

Graduate Research Examinations Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) This Policy outlines the University's position, consistent with any legislative and other requirements, in relation to the conduct of examinations for higher degrees by research.

(2) This Procedure describes the steps which must be taken by candidates, supervisors, the Graduate Research School (GRS), panels and other La Trobe University staff during the examination of a higher degree by research, noting that timely and effective examination also depends on engagement by examiners external to La Trobe. The requirements for presentation, submission and retention of a thesis, and the procedures for the nomination and appointment of examiners are prescribed in the separate procedures.

(3) The Board of Graduate Research (BGR) determines the conditions under which graduate research theses are examined. The examinations are administered by the GRS.

Section 2 - Scope

(4) This Policy applies to:

- a. All campuses
- b. All higher degrees by research
- c. All staff of the University, including honorary staff
- d. All candidates for a higher degree by research.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

Award of a Higher Degree by Research

(5) The award of a higher degree by research is based on:

- a. an assessment of the quality of the thesis or the thesis and research artefact(s) by a minimum of two independent expert examiners, and
- b. the satisfactory completion of any other requirements of the degree, including any specified coursework or placement.

(6) The criteria for the examination of the respective higher degrees by research are prescribed in the Graduate Research Examinations Procedures:

- a. [Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Thesis Requirements, Submission and Retention](#)
- b. [Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Appointment of Examiners](#)

Modes of Submission

(7) Two modes of submission for higher degree examination are recognised at La Trobe University:

- a. Thesis mode (with or without publications)
- b. Practice-based mode

(8) The requirements for each of these modes are outlined in the schedules and guidelines attached to the [Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Thesis Requirements, Submission and Retention](#).

(9) The choice of mode of submission will be determined by the candidate in consultation with their supervisor according to the features and requirements of the particular research project.

Joint Work

(10) While candidates may form part of a research team, they are expected to make substantial contributions towards the research projects described in the thesis in a combination of project conception and design, analysis and interpretation of research data or materials.

(11) The thesis will be written by the candidate. Where the thesis contains any work of co-authors (which may occur when the thesis contains material that has been published or is intended for publication) then the inclusion of that work will comply with the University's [Research Authorship and Outputs Policy](#) and the [Schedule B - Presentation of Theses for Graduate Research Degrees](#).

(12) Contributions by others, whether published or unpublished, must be acknowledged in the statement of authorship by the candidate.

Responsibilities for Examination of Higher Degrees by Research

(13) The Board of Graduate Research has responsibility for:

- a. ensuring the criteria for examination (as prescribed in the Graduate Research Examination Procedures listed in the clauses below) are followed and directing the way in which higher degrees by research will be examined;
- b. the appointment of examiners in accordance with the criteria and procedures outlined in the [Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Appointment of Examiners](#);
- c. determining the conditions for the format, submission and retention of theses, as outlined in the [Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Thesis Requirements, Submission and Retention](#) and associated schedules;
- d. making a recommendation to the Academic Board for the award of a higher degree by research in each case.

(14) The Graduate Research School is responsible for the coordination and administration of the higher degree by research examination process.

Access to the Thesis

(15) The University seeks to fulfil its responsibilities to disseminate the results of publicly funded research and to enhance its reputation as a leading research university. To support these aims the University will provide open access to the final thesis, subject to any embargo approved according to the [Graduate Research Examinations Procedure- Thesis Requirements, Submission and Retention](#) and associated schedules that may prevail for a designated period.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Provision of Examinable Material to Examiners

(16) Depending on the mode of submission (thesis or practice-based mode) examinable material may consist of a thesis (including an exegesis), and other written material such as catalogues and journals, or research artefact(s), which may be submitted individually or presented in the form of an exhibition or performance.

(17) The candidate's school is responsible for providing detailed guidelines for candidates submitting research artefacts in the practice-based mode. The GRS will be responsible for the provision of the thesis or exegesis to all examiners.

(18) Following the submission of the thesis with the required documentation, as described in the [Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Thesis Requirements, Submission and Retention](#), the GRS will despatch the thesis to the approved examiners with the appropriate examination instructions for the relevant mode of submission.

(19) The GRS will provide examiners with electronic access to the thesis. If examiners request a hard copy of the thesis the candidate will be asked to provide a printed version.

