

Monash University Policy

[This policy comes into effect from 30 June 2017]

Policy Title	Graduate Research Thesis Examination Policy
Date Effective	30-June-2017
Review Date	29-June-2019
Policy Owner	Vice-Provost (Graduate Education)
Category	Academic and Quality Standards
Version Number	1.0
Content Enquiries	policy-education@monash.edu
Scope	<p>This policy applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All campuses and teaching locations. • All graduate research courses, including joint or dual awards. • All current graduate research students. • All former students who have been approved by the Graduate Research Committee to submit their thesis under lapsed enrolment, in accordance with section 3 of the Graduate Research Re-admission Procedures.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To specify the principles that must be followed in relation to the examination of a thesis, which has been submitted for the purposes of fulfilling the requirements of a graduate research degree. • To specify the roles and responsibilities of students, staff, academic units/programs/schools, faculties and examiners in relation to the examination of a thesis. • To outline the criteria that must be met in order for a student to be approved to submit a thesis for examination, and the consequences to the student if they do not meet the requirements as specified under this policy and its procedures. • To specify the criteria for assessing all graduate research thesis examinations, including theses which include a creative component such as a performance or exhibition.
POLICY STATEMENT	

Roles and responsibilities of staff, students and examiners

1. **All staff, students and examiners are responsible for:**
 - a) Making every effort to ensure that there is no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to the examiners appointed to assess the student's thesis.
 - b) Immediately declaring if they believe or suspect that they have an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest in relation to the examination of the thesis.

2. **Chair of Examiners are responsible for:**
 - a) Nominating appropriately qualified, eligible examiners in consultation with the student's supervisor/s for consideration by the Graduate Research Committee;
 - b) Reviewing the student's examiners' reports and making a recommendation to the Graduate Research Committee based on the examination matrix as specified by the procedures.
 - c) Recommending additional or replacement examiners if requested to do so;
 - d) Certifying that the student has satisfactorily addressed examiners' comments and complied with any conditions that must be met prior to award of the degree.
3. **Supervisors are responsible for:**
 - a) Recommending whether the student's thesis is ready for examination;
 - b) Confirming that, to the best of their knowledge, the thesis conforms with University policies as they apply to intellectual property, academic integrity, ethics, and authorship.
 - c) Confirming that, to the best of their knowledge, the thesis has not been previously presented for any other award, either at Monash or any other institution.
 - d) Ensuring they do not communicate with examiners until the examination process has been completed.
4. **Students are responsible for:**
 - a) Confirming that the thesis conforms with University policies as they apply to intellectual property, academic integrity, ethics, and authorship.
 - b) Respecting the confidentiality of the examination process, thereby not communicating (either verbally and/or in written form) with their examiners until the examination process has been completed.
 - c) Complying with any examination requirements as specified under this policy and its procedures.
 - d) Complying with any conditions that must be met prior to the award of the degree.
5. **Examiners are responsible for:**
 - e) Submitting a report on the thesis within the specified time-frame, with a failure to submit a report within the agreed time-frame (or revised time-frame, where approved) meaning that they forfeit their right to examine the thesis.
 - f) Providing detailed comments on the strengths and/ or weaknesses of the thesis, whether the report is favourable or not.
 - g) Complying with any examination requirements as specified by the University, including attending an oral defence or viva voce where required.

Examination Principles

6. The Graduate Research Committee:
 - a) Determines whether or not a thesis or alternative research component is to be examined.
 - b) Approves the appointment of examiners, and
 - c) Determines whether or not the student has met the requirements for award of the degree.
7. A Chair of Examiners must be appointed to oversee the examination of each thesis.
8. Each thesis must be examined by at least two examiners. A third examiner will be appointed where there is substantial difference between the recommendations of the two examiners, in accordance with the procedures.
9. All examiners must be external to the University, including examiners of a masters by research degree.

Assessment Principles

To be awarded a pass grade, a doctoral thesis or alternative research component must:

1. Make a significant contribution to knowledge and understanding in the relevant field;
2. Contain material worthy of publication in a form appropriate to the discipline; and
3. The format and literary presentation of the thesis is satisfactory.

To be awarded a pass grade, a research master's thesis or alternative research components must:

4. Make a contribution to knowledge and understanding in the field of study concerned,
5. Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the subject matter with which it deals; and
6. The format and literary presentation of the thesis is satisfactory.

Reporting to Academic Board

1. Reports on the operation of the Policy (to include domains such as the policy's impact on the timeliness of the examination process) will be submitted to Academic Board.
2. Reports on thesis examination outcomes (statistics) will be submitted to Academic Board.

Supporting Procedures	Graduate Research Thesis Examination Procedures
Responsibility for implementation	Vice-Provost (Graduate Education) Pro Vice-Chancellor and President (Malaysia) Graduate Research Committee Deans Associate Deans (Graduate Research) and Deputy Deans (Graduate Research) or equivalent Heads of Department/School/Programs Graduate Research Coordinators Supervisors
Status	New
Approval Body	Name: Academic Board Meeting: 2/2017 Date: 12 April 2017 Agenda item:
Endorsement Body	Name: Graduate Research Committee Meeting: 7/2016 Date: 20 October 2016 Agenda item: 10.1
Definitions	Chair of Examiners (CoE): Is the Head of the Department/School or Program in which the student is enrolled, or their nominee. Graduate Research Committee (GRC): Means the committee (however designated) established in accordance with Part 4 of the Monash University (Vice-Chancellor) Regulations. Graduate Research Degree: Means a master's by research or doctoral degree of the University. Interchangeable with higher degree by research.

	<p>Final result: For the purposes of this policy, means the outcome of the student's examination, where the student is deemed to have either met or not met the requirements of their degree.</p> <p>Student: For the purposes of this policy, means current graduate research students of the University, or former students who have been approved to submit their thesis under lapsed enrolment, having consented in writing to be bound as a student by the University's statutes and regulations.</p> <p>Supervisor: For the purposes of this policy, means the student's main supervisor as recorded in the student system; or, where the main supervisor is unable or unwilling to fulfil their role as required under this policy, an approved alternative academic staff member. Cannot be a person external to Monash University.</p> <p>Thesis: Means a written thesis or approved alternative research component.</p>
Legislation Mandating Compliance	<p>Part 5 (Higher Degrees by Research) of the Monash University (Academic Board) Regulations</p> <p>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015</p> <p>Australian Qualifications Framework</p> <p>Malaysian Qualifications Framework</p>
Related Policies	<p>Graduate Research Progress Management Policy</p> <p>Graduate Research Re-admission Procedures</p> <p>Student Complaints and Grievances Policy</p>
Related Documents	<p>Conflict of interest guidelines for the nomination of high degree by research thesis examiners</p> <p>Guidelines for theses including published works</p>