



## Process for awarding research degrees after examination

*Principles underpinning the following Proposed Process.*

Should minor or major amendments to or rewriting of the thesis be required, it is an expression of the duty of care the R&RSC (superseding the RAB in this area) has towards the candidate that what is required is detailed in a fashion that the candidate and supervisor understand. Sometimes the content of the Examiners' Reports need to be interpreted, particularly when there are any conflicting recommendations among them. Consequently, it may be appropriate to give the candidate and Supervisor a contact person who may clarify matters set down in the requirements. The importance of the Higher Degree Research Examinations Panel (HDREP) and its input at this point in the process must be noted.

The membership of HDREP consists of the EO of HDREP (at the moment the Associate Dean) and the three departmental appointees to R&RSC.

In respect of outcomes (1) and (2), it is important to be seen to remove/minimize the possibility of bias impacting the determination that the amendments made by the candidate have been completed sufficiently well for the candidate to now be declared eligible to receive the award. Notwithstanding striving for academic independence and integrity, a supervisor is always strongly committed to seeing his/her candidate succeed. To not have the Supervisor "signing off" on satisfactory completion of amendments may well free him/her to be more supportive of the candidate. Further, to have somebody responsible to the R&RSC as the final determiner of the eligibility of the candidate to receive the award may better reflect the Dean's relationship with the academic governance of the ACT. Moreover, the integrity of the award will be enhanced if greater scrutiny is applied to completed major amendments compared with minor amendments.

The following revised process was adopted by the R&RSC 17 April 2009.

### *New Process*

Following their consideration of a thesis, examiners report their assessment of the thesis in one of the following terms:

- (1) That the degree be awarded.
- (2) That the degree be awarded *provided that* **minor** corrections and/or additions as specified in my report are carried out to the satisfaction of the Board.
- (3) That the degree be awarded *provided that* **major** corrections and/or additions as specified in my report are carried out to the satisfaction to the Board.
- (4) That the candidate be asked to rewrite and resubmit the thesis for examination taking into account recommendations in my report.
- (5) That the candidate be not awarded the degree.

In the first instance, examiners' reports are submitted to the (main) supervisor for consideration, and a response to the Higher Degree Research Examination Panel (HDREP). The response should included, where relevant, suggested amendments and revisions.

The HDREP considers whether any qualifications of the supervisor's response should be made, and forwards the examiners' reports and the supervisor's response with its recommendation to the R&RSC. Should amendments be required, these are detailed in the

HDREP recommendation. Should rewriting be required, the matters to be addressed are detailed in the HDREP recommendation.

The HDREP recommends one of the following outcomes to the R&RSC (in these words or similar):

- (1) that the degree be awarded
- (2) that the degree be awarded subject to the satisfactory completion of the detailed **minor** amendments
- (3) that the degree be awarded subject to the satisfactory completion of the detailed **major** amendments
- (4) that the thesis be rewritten taking account of the detailed advice and resubmitted for examination
- (5) that the degree not be awarded.

Assuming no reason for an additional examiner or oral examination, the R&RSC may make a recommendation to the AB. Before reaching a final decision, the R&RSC may send the reports of each examiner to the other examiners and invite their comments.

If outcome (1) is accepted by the R&RSC, a recommendation goes forward to the AB that the degree be awarded to the candidate (noting that any typographical errors will be corrected in the library copy of the thesis). The HDREP shall be responsible for determining that all typographical errors have been satisfactorily corrected.

If outcome (2) is accepted by the R&RSC, a recommendation goes forward to the AB that the degree be awarded subject to satisfactory completion of the specified **minor** amendments.

The EO of the R&RSC shall advise the Supervisor and the candidate of the minor amendments required (including correction of typographical errors).

When the candidate has completed the amendments to the satisfaction of the Supervisor, the Supervisor advises the EO of the R&RSC in writing and provides an electronic copy of each of the amended and the original thesis.

The EO of the R&RSC shall refer the amended thesis to HDREP. When HDREP is satisfied the amended thesis fulfils the requirements of the R&RSC, EO of HDREP reports to R&RSC and through the EO of the R&RSC advises AB that the candidate has satisfactorily completed the specified minor amendments.

If outcome (3) is accepted by the R&RSC, the R&RSC shall hold the recommendation to the AB that the degree be awarded until the candidate has satisfactorily completed the specified **major** amendments.

The EO of the R&RSC shall advise the Supervisor and the candidate of the major amendments required (including correction of typographical errors).

When the candidate has completed the amendments to the satisfaction of the Supervisor, the Supervisor advises the EO of the R&RSC in writing and provides an electronic copy of each of the amended (with track changes turned on) and the original thesis.

The EO of the R&RSC shall refer the copies of the thesis to the HDREP. When the HDREP is satisfied the amended thesis fulfils the requirements of the R&RSC, the HDREP shall advise the R&RSC through the EO of the R&RSC that the candidate has satisfactorily completed the specified minor amendments.

The R&RSC shall recommend to the AB that the degree be awarded to the candidate.

If outcome (4) is accepted by the R&RSC, the R&RSC shall resolve that the thesis be rewritten taking account of the detailed advice and resubmitted for examination.

Following this resolution by the R&RSC, the EO of the R&RSC shall advise the Supervisor and the candidate of the resolution and provides the detailed advice to guide the rewriting of the thesis.

The most critical of the initial examiners is normally invited to examine the resubmitted thesis and one or two (depending on award level) new examiners are invited to evaluate the resubmitted thesis.

When the candidate has rewritten the thesis to the satisfaction of the Supervisor, the Supervisor advises the EO of the R&RSC in writing and provides copies of the amended thesis for examination, with appropriate covering certification.

On provision of the rewritten thesis, the examiners are advised that Option (4) is not available as an assessment outcome of their examination of the thesis.

On receipt of the examiners assessment of the rewritten thesis, the above due process is applied.

If outcome (5) is accepted by the R&RSC, the R&RSC shall resolve that the award not be given to the candidate, and that the candidate be so informed of the resolution of the committee.

Approved by the R&RSC 17 April 2009

Graeme Chatfield

Associate Dean

Adjusted

4 September 2009

Graeme Chatfield