Exhibition or Performance of Examinable Material

(20) Projects such as works of art, design, photography, installation, architectural models, film or performances resulting from creative investigations, will be presented in a gallery or other appropriate venue, at times and dates that permit attendance by the examiners on the recommendation of the principal supervisor and school Director of Graduate Research(DGR).

(21) The examiners will assess any performance or exhibition independently, and will receive a copy of supporting written documentation (e.g. the catalogue). Each examiner will also receive a copy of the durable audio-visual record (e.g. digital recording) and the thesis/exegesis. The timing of the provision of this material (before or after the performance or exhibition) will be determined in each disciplinary area.

Part B - Criteria for Examination

General

(22) Examiners will be provided with the following criteria for examination of a thesis for the respective degrees.

Masters by Research

(23) The degree of Masters by Research shall be awarded based on the examination of a thesis. The requirements for the degree shall be satisfactory completion of any coursework components and completion of a thesis which demonstrates the following course learning outcomes:

- a. mastery of theoretical knowledge and ability to reflect critically on theory and its application
- b. ability to analyse and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories and apply to established theories from different bodies of knowledge or practice
- c. ability to generate and assess complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level
- d. ability to design, use and evaluate research and research methods
- e. advanced communication and technical skills to present coherent arguments and disseminate research findings to specialist and non-specialist audiences

PhD

(24) The degree of PhD shall be awarded based on the examination of a thesis. The requirements for the degree shall be the satisfactory completion of any coursework requirements and completion of a thesis which demonstrates the following course learning outcomes:

- a. mastery of a substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of research or learning, including knowledge that constitutes an original contribution;
- b. ability to provide a critical appraisal of relevant literature and available research, to appreciate and understand the relationship of the investigations undertaken by the candidate to the wider field of knowledge in which these investigations are located, and to draw out the contribution to knowledge made by these investigations;
- c. knowledge and understanding of the methodological techniques relevant to the field of research as well as identify and allow for any shortcomings associated with these techniques;
- d. a satisfactory level of literary presentation reflecting an ability to communicate in a clear, concise and authoritative manner appropriate to the field of research and to the scholarly community to which it is addressed.

Professional Doctorate

(25) A Professional Doctorate (Research) degree shall be awarded based on examination of a thesis once the candidate has met all coursework requirements of the degree at a satisfactory level. The thesis will demonstrate the following course learning outcomes:

- a. mastery of a substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of research or learning, including knowledge that constitutes an original contribution of direct relevance to the profession;
- b. ability to provide a critical appraisal of relevant literature and available research, to appreciate and understand the relationship of the investigations undertaken by the candidate to the wider field of knowledge in which these investigations are located, and to draw out the contribution to knowledge made by these investigations;
- c. knowledge and understanding of the methodological techniques relevant to the field of research as well as identify and allow for any shortcomings associated with these techniques;
- d. a satisfactory level of literary presentation reflecting an ability to communicate in a clear, concise and authoritative manner appropriate to the field of research and to the professional area to which it is addressed.

Part C - Conduct of the Examination

(26) Examiners will examine the thesis according to the provisions outlined in these procedures and in the [Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Appointment of Examiners](#).

When a Thesis Contains Publications

(27) When a thesis contains already published work, or work accepted or submitted for publication, the examination of the thesis will assess the research as presented, assessing whether the combination of published/accepted work/submitted and other work meets the criteria for the respective degrees as outlined in Part B.

(28) In their evaluation of the articles/book chapters/book, examiners will consider the standing of the journal or, in the case of book chapters or a book, the quality of the publishers.

(29) Examiners may recommend that changes are made to any unpublished or framing material (see [Schedule B - Presentation of Theses for Graduate Research Degrees](#)) in a thesis that contains publications, but may not recommend changes to any accepted or published work. Recommended changes or additions to the framing material which may be captured in an additional appendix may, however, address matters pertaining to the published articles/book

chapters.

Practice-based Mode Involving a Performance or Exhibition

(30) All nominated examiners must view the exhibition or performance independently and follow the normal practice of not communicating with one another as prescribed in the [Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Appointment of Examiners](#).

(31) Following the exhibition or performance, two of the nominated examiners will be asked to complete their individual examination of the thesis and artefact(s) in the first instance, and prepare their reports according to the requirements outlined in these procedures.

(32) The candidate is responsible for submitting a high-quality durable audio-visual record of any performance/exhibition component. The durable audio-visual record must be sufficient to form the basis of a fair and thorough examination in the event further examination is required by an examiner who did not attend the performance or exhibition.

