Higher Degree by Research Examination Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to describe the principles and key requirements for Higher Degree by Research (HDR) examinations at The University of Queensland.

(2) This Policy applies to all students enrolled in, and all staff involved in the delivery of, Higher Degree by Research at The University of Queensland.

Section 2 - Principles and Key Requirements

(3) The thesis examination is conducted by at least two recognised experts in the discipline who are external to the University, independent of the conduct of the research of the candidate, and approved in accordance with the Conflict of Interest guidelines for the appointment of Examiners (refer to the Higher Degree by Research Examination Guideline).

(4) The University is committed to the following principles with regard to HDR examinations:

a. The thesis adheres to the principles of research integrity as stipulated in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research including authorship, plagiarism and research ethics. A thesis includes a statement of originality incorporating an acknowledgement of other contributors, editorial assistance, and copyright provisions and approvals.
b. That examiners hold a degree or possess professional experience equivalent to the degree they are examining.
c. Conflicts of Interest between examiners, advisors and candidate are declared so that the thesis may be assessed free from bias or preferential treatment.
d. Confidentiality of the examination process is maintained and the candidate and advisors must not communicate with examiners during the examination process unless directed to do so.
e. Examiners provide written reports on the thesis and participate in an oral examination of the candidate, where applicable.
f. The University's processes for determining the outcome of the examination are available to candidates, advisors and examiners.
g. Open access to the final thesis is provided by the University except when circumstances require an embargo for a designated period of time.

Section 3 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Advisors

(5) The academic roles and accountabilities for advisors are specified in the Eligibility and Role of Higher Degree by Research Advisors Policy.

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Chair of Examiners

(6) The Chair of Examiners provides outcome recommendations to the Dean, Graduate Research School and oversees the oral examination component, where applicable.

Dean, Graduate Research School

(7) The Dean, Graduate Research School decides on the examination outcome.

Provost

(8) The Provost approves the conferral of the degree, upon recommendation from the Dean, Graduate Research School.

Director, Graduate Research School

(9) The Director, Graduate Research School is responsible for ensuring Recording and Reporting as described in section 5.

Candidates

(10) Candidates who commence enrolment in an HDR program from 1 January 2018 will undergo an oral examination.

(11) Candidates who commence enrolment in an HDR program from 1 January 2017 and include a published work, or part of a published work, in their thesis will undergo an oral examination.

Section 4 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(12) Review of, and compliance with, this Policy is overseen by the Dean, Graduate Research School and the Academic Board's Higher Degree by Research Sub-Committee.

Section 5 - Recording and Reporting

(13) All thesis examination transactions and activities are recorded within UQ’s student system.

(14) All student records including final outcome, applications and University decisions are filed in the student’s personal record in UQ’s digital student record system.

Section 6 - Appendix

Definitions, Terms and Acronyms

Term	Definition
Advisor	Suitably qualified person who provides expertise related to the candidate’s research and is available to provide advice throughout candidature.
Chair of Examiners	UQ staff member who provides academic oversight of the examination process, including the oral examination, as described in the Higher Degree by Research Examination Guideline.
Dean	Dean of the UQ Graduate Research School or delegate.
Examiner	An experienced researcher with expertise in the relevant discipline who is not a UQ staff member and has been approved in accordance with the Higher Degree by Research Examination Guideline relating to Conflict of Interest.

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Term	Definition
HDR	Higher Degree by Research comprising MPhil, PhD, and PDR.
MPhil	Master of Philosophy.
Open Access Thesis	Thesis publicly searchable and available via the Internet.
PDR	Professional Doctorate by Research.
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy.
Principal Advisor	Approved UQ staff member who takes primary academic responsibility for the candidate during their candidature with their role and eligibility outlined in Eligibility and Role of Higher Degree by Research Advisors Policy.
Thesis	Material outcomes of a sustained program of supervised research undertaken by a candidate whilst enrolled in a HDR program.
Thesis Embargo	Restriction of open access of a thesis.

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