Graduate Research Examinations Policy

Section 1 - Key Information

Policy Type and Approval Body	Academic – Academic Board
Accountable Executive – Policy	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Responsible Manager – Policy	Senior Manager, Graduate and Global Research
Review Date	4 December 2027

Section 2 - Purpose

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

(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 graduate research degree, 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.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This Policy applies to:

a. all campuses
b. all graduate research degrees
c. all staff of the University, including honorary staff
d. all candidates for a graduate research degree

Section 4 - Key Decisions

Key Decisions	Role
Appointment of examiners	School Director of Graduate Research
Recommendation of award of degree to Academic Board	Chair, Board of Graduate Research
Approval of award of degree	Academic Board

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Section 5 - Policy Statement

Award of a Graduate Research Degree

(4) The award of a graduate research degree 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.

Modes of Submission

(5) Two modes of submission for graduate research degree examination are recognised at La Trobe University:

a. thesis mode (with or without publications); and
b. Practice-based mode (with or without publications).

(6) 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.

(7) 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

(8) 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.

(9) 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.

(10) Contributions by others, whether published or unpublished, must be acknowledged in the statement of authorship by the candidate.

Responsibilities for Examination of Graduate Research Degrees

(11) The Board of Graduate Research (BGR) 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 graduate research degrees will be examined; and
b. ensuring the appointment of examiners is in accordance with the criteria and procedures outlined in the Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Appointment of Examiners; and
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; and
d. making a recommendation to the Academic Board for the award of a graduate research degree in each case.

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(12) The Graduate Research School (GRS) is responsible for the coordination and administration of the graduate research degrees examination process.

Access to the Thesis

(13) 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 6 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Decision and Recommendation for the Award of a Graduate Research Degree

(14) The normal steps for reaching a decision and awarding a graduate research degree are:

a. Examiners review the examinable material against the criteria for examination and recommend a classification.
b. The School Director of Graduate Research (DGR)(or nominee) or the Examination Panel recommends the final classification (or that the outcome be deferred), and, for a Master's by research, the final grade.
c. The Chair, BGR makes a decision, based on the recommendation of the DGR (or nominee) or Examination Panel.
d. Candidate notified of outcome.
e. Candidate completes amendments to satisfaction of their supervisor and DGR (or nominee) if required, and any other completion requirements.
f. The Chair, BGR recommends to the Academic Board the award of the degree.
g. BGR ratifies the Chair, BGR's decision and recommendation.

Part B - Criteria for Examination

Master's by Research

(15) The degree of Master's by research shall be awarded based on the examination of a thesis (and other examinable materials if appropriate). The requirements for the degree shall be satisfactory completion of any coursework components and completion of a thesis which demonstrates all of 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; and
e. advanced communication and technical skills to present coherent arguments and disseminate research findings to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

(16) The degree of PhD shall be awarded based on the examination of a thesis (and other examinable materials if appropriate). The requirements for the degree shall be the satisfactory completion of any coursework requirements and completion of a thesis which demonstrates all of 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 how to identify and allow for any shortcomings associated with these techniques; and
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 (Research)

(17) 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 all of 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 how to identify and allow for any shortcomings associated with these techniques; and
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 - Provision of Examinable Material to Examiners

(18) 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.

(19) The candidate's school is responsible for providing detailed guidelines for candidates submitting research artefacts in the practice-based mode.

(20) In the case of a posthumous examination, the provision of examinable materials to the examiners will be guided by the provisions of the Qualifications Issuance Policy.

(21) Following the submission of the examinable material with the required documentation, as described in the Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Thesis Requirements, Submission and Retention , the GRS will despatch the thesis or exegesis and any other submitted materials to the approved examiners with the appropriate examiner guidelines for the relevant mode of submission, which include the criteria for examination.

(22) The Graduate Research School 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

(23) 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),or nominee.

(24) 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.

(25) The examiners will assess any performance or exhibition independently, and will receive a copy of supporting written documentation (e.g. the catalogue). The GRS will provide each examiner with 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 by the School Director of Graduate Research (or nominee).

Part D - Candidate's Status During the Examination Period

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

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

(28) During this time the candidate will continue to have access to the University's Information Services (IS) and Library facilities.

(29) 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.

Part E - Conduct of the Examination

(30) The candidate and members of the supervisory team must have no contact with approved examiners regarding the examination of the thesis until the Board of Graduate Research has recommended an outcome or they are invited to do so by an Examination Panel.

(31) Examiners will examine the thesis according to the provisions outlined in these procedures and in the Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Appointment of Examiners. In the case of a posthumous examination, the examiners will also be guided by the provisions of the Qualifications Issuance Policy in the examination of the thesis or other written work or artefacts prepared by the deceased candidate and submitted by their supervisor(s).

When a Thesis Contains Publications

(32) 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.

(33) 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.

