

HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH ASSESSMENT AND ASSESSMENT APPEALS PROCEDURE

Category	Procedure		
Review	1 year from date of Approval		
Code	ARP003P		
Contact	policy@imc.edu.au		
Version	Approval Authority	Approval Date	Review Date
2024.11	Deputy President (Education)	20 November 2024	30 September 2025

1. PURPOSE

This procedure outlines the process for the submission, examination, and appeal of higher degree research theses at the Australian National Institute of Management and Commerce (the Institute or IMC). It is designed to support the Higher Degree Research Assessment and Assessment Appeals Policy.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all candidates enrolled in higher degree research at the Institute, academic staff involved in the supervision and examination of these candidates, and examiners of theses submitted by the Institute's students.

3. PROCEDURES

3.1 Thesis Submission

- The candidate shall present for examination a thesis / thesis & industry portfolio in the form endorsed by the Research Committee (RC), embodying the results of the candidate's original contribution.
- The thesis, exclusive of any appendices, shall not usually exceed 50,000 words for a Research Master's degree and 100,000 words for a Research Doctoral degree. The word limit and exact nature of an industry-engaged PhD will be decided prior to the mid-candidature review process and presented to the RC for approval.
- The candidate will state generally in the Introduction and specifically in the body of the thesis all sources from which the information is derived, clearly differentiating their original contribution.

- The candidate shall not present in the thesis any work that has been the basis of the award of a previous degree unless it is clearly identified as such.
- The candidate will have adhered to any / all conditions of ethical approval throughout the research process.
- The candidate shall retain all original data, in a form that would permit replication of all analyses reported in the thesis, in a central repository at the Institute for a period of not less than five years.
- The candidate shall submit to the Secretary of the RC and the Principal Supervisor one copy in digital format approved by the Committee.
- At the time of submitting the thesis for examination, the Principal Supervisor will present a formal statement to the RC stating that the supervisors have discussed the academic content and findings with the candidate and agree that it is in a form suitable for examination while neither expressing nor implying a judgment concerning the merits of the research.
- The candidate is wholly responsible for the content and submission of the thesis for examination.

3.2 Examiner Selection and Appointment

- The Principal Supervisor will present to the RC a list of four potential examiners for a Master's Degree and five potential examiners for a Doctoral degree, together with supporting documentation. The Examiners are expected to be academically reputable in the field of the thesis, with a significant body of published work, or other publicly recognised output as appropriate for their discipline.
- Examiners should typically hold a qualification at least equivalent to the level of the award being examined.
- The RC shall approve and approach two examiners for a Master's degree and three examiners for a doctoral degree. One further examiner will be identified as an alternate.
- If a replacement examiner is required, then the replacement examiner will be the alternate selected by the RC. If an alternate is unavailable from the pool of examiners originally provided by the Principal Supervisor, the RC may decide to request the Principal Supervisor to submit the names and supporting documents for additional potential examiners
- All examiners must be external and independent of the Institute. It is recommended that at least one of the examiners for a PhD shall be external to Australia.

- No person who has been involved in the supervision of the candidate shall be appointed examiner. No person who is or has been in a personal relationship with the candidate or the supervisors will be approved to be an examiner. No person who has been a co-author with the candidate or the supervisors over the past five years will be approved to be an examiner. No person who has been employed by IMC within the past 5 years will be approved to be an examiner.
- The RC's recommendation of the examiners is confidential and must not be revealed to the candidate at any time.

3.3 Examination Process

- Examiners will be expected to report within two months of receiving the thesis.
- If an examiner fails to report within three months after adequate reminder, the RC may appoint an alternate examiner.
- Each examiner shall submit an independent, written report (template for which is in Appendix A) on the merits of the thesis which shall contain an assessment of the thesis in relation to the stated thesis objectives.
- The examiner's report shall include one of the following recommendations:
 - i. ***Award with no/minor amendments***: the thesis be classified as passed. The examiner may specify this category for a thesis that does not require any amendments.
 - ii. ***Require minor revisions***: the thesis be classified as passed conditionally, subject to minor revisions, as outlined in the Examiner's Report, being made to the satisfaction of the Principal Supervisor, within 6 weeks of official notification of the examination outcome. The examiner may specify this category for a thesis which requires correction of errors of presentation and minor deficiencies, but which are not of sufficient importance to warrant major corrections.
 - iii. ***Require major revisions***: the thesis be classified as passed conditionally, subject to revisions, as outlined in the Examiners' Report, being made to the satisfaction of the Deputy President (Education) or delegate as specified by the Committee, within eight weeks of official notification of the examination outcome. The examiner may specify this category for a thesis which requires correction of deficiencies other than errors of presentation, but which are not of sufficient importance to warrant submission for re-examination by the original examiner.
 - iv. ***Revise and resubmit***: the thesis to be submitted in a revised form for re-examination by the original examiners, where appropriate. The examiner may

specify this category for a thesis which requires major, substantive amendment and submission for re-examination. In the Examiner's Report, the examiner shall provide detailed guidance to the candidate to assist revision. The candidate must then resubmit the thesis together with a statement by the candidate outlining the revisions that have been made.

