

# Assessment - Research Components of Coursework Courses Procedure

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This procedure supports the [Assessment Policy](#) by stating detailed requirements for research components in coursework courses.

### Scope

(2) This procedure applies to research component subjects in the following types of coursework course:

- a. bachelor (honours) – both stand-alone courses and integrated courses; and
- b. postgraduate coursework courses with a research component, including graduate certificates; and
- c. masters by coursework and dissertation.

### References

(3) Where a supporting document is referenced in this procedure, it will be listed on the associated information tab.

## Section 2 - Glossary

(4) Most of the terms in this procedure are defined in the glossary section of the [Assessment Policy](#). For the purposes of this procedure, the following additional terms have the definitions stated:

- a. Dissertation – a written report of supervised research on a topic, which may be primary or secondary research.
- b. Integrated bachelor honours course – where a bachelor degree and a bachelor (honours) degree are combined in an integrated bachelor (honours) course that meets the requirements of both courses.
- c. Multimedia materials – non-written physical, visual, recorded or digital materials such as a three-dimensional artefact, sound or video recording, computer software, photographs or paintings.
- d. Portfolio – an examinable written work that consists of a set of scholarly documents which can include academic or professional journal articles and conference papers, plans, reports and policy documents. The portfolio is submitted with an introduction and conclusion which explain the historical and contemporary context of the research or investigation and the development of the portfolio.
- e. Project – a work or works partly in a non-written medium that is an alternative to a dissertation, which may be required in fields such as the creative and performing arts; this term is used both for the process of developing the work and the examinable work produced.
- f. Research component subject – a subject in which students undertake a substantial piece of supervised research and produce a thesis, dissertation, portfolio or project.
- g. Research misconduct – see the [Research Misconduct Procedure](#) for the University's definition of research misconduct.
- h. Stand-alone bachelor honours course – a one-year add-on honours completed following a bachelor degree.

## Section 3 - Policy

(5) This procedure supports the [Assessment Policy](#) and should be read alongside it.

## Section 4 - Procedure

### Academic integrity and academic and research misconduct

(6) The [Academic Integrity Policy](#) states:

- a. the University's expectations of staff and students to practise and maintain academic integrity, including research integrity; and
- b. their responsibilities in relation to this, including the responsibility of supervisors to report instances of suspected academic misconduct or student research misconduct for investigation under the [Student Misconduct Rule](#).

### Honours (or Dissertation) Advisors

(7) Where relevant, Heads of School may appoint a school based Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor to assist in delivering coursework courses with a research component. If the relevant Heads of School agree, one Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor may be appointed for multiple schools.

- a. An Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor must be classified as research active.

### Responsibilities of Honours (or Dissertation) Advisors

(8) Where a student has applied to enrol or transfer into an honours degree or postgraduate coursework course with a research component, the Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor will respond to requests by the relevant Course Director or Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) to:

- a. assess the feasibility of the proposed research project; and where required consult others who have more relevant expertise, before approving a student's project proposal;
- b. recommend to the Executive Dean or their nominee the appointment of a principal supervisor and, where appropriate, a co-supervisor for the student. The Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor should obtain the consent of the proposed supervisor(s) and the endorsement of the relevant Head(s) of School before making recommendations.
- c. In cases where a student has applied to enrol in a faculty-wide honours course, multiple Honours Advisors may be asked to assist in assessing the student's application and completing the tasks above.

(9) After the student's enrolment into an honours degree or postgraduate coursework course with a research component, the relevant Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor will:

- a. recommend to the Executive Dean, or their nominee, the appointment of examiners for the dissertation or project submitted by the student. Assessors and examiners may be nominated by the student's supervisor; and
- b. contribute to moderation and QUASAR activities administered by Subject Coordinators of research component subjects in the honours or postgraduate coursework course with a research component as required.

(10) Where the Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor is a supervisor of the student's research, the Head of School will nominate someone else to approve the student's proposal and approve the appointment of assessors and examiners.

## Supervisors

### Appointment of supervisors

(11) The [Assessment Policy](#) states requirements for appointing supervisors of students' research in research component subjects for coursework programs.