Part D - Recommendations Available to Examiners

(33) Examiners will recommend one of the options in the table below. Examiners are requested to:

- a. include justifications of their recommendations in their reports
- b. provide candidates with feedback
- c. when appropriate, list amendments required to bring the thesis or project up to a standard appropriate for the degree.

Recommendations

Option	Recommendation
(a)	The thesis should be classified as passed and the candidate awarded the degree without amendment or further examination
(b)	the thesis should be classified as passed and the candidate awarded the degree subject to the minor amendments recommended in the examiners' reports and candidates given up to four weeks to effect the recommendation as well as correct any typographical errors to the satisfaction of the principal supervisor and the DGR or Dean.
(c)	the thesis should be classified as passed and the candidate awarded the degree subject to the major amendments recommended in the examiners' reports and candidates given up to twelve weeks to effect the recommendation as well as correct any typographical errors to the satisfaction of the principal supervisor and the DGR or Dean.
(d)	the thesis should be classified as deferred and the candidate given up to twelve months to revise (see Part I for details of how revisions are determined) and resubmit the thesis for examination
(e)	the candidate should not be awarded the degree

(34) The examiners will be requested to provide a grade based upon the grading schema in [Schedule A - Masters by Research Thesis Grading Schema](#).

(35) For a doctoral research thesis, if recommending (d) or (e), examiners will be asked if the thesis is at the standard of a Masters by Research degree.

(36) The Director of Graduate Research may convene an advisory panel to make a recommendation on the examination outcome or the grade of a Masters thesis.

Part E - Monitoring and Reporting Progress of Examinations

(37) Examiners are asked to return their reports within six weeks.

(38) The Graduate Research School will send regular reminders to examiners during this period.

(39) The Graduate Research School will provide candidates and supervisors with an update on the examination status after two months have elapsed since the thesis was dispatched. Candidates or supervisors may also request an update of the examination status during the examination period.

(40) Recommendations made by examiners will not be communicated during the examination process. Candidates and supervisors will be advised of the outcome as per Part M.

Part F - Appointment of a Reserve Examiner

(41) If there continues to be no response from either of the first two examiners after eight weeks the GRS will approach the approved reserve examiner and officially invite them to examine the thesis, under the same conditions given to the initial examiners.

(42) A reserve examiner may also be appointed in certain circumstances after the initial examiners' reports are received - see Part H below.

Part G - Oral Examinations

(43) Normally, there is no provision for oral examinations in higher degrees by research at La Trobe University. However an oral examination may be required under the provisions for some cotutelle and joint award degrees. Any requirements for such oral examinations will be outlined in relevant inter-institutional agreements and course accreditation documents.

Part H - Reaching a Decision Based on Examiners' Recommendations

Summary of Decision and Conferral

(44) The procedures for reaching a decision and conferral of the degree are:

- a. Examiners recommend a classification
- b. The DGR or the Advisory Panel recommends the final classification according to the table below
- c. The Chair BGR makes a decision, based on the recommendation of the DGR or Advisory Panel, and recommends to the Academic Board the award of the degree
- d. The Chair BGR makes the decision, BGR ratifies the Chair BGR's decision and the recommendation to the Academic Board if the candidate has met the requirements for the degree
- e. Academic Board approves the award of the degree
- f. University Council confers the degree.

(45) Each examiner will choose from among the recommendations prescribed in Part D of this Procedure.

Action Following Examiner Recommendations

Scenario	Examiner 1 Recommendation	Examiner 2 Recommendation	Action
1	One of (a),(b), or (c)	The same recommendation	The DGR will normally adopt the mutual recommendation for the final classification

Scenario	Examiner 1 Recommendation	Examiner 2 Recommendation	Action
2	One of (a),(b), or (c)	One of (a),(b), or (c) but not the same as Examiner 1	The DGR will normally recommend one of the classifications, with appropriate corrections or amendments
3	One of (d) or (e)	One of (d) or (e) (whether the same or different)	The DGR will normally convene an Advisory Panel which will, in turn, recommend one of (d) or (e). Where the recommendation is (e) the Advisory Panel will specify whether this is: - no degree to be awarded (a fail outcome) or, in the case of a doctorate, the candidate should be awarded a Masters degree by Research (minor amendments only allowed).
4	One of (a), (b) or (c)	One of (d) or (e)	The GRS will ask the reserve examiner to examine the thesis prior to communication with the DGR.