- v. ***Do not award the degree:*** The thesis does not meet the standards for the award of the degree as specified in the Australian Qualifications Framework and does not warrant a further period of research and/or writing. The candidate should not be awarded the degree, nor should they be permitted to revise and submit for re-examination.
- vi. ***Allow revision and re-submission as a Masters by Research Thesis (For PhD theses only):*** The thesis does not meet the standards for the award of the degree as specified in the Australian Qualifications Framework. The candidate should not be awarded the degree of PhD, nor should the candidate be permitted to revise and submit for re-examination of the thesis as a PhD. The candidate will be allowed to revise the thesis and re-submit the thesis for examination as a Masters by Research.

3.4 Thesis Examination Outcomes

After considering the recommendations of the examiners, the RC may:

- Recommend that the degree be awarded
- Recommend that the degree be awarded conditional upon the making of such amendments as the RC deems appropriate
- Request the examiners consult with and report to the RC
- Appoint an additional examiner or examiners
- Appoint an external adjudicator who shall consider and report to the RC upon the thesis and any supporting papers invited or requested by the RC and the examiners' reports
- Require the candidate to sit for such written, oral and practical examinations as the committee may prescribe
- Permit a candidate to revise the thesis for re-examination if, in the opinion of the RC, the work is of sufficient merit to warrant this concession
- Recommend that the degree be not awarded
- Allow revision and re-submission as a Masters by Research Thesis (For PhD theses only).

Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, and before making any final recommendation, the RC may take one or more of the following actions:

- Seek advice from the Principal Supervisor and/or Deputy President (Education) or delegate
- Appoint an additional examiner
- Appoint an external adjudicator: an external adjudicator will only be appointed

by the RC if the examiners are unable to reach a consensus recommendation. If the adjudicator recommends that the candidate's thesis be revised and resubmitted, then the adjudicator will serve as the sole examiner for the resubmitted thesis

- Invite the examiners to confer with each other and/or with the RC, with a view to the presentation of a consolidated recommendation
- Direct that the candidate undertakes such further examinations either oral, written or practical.
- A candidate awarded the degree shall complete minor amendments within three months and major amendments within six months. These will be made to the satisfaction of the Principal Supervisor.
- A candidate permitted to revise a thesis for re-examination shall complete the revision within 9 months under the supervision of a Principal Supervisor or supervisors endorsed by the RC.
- A candidate who has revised a thesis and resubmitted it for examination as directed by the RC, and who fails the re-examination shall not be eligible for any further examination.
- A doctoral candidate may be awarded the PhD *cum laude* in cases where the examiners, unanimously and independently, agree that the thesis is of exceptional quality in every respect and can be awarded without requirement for more than minor editorial amendment.

The HDRSEC's decision will be documented using the template in Appendix B.

3.5 Procedure Upon Recommendation of “Do not award the degree”

Where any examination, adjudication or consultation report is received by the RC, on which basis the RC is considering recommending that the degree not be awarded, the candidate and their Principal Supervisor shall be notified in writing of the content of that report and may within eight weeks lodge a response limited to the academic and substantive matters raised therein. The RC shall take into account the submissions of the Principal Supervisor and/or the candidate in determining whether the degree be awarded.

3.6 Appeals Process

- Candidates have a right of appeal against an unfavourable examination outcome and will be invited to submit a report to the Academic Board detailing any concerns they may have about the examination process. The formal appeal must be made in writing to the Chair of the Academic Board within four weeks of receiving the advice of an unfavourable outcome. The formal appeal, recommendation, all Examiners' Reports, candidate responses and any other relevant material shall then be referred to the Academic Board for review and final decision.
- Appeals will be permitted on procedural grounds only. Procedural grounds for appeal may include:
 - Procedural irregularities in the conduct of the examination; or
 - Documentary evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of one or more examiners.

- The Academic Board will not consider any appeal where the candidate simply rejects the academic assessments of his or her work or where the candidate complains about inadequacy of supervision or other problems arising during the course of the candidate's Masters or PhD Program. (Problems encountered during candidature should be handled by grievance procedures at the appropriate time).
- Any member of the Academic Board involved in making the unfavourable examination outcome will absent themselves from all discussions of the appeal. There shall be no appeal against the final decision of the Academic Board.

4. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- i. *Higher Degree Research Assessment and Assessment Appeals Policy*
- ii. *Higher Degree, Research and Scholarships Committee Terms of Reference*
- iii. *Higher Degree Research Confirmation of Candidature and Progression Review Policy and Procedure*
- iv. *Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy*
- v. *Research Human Research Ethics Policy*
- vi. *Research Materials and Data Management Policy*

5. VERSION CONTROL

Version	Approval Authority	Approval Date
2024.11	Deputy President (Education)	20 November 2024

The Deputy President (Education) oversees the implementation and compliance of this procedure. Please contact the Deputy President's office via - policy@imc.edu.au for any enquiries or clarifications related to this procedure.

Appendix A – Examiners’ Form



PhD Final Submission Examination Assessment Form

Examiner Details

- Name: _____
- Institution: _____
- Position: _____
- Email: _____
- Date of Assessment: _____

Candidate and Thesis Details

- Candidate Name: _____
- Student Number: _____
- Thesis Title: _____

Detailed Feedback and Recommendations

Please provide detailed comments regarding your assessment and specific recommendations for any required revisions (continue on a fresh page if required).

Strengths

Areas Requiring Revision

Specific Recommendations

Overall Assessment

Based on the examination, I recommend that (select one):

- Award with no/minor amendments.** The thesis meets all requirements and can be awarded with no or minimal editorial changes.
- Requires minor revisions.** The final submission be classified as passed conditionally, subject to minor revisions, as outlined in my report.
- Requires major revisions.** The final submission requires correction due to deficiencies other than errors of presentation, but which are not of sufficient importance to warrant submission for re-examination.
- Revise and resubmit.** The final submission requires major, substantive amendment and submission for re-examination. My report provides detailed guidance to assist revision.
- Do not award the degree.** The final submission does not meet the standards for the award of the degree as specified in the Australian Qualifications Framework and does not warrant a further period of research and/or writing. My report provides detailed reasons for this decision, clearly outlining why revisions would not be sufficient.
- Allow revision and re-submission as a Masters by Research Thesis.** The final submission does not meet the standards for the award of the degree as specified in the Australian Qualifications Framework and does not warrant a further period of research and/or writing. The candidate could however be allowed to revise the thesis and re-submit the thesis for examination as a Masters by Research.

Examiner's Declaration

I declare that I have no conflict of interest in examining this thesis and that my assessment is fair and impartial.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Office Use Only: Date Received: _____

Appendix B – Examination Panel’s Template



Examination Panel (RC) Assessment and Tracking Form

Candidate Details

- Name: _____
- Student Number: _____
- Thesis Title: _____
- Submission Date: _____

Examination Details

Examiner 1

- Name: _____
- Recommendation: _____
- Date Received: _____

Examiner 2

- Name: _____
- Recommendation: _____
- Date Received: _____

Examiner 3

- Name: _____
- Recommendation: _____
- Date Received: _____

Additional Examiner (if required)

- Name: _____
- Recommendation: _____
- Date Received: _____

RC Assessment

Date of Assessment: _____

Examination Outcome

Based on examiners' reports, the HDRSEC recommends:

- Award the degree with no amendments
- Award the degree subject to minor amendments
- Award the degree subject to major amendments
- Revise and resubmit for examination
- Allow revision and resubmission as Masters by Research
- Do not award the degree
- Appoint additional examiner
- Appoint external adjudicator

Special Recognition

- Award PhD cum laude (requires unanimous recommendation from all examiners)

Amendment Tracking (if applicable)

Minor Amendments

- Due Date (3 months from notification): _____
- Supervisor Approval Required: [] Yes [] No
- Amendments Completed Date: _____
- Supervisor Sign-off Date: _____

Major Amendments

- Due Date (6 months from notification): _____
- Deputy President (Education) Approval Required: [] Yes [] No
- Amendments Completed Date: _____
- Final Approval Date: _____

Revision and Resubmission

- Due Date (9 months from notification): _____
- New Principal Supervisor (if changed): _____
- Resubmission Date: _____
- New Examination Process Required: [] Yes [] No

Conversion to Masters by Research

- Candidate Accepted Conversion: [] Yes [] No
- New Submission Date: _____
- New Supervisor Assigned: _____
- MBR Requirements Provided to Candidate: [] Yes [] No

Appeal Process (if applicable)

- Appeal Received Date: _____
- Grounds for Appeal: _____
- Academic Board Review Date: _____
- Final Decision: _____

Final Outcome

- Decision: _____
- Date: _____
- Award Conferred: _____

Signatures:

RC Chair: _____ Date: _____

Deputy President (Education): _____ Date: _____