



HDR Examination Protocol

DATE: Approved 2017, Minor amendments 2018,2022

Purpose

The College of Science (CoS), and the College of Health and Medicine (CHM) protocol on HDR examinations aim to ensure high quality, independent and timely examination of HDR theses. This document sets out the conditions for examinations and appointment of examiners and should be read in conjunction with the Research Awards Rule (<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01614>)

Nomination of Examiners

- Students should be given the opportunity to discuss potential examiners, but must not know the names of the final examiners chosen.
- It is a requirement of the examination that no fewer than two external expert examiners of international standing are appointed.
- Within CHM/CoS the expectation for a PhD examination^a is that at least one of the two external expert examiners is an international academic. If no international examiners are appointed, the School must provide a justification when submitting the nomination e-form.
- Whether two or three examiners are appointed is at the discretion of the School.
- The examiners are to be appointed before the thesis is submitted to minimise delays in the examination process.
- The examiners must be made aware of the expectation to provide the report within two months.
- The examiners should not have been involved with the project and should not have recently (within 5 years) published or closely collaborated with the candidate or members of the supervisory panel^b.
- All examiners should be experts in the topic of the thesis (or in different aspects of an interdisciplinary or multi-faceted thesis).
- At least one examiner should have significant expertise in supervising PhD students and in examining theses.
- When submitting a Nomination of Examiners, the supervisor should provide a short CV or biosketch for each nominated examiner, which highlights why they are suitable to examine the thesis. A link to a url is sufficient, however the e-form will be returned to the Delegated Authority if insufficient information about the proposed examiners expertise is made available.

Initial Examination

- The School should monitor the length of the examination and be in contact with the HDR Examinations Office if there are delays beyond 2 months.
- If the delays become excessive they should notify the College and consider appointing an additional examiner.

Prohibited Communications

- Neither the student nor any member of the panel should communicate directly with an examiner during the course of the examination.

Delegated Authority Recommendation on Receipt of Reports

- Under no circumstances are the examiners' recommendations to be provided to the student by the School. The HDR Examinations Office will send an anonymous version of the reports to the student once the recommendation has been approved.
- If an examiner makes any statement in their report that questions the integrity of the thesis (plagiarism, other forms of misconduct), the School must immediately notify the College.
- In cases where the recommendations of the examiners are divergent, the Delegated Authority should provide a justification for their recommendation. In cases of significant disparity an additional examiner should be appointed. The Guidelines for consideration of examiners reports at: https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppi/document/ANUP_012807 should be followed.

College Approval

- The examiners make a recommendation to the University; the Associate Dean HDR determines the outcome of the examination.
- The College will require amendments to the thesis before award of the degree if the examiners note typographical or other minor errors, even in cases where the examiners have recommended unconditional award.

Response to Examiners Comments

- When a student is required to undertake revisions to the satisfaction of the Delegated Authority, it is a CHM/CoS requirement that they provide a document outlining the revisions made in response to the examiners comments when submitting the revised thesis for approval by the Associate Dean HDR.

^a There is no requirement for an international examiner, although the examiners should still be of international standing for an MPhil or DPsych examination.

^b If there has been a recent collaboration or publication between a nominated examiner and a supervisor, a statement justifying the nomination and addressing the potential conflict of interest must be provided for consideration by the Associate Dean.