### Change of supervisors

(12) When a principal supervisor is unable to supervise the student for an extended period, a co-supervisor will act as principal supervisor.

(13) When no co-supervisor has been appointed, and the principal supervisor is unable to supervise the student for an extended period, the same authority who approved the appointment of the principal supervisor will appoint an acting principal supervisor.

(14) Where the principal supervisor becomes unavailable for the remainder of the supervision:

- a. a co-supervisor will act as principal supervisor; or
- b. where there is no co-supervisor qualified to be principal supervisor, the relevant Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor, Course Director or Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) (as appropriate) will act as principal supervisor until a new principal supervisor is appointed by the same authority who appointed the original one, meeting the same conditions as for the original appointment.

### Responsibilities of supervisors

(15) The principal supervisor is responsible for:

- a. advising the student and monitoring their progress;
- b. where there is a supervisory team, leading it, with final responsibility for the team's decisions;
- c. negotiating roles with co-supervisors and with the student, at the start of the supervision;
- d. helping inexperienced co-supervisors to develop their supervisory skills;
- e. encouraging co-supervisors to be active in supporting the student's research efforts;
- f. consulting the Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor if they believe co-supervisors are not providing the required support;
- g. ensuring that, if the research requires ethics approval, data is not collected without the ethics approval, and that after ethics approval the research complies with the conditions of the approval;
- h. ensuring that, if the research requires safety approval, data is not collected until the approval has been obtained, and that after safety approval the research complies with the conditions of the approval;
- i. raising with the Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor or research component Subject Coordinator:
  - i. any suspected academic misconduct or research misconduct; or
  - ii. issues of intellectual property rights, commercial or other confidentiality matters arising from the content of the dissertation, portfolio or project;
- j. recommending suitable assessors/examiners to the Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor or research component Subject Coordinator, if/when asked; and
- k. giving the student adequate notice if they plan long leave, retirement or departure from the University, and, in consultation with the Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor or research component Subject Coordinator, arranging for supervision during their absence.

(16) All members of the supervisory team are responsible for:

- a. guiding the student as needed on:
  - i. the nature of the research and the expected standard;
  - ii. choice of research topic;
  - iii. planning the research;
  - iv. ethical issues relating to the research;
  - v. research methodology;
  - vi. data analysis; and
  - vii. developing solutions for problems that arise in the research;
- b. at the start of the supervision, establishing arrangements for regular contact with the student, and then adhering to these;
- c. responding promptly to the student's questions and commenting promptly on drafts;
- d. agreeing with the student on a schedule for their written or other work so their progress can be assessed at regular intervals;
- e. monitoring the student's performance against the standard required for the work;
- f. advising the student if the rate of progress or standard of their work is lower than expected for the project;
- g. ensuring that the student's work is their own or, where they receive substantial assistance, this:
  - i. is acknowledged in the work submitted for examination; and
  - ii. does not conflict with the requirement that the intellectual content of the examinable work is the student's;
- h. encouraging the student to publish the research; and
- i. fulfilling any other University requirements for postgraduate supervision.

### **Improper supervision and editing**

(17) The [Academic Integrity Policy](#) states that improper supervision and/or editing of a student's work by a supervisor or teaching staff member is a form of academic misconduct.

(18) Improper supervision or editing is supervision or editing to such an extent that the staff member becomes effectively the primary author, so that it is no longer possible for assessment of the work to identify the student's level of knowledge and skills.

(19) The guidelines section of this procedure provides guidance to help supervisors and teaching staff understand the difference between legitimate supervision or constructive comments on a student's draft assessment work to aid learning versus improper supervision and editing.

