

## Higher Degree Research (HDR) Examination Policy

<b>Policy Category</b>	Academic
<b>Policy Code</b>	RES-HE-03
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Dean
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Director of Research
<b>Approving Authority</b>	Academic Board
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<b>Related Documents</b>	HDR Supervision Policy HDR Ethics Policy HDR Responsible Conduct of Research Policy HDR Candidature Policy Academic Integrity Policy HDR Guide for Ethical Use of GenAI HDR GenAI Policy
<b>HESF (Threshold Standards) 2021</b>	1.4.1; 1.4.2; 1.4.3; 1.4.4; 4.1.1; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.1.4; 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.2.3; 4.2.4; 6.2.1; 6.2.2; 7.2.1.
<b>Policy Visibility</b>	Public

### 1. Purpose

This policy establishes the principles, standards and procedures governing submission and examination of Higher Degree Research (HDR) theses at the Institute, ensuring assessments are rigorous, fair, timely and aligned with national best practice.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all HDR candidates, supervisors, examiners, graduate research staff, and relevant committees involved in HDR thesis submission and examination across all Institute locations and delivery modes.

## 3. Principles

The principles guiding this policy are:

- Examinations evaluate originality, significance and methodological rigour in line with AQF level and disciplinary standards.
- Processes maintain independence, confidentiality and avoidance of conflicts of interest.
- Assessment criteria and outcomes are transparent and consistently applied.
- Examiners are independent, and suitably qualified with recognised expertise and international standing in their relevant discipline
- Candidates receive timely feedback and clearly defined appeal avenues.

## 4. Definitions

Definitions of Thesis, Examiner, Minor/Major Amendments, Revise and Resubmit, Conflict of Interest, etc., are provided in the Institute Glossary.

## 5. Policy Details

### 5.1 Thesis Submission

Thesis must be original work, written in English, and typically be 20,000–25,000 words in length, unless an exemption has been approved.

The candidate must complete all milestones and obtain supervisor endorsement of examinable quality. Submission without endorsement is permitted but noted.

Electronic submissions (PDF) are via the LMS following a Notification of Intent to Submit lodged at least two months prior.

### 5.2 Nomination & Appointment of Examiners

The candidate's supervisor recommends three nominees as examiners; the Scholarship and Research Committee appoints two examiners (at least one external) and a reserve.

Examiners must: have a doctorate (or equivalent), be research.active with recognised expertise and international standing in their relevant discipline, and possess no conflicts of interest.

Examiner identities remain confidential from the candidate until examination concludes.

### **5.3 Examination Process**

Examiners will receive the thesis together with accompanying guidelines and are required to submit their written reports within eight weeks of receipt.

Reports will address the candidate's contribution to knowledge, methodology, engagement with the literature, quality of presentation, and alignment with AQF requirements.

Following receipt of examiner reports, an oral examination (thesis defence) will be conducted within eight weeks.

### **5.4 Outcomes & Resolution**

Examiners recommend: Pass; Pass with Minor Amendments; Pass with Major Amendments; Revise & Resubmit; or Fail.

The Scholarship and Research Committee determines the final outcome; divergent reports are resolved by clarification, a third examiner or the Dean.

Amendment timeframes: Minor 2 months; Major 4 months; Resubmission 8 months.

### **5.5 Appeals**

Appeals on procedural grounds or Fail outcomes lodged within 20 working days.

Stage 1: Director of Research; Stage 2: Dean. External review available after internal avenues.

### **5.6 Post-Examination & Graduation**

Final corrected thesis lodged within one month of amendment approval.

Digital thesis released via Institute repository; embargo of up to two years (renewable) may be approved.

Academic Board confers award on recommendation of the Scholarship and Research Committee.

## 6. Legislation & Standards

Aligned with AQF, Higher Education Standards Framework 2021 (Standards 4.1 & 4.2), Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, and National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

## 7. Version Control

Version	Authored by	Brief description of change	Date Approved	Effective Date
2025.1	Dean	Initial release of HDR Examination Policy.	06 August 2025	07 August 2025
2026.1	Associate Dean, Academic Operations and Partnerships	Minor amendments; updates to role titles, update responsible officer, clarification of examiner requirements, minor grammatical updates.	12 May 2026	13 May 2026