Higher Degree by Research Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This policy states the requirements of Charles Sturt University (the University) for students' candidature for higher degrees by research.

(2) It is intended to achieve the following:

a. University compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF) and other legislative requirements in relation to research training.
b. In accordance with HESF standard 1.4, on completion of their candidature, candidates will have demonstrated specific and generic learning outcomes related to research, including:
    i. a detailed understanding of the specific topic of their research, within a broad understanding of the field of research
    ii. capacity to scope, design and conduct research projects independently
    iii. technical research skills and competence in the application of research methods, and
    iv. skills in analysis, critical evaluation and reporting of research, and in presentation, publication and dissemination of their research.
c. In accordance with HESF standard 4.2, provide guidance for the:
    i. rights and responsibilities of candidates and supervisors
    ii. induction and orientation of candidates and supervisors to their roles
    iii. monitoring of the progress of candidates
    iv. assessment and examination of candidates' work
    v. independence of examiners
    vi. presentation and communication of research outputs by candidates, and
    vii. resolution of disputes.
d. Higher degrees by research offered by the University are consistent with the levels of skills and knowledge, and qualification specifications, stated by the Australian Qualifications Framework (Second Edition January 2013) for these levels and types of award.
e. Where awards are offered jointly with a partner institution, or candidates are partly supervised by a partner institution, there is appropriate approval and quality assurance of such arrangements, balanced with some flexibility to accommodate partners' equivalent policies.
f. Higher degree by research (HDR) candidates are well supervised by an appropriately qualified supervisory team.
g. HDR candidates are only admitted to full candidature after rigorous scrutiny of their proposed research and confirmation that appropriate supervision and research facilities are available for their proposed project.
h. The University complies with legislative requirements for the provision of Australian Government Research Training Program–funded scholarships.
i. There is regular monitoring of HDR candidates' progress and standard of work.
j. There is a fair process for terminating HDR candidature where a candidate fails to maintain satisfactory progress.

k. Examination of candidates' work submitted for examination is rigorous and impartial.

Scope

(3) This policy applies to all HDR courses offered by the University.

(4) Some aspects of requirements for HDR courses are stated by other policies and procedures:

a. the Admissions Policy and Admissions - Entry Requirements (Higher Degrees by Research) Procedure state entry requirements for HDR courses
b. the Course and Subject Procedure - Coursework Design states subject design requirements for coursework subjects in HDR courses
c. the Academic Staff Qualifications and Expectations Procedure states:
    i. required levels of qualification for supervision of HDR candidates, and
    ii. the process for assessment of a person's qualifications and experience as equivalent to the required level of qualification.

References

(5) Where supporting documents are referenced in this policy, they will be listed in the associated information tab.

Section 2 - Policy

Academic governance of HDR courses

(6) Academic governance and oversight of research training and higher degree by research courses are set out in:

a. Governance (Academic Senate) Rule
b. University Research Committee Membership and Terms of Reference
c. Academic Quality Policy
d. Course and Subject Policy

Requirements for types of course

Doctoral courses

(7) Doctor of philosophy courses and professional doctorates require candidates to:

a. apply a substantial body of knowledge to research, investigate and develop new knowledge in one or more fields of investigation, scholarship or professional practice, and
b. present their work in a thesis which demonstrates advanced theoretical and methodological knowledge and that the research makes an original and significant contribution to knowledge, understanding or professional practice.

(8) Requirements specific to doctor of philosophy or to professional doctorate courses follow.

Doctor of philosophy

(9) Candidates for a doctor of philosophy must undertake original and significant research on an approved topic.

(10) There are two modes of candidature for a doctor of philosophy:

a. Typical candidature, whereby the candidate undertakes a research project and develops a thesis or thesis by publication reporting on it.
b. Thesis by prior publication candidature, whereby the candidate is enrolled for a shorter period of candidature, after being admitted on the understanding that they will submit previous publications with supplementary chapters or an essay that integrates the work and places the publications into the context of the research question instead of a single unpublished thesis; the research and publications must have been completed before they begin their candidature.

(11) Where candidates undertake the thesis by publication or thesis by prior publication, they must:

a. demonstrate the originality and significance of the body of research published or submitted for publication,
b. present these publications and supplementary chapters or essay that integrates the work and places the publications into the context of the research question, in the thesis, and
c. clearly demonstrate the candidate's contribution to the published papers. A statement must be provided about the candidate's contribution to specific elements of the published papers, including: (1) proportion contribution to the writing of each section of each paper; and (2) proportion contribution to each of the analyses or experimental procedures in the paper. This statement must be verified by each of the co-authors of each paper.