(34) Examiners may recommend that changes are made to any unpublished or framing material (see Graduate Research Examinations - 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. Examiners may recommend additional framing material to be included to address matters pertaining to the published articles/book chapters.

Practice-based Mode Involving a Performance or Exhibition

(35) 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.

(36) 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.

(37) In in the event further examination is required by an examiner who did not attend the performance or exhibition, the GRS will provide them with a copy of the durable audio-visual record (e.g. digital recording) of the exhibition or performance to use for their examination.

Oral Examinations

(38) Normally, there is no provision for oral examinations in graduate research degrees at La Trobe University. An oral examination may be required, however, 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 F - Recommendations Available to Examiners

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

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

Recommendation Table

Option	Recommendation
(a)	The thesis should be classified as passed and the candidate awarded the degree without amendment (other than the correction of typographical errors only) or further examination.
(b)	The thesis should be classified as passed and the candidate awarded the degree subject to amendments where the examiner recommends either; a. minor amendments (including the correction of typographical and grammatical errors, formatting errors, the minor re-writing of sentences and/or paragraphs for clarity, and referencing errors) with up to four weeks to effect the recommendation; or b. major amendments (including minor amendments and substantial changes to the structure and/or content of chapters, tables or figures) with up to twelve weeks to effect the recommendation to the satisfaction of the principal supervisor and the DGR, or Dean of School (or nominee).
(c)	The thesis should be classified as deferred and the candidate re-enrolled for up to twelve months (full-time equivalent) to revise and resubmit the thesis for examination per the Graduate Research Examinations Procedure – Revise and Resubmit. Revision may include any amendments listed above and substantial changes to the structure and/or content of the thesis which may necessitate additional research and data collection, a change in methodology, significant additions to the literature review and/or analysis.
(d)	The candidate should not be awarded the degree (fail).

(40) For a Master's by research thesis the examiners will be requested to provide a grade based upon the grading schema in Schedule A – Masters by Research Thesis Grading Schema.

(41) For a doctoral research thesis, if recommending (c) or (d), examiners will be asked if the thesis is at the standard of a Master's by research degree and to provide a grade based on the grading schema in Graduate Research Examinations - Schedule A - Master's by research Thesis Grading Schema.

Part G - Monitoring and Reporting Progress of Examinations

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

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

(44) If either of the first two examiners do not respond to the GRS during the examination period or does not return their report within a timely manner, 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.

(45) The GRS 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.

(46) Recommendations made by examiners will not normally be communicated during the examination process unless the initial recommendation is deferral, and a revision plan is established per the Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Revise and Resubmit. Candidates and supervisors will be advised of the examination outcome after the completion of the examination process by the Chair, Board of Graduate Research.

Part H - Reaching a Decision Based on the Examiner Reports

Actions Following Examiner Recommendations

(47) Once both examiners' reports have been received, the Graduate Research School (GRS) will send the reports to the School Director of Graduate Research (DGR) to recommend a final classification, unless the reports are divergent and thus a third examiner is required. The different scenarios and resulting actions are outlined in the table below.

Scenario	Examiner 1 Recommendation	Examiner 2 Recommendation	Action
1	One of (a)or(b)	The same recommendation	The DGR will normally adopt the examiners' mutual recommendation for the final classification of passed or passed with amendments and, where amendments are required, will stipulate the time permitted to make the amendments.
2	One of (a)or(b)	One of (a)or(b)but not the same as Examiner 1	The DGR will normally recommend one of (a) or (b), and where amendments are required will stipulate the time permitted to make the amendments.
3	(c)	(c)	The DGR will normally adopt the examiners' mutual recommendation for the final classification and recommend that the thesis be deferred per the Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Revise and Resubmit.
4	(d)	(d)	The DGR will normally adopt the examiners' mutual recommendation for the final classification of failed.

(48) Outcomes not listed in the above table are considered divergent and the GRS will ask the reserve examiner to examine the thesis. Once the reserve examiner's report is received, the GRS sends the three examiner reports to the DGR to recommend a final classification. The different scenarios and resulting actions are outlined in the table below.

Scenario	Examiner 1 Recommendation	Examiner 2 Recommendation	Examiner 3 Recommendation	Action
1	One of (a) or (b)	One of (c) or (d)	One of (a) or (b)	The DGR will normally recommend a final classification of passed or passed with amendments and, where amendments are required, will stipulate the time permitted to make the amendments.
2	One of (a) or (b)	One of (c) or (d)	One of (c) or (d)	The DGR may recommend a deferral or may decide to convene an Examination Panel to provide a joint recommendation (see Part I).
3	(c)	(d)	(c)	The DGR will normally recommend that the thesis be deferred per the Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Revise and Resubmit.
4	(c)	(d)	(d)	The DGR will normally recommend that the thesis be failed.