(46) Depending on the recommendation of the reserve examiner following Scenario 4, the following action will be taken:

Scenario	Recommendation of reserve examiner following Scenario 4 above	Action
5	(a),(b) or (c)	The DGR will normally recommend one of (a),(b) or (c)
6	(d) or (e)	The DGR will convene an Advisory Panel which will, in turn, recommend one of (d) or (e). Where the recommendation is (e) the Advisory Panel will specify whether this is: - no degree to be awarded (a fail outcome) or, in the case of a doctorate, the candidate should be awarded a Masters degree by Research (minor amendments only allowed).

(47) Where a reserve examiner has been appointed under Part F and more examiner reports are returned than are needed to reach a decision, the additional report/s that have not informed the decision may be provided to the candidate with this advice.

(48) The DGR will determine the final grade of a Masters by Research thesis based on consideration of the grade recommended by each examiner. When the recommended grades are different, the final grade will be the average of the recommended grades. In circumstances where the difference in the recommended grades is more than 10, the DGR will make a final recommendation based on the examiners reports.

(49) Any grade recommended by the examiner whose report has been set aside will not be considered in determining the final grade.

Part I - When a Thesis is Deferred

Development of a Revision Plan

(50) Where an Advisory Panel recommends a classification of deferred (d) the Advisory Panel will determine a plan for the revision of the thesis based on the examiners' reports. The provision of a plan for the revision of a deferred thesis must maintain the anonymity of the examiners.

(51) The chair of the Advisory Panel must submit a written report of its recommendations and plan for the revision of the thesis to the Chair BGR for approval.

(52) The approved revision plan must be considered by the examiner (or examiners) who recommended deferral. The Graduate Research School is responsible for liaising with the examiner(s) for their approval that the revision

plan proposed by the Advisory Panel constitutes an acceptable framework for revision of the thesis. If the examiner(s) do not agree with all parts of the revision plan proposed by the Advisory Panel, the examiner(s) are asked what modifications are required. Should the examiner(s) not accept the revision plan and propose no modifications, then the matter will be referred to the Advisory Panel for further consideration, to determine the revision plan and obtain the examiner(s) agreement. If an agreement cannot be reached with the examiner(s) recommending deferral, another examiner will be sought to examine the revised thesis.

(53) Following an agreement with the examiner(s) concerning the revision plan the candidate is advised and asked to confirm their acceptance of the revision plan in writing (see Part O below for enrolment status following this step).

Re-examination of the Thesis

(54) A resubmitted thesis will be evaluated on the same academic criteria as a thesis submitted for the first time guided by the approved revision plan.

(55) The complete revised thesis will be submitted for re-examination to the examiner or examiners who recommended that the thesis be deferred. If the examiners who recommended that the thesis be deferred are no longer available, then other examiners can be appointed.

(56) Any examiner of a resubmitted thesis will be advised that it is a resubmitted thesis. Examiner(s) are provided with the revision plan. At the discretion of the Chair BGR, an examiner may request and be provided with the thesis in its original form and reports from the original examination.

(57) No direct communication between the original or new examiners and the candidate or supervisor in relation to the amendments required for the thesis may occur without approval from the Chair BGR.

(58) Following the submission of a revised thesis the options available to examiners are:

- a. Pass, with or without advice concerning any typographical errors
- b. Fail.

(59) For a Masters by Research thesis, the examiners will be asked to provide a grade based upon [Schedule A - Masters by Research Thesis Grading Schema](#).

(60) In circumstances where there are two divergent reports, the Board of Graduate Research will convene a sub-committee co-opting members of the Advisory Panel, including a disciplinary expert, to make a recommendation of either (a) or (b) and to provide a grade for a Masters by research thesis if required.

Part J - Requirements for Graduate Research Advisory Panels (Advisory Panel)

Role of an Advisory Panel

(61) An Advisory Panel is convened by a DGR in the circumstances outlined in the table above, Action Following Examiner Recommendations. The Advisory Panel is normally convened within four weeks of the DGR receiving the examiners' reports and recommendations.

(62) An Advisory Panel will:

- a. make recommendations to the Chair BGR regarding an examination outcome as prescribed in Part H above
- b. establish a revision plan for the thesis (as prescribed in Part I above)

(63) An Advisory Panel may also be established at the discretion of the Chair BGR.