Professional doctorate

(12) In addition to the requirements in clause (7) for all doctoral courses, candidates for a professional doctorate must conduct research into a current problem or issue relevant to the practice of their profession. The thesis must:

a. comprise at least 66% of the volume of learning of the course, and
b. make a substantial contribution to professional practice.

(13) The coursework subjects for the course must support the student in achieving research-integrated practice and research outcomes.

Master by research

(14) Candidates for a master by research must:

a. undertake research on an approved topic, and
b. present their research in a thesis which demonstrates appropriate theoretical and methodological knowledge. The research must make a distinct contribution to knowledge of the subject.

Higher doctorates

(15) The University may award a higher doctorate (Doctor of Letters or Doctor of Science) to an applicant who has made an internationally recognised, original contribution to knowledge, surpassing the standard of work required for the award of a doctor of philosophy. See the Higher Doctorate Procedure for more information.

Honorary doctorates

(16) The University may also confer honorary doctorates on people who have made an outstanding contribution to education, society, the public good, scholarship and/or professional practice. Such awards will be unambiguously identified as an honorary qualification. The Governance (Honorary Awards and Titles) Rule states requirements for awarding honorary awards.

Dual and joint HDR awards

(17) For the University to approve candidature for a dual or joint HDR award, the relevant type of partnership agreement as defined in the University Partnerships Policy must have been approved.

(18) Dual and joint award agreements must be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (Performance and Governance) and their counterpart at the partner university.

(19) For the University to enter a dual or joint award agreement with another university, the University Partnerships Procedure must be followed and there must be satisfactory evidence that:

a. there is already a research relationship between the two universities
b. the other university is accredited to confer the same award or its national equivalent of the award
c. the arrangements address quality assurance of the candidate's research training and compliance with the HESF standards
d. the agreement will advance the University's research strategy.

(20) Candidates cannot undertake a joint doctor of philosophy award on the basis of prior publications.

(21) The Higher Degree by Research Procedure states additional requirements for candidature that are specific to dual and/or joint awards, including:

a. enrolment and fees
b. supervision arrangements and their approval
c. approval of, and effects of, changes to research topic
d. termination of candidature
e. thesis requirements, and
f. examination of theses.

(22) The Admissions - Entry Requirements (Higher Degrees by Research) Procedure states the entry requirements for joint and dual HDR courses.

Policy exceptions for dual or joint award agreements

(23) In negotiating a dual award agreement, it may be necessary for the University to agree on exceptions to policies on HDR awards and HDR candidature, where Charles Sturt University requirements conflict with those of the partner university in areas such as enrolment, progress, probation, confirmation or duration of candidature, theses and examination. Where an agreement includes such an exception:

a. the agreement must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research), and
b. the policy exception must be reported to University Research Committee and, via that committee's minutes, to Academic Senate.

Minimum and maximum periods of candidature

(24) The Higher Degree by Research Procedure states:

a. rules for calculating a candidate's period of candidature, and
b. the effect of approved leave on this calculation.

(25) The Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services may approve an exception to the minimum or maximum periods of candidature stated below, for an individual candidate, where there are exceptional

circumstances, on the recommendation of the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies).

Doctor of philosophy and professional doctorate periods of candidature

(26) For a doctor of philosophy or professional doctorate where the entire candidature is completed at Charles Sturt University:

a. the candidate must complete at least three years of full-time candidature or part-time equivalent before the thesis may be submitted for examination, unless:
    i. a panel of experts agrees that the thesis is ready to be submitted for examination earlier. The panel will consist of the Sub Dean (Graduate Studies), the Associate Dean (Research) and a disciplinary expert (internal or external) appointed by the Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) and endorsed by the Executive Dean, and
    ii. the early submission is endorsed by the Executive Dean and approved by the Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services
b. the candidate must submit the thesis for examination within four years of full-time candidature or part-time equivalent.

(27) For a doctor of philosophy or professional doctorate where the candidature was started at another institution:

a. the candidate must complete at least three years of full-time candidature or part-time equivalent, with at least one year of full-time candidature or part-time equivalent at Charles Sturt University, before the thesis may be submitted for examination. An earlier submission may be allowed under the same conditions stated in clause (26)a, and
b. the candidate must submit the thesis for examination within four years of full-time candidature or part-time equivalent, including any period of candidature at the other institution.

Doctor of philosophy/thesis by prior publication periods of candidature

(28) Notwithstanding clause (26)-(27), where a candidate is admitted to a doctor of philosophy on the basis that they will submit a thesis by prior publication, they must:

a. complete at least six months of full-time candidature or part-time equivalent before the thesis may be submitted for examination, and
b. submit the thesis for examination within one year of full-time candidature or part-time equivalent.