Determining the Grade for a Masters by Research Thesis

(49) The School Director of Graduate Research (DGR) (or nominee) will recommend the final grade for a Masters by research thesis based on consideration of the grade recommended by each examiner. When the examiners' grades differ by less than ten (10), the final grade will normally be the average of the individual grades. Where the difference in the examiners' grades is ten (10) or more, the DGR (or nominee) will normally make a final recommendation based on the examiners' reports, but may choose to convene an Examination Panel to make a joint recommendation.

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

Chair, Board of Graduate Research Decision

(51) The Chair, Board of Graduate Research (BGR) makes the decision on the outcome of the examination, based on the recommendation of the School Director of Graduate Research (DGR) (or nominee) or Examination Panel.

(52) In exceptional circumstances, such as when the Examination Panel is unable to reach a joint recommendation, the Chair, BGR may make a decision on the outcome, or refer the outcome recommendation to a full meeting of the BGR. The Chair, BGR may seek further consideration by individual examiners or an Examination Panel.

Part I - Requirements for Graduate Research Examination Panels (Examination Panel)

Role of an Examination Panel

(53) The role of the Examination Panel is dependent on the reason it was formed, as outlined in the relevant parts of this policy and the Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Revise and Resubmit. An Examination Panel may be formed to:

a. make a joint recommendation on the examination classification when three examiners have provided divergent recommendations (as outlined in the table above: Action Following Examiner Recommendations); or
b. make a joint recommendation on the grade for a Master's by research where their individual grades differ by ten (10) or more and the DGR chooses to form an Examination Panel rather than making the recommendation themselves; or
c. endorse the revision plan for a deferred outcome, and subsequently to make a joint recommendation to the

Chair, BGR regarding the examination outcome of the revised thesis.

(54) An Examination Panel may also be established in other circumstances at the discretion of the Chair, BGR.

Appointment and Responsibilities of the Examination Panel Members

(55) Examination Panels are normally convened by the School Director of Graduate Research (DGR) (or nominee) and consist of:

a. the DGR (or nominee) (in the role of Chair);
b. the examiners (who are independent disciplinary experts in the area of the thesis); and
c. a Graduate Research School (GRS) staff member may support the Panel as secretary.

(56) The Examination Panel is normally convened within four weeks of the DGR receiving the examiners' independent reports and recommendations.

(57) The GRS will provide the Examination Panel with a copy of appropriate documents, including copies of the examiners' reports.

(58) The Examination Panel Chair is responsible for ensuring procedure is followed, including that:

a. the relative status of the examiners does not affect the overall outcome;
b. providing advice to the Panel regarding La Trobe qualification standards, policies and procedures; and
c. drafting the Panel recommendations and/or revision plan for endorsement by the Panel.

(59) If the DGR is a supervisor; or has been directly involved in the supervision at any time during candidature; or has another of conflict of interest, then another senior member of the academic staff of that school, e.g. the Dean of School (or nominee) should chair the Panel.

Part J - Setting Aside an Examiner's Report

(60) The Chair, Board of Graduate Research (BGR) 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 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; or
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 as prescribed by the Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Appointment of Examiners.

(61) When the Chair, BGR sets aside an examiner's report, the reserve examiner will be requested to examine the thesis. 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.

(62) Where three examiners have selected (a-b), (c) and (d), and one of the reports is subsequently set aside, the Examination Panel may make a recommendation based upon the remaining examiners' reports, without seeking further examination.

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Part K - Communication of Outcomes

(63) Once the Chair, Board of Graduate Research has decided on the outcome of the examination, the Graduate Research School will send a letter of the decision and copies of the examiners' reports to the candidate with a copy to the supervisors, DGR and Dean of School.

(64) If an examiner's report is set aside it is not given to a supervisor or candidate.

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

Part L - Completion of Final Requirements

(66) Candidates who have not finalised the completion requirements and uploaded the final copy of their thesis to the University repository within the approved amendment and/or approved extension period may be withdrawn. Candidates will then need to seek approval in writing from the Chair, BGR to submit their final copy of their thesis.

Where No Amendments are Required

(67) Candidates whose thesis is passed without any requirement for amendments should, within two weeks of notification, complete the final steps required for the deposit of their thesis according to the Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Thesis Requirements, Submission and Retention.

Where Amendments are Required

(68) Candidates who are required to make amendments to the thesis will be allowed a limited period (typically 4-12 weeks), independent of study rate, for completion of those amendments.

(69) Candidates who are unable to complete the required amendments in the designated time can apply for an extension to the amendment period with the support of their supervisor. Extensions beyond twenty-four weeks will be given only in exceptional circumstances.

(70) Once the amendments have been completed, candidates must submit an amendment report addressing the examiners' comments and outlining the subsequent changes made to the thesis along with a copy of the updated thesis so that their supervisor and DGR or Dean of School can assess whether the changes have satisfactorily addressed the examiners' requirements.