Appointment and Composition of the Advisory Panel

(64) Advisory Panels are appointed by the DGR and consist of:

- a. the DGR/nominee (in the role of Chair)
- b. a nominee of the DGR from the broad field of research
- c. at least one other senior academic who has expertise in the area of the thesis

(65) The Chair of the Advisory Panel should not normally be of the same discipline as the candidate. If the DGR is the supervisor, has been directly involved in the supervision at any time during candidature, or has attended the candidate's research progress committee meetings (sufficiently often to give rise to questions of conflict of interest), then another senior member of the academic staff of that school should chair the panel.

(66) Where possible the panel membership should have appropriate gender representation.

Submissions to the Advisory Panel

(67) When the Graduate Research School(GRS) determines that the examiners' reports should be referred to an Advisory Panel, the GRS will inform the principal supervisor and the DGR.

(68) The GRS will send the candidate a letter officially advising them of the decision to convene an Advisory Panel and will enclose the de-identified examiners' reports.

(69) The GRS will provide the Advisory Panel members with copies of the examiners' reports. Examiners' identities will be visible to the Advisory Panel but must not be shared with the supervisor or candidate to preserve the confidentiality of the examination process.

(70) The candidate and supervisor will be invited by the Advisory Panel to address in writing the concerns raised by examiners. The candidate and supervisor may also propose changes to be made to the thesis if it is either to be passed or deferred and resubmitted for examination.

Participation in Advisory Panel Meetings

(71) Supervisors and candidates may participate in Advisory Panel meetings as allowed by the Advisory Panel but are not authorised to make recommendations to the Chair of BGR.

(72) The candidate may nominate another person who has expertise in the field of research to be their representative. The representative may provide written proposals for amending the thesis on behalf of the candidate and may attend parts of the meeting as allowed by the Advisory Panel.

(73) When attending an Advisory Panel, a candidate may also be accompanied by a support person. The support person may provide general support for the candidate but may not speak on the candidate's behalf.

(74) The Advisory Panel will determine its procedure as prescribed above and may hold some of its discussions without the candidate, the candidate's representative or a supervisor present.

Approval of Advisory Panel Recommendations

(75) An Advisory Panel may make recommendations according to the options outlined in clause (62) unless circumstances prevail as outlined in clause (78).

(76) The Chair BGR will normally approve the recommendations of an Advisory Panel out-of-session. The Chair

BGR may ask an Advisory Panel for clarification of any part of its recommendations and its consideration of the examiners' reports, and, where the Advisory Panel's recommendation does not appear to meet the examiners' concerns, the Chair may refer the matter back to the Advisory Panel before approving its recommendation.

(77) In exceptional circumstances, the Chair BGR may refer the Advisory Panel's recommendation to a full meeting of the BGR or may seek further consideration by the examiners.

Part K - Setting Aside an Examiner's Report

(78) The Chair BGR, or the Advisory Panel reviewing the examiners' reports and recommendations, may set aside an examiner's report when:

- a. there is enough evidence of inadequate or poor quality in that examination
- b. there is a demonstrable bias that disadvantages the candidate and brings the examination into question
- c. it has been found that the examiner does not meet the criteria for examiners as prescribed by the [Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Appointment of Examiners](#)
- d. there is evidence of actions, such as collaboration between examiners or inappropriate communication with the candidate, supervisor or other persons involved in the candidate's research that may bring the examination into disrepute.

(79) When the Chair BGR sets aside an examination recommendation and report (either independently or on the recommendation of an Advisory Panel), the reserve examiner will be requested to examine the thesis if they have not already done so. The two examiners' recommendations will then be considered, without the report and recommendations that have been set aside, as if they are the only reports and recommendations.

(80) Where three examiners have selected (c), (d) and (e), and one of the latter two reports is set aside, the Advisory Panel may make a recommendation based upon the remaining examiners' reports, without seeking further examination.

(81) BGR will be advised of and will review all examiners' reports set aside at its next meeting.

Part L - Candidate Appeals

(82) Candidates may appeal the outcome of an examination where there is evidence of a breach of regulation, policy or procedure that has had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the examination.

(83) A candidate seeking to appeal the outcome of an examination must advise the GRS of their intention to appeal within 10 working days of being notified of the outcome of their examination.