Master by research periods of candidature

(29) Candidates for a master by research:

a. cannot submit the thesis for examination until they have completed at least one year of full-time candidature or part-time equivalent, and
b. must submit the thesis for examination within two years of full-time candidature or part-time equivalent.

Higher doctorate periods of candidature

(30) There are no maximum or minimum periods of candidature for the award of a higher doctorate.

Admission

(31) The Admissions Policy and Admissions - Entry Requirements (Higher Degrees by Research) Procedure state the entry requirements for HDR courses.

(32) The Admissions Procedure states the process for applications for admission to HDR courses and approval of these applications.

Induction and training

(33) The Office of Research Services will provide each new HDR candidate with an induction, irrespective of their educational background, entry pathway, study mode or study load. This will cover the University's code of conduct for research, research ethics, research data management, authorship, copyright, and intellectual property.

(34) The candidate's principal supervisor will supplement this induction with an induction into discipline-specific and research facility-specific matters the candidate needs to understand to undertake their research.

(35) Candidates will be encouraged to responsibly publish and disseminate their research findings and outputs, and will be provided with training opportunities and support to achieve this.

Australian Government Research Training Program–funded scholarships

(36) The University provides Australian Government Research Training Program (AGRTP)–funded scholarships on behalf of the Commonwealth Government.

(37) A number of scholarships are available to encourage participation of candidates from identified groups, including First Nations Australian candidates, international candidates and return to study candidates.

(38) The Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) approves the award of an AGRTP-funded scholarship to an individual candidate, on the recommendation of the Higher Degree by Research Scholarships Committee.

(39) The Higher Degree by Research Scholarships Procedure - Australian Government Research Training Program Funded Scholarships states the University's rules for administering these scholarships, and how the University uses its discretion under the legislation governing these scholarships.

(40) Should the policy or procedure be inconsistent with the legislation, the legislation overrules the policy or procedure.

(41) The University awards AGRTP-funded scholarships to candidates of exceptional research potential who are undertaking a master by research, doctor of philosophy or professional doctorate course.

Enrolment

(42) The Enrolment and Fees Policy states requirements for enrolment in courses, including HDR courses.

(43) The Higher Degree by Research Procedure states enrolment-related requirements specific to HDR courses.

Academic integrity and academic and research misconduct

(44) The Academic Integrity Policy states:

a. the University’s expectations of staff and students to practise and maintain academic integrity, which includes research integrity, and
b. their responsibilities in relation to this, including the responsibility of academic staff to report instances of suspected academic misconduct or research misconduct by students for investigation under the Student Misconduct Rule 2020.

(45) The Research Policy:

a. defines the University's code of research conduct, and
b. states detailed requirements for researchers (including HDR candidates) to ensure research integrity and research safety.

(46) The Student Misconduct Rule 2020 states:

a. detailed definitions of types of academic misconduct (cheating, collusion, plagiarism) and research misconduct
b. process requirements and time-frames for academic misconduct allegations, investigations and decisions
c. penalties that appointed officers, specific senior roles and student misconduct committees may apply where they find that academic misconduct has occurred, and
d. grounds and the process for appeals against academic misconduct decisions.

Candidates' responsibilities

(47) The Higher Degree by Research Procedure states candidates' rights and responsibilities in undertaking their candidature.

Supervision

Register of supervisors

(48) The Office of Research Services will maintain a register of supervisors for the University, containing names and other relevant details of persons who may be appointed as a principal supervisor or as a co-supervisor.

(49) The Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services will approve the addition of supervisors to the register on the recommendation of a Sub Dean (Graduate Studies).

(50) To be added to the register, a proposed supervisor will normally have satisfied the conditions for addition to the register stated in the Higher Degree by Research Procedure.

Appointment of supervisors

(51) For each candidate, the Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services will appoint, on the recommendation of the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies), a supervisory team comprising:

a. a principal supervisor, who must normally be an academic staff member of the University or partner institution and listed on the university register of supervisors, and
b. one or more co-supervisors.

(52) For a dual award candidate, the principal supervisor for the candidate's enrolment at the partner university may be a staff member of the partner university, who meets the partner university's requirements to be a principal supervisor.

(53) For any candidate, an external expert may be appointed as a co-supervisor if they have expertise in the particular area of research or profession.

(54) The Higher Degree by Research Procedure states detailed requirements for appointment of supervisors.