### **Quality assurance of supervision**

(20) The [Assessment Policy](#) states that the Associate Dean (Academic) of the teaching faculty will collaborate with Honours (or Dissertation) Advisors and Course Directors or the Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) to ensure a high, consistent quality of supervision in research components of coursework courses. This should involve:

- a. providing induction training for, and facilitating peer support of, new supervisors, including training on academic and research integrity and intellectual property issues relating to coursework research;
- b. ensuring that supervisors have completed brief refresher training on good practice in coursework-research supervision in the two years prior to beginning supervision with a new coursework-research student;
- c. ensuring that relevant subject outlines communicate the expected minimum frequency of supervisory meetings (e.g. at least monthly meetings, in person or online);
- d. ensuring that relevant subject outlines inform students of at least two people with whom they can discuss any concerns about their supervision, such as their Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor, Subject Coordinator, Course

Director or Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) (as appropriate);

- e. ensuring that the online subject sites in relevant subjects provide a template for the student and the supervisor to record agreed reciprocal expectations regarding the supervision process;
- f. ensuring that the online subject sites in relevant subjects provide a template for supervisors and students to record matters discussed and actions agreed at each supervisory meeting; and
- g. ensuring that all coursework-research students, at least once in the first half of their supervision, are:
  - i. actively invited to contact their Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor, Subject Coordinator, Course Director and/or Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) (as appropriate) to discuss any concerns about their supervision; and
  - ii. assured that any supervision-focused conversation will be responded to sensitively.

## **Research proposals**

(21) The [Assessment Policy](#):

- a. requires students to submit a written research proposal for their dissertation, portfolio or project; and
- b. forbids students to begin their research until the proposal is assessed and approved.

(22) Research proposals are approved by the student's Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor and/or relevant Subject Coordinator (as appropriate).

(23) Students will submit the research proposal by the deadline specified in the subject outline.

(24) Each research proposal will set out the proposed:

- a. topic of investigation or work; and
- b. methodology.

(25) Formal approval of the student's research proposal will be notified to the student via a 'satisfactory' or other pass grade in the student's Grade Centre.

(26) Where the proposal is for research involving human subjects, human biological materials, animal subjects or animal biological materials, the project must also have ethics approval from the relevant University ethics committee and/or external ethics committee before data collection begins.

## **Submission of work for examination**

### **Submission deadlines**

(27) The [Assessment Policy](#) authorises faculties to determine, for research components of coursework courses:

- a. submission deadlines;
- b. the submission process;
- c. penalties for late submission; and
- d. whether resubmission is permitted.

The above information must be included in the relevant subject outline.

### **Requirements for the work submitted**

(28) Work submitted for examination must meet the following requirements. The work must:

- a. be on the approved research topic;

- b. comply with the word limit specified to the student and, in the case of a project, to any other requirements specified for it;
- c. be written in English unless the course or the nature of the work requires that it be written in another language;
- d. have been completed after the student's admission to the course; and
- e. be an accurate account of the student's own research, although the relevant Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor, Course Director or Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) (as appropriate) may deem that work done conjointly with others is acceptable provided that:
  - i. they are satisfied with the extent of the student's contribution; and
  - ii. the other contributors have given written consent to the inclusion of their work.

(29) Where a written dissertation is normal in a subject, multimedia materials:

- a. should not exceed 10% of the material submitted; but
- b. may exceed 10% of the material submitted in a dissertation if the relevant Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor, Course Director or Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) (as appropriate) approves this.

(30) The work submitted for examination:

- a. must not contain as its main content work or other material that has been submitted previously for a university degree or similar award; but
- b. may contain work or other material that has been published previously, provided that:
  - i. the student has gained the written permission of the publisher of the material to include it; and
  - ii. such previous publications are clearly referenced.

(31) The work submitted must acknowledge any substantial assistance or editorial assistance provided to the student in their research and in production of the examinable work.

(32) Before the student uses a paid editor, they must obtain the consent of their principal supervisor.

(33) If a student uses a professional editor whose current or past area of academic specialisation is that of the research topic, they must acknowledge this specifically in the work submitted.

### **Submission of work**

(34) The student will submit for examination a digital copy (in a write-protected format such as .pdf or .rtf) of the dissertation, portfolio or the written component of the project.

(35) The student will submit a digital copy of any written work as detailed in the subject outline for the research component subject. The work will be accessed by the Subject Coordinator to facilitate assessment by the approved assessor(s)/examiner(s).

(36) If examiners require the student to make corrections in order to reach a passing standard, the student will later provide a final copy of the work, with the corrections made, in the same way they submitted the original work.

