; *and*
- (b) has had a significant period of work experience (normally at least five years) in a relevant field, perhaps including substantial short course training; *and*
- (c) can demonstrate capacity and/or aptitude for research in accordance with 3.4.4.2(b) or (c) above;

the applicant may, on a case-by-case basis, be granted special entry by the URDC in accordance with the Admission Rules.²⁰

Advanced standing

3.4.4.6 Advanced standing (credit) in regard to an application for admission to a masters program by research should only be granted on a unit-by-unit basis for any coursework or research training component, and may only be granted for units undertaken at PG level. Except in the case of an applicant with a partly completed higher degree by research in the same field (see 3.4.4.9) advanced standing is not available for any part of the research component of the program.²¹

3.4.4.7 Subject to the academic requirements of the program, the DRDC, on the recommendation of the relevant course convener, may grant advanced standing for part or all of the coursework component of a masters program by research (depending on the size of coursework component, up to one-third of the program or a maximum of 15 credit points in a 48 credit point program²²) in the case of an applicant with:

- (a) a masters degree by coursework in the relevant research area, where the units on which advanced standing will be based were undertaken at PG level; or
- (b) any coursework component of a degree, graduate certificate, graduate or postgraduate diploma, or the equivalent, where the units on which advanced standing will be based were undertaken at PG level.

3.4.4.8 Where advanced standing has been granted in accordance with 3.4.4.7, details should be recorded in DRDC minutes. Documentary evidence (including the course convener's recommendation) should be retained on the student's file.

²⁰ At meeting No. 85 on 4 December 2002, Council approved the designation by Academic Board of the URDC as an "admissions committee" for the purpose of admitting students to programs which lead to higher degrees by research (within the meaning of Rule 7 (2) of the *Admission Rules 1995*). (Council resolution C85/11)

²¹ See DEST definition of a higher degree research course and guidelines on what may and may not be included in the research content in 1.2.2.

²² Advanced standing of up to 16 credit points may be granted in a course that has not been restructured on the basis of units that are 3 credit points or multiples of 3 credit points.

3.4.4.9 Subject to compliance with DEST requirements for the research content of a research course, advanced standing may be granted for part of the research component of a masters program to an applicant with a partly completed research degree in the same field (eg a student transferring from another institution). (See also requirements relating to course transfer in Part 5.)

3.4.4.10 Academic Board may approve exceptions to the normal requirement that, even with the granting of advanced standing in accordance with provisions of this section, a student must have been enrolled in a masters course by research for a period of not less than one year.²³ (See statements on Minimum duration above.)

Bridging requirements

3.4.4.11 The DRDC, on the recommendation of the relevant course convener, may require a candidate to complete a bridging program as an additional condition of admission (see 3.4.4.4). Such bridging programs do not form part of the masters program and may be taken at an undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate level.

3.4.5 Examination and completion in masters programs by research

3.4.5.1 The DRDC is responsible for final assessment in masters programs by research. (For detailed advice on examination and completion in all programs see Part 7.) This responsibility includes:

- (a) appointing examiners for the thesis;
- (b) overseeing arrangements for thesis examinations and the quality and efficiency of the examination process;
- (c) considering examiners' reports and deciding the result of the thesis examination (URDC endorsement is required in the case of a Fail result – see 3.4.5.19); and
- (d) certifying and reporting course completion to the Divisional Education Committee to enable the recommendation to Academic Board that the degree be awarded.

Thesis requirements

3.4.5.2 As noted in 3.4.1.5, the results of the research in a masters program by research are presented as a thesis or its equivalent in another medium.

3.4.5.3 A masters degree thesis:

- (a) will display a sound knowledge of the field of the thesis including recent contributions to that field;
- (b) will demonstrate analytical and critical evaluation skills of a high order;
- (c) will include a substantial critical review of the field; and
- (d) should include an original contribution in the form of a contribution to knowledge or a new presentation of existing knowledge.