Responsibilities of supervisors and the Sub Dean (Graduate Studies)

(55) Each supervisor must:

a. declare conflicts of interest, including a personal relationship with the candidate, to the Head of School (or

equivalent) or their delegate and Sub Dean (Graduate Studies), and

b. ensure their actions are consistent with the Universities Australia Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships.

(56) The principal supervisor is:

a. responsible for leading the supervisory team, and
b. accountable for the candidate's supervision and progress to the Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) of the faculty in which the candidature is based.

(57) The Higher Degree by Research Procedure states the responsibilities of principal supervisors in more detail and states the responsibilities of co-supervisors.

(58) If a supervisor does not meet one or more of the responsibilities of their role, the Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services, on the recommendation of the Sub Dean (Graduate Studies), may:

a. set conditions on which a principal supervisor can continue as principal supervisor
b. set conditions on which a co-supervisor can continue as a co-supervisor
c. appoint a replacement principal supervisor and:
    i. appoint the original principal supervisor instead as a co-supervisor
    ii. remove the original principal supervisor from the supervisory team
    iii. downgrade the principal supervisor to co-supervisor only on the university supervisors register, and/or
    iv. remove the principal supervisor from the university supervisors register
d. appoint a replacement co-supervisor and:
    i. remove a co-supervisor as co-supervisor of the candidate
    ii. remove a co-supervisor from the university supervisors register.

(59) The Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) is responsible for monitoring the progress of HDR candidates in their faculty.

Absence or departure of supervisors

(60) The Higher Degree by Research Procedure states what measures will be taken where a candidate's principal supervisor or co-supervisor is unable to provide supervision.

Probationary candidature

(61) Each candidate will begin their candidature on a probationary basis, unless the Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services approves an exception, on the recommendation of the Sub Dean (Graduate Studies). An exception may be approved, for example, where:

a. the candidate has been admitted on the basis that they will submit a thesis by prior publication, or
b. the candidate has transferred their candidature from another institution where they were already confirmed as a full candidate, and the faculty and Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services consider their research is at a sufficient standard for full candidature.

(62) Probationary candidature will normally last up to one full-time year or part-time equivalent.

(63) The relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies), in consultation with the principal supervisor, will specify the conditions of probation as part of their recommendation to admit the candidate.

(64) Candidates' needs and preparedness will be assessed, and formative feedback provided, to enable additional

support needs to be identified and for the candidate to be referred to academic or other support as required.

(65) During their probationary candidature, candidates must:

a. participate in the online induction seminar run by the Office of Research Services, within their first session of enrolment
b. complete all academic and research integrity training required by the Academic Integrity Policy
c. complete a draft review or synopsis of literature to a standard approved by the supervisory team
d. present a seminar on their proposed research topic
e. submit an initial expectations and communications plan within the first six weeks of candidature
f. complete an individual development plan within the first six months of candidature
g. submit a research proposal and response to reviewers' comments on the proposal
h. submit a data management plan, and
i. meet any other conditions of the probationary candidature specified by the faculty.

Confirmation of candidature

(66) A probationary candidate's research proposal will be reviewed by a panel, which will recommend one of the following outcomes to the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) for decision:

a. Passed with no changes.
b. Passed, subject to changes: the report will indicate the required changes, which must be made to the satisfaction of the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies).
c. Re-submitted: the candidate must complete the extra work and revisions identified as necessary by the panel, and resubmit the proposal for review by at least two reviewers. The candidate will normally have to present the revised proposal at a seminar. Only one resubmission will be permitted.
d. Failed: where the candidate fails, they will be asked to show cause why their candidature should be allowed to continue: see the 'Termination of candidature' section in this policy.
    i. where the candidate is for a doctor of philosophy award, the panel may recommend that the candidate be invited to undertake for a masters by research award.

Change of research focus

(67) Once a research proposal has been passed, the research focus or theme may only be changed with the approval of:

a. the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies)
b. if the change will require a change to the candidate's school and/or supervisory team, the Head of School (or equivalent) or their delegate, and
c. if the change will require a change to the candidature's field of research or duration, the Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services, on the Sub-Dean's recommendation.

Progress

(68) Candidates are expected to undertake their research and thesis preparation all year unless on approved sessional leave or on the types of leave described in the 'Leave' section of this policy.

(69) The relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) will monitor a candidate's progress during their probationary candidature, in consultation with the candidate and their principal supervisor. Progress will be monitored through the development of the candidate's expectations and communications plan, individual development plan and probation

requirements.

(70) The candidate must submit a progress report every six months, for:

a. comment and endorsement by their principal supervisor, and
b. consideration by the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) and Office of Research Services.

