

Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Thesis Requirements, Submission and Retention

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

- (1) This procedure and its associated schedule and guidelines outline the requirements for the preparation, submission and depositing of theses for all higher degrees by research.
- (2) These procedures are to be read in conjunction with the Graduate Research Examination Procedures.
- (3) As prescribed in the [Graduate Research Examinations Policy](#) the Board of Graduate Research determines the conditions under which graduate research theses are examined. The examinations are administered by the Graduate Research School.
- (4) The [Graduate Research Examinations Policy](#) specifies two modes of submission:
- Thesis mode of submission
 - Practice-based mode of submission

Section 2 - Scope

- (5) Refer to the [Graduate Research Examinations Policy](#).

Section 3 - Policy Statement

- (6) Refer to the [Graduate Research Examinations Policy](#).

Section 4 - Procedure

Part A - Standard of Work

- (7) La Trobe University is bound by the Qualification Type Specifications outlined in the Australian Qualifications Framework. In relation to higher degrees by research, supervisors must guide their candidates to conduct research and prepare theses appropriate for the level of the degree.
- (8) Graduates of a Master's degree by research will have (and demonstrate in their thesis) a body of knowledge that includes the understanding of recent developments in one or more disciplines.
- (9) Graduates of a doctoral degree will have (and demonstrate in their thesis) a substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of work or learning, including knowledge that constitutes an original contribution.

(10) The detailed criteria for examination of theses are outlined in the Graduate Research Examination Procedures.

Part B - Prior Work

(11) The majority of work presented in the thesis, in either mode of submission, must be based on research undertaken during candidature at either La Trobe or another university if the candidate has transferred from another university. No work submitted for any other degree or diploma may be presented for assessment. Candidates may refer to work submitted for the award of another degree with appropriate citation.

(12) Where a thesis contains publications candidates may not include any papers submitted or published prior to their candidature, unless they are transferring from a degree at the same level from another university.

Part C - Formatting, Structure and Content

(13) The detailed requirements for presentation of a thesis for both modes of submission, including word length, format, structure and content of the thesis are prescribed in the [Schedule B for Presentation of Theses for Graduate Research Degrees](#).

(14) The detailed requirements for the other examinable components of practice-based mode are outlined in the Guidelines for Presentation of Examinable Components in Practice-Based Higher Degrees by Research (forthcoming).

Part D - Language of Thesis

Approvals

(15) Any thesis submitted to fulfil the requirements of a higher degree by research must normally be written in English, unless a candidate has already been authorised under the terms of a joint degree by higher research or cotutelle arrangement to do otherwise.

(16) Where any other candidate wishes to write a thesis in a Language Other Than English (LOTE), approval must be sought from the Chair, Board of Graduate Research via the principal supervisor and the School Director of Graduate Research (SDGR). This would normally occur as part of the admission process or at the time of the first progress report but must occur prior to confirmation of candidature.

(17) Approval will only be given to write a thesis in a LOTE where:

- a. the use of that language can be justified by the candidate and the principal supervisor as being intrinsic to the topic of the thesis, and
- b. the principal supervisor can provide evidence that examiners will be available to assess the thesis in the nominated language.

(18) A candidate's lack of proficiency with the English language is not an appropriate reason for seeking to write the thesis in a LOTE.

Requirements

(19) Title and synopsis requirements for the presentation of a thesis in a LOTE are outlined in the [Schedule B for Presentation of Theses for Graduate Research Degrees](#).

(20) The approval to proceed does not obviate the need for the candidate to meet the English language admission requirements for their degree.

(21) Examiners' reports must be written in English.

(22) The citation required for graduation must be in English.

Part E - Editing of Theses

Guidelines

(23) Candidates may seek input from a professional editor prior to submission of their thesis for examination.

(24) Theses must be edited according to the Guidelines for Editing Research Theses which form part of the Australian Standards for Editing Practices.

(25) Professional editorial intervention should be restricted to copyediting and proofreading. Where a professional editor provides advice on matters of structure, exemplars only should be given.

(26) The candidate must consider whether or not to accept each suggested editorial change.

(27) The name of the editor and a brief description of the service rendered should be included in the acknowledgements or other prefatory matter of the thesis when it is presented for examination.

Part F - Preparation for Submission

Notice of Intention to Submit

(28) The following procedures apply to submission for examination and again for any re-submission for examination that may be required.

(29) No later than one month prior to the planned submission date of the thesis a candidate must submit a Notice of Intention to submit (NOI) form, endorsed by their principal supervisor and SDGR to the Graduate Research School (GRS), providing the anticipated submission date and a summary of the thesis. In the practice-based mode, where the examiners will attend an exhibition or any other event that comprises part of the material or activity to be examined, this form must be completed no less than three months prior to the planned event.

(30) The receipt of this form triggers the recruitment of examiners according to the [Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Appointment of Examiners](#).

Authority to Submit

(31) One week prior to submission of the thesis the candidate must seek their supervisor's endorsement of the Authority to Submit (ATS) form. In signing this form the supervisor agrees that they have seen a final copy of the candidate's thesis and that, in their opinion:

- a. the thesis is ready for examination
- b. the thesis complies with the provisions of the relevant [Schedule B for Presentation of Theses for Graduate Research Degrees](#) (see Part C above)

(32) In the case of doctorates with coursework requirements the principal supervisor must also certify that the coursework requirements have been completed.