(37) Once the student's work has been assessed as a pass, the Honours (or Dissertation) Advisor, Course Director, Sub Dean (Graduate Studies) or their nominee, will upload it to the University's repository of research outputs.

(38) The Executive Dean or their nominee for such decisions may restrict public access to the submitted work for a specific period or indefinitely, where the work contains sensitive or confidential information.

(39) All digital copies submitted become the property of the University.

(40) The University's [Intellectual Property Policy](#) applies to the intellectual property in submitted dissertations, portfolios and projects.

### **Examination of the work submitted**

(41) The [Assessment Policy](#) states requirements for appointment of examiners of students' work submitted for research components of coursework courses.

### **Guidelines and criteria for examination**

(42) For examination of dissertations, portfolios and projects, the faculty decides:

- a. explicit criteria for assessment; and
- b. how guidelines for marking will be communicated to examiners.

(43) The [Assessment Policy](#) states the grades available for the (final) research component subject in bachelor (honours) courses.

(44) The criteria for grading work submitted for examination in a bachelor (honours) course at H1 (Class 1) or H2a (Class 2, division 1) is that the student has demonstrated their capacity for independent research.

### **Where examiners' recommendations vary**

(45) Normally, examiner marks will be averaged to determine a student's overall dissertation mark and final grade. However, where examiners of work submitted for a research component subject recommend grades that differ by more than one grade and, despite moderated discussions aimed at achieving consensus, cannot agree on a single grade, the Executive Dean or their nominee may appoint an arbiter.

(46) The arbiter will review the student's work submitted for examination and submit their mark and report to the relevant Subject Coordinator. The two closest marks will be used to determine the student's final mark and grade; the normal grade ratification process will then proceed.

### **Review of grades**

(47) The [Assessment Policy](#) states that, where a student requests a review of a grade for a research component subject in a coursework course, the head of the school that offers the subject will be the reviewer in consultation with the Course Director or Sub Dean (Graduate Studies); and if the student's principal supervisor is in a different school, the head of that school.

(48) The student should follow the University's complaints processes (see the [Complaints Management Policy and procedure](#)) to address concerns of discrimination or harassment: that is, where:

- a. the student considers they are being discriminated against in the decision: that is, treated less favourably than another student or students in the same circumstances; or
- b. the student considers they are being or have been harassed by a person exercising authority under this procedure: that is, they consider the person is interfering with their right to study and live in a non-threatening environment.

## **Section 5 - Guidelines**

### **Improper supervision and editing**

(49) To help supervisors and teaching staff avoid improper supervision and editing, here are some examples of proper

and improper supervision and editing.

Proper supervision or editing	Improper supervision or editing
<p>The staff member corrects the student's stylistic errors in part of the draft, and asks them to make similar corrections in the rest of the draft.</p>	<p>The staff member copy-edits the student's draft throughout, so that the student appears to write correctly when their writing skills are not in fact at that level.</p>
<p>The staff member agrees that the student can use a copy-editor to correct the style of their draft, because the student has a learning disability which affects their writing skills, or is writing in English as an additional language. The student states in the text at the start of the submitted assessment that it was copy-edited by the copy-editor.</p>	<p>With or without the staff member's permission, the student has the draft copy-edited by another person. The copy-editing is not acknowledged in the submitted work. The student appears to have the level of writing skills suggested by the correct style of the submitted work, but in fact does not.</p>
<p>The staff member explains to the student how to undertake a literature review or find sources they can use to develop the research project or assessment work. They discuss sources with the student, modelling a critical approach to the sources and helping the student understand scholarly debate in the area. They suggest leading works on the topic with which the student needs to engage.</p>	<p>The staff member provides the student with an existing draft literature review on the topic. The student appears to have done a thorough, critical literature review when in fact they have not: it is the work of a staff member.</p>
<p>The staff member comments on drafts, pointing out flaws in the arguments, raising further questions for the student to consider and/or investigate to extend the scope of the work, and identifying other sources the student should consider to enrich the work.</p>	<p>The staff member drafts sections of the work to improve the arguments, extend or enrich the work. The work is raised to the staff member's level of skills and knowledge. It is unclear whether the student has acquired those skills and knowledge.</p>



## Status and Details

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