(71) From their review of a candidate's progress report or reports, and on the recommendation of the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies), the Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services or their nominee may:

a. approve continuation of the candidature
b. take other actions including imposing conditions on which the candidature may continue, or
c. ask the candidate to show cause why their candidature should continue: see the 'Termination of candidature' section in this policy.

Leave

(72) The University expects an HDR candidate to be undertaking their research and thesis preparation for their candidature on any weekday when the University is open, other than when they are on approved leave.

(73) A candidate may have:

a. up to 20 working days of recreation leave per year
b. leave for up to one session at a time, where this is necessary to meet family or employment commitments, or because of adverse circumstances, and
c. up to a total of two sessions of leave during their candidature.

(74) The Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services may approve a request for leave from an HDR candidate, on the recommendation of the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies).

(75) The Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services may approve a request for leave beyond the limits stated in subclauses (73)b. and c. where there are exceptional circumstances.

(76) The Higher Degree by Research Procedure states more detailed conditions for approval of leave and how it affects the candidature period.

(77) The Higher Degree by Research Scholarships Procedure - Australian Government Research Training Program Funded Scholarships states the types of paid leave a recipient of such a scholarship may have: that is, leave during which payment of a scholarship stipend will continue.

Withdrawing after census

(78) A candidate who wishes to withdraw from a subject after the census date has passed must apply for either:

a. Late Withdrawal (LW) or
b. Approved Withdrawal (AW)

(79) The Higher Degree by Research Procedure states the application process for, and effects of, late withdrawal and approved withdrawal.

Termination of candidature

(80) The relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) will advise the Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research

Services if a candidate is not making satisfactory progress or has failed to comply with university policies or procedures relevant to their candidature.

(81) Unsatisfactory progress may be:

a. a low standard of work, suggesting that the candidate will not be able to complete the course successfully, and/or
b. slow progress of the work, suggesting that the candidate will not complete the course within the maximum period of candidature.

(82) A probationary candidate's progress will be considered unsatisfactory if the outcome of the review of their research proposal is a fail.

(83) Where a candidate is identified as not making satisfactory progress and/or in breach of relevant policies or procedures, the Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services will:

a. send the candidate a notice:
    i. inviting them to show cause why their candidature should be allowed to continue, and
    ii. if they are studying on an Australian student visa, warning them that if the University terminates their candidature, it will report this to the Department of Home Affairs, which may cause their visa to be cancelled, and
b. allow them one month from the date of notice in which to respond, before the decision whether to terminate their candidature is made.

(84) If the candidate:

a. responds by the deadline, the Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services:
    i. will consider their response and decide whether to allow the candidate to continue, and
    ii. if the decision is to allow the candidate to continue, may set conditions the candidate must meet or else have the candidature terminated at a later date, or
b. does not respond by the deadline:
    i. if they are not studying on an Australian student visa, their candidature will be terminated, or
    ii. if they are studying on an Australian student visa, they will be allowed 20 working days in which to seek a review by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (Performance and Governance) the decision to terminate their candidature.

Conversion of candidature to a different award

(85) A candidate for a doctor of philosophy or professional doctorate award may convert to candidature for a master by research award, where progress reports, reviewed research proposal or examiners' reports indicate that the candidate's work is at a standard more appropriate for the lower award.

(86) Such conversions are approved:

a. as a solution to progress concerns, by the Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services on the recommendation of the candidate's principal supervisor and the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies), with the candidate's written agreement, or
b. as an outcome of the examination process, by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research), on the recommendation of an examination committee, with the candidate's written agreement.

(87) A candidate for a master by research or professional doctorate award may convert to candidature for a doctor of philosophy award where there is agreement that the candidate's work is at a standard appropriate to the higher award, however not prior to when confirmation of candidature is approved.

(88) Such conversions are approved by the Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services on the recommendation of the candidate's principal supervisor and Sub Dean (Graduate Studies), and/or with endorsement from the reviewers during the confirmation process, with the candidate's written agreement.

(89) The Higher Degree by Research Scholarships Procedure - Australian Government Research Training Program Funded Scholarships states the conditions on which a scholarship recipient may continue to receive a scholarship following such a conversion.

Submission of examinable work

(90) The thesis submitted by a candidate for examination for a higher degree by research award must comply with the detailed thesis requirements stated in the Higher Degree by Research Procedure.

(91) A candidate will give their principal supervisor at least 30 calendar days notice of their intention to submit the thesis so that the supervisor can submit the appointment of examiners form and examiners can be appointed in good time.