(33) All doctoral candidates are required to submit a 50-word citation summarising their thesis in lay terms on the ATS form. The citation is incorporated in documentation for graduation, irrespective of whether the candidate chooses to attend a graduation in person.

(34) Following endorsement by the SDGR the Authority to Submit form is submitted to the GRS.

(35) If the supervisor declines to certify that a thesis is ready for submission a candidate may request that the Board of Graduate Research accept a thesis for examination without the approval of the supervisor.

(36) In the circumstances outlined in clause 35 the supervisor must provide a statement in writing outlining their reasons for declining their support. This statement must be provided to the candidate and authorised by the SDGR.

(37) Each application in these circumstances is assessed on its merits by the Chair BGR. The Chair may consider any implications for the reputation of the University. The candidate and supervisor will be informed whether or not the thesis will be examined.

Part G - Submission

(38) Following receipt of the ATS form, the GRS will:

- a. check the candidate's enrolment and any fee sanctions that might apply. Any necessary action will be taken to correct enrolment details and to advise the candidate to settle any outstanding debts with the University
- b. check any special requirements that any of the confirmed examiners may have and advise the candidate and supervisor.

(39) Where an examiner(s) requests a hard copy of the thesis, either before or after submission for examination, it is the candidate's responsibility to provide the requested number of bound copies in accordance with the requirements outlined in the [Schedule B for Presentation of Theses for Graduate Research Degrees](#).

(40) Where a candidate may have payment of fees to the University outstanding a thesis may proceed to examination. The candidate will be advised of any amendments that may be required after examination but award of the degree will not be recommended until all sanctions are cleared.

(41) Following submission of the thesis, GRS will provide the examiners with access to the thesis together with accompanying guidelines for examination for the relevant degree.

Part H - Final Submission After Examination

(42) The result of any thesis examination will be determined according to the Graduate Research Examination Procedures. All graduate research theses for which a degree is awarded at La Trobe University will be deposited in electronic form with the University Library after successful examination.

(43) Following any required amendments or revisions the candidate is required to submit a final version of their thesis with an Access to Thesis - Consent form to the GRS.

(44) When the Chair BGR has been advised by:

- a. the School that the thesis has been as amended, as required by the examiners or Graduate Research Advisory Panel, and that the candidate has fulfilled the requirements of the degree, and
- b. GRS staff that the candidate has:
 - i. settled all debts with the University and
 - ii. administrative procedures are complete

(45) they will recommend to Academic Board that the degree should be awarded.

Part I - University Library Repository - Access to Theses and Embargos

Access to Theses

(46) Following the Academic Board approval that the degree be awarded the thesis will be deposited with the University Library.

(47) The thesis will normally be made available in the University Library's open access online Repository where there are no restrictions on access to the thesis. All theses and documents in the Repository are normally indexed by web search engines and are freely accessible to any person.

Restrictions on Access - Embargo and Copyright

(48) Candidates or supervisors may have a range of reasons for applying for restriction of access to all or part of a thesis for a designated period of time. These reasons may include:

- a. Pending publications or patents
- b. Public interest
- c. Copyright
- d. Other commercial-in-confidence, or intellectual property considerations
- e. Ethical sensitivities

(49) Where any material in the thesis is subject to any copyright restrictions, or permissions, this information, and copies of any relevant agreements, will be included in the thesis according to the instructions outlined in the [Schedule B for Presentation of Theses for Graduate Research Degrees](#).

(50) If any of the circumstances outlined in clause 47 apply, or any other circumstances deemed valid, candidates or supervisors may apply for an embargo. When an embargo is applied to a thesis a digital copy of the thesis is kept in a dark archive and cannot be perused, loaned or copied until the end of the embargo period.

(51) If permission to use third party copyright material has not been granted, two versions of the thesis should be submitted - the original and a redacted version. The original version will be stored in a secure location with restricted access. The redacted version will be the version that is publicly exposed, subject to any other embargo that may have been imposed on the remaining material.

(52) Where a redacted version of the thesis has been submitted, citations for any omitted papers should be placed in the thesis where they would otherwise form a chapter or part of the thesis.

(53) In the circumstances described in in clause 49 the original complete version of such a thesis can be made available on request to a single individual as long as the Library Officer is satisfied that the request is for the purposes of research and study as outlined under Section 51 of the [Copyright Act](#). However if an embargo is in place access to either version would be denied.

(54) A request for restricted access is made on the Access to Thesis - Consent Form before the final version of the thesis is submitted.

(55) Approval to restrict access to all or part of any thesis must be given by the Chair, BGR and is normally only given for a designated period, usually 12 months or two years.

(56) At the conclusion of any period of approved embargo the thesis will revert to the open access repository unless a new application to extend the period of restricted access has been approved by the Chair, BGR.

Changes in Permissions

(57) In exceptional circumstances, where permission to use copyrighted material has been given after submission of the final version of the thesis to the Library, a new version of the thesis with appropriate acknowledgements may be submitted to the Library for the purposes of publication in the open access repository.

Section 5 - Definitions

(58) Nil.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	28th November 2016
Review Date	15th September 2019
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	27th November 2016
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
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