(71) Once the amendment report has been approved, candidates must complete the final steps required for the deposit of their thesis according to the Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Thesis Requirements, Submission and Retention.

Part M - Award of the Degree

(72) Once the candidate has satisfactorily completed all final requirements and settled all debts with the University the Chair, Board of Graduate Research (BGR) will recommend to the Academic Board that the degree be awarded and the GRS will change the candidate's status on the student system to 'Passed'.

(73) Following approval of the award of the degree by the Academic Board, the degree will be conferred, and the Graduate Research School (GRS) will change the candidate's status on the student data base to 'Passed'. All academic certifications will be issued per the Qualifications Issuance Policy and arrangements for graduation will commence.

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

(75) A candidates' access to the University's Information Services and Library facilities will be ceased and their student and institutional email accounts will be closed shortly after conferral.

Part N - Prizes and Awards

School Prizes

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

The Nancy Millis Medal

(77) The Nancy Millis Medal will be awarded for an outstanding doctoral theses (including for the Doctor of Philosophy or a professional doctorate) based on examiners' reports, endorsement by the DGR and approval by the 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 or profession.

(78) Examiners will be asked if they recommend the candidate should be considered for the award based on the criteria above, (a) or (b).

(79) The examiners' recommendations, together with an assessment of the examiners' reports including the strength of the justification for the award and the extent of any recommended amendments, will form the basis for a recommendation by the DGR to the BGR. A candidate will normally only be recommended for the award by the DGR when both of the examiners has made such a recommendation. Where a DGR experiences a conflict of interest, a recommendation will be made by the relevant Dean of School, or nominee.

(80) The BGR will make a final decision, taking into consideration the strength of justification in the examiners' reports and DGR's recommendation in reference to the criteria above, and that the number of awards awarded each year will be typically 5% of the number of graduating candidates.

The Research Masters Award

(81) The Research Masters Award will be awarded for an outstanding Master's by research theses in recognition of the originality and high standard of the research and the impact of the work in the context of the field of research.

(82) The Award may normally be awarded where:

a. both examiners have graded the Master's by research thesis at 90 or above; or
b. the Master's by research thesis is ungraded and the DGR (or nominee) makes a recommendation based on their assessment of the examiners' reports taking into account the impact of the work in the context of the field of research including acceptance for publication in a peer-reviewed journal of high standing; or
c. one or more of the examiners have graded the thesis at 85% or above and the DGR (or nominee) makes a recommendation based on their assessment of the examiners' reports taking into account disciplinary grading norms and the impact of the work in the context of the field of research including acceptance for publication in a peer-reviewed journal of high standing.

(83) In the case of b or c above, where the DGR experiences a conflict of interest, the assessment and decision to

award will be made by the relevant Dean of School or nominee.

(84) The Board of Graduate Research will approve the decision to award the Research Masters Award.

Part O - Candidate Appeals

(85) 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.

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

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

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

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

(89) 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; and
b. two other senior academics, one of whom must be a member of the Board of Graduate Research.

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

Submissions to the Appeal Panel

(91) 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 of the written request. Submissions should address any relevant grounds for appeal, as outlined above.

(92) 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

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

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

(94) The Appeal Panel will report its decision to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) or nominee, who will direct the Chair, BGR to take appropriate action.

(95) The Secretary of the Appeal Panel will communicate the outcome of the appeal to the supervisor and candidate in

an appropriate manner.

(96) The Appeal Panel will then 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 in the first instance. If they are not satisfied with the decision of the University Ombudsman, they maintain the right to file a grievance or complaint with the National Student Ombudsman. For further information on complaints considered by the National Student Ombudsman, go to Making a complaint | National Student Ombudsman (NSO).

(97) The Chair, BGR will inform the candidate in writing of any actions to be taken in relation to the candidate's examination following the communication of the outcome of the appeal.

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

Section 7 - Definitions

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

a. Candidate: any student of a graduate research degree 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, BGR in relation to the outcome of a graduate research degree examination, after consideration of the recommendations of examiners, the school Director of Graduate Research and a Graduate Research Examination 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. Graduate research degree: 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 Master's by research degrees. May also be referred to as a higher degree by research.
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 graduate research degree, either standalone, or an exegesis accompanying a research artefact(s).
g. Thesis mode of submission: a mode of submission for examination for a graduate research degree 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 graduate research degree examination include a research artefact(s) and a thesis.

Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(100) This Policy is made under the La Trobe University Act 2009.

(101) Associated information includes:

a. Higher Doctorate Policy
b. Qualifications Issuance Policy

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	2nd January 2025
Review Date	4th December 2027
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	4th December 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Manager - Policy	Rebecca Lubansky Senior Manager, Graduate and Global Research
Enquiries Contact	Graduate Research School

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