Readiness for examination

(92) A candidate will normally submit their thesis to the Office of Research Services once they and their principal supervisor agree it is ready for examination.

(93) Where the principal supervisor does not agree with the candidate that the thesis is ready for examination, the candidate may take any or all of the following steps:

a. Attempt to resolve the matter with the principal supervisor.
b. Request that a committee is appointed to arbitrate. The committee will:
    i. comprise the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) (chair), the head of the relevant school or their nominee, and up to two experts in the relevant discipline who may be staff of the University or external to it, and
    ii. recommend that the candidate:
        - may submit the thesis for examination
        - needs to prepare the thesis further, or
        - complete another action appropriate to the situation.
c. Submit the thesis for examination without agreement of the supervisor or the committee.

(94) Where a candidate submits the thesis for examination without approval of the supervisor or committee, the Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services will proceed as stated under the 'Examination of the work' section in this policy. The examiners will not be notified that the thesis has been submitted without agreement.

Examination of the work

(95) The Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services will appoint examiners based on the recommendation of the principal supervisor and endorsement of the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) and the proposed examiners' curricula vitae. If a conflict of interest occurs, where the Sub-Dean is the principal supervisor, then the Associate Dean (Research) for the appropriate faculty will endorse the proposed examiners.

(96) Three external examiners will be appointed to examine each HDR thesis.

(97) Examiners must:

a. be of high academic standing in the field of the candidate's research (at least two will have international standing in the field of research)
b. hold the level of qualification required by the Academic Staff Qualifications and Expectations Procedure
c. be independent of the conduct of the candidate's research, and
d. not be appointed where there is any conflict of interest as described in the Australian Council of Graduate Research guidelines. Examiners must declare any potential conflict of interest.

(98) If an examiner fails to provide a report on a thesis within 30 calendar days of the expected date of receipt, the Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services may appoint a replacement examiner, on the recommendation of the principal supervisor and the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies).

(99) The Higher Degree by Research Procedure states requirements for:

a. maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the examination process, and
b. payment of honoraria to examiners.

Examination criteria

(100) Examiners will examine a thesis against the requirements for the type of course, considering:

a. whether the standard of the work meets the University's requirements for the type of award stated in the 'Requirements for types of course' section of this policy, and
b. the following specific aspects:
    i. the candidate's understanding of the specific topic of their research and a broad understanding of the field of study
    ii. the originality of the candidate's work
    iii. a demonstration of the capacity to scope, design and conduct research independently
    iv. the significance of the thesis as a contribution to knowledge in the field of study
    v. the adequacy of the research methodology (including technical research skills and competence in applying research methods) and skills in analysis, critical evaluation and reporting of the research, and
    vi. skill in relation to presentation, publication and dissemination, including the worthiness of the thesis for publication.

(101) University Research Committee may approve additional criteria for examination of specific courses on the faculty's recommendation.

(102) The Office of Research Services will provide each examiner with the full set of assessment criteria.

Examiners' recommendations

(103) Each examiner will provide a written report on the thesis and any other examinable work submitted, including a recommendation for the thesis to be:

a. Passed with no amendments: if accepted, this recommendation has the effect that the candidate will pass the degree.
b. Passed subject to minor amendments: the report will indicate the required changes, which must be made to the satisfaction of the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies).
c. Passed subject to substantive amendments: the report will indicate the required changes. Once the candidate

has made these, they will submit a detailed report of the changes made to the thesis to the examination committee of University Research Committee. The thesis and the candidate's response to the examiners will not be referred back to the examiners.

d. Re-submitted: the candidate must complete the extra work and revisions identified as necessary by the examiners' reports. A thesis that must be resubmitted requires changes of such extent, complexity and/or conceptual scale that their adequacy must be assessed again by an examiner or experts.
e. Failed: where the candidate fails, they will not be awarded the higher degree by research.

Consideration of examiners' reports

(104) The Office of Research Services will receive the examiners' reports and, once all have been received, will forward them to the Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services and the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies).

(105) The Sub Dean (Graduate Studies), after considering the reports, will refer them to the principal supervisor, who will provide them to the candidate.

(106) Where the examiners' all recommend a pass (clause (103)a), the Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services will initiate the process to approve and confer the award on the candidate.

(107) Where one or more of the examiners recommend clause (103)b, c, d or e, the candidate will normally have six months in which to provide the faculty with a response to the examiners' reports. The Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services may approve an extension of the deadline or set a new deadline for response in exceptional circumstances.

(108) Where two or more of the examiners recommend clause (103)d or e, the Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services, in consultation with the Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) may waive the requirement for the candidate to respond to examiners and require the candidate to resubmit the work by a specified date. This may require a further period of enrolment.