²³ *Courses and Awards (Courses of Study) Rules* 2005, paragraph 11(3) at <http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/legislation/rules/current/courses-awards-courses-study-rules05>

- 3.4.5.4** A masters by research thesis is expected to contain material suitable for publication either in its own right or in part.
- 3.4.5.5** A masters by research thesis will be well ordered and satisfactory in its literary presentation.
- 3.4.5.6** The criteria in 3.4.5.3-5 are used for the examination report on a masters by research thesis. Each examiner is asked to indicate whether, in her or his judgment, the thesis:
- (a) displays a sound knowledge of the field of the thesis including recent contributions to that field;*
 - (b) demonstrates analytical and critical evaluation skills of a high order;*
 - (c) includes a substantial critical review of the field;*
 - (d) includes an original contribution in the form of a contribution to knowledge or a new presentation of existing knowledge;*
 - (e) contains material suitable for publication either in its own right or in part; and*
 - (f) is well-ordered and satisfactory in its literary presentation.*
- 3.4.5.7** The masters thesis should demonstrate that the candidate is conversant with well known and well tried techniques of research and has the ability to make logical and considered judgements. The level of competence displayed should be that which would be adequate for applied research or for the more routine types of pure research. The thesis should be the candidate's own work and, in that sense, should be original. As noted above, the thesis is expected to provide a contribution to knowledge or a new presentation of existing knowledge.
- 3.4.5.8** General information on thesis requirements, including guidelines for other forms of the research product such as creative works, is provided in Part 7 and in an appendix to the Gold Book.
- 3.4.5.9** The examination criteria in 3.4.5.6 are modified for a masters by research thesis incorporating creative production or in the form of a creative work (see 7.3.4). In this case each examiner is asked to indicate whether, in her or his judgment, the thesis:
- (a) displays a sound knowledge of the field of the thesis including recent contributions to that field;*
 - (b) demonstrates analytical and creative skills of a high order;*
 - (c) includes an original contribution in the form of a contribution to knowledge and creative practice, or a new presentation of existing knowledge;*
 - (d) contains material suitable for publication or exhibition either in its own right or in part;*
 - (e) demonstrates that the creative and exegetical components are in a symbiotic relationship, in so far as the theory informs practice and vice versa; and*
 - (f) is well ordered and satisfactory in its presentation.*

Submission of thesis

3.4.5.10 A masters by research candidate will submit three copies of the thesis to the secretary of the Divisional Research Degrees Committee, who will arrange the examination. Requirements for thesis submission are set out in Part 7.

Thesis examiners

3.4.5.11 There shall be two examiners for each masters by research thesis. In exceptional circumstances the DRDC may approve additional examiners (see also 3.4.5.12).

3.4.5.12 Where the research product of a masters by research program may take a form other than a thesis, for example a creative work, the DRDC, acting on the advice of the chair of the supervisory panel and the course convener, may appoint a jury or other professional panel of two or more members to examine a creative work.

3.4.5.13 A person shall not be appointed to be an examiner of a masters by research thesis if the person:

- (a) has acted as the candidate's supervisor in any capacity; or
- (b) has provided substantial advice to a candidate in the preparation of the thesis.

3.4.5.14 Both examiners of a masters by research thesis will be external to the University.

3.4.5.15 At least one examiner shall be a member of academic staff at a tertiary institution who has a higher degree by research. Both examiners should have recognised research or professional reputations in the relevant field.

Examination process, result and course completion

3.4.5.16 The DRDC will consider the examination reports to determine the result for a masters by research thesis.

3.4.5.17 Where the DRDC considers that there is a serious difference of opinion between examiners in their assessment of a masters thesis by research, the DRDC will:

- (a) seek further clarification from one or both examiners; *and/or*
- (b) appoint a third examiner to examine the thesis, in accordance with procedures set out in 3.2.5.20; *or*
- (c) appoint an external adjudicator who is an expert in the field of the thesis, in accordance with conditions and procedures in 3.2.5.21; *and then*
- (d) take all reports into account in deciding the result for the thesis.

3.4.5.18 At the completion of the examination process and after considering all relevant reports the DRDC will determine the result for a masters by research thesis. The result will be an ungraded Pass or Fail.

3.4.5.19 Where the DRDC decides that a masters by research thesis should be given a Fail result, the Committee must seek URDC endorsement before making the appropriate

recommendation to Academic Board. 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.

3.4.5.20 The DRDC will:

- (a) determine the result of a masters program by research by considering the recommended result for the thesis or its equivalent in another medium, the result of any coursework required as part of the program and advice on any other requirements such as the final seminar; and
- (b) provide advice and recommendation concerning course completion to the Divisional Education Committee to enable the appropriate recommendation to be made to Academic Board (see 7.9.1).