Appointment and Composition of a Graduate Research Examination Appeal Panel (Appeal Panel)

(84) Upon being notified of a candidate's intention to appeal, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement) or nominee will appoint a Graduate Research Examination Appeal Panel which will normally meet within 20 working days of the candidate lodging their notice of intention to appeal.

(85) Appeal Panel members must have had no prior involvement with the candidate. Where possible the panel membership should have balanced gender and cultural representation.

(86) The Appeal Panel will consist of three members who have significant experience in research training and an understanding of a higher degree by research examination, as follows:

- a. a professor of the University who will act as chair. The chair of the panel should not normally be of the same discipline as the candidate.
- b. two other senior academics, one of whom must be a member of the Board of Graduate Research.

(87) A secretary will be appointed to support the panel.

Submissions to the Appeal Panel

(88) The Chair of the Appeal Panel will seek written and verbal submissions as appropriate from the candidate, supervisor and any relevant staff members who have been involved with the administration of the candidate's examination. Submissions will normally be due within 10 working days following the deadline for response. Submissions should address any relevant grounds for appeal, as outlined in clause (82) above.

(89) When attending an Appeal Panel, a candidate may be accompanied by a support person. The support person may not be a legal practitioner or possess any form of legal qualification. They may provide general support for the candidate but may not speak on the candidate's behalf.

Decisions Available to Appeal Panels

(90) In determining an appeal, the Appeal Panel may:

- a. uphold the appeal, or
- b. dismiss the appeal.

(91) The Appeal Panel will report its decision to the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement) or nominee, who will direct the Chair, Board of Graduate Research to take appropriate action.

(92) The Appeal Panel will give written notice of its decision and the reasons for it to the candidate. The candidate will be advised that if they are not satisfied with the decision of the Appeal Panel, they maintain the right to file a grievance or complaint with the University Ombudsman or contact the Victorian State Ombudsman.

(93) The Chair, Board of Graduate Research will inform the candidate in writing of any actions to be taken in relation to the candidate's examination following the outcome of the appeal.

(94) During the time in which the appeal is being lodged and heard, the candidate's status remains 'under examination' as outlined in Part O, until the outcome of the appeal is known.

Part M - Communication of Outcomes

(95) If the decision of the Chair BGR is (a),(c) or (e), the GRS sends a letter of decision and copies of the examiners' reports to the candidate with a copy to the supervisors, Dean and DGR.

(96) The identity of the examiners is revealed to the candidate at the time a letter is sent as described in clause (95), unless an examiner has requested that he or she remains anonymous. If an examiner's report is set aside it is not given to a supervisor or candidate.

(97) When an Advisory Panel is convened to consider a recommendation of (d) the candidate and supervisor will receive the examiners' reports and recommendations with the identity of the examiners removed, to ensure the integrity of any potential re-examination of the thesis.

(98) Following the outcome of a meeting of an Advisory Panel, and confirmation of the decision by the Chair BGR, the GRS sends a letter of decision and copies of the de-identified examiners' reports to the candidate with a copy to the supervisors.

(99) The candidate should indicate in writing their acceptance of any revision plan provided by the Advisory Panel for revision of the thesis within 10 working days of receipt.

Part N - Recommendation for Award and Award of Degree

(100) Following the fulfilment of the final submission requirements as outlined in the [Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Thesis Requirements, Submission and Retention](#) the recommendation for the award of the degree is made by the Chair BGR out-of-session. Ratification of the recommendation for award is considered at the next meeting of the BGR.

(101) The recommendation of the Chair BGR for the award of the degree is submitted to Academic Board for approval. Following Academic Board approval, the degree can be conferred.

Part O - Candidate Status After Thesis Submission

During the Examination Period

(102) After the candidate has uploaded their thesis to the La Trobe University's Institutional Repository, the GRS will change the candidate's status on the student record system to 'under examination'.

(103) The date of uploading will be recorded. From this point, the candidate is no longer enrolled and will not incur any additional fee liabilities.

(104) During this time the candidate will continue to have access to the University's ICT and Library facilities for a period of not less than twelve months or until all requirements for their degree have been completed if this date is sooner.

(105) International candidates must seek information from the [Department of Home Affairs \(DHA\)](#) in relation to any extension of visas that may be required during this period.