(109) Where all examiners recommend clause (103)e, the candidate will be failed and will not be allowed to re-submit the thesis in a revised form for the same degree.

(110) The candidate should prepare their response in consultation with their principal supervisor, but it need not reflect the views of the principal supervisor or anyone other than the candidate.

(111) If the candidate does not make satisfactory progress in making required changes, the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) may convene the examination committee to decide whether to recommend termination of the candidature to the Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services: see the 'Termination of candidature' section of this policy.

(112) Where the principal supervisor is satisfied that the candidate has addressed the examiners' comments and made the required changes, they will provide written confirmation of this to the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies).

(113) The Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) will provide the candidate's response to the examiners' reports and a copy of the principal supervisor's endorsement to the Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services, who will either:

a. initiate the process to approve and confer the award on the candidate, or
b. agree that, once the candidate has made minor changes to the satisfaction of the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies), they will initiate the process to approve and confer the award on the candidate, or
c. decide whether the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) or Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research

Services will convene an examination committee to decide the final outcome for the work submitted.

(114) If an examination committee is required to decide the outcome, it will be convened by the Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) or Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services and include:

a. the Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) or Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services as chair. Where Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) is the candidate's supervisor or has another conflict of interest, another chair will be nominated by the Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services, and
b. three appropriately qualified academic staff of the University, appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) or their delegate.

(115) The Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services will have right of audience on any examination committee.

(116) The examination committee may refer decisions to the University Research Committee where it has difficulty reaching agreement or the matter is likely to create a new precedent for such decisions.

(117) The examination committee, under the appropriate terms of reference, will make one of the following recommendations:

a. Once the candidate has made the substantive changes and any other changes to the satisfaction of the examination committee, the award will be conferred.
b. The candidate will be required to resubmit the work by a specified date, which may require a further period of enrolment.
c. Candidates may be called for an interview where the examination committee or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) believes the process would benefit from an interview with the candidate to determine the final examination outcome.
d. An arbiter will be appointed to review the thesis and examiners' reports.
e. The work will be failed, the candidate not be permitted to resubmit, and the candidature be terminated.

(118) Where the candidature is for a doctor of philosophy award, the examination committee may alternatively recommend that the candidate not be awarded this degree, but be invited to revise the thesis and resubmit for examination for a master by research award.

Resubmission and re-examination

(119) The candidate will have six months in which to resubmit unless the Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services approves a different deadline on the recommendation of the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies).

(120) The candidate must be enrolled in an appropriate subject for their course while they prepare the resubmission.

(121) The Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services may, on the recommendation of the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies), appoint a replacement principal supervisor and/or an additional co-supervisor to support the candidate in preparing their resubmission.

(122) The examiners of a resubmitted thesis will normally be the original examiners if they agree to examine again.

(123) Once the candidate has submitted the revised thesis for examination, the examiners will make one of the following recommendations: that the thesis be:

a. Passed with no amendments: if accepted, this recommendation has the effect that the candidate will pass the degree.

b. Passed subject to minor amendments: the report will indicate the required changes, which must be made to the satisfaction of the Sub Dean (Graduate Studies).
c. Failed: where the candidate fails, they will not be awarded the higher degree by research.

(124) A candidate may only resubmit their work once for the same award.

Appointment of arbiter

(125) Where the examination committee recommends the appointment of an arbiter, the principal supervisor will be responsible for nominating a pool of examiners for this purpose, with a minimum of three provided and who are external to the University.

(126) An arbiter will be recommended from this pool of examiners by the Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) and approved by the Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services.

(127) Where the Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services approves an arbiter, the Office of Research Services will:

a. provide the arbiter with a copy of the original thesis submitted for examination, the examiners' reports, the candidate's response to these, and the principal supervisor's endorsement
b. ask the arbiter to review these documents and, within 30 calendar days, make one of the recommendations in clause (103).

(128) If the thesis is for a doctor of philosophy award, the Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services will also inform the arbiter that, if their recommendation is to fail the thesis, they can make the recommendation described in clause (118).

Approval of final result and conferral of awards

(129) Where the examiners, an arbiter or an examination committee recommend a final result (pass or fail) for a candidate's thesis, the Dean, Graduate Research or Director of Research Services will forward the recommendation to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) for approval.

(130) Similarly, where the relevant Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) advises that a candidate has made the required minor changes to their thesis satisfactorily, the Dean, Graduate Research or Director, Research Services will forward a recommendation that the candidate's thesis be passed to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) for approval.

(131) Where the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) approves a pass result, they will also recommend to Academic Senate that the candidate be added to the list of graduands for approval: the Conferral and Graduation Policy describes this process in more detail.

(132) Where the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) approves a fail result, the candidature will be terminated.

Submission of final thesis

(133) Once a candidate's thesis is approved as a pass, the candidate must upload the final version of the thesis (with any changes made) to the University's research output repository.

(134) The Higher Degree by Research Procedure states the requirements for:

a. withholding a candidate's transcript or award if they have not uploaded their thesis, and

b. a full or partial embargo or restriction to be placed on access to a thesis that has confidential and/or sensitive contents.

Appeals and complaints

(135) Where a student wishes to appeal an original decision made under this policy or its procedures, or has a complaint about their treatment, quality of service or the conduct of staff, the following policies apply:

a. University Student Appeals Policy and University Student Appeals Procedure
b. Complaints Management Policy and Complaints Management Procedure.

Section 3 - Procedures

(136) The Higher Degree by Research Procedure supports this policy by stating detailed requirements for:

a. enrolment
b. calculating the period of candidature
c. maintaining academic and research integrity
d. appointment of supervisors
e. criteria for persons to be added to the university register of supervisors as a co-supervisor or as a principal supervisor
f. responsibilities of the principal supervisor and the supervisory team
g. arrangements to continue supervision in the extended absence or departure of a supervisor
h. candidates' leave
i. requirements for theses, their submission and access to them, and
j. joint and dual HDR awards.

(137) The Higher Degree by Research Scholarships Procedure - Australian Government Research Training Program Funded Scholarships states the University's detailed requirements for these scholarships, including:

a. types of scholarship
b. eligibility criteria
c. restrictions on work outside the candidate's course
d. scholarship benefits
e. paid leave
f. variations to scholarships, such as changes from full-time to part-time tenure, or vice-versa, or permission to undertake research overseas or in another organisation
g. scholarship durations
h. conditions for continuation of a scholarship when the scholarship recipient transfers between higher education providers, or converts to candidature for a different award, and
i. termination of scholarships.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(138) Nil.

Section 5 - Glossary

(139) For the purposes of this policy, the following terms have the definition stated:

a. Academic integrity – means acting with honesty, fairness and responsibility in learning, teaching and research.
b. Academic misconduct – means the breach of academic integrity by engaging in dishonest or unethical practices such as cheating, collusion or plagiarism.
c. Adjunct academic position – means an unpaid academic position of the University as defined in the Appointments Procedure - Visiting and Adjunct Appointments.
d. Candidate – means a student enrolled in an HDR course: that is as a candidate for the HDR award to which the course leads.
e. Candidature – means the fact of a person being enrolled in an HDR course.
f. Dual HDR award – means an award where candidates undertake a single course of study with the University and another university, with their candidature time split between the two institutions. The candidate is examined against criteria agreed between the institutions before the candidature starts and each institution confers a separate award testamur that acknowledges the other institution on completion.
g. External expert – means someone who possesses industry knowledge and experience, including having completed research or otherwise making original contributions to their field that is appropriate for their appointment as a supervisor or examiner of a thesis.
h. Higher degree by research (HDR) course – means a course leading to a qualification at Australian Qualifications Framework level 9 or level 10 in which a research component makes up 66% or more of the course volume of learning. Higher degree by research courses lead to the award of a master by research, professional doctorate or doctor of philosophy.
i. Joint HDR award – means an award where the University and another university jointly confer an award on an HDR graduand, and the award testamur bears the crests of both partners. One university will be the lead university, and candidates will be enrolled at the lead university, which will manage the examination of their thesis.
j. Research component – means one or more subjects for an HDR course in which students undertake a substantial piece of research and produce a thesis, dissertation, portfolio or project.
k. Session – means a standard teaching period for which students are enrolled in subjects.
l. Thesis – means the work submitted for examination; may include a traditional printed thesis and/or previously published material, creative or artistic works, software, codes, models and/or appendices.
m. Thesis by prior publication – means an alternative mode of candidature for a doctor of philosophy award, whereby the candidate is admitted on the basis of their prior publications, and in a short period of candidature prepares supplementary chapters or a significant unifying essay to submit with those publications as their thesis.
n. Thesis by publication – means an alternative mode of presenting a body of research for a doctor of philosophy award, whereby the candidate, after they begin their candidature, is approved to develop and submit works for publication in peer-reviewed publishing outlets during their period of candidature, and submit these works with supplementary chapters or a significant unifying essay instead of a single unpublished thesis.
o. Working days – means days when the University is open; excludes weekends and other days when the University is closed.

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