Following the Examination Period

(106) Following the advice of outcomes and the satisfactory completion of any amendments that may be required (see clauses 110-113) the candidate's status on the student data base is changed to 'completed' and arrangements for graduation will commence.

(107) Invitations to graduate are emailed to candidates' La Trobe student email account. It is the candidate's responsibility to keep their personal contact details up to date via Student OnLine.

(108) Following the issue of a testamur candidates' access to the University's Information Services and Library facilities is ceased and their student email account is closed, unless alternative arrangements have been made through the local academic unit.

Where No Amendments are Required

(109) Candidates whose thesis is passed without any requirement for amendments can complete the final steps required for the deposit of their thesis according to the [Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Thesis Requirements, Submission and Retention](#).

Where Minor or Major Amendments Are Required

(110) Candidates who are required to make amendments to the thesis will be allowed a limited period for completion of those amendments and submission of the final copy of their thesis to the GRS as follows:

- a. Minor amendments - 4 weeks
- b. Major amendments - 12 weeks

(111) Candidates who are unable to complete the required amendments in the designated time will be required to apply for an extension to the amendment period which is supported by their supervisor. One extension will be granted up to the equivalent of the original period given. Extensions beyond 24 weeks will be given only in exceptional circumstances.

When a Thesis is Deferred for Revision and Resubmission

(112) When a candidate is requested to revise the thesis as directed by the Advisory Panel, the candidate is re-enrolled for a period not exceeding 12 months. The candidate will continue to be supervised and comply with other conditions of candidature during this period.

(113) Candidates who do not submit the final revised version of the thesis (with authorised Authority to Submit documentation) within twelve months will normally have their status changed to withdrawn and access to university facilities terminated.

Options for Submission After Candidature is Withdrawn

(114) Candidates whose candidature is withdrawn may apply to revive their candidature according to the [Graduate Research Candidature Policy and Procedures](#) to resubmit their revised thesis.

Part P - Prizes and Medals

School Medals

(115) Schools may award prizes or medals to any candidates for meritorious examination outcomes as they see fit.

The Nancy Millis Medal

(116) The Nancy Millis Medal will be awarded for outstanding PhD theses based on examiners' reports, endorsement by the DGR and approval by the Board of Graduate Research (BGR). Candidates nominated for the award will normally have demonstrated through their thesis and any creative works related to the thesis:

- a. international or national recognition of the significance of the research;
- b. the impact or potential impact of the work in the context of the field of research.

(117) Examiners will be asked if they recommend the candidate should be considered for the award based on the criteria above, 116 a or b. A candidate will normally be considered for the award only when at least one of the examiners has made such a recommendation.

(118) The examiners' recommendations, together with an assessment of the examiners' reports, will form the basis for a recommendation by the DGR to the BGR. Where a DGR experiences a conflict of interest, a recommendation will be made by the relevant Associate Dean (Research and Industry Engagement).

(119) The BGR will make a final decision, taking into consideration the examiner's recommendation, DGR endorsement, and that the number of medals awarded each year will be typically 5% of the number of graduating candidates.

Section 5 - Definitions

(120) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. Candidate: any student of a higher degree by research who has not yet graduated from their degree and has not withdrawn. This will include those currently on approved leave.
- b. Decision: the decision of the Chair of the Board of Graduate Research in relation to the outcome of a higher degree by research examination, after consideration of the recommendations of examiners, the school Director of Graduate Research and a Graduate Research Advisory Panel where appropriate. The 'decision' is submitted to Academic Board for approval.
- c. Embargo: an approved prohibition on access to a thesis for a designated period.
- d. Higher degree by research: A degree at Level 9 or 10 of the Australian Qualifications Framework, which is comprised of at least two-thirds research and no more than one-third coursework, namely Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), professional doctorates; and Masters by Research degrees. May also be referred to as a graduate research degree.
- e. Research artefact(s): an outcome of research other than the major written component such as a thesis (including exegesis). This may be an output such as a sculpture, painting, novel, software, or an event such as an exhibition or performance.
- f. Thesis: the major written outcome of a higher degree by research, either standalone, or an exegesis accompanying a research artefact(s).
- g. Thesis mode of submission: a mode of submission for examination for a higher degree by research in which the thesis is the only ultimate examinable outcome.
- h. Practice-based mode of submission: a mode of submission in which the examinable components for a higher degree by research examination include a research artefact(s) and a thesis.

Status and Details

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