

**WESTERN SYDNEY**  
UNIVERSITY



---

Graduate Research School



# Higher Degree Research

EXAMINATION HANDBOOK





## INTRODUCTION

Submitting your thesis for examination is a fantastic achievement and is both an exciting and tense time for most candidates. As you work to finish your thesis, you will experience a great deal of relief – but this may quickly be followed by feelings of stress and uncertainty as you wait for the examiners to return their assessment.

This Higher Degree Research Examination Handbook provides comprehensive information about how to prepare your thesis for submission and the examination process.

Planning your thesis for submission ahead of time and being well prepared will help to make the examination process less stressful for you and ensure a smooth progression towards your graduation.

If you are feeling a little anxious, that is fine!

The purpose of this handbook is to make the process as stress-free as possible. It is a simple step-by-step guide that should be read in conjunction with our online 'PhD Final Stages' program that you can access via the Research Training vUWS site.

In these final stages, it is easy to get distracted so stay focussed – remember, you are almost there!

Best of luck!

**Dean of Graduate Studies**



# STEP 1: SELECTING EXAMINERS

## YOUR ROLE IN CHOOSING EXAMINERS

One of the most important conversations you need to have with your supervisors is to discuss your potential examiners.

You and your supervisors should be thinking about potential examiners from an early stage in your candidature. You should talk about your preferences, including:

1. those academics that you would like to examine your thesis; and,
2. those who you feel would be inappropriate.

Your supervisors may decide not to use your suggestions based on their knowledge of the examiners, and you should trust your supervisor's judgement. If you request that a specific examiner should not be used, your supervisor should respect your preferences.

You will not be notified of the final composition of your examination panel until after you receive your results – or until your oral examination.

## YOUR SUPERVISOR'S ROLE IN CHOOSING EXAMINERS

Selecting the right examiners is one of the most important tasks that your supervisory panel will undertake in your candidature.

Your supervisors will make the choice based on some of the following considerations:

- examiners must be leaders in the field of research you have undertaken;
- examiners must hold qualifications at least at the level which they are examining;
- examiners should have the right level of academic experience, as inexperienced examiners may have a tendency to be more critical in their judgement; and,
- for international candidates, an examiner from your country of origin can be used and may act as a future mentor.

## NUMBER OF EXAMINERS

All higher degree research examinations require three examiners.

Two examiners are appointed to examine the thesis and an additional examiner is maintained as a reserve.

The reserve examiner is important as unforeseen circumstances may prevent an examiner from completing the examination process within a suitable timeframe.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU SHOULD KNOW

Some important factors you should know include:

- Western Sydney University staff cannot be nominated;
- examiners may not be appointed if they have ever acted on your supervisory panel;
- there must not be a conflict of interest between you and an examiner;
- it is your supervisory panel's responsibility to approach examiners and you must not approach your examiners;
- your supervisors will request that you provide an abstract that they can send to potential examiners;
- examiners will be informed about the structure and expectations of Australian research degrees and the requirements for examination;
- your supervisors will be expected to nominate examiners up to three months in advance of the final submission of your thesis; and,
- the Graduate Research School cannot progress the examination of your thesis if we have not received an approved Nomination of Examiners form.

Examination forms are available here: [http://bit.ly/GRS\\_forms\\_guidelines](http://bit.ly/GRS_forms_guidelines)

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The use of independent thesis examiners is an important factor in maintaining the quality and integrity of the examination process.

It is your supervisory panel's responsibility to ensure there are no conflicts of interest in the selection of your examiners, or to report and address potential conflicts of interest.

It is your responsibility as a candidate to inform your supervisory panel if you believe you have a conflict of interest with a potential examiner.

There are a range of circumstances that can lead to a conflict of interest. The **Conflict of Interest Policy** lists examples of different types of conflict of interest that may arise. This list is only indicative and is not to be considered exhaustive.

This conflict of interest policy has been benchmarked against the Australian Council of Graduate Research (ACGR) best practice guidelines.

# STEP 2: PREPARING YOUR THESIS FOR SUBMISSION

## CANDIDATE RESPONSIBILITIES

As a research candidate, you are responsible for the content, style and presentation of your thesis and for certifying its authenticity. You have a responsibility to ensure that you understand and avoid all instances of plagiarism.

You must accurately reference all of your sources in the expected style of your discipline and state the extent to which the work of others has been used in your text where appropriate.

You are not permitted to incorporate in your thesis work that has been submitted for another degree.

## EDITING AND PROOFREADING

The best way to make a good first impression on your examiners is to present a thesis that has been carefully and thoroughly edited for style and consistency and proofread for basic spelling and grammatical errors.

You are responsible for the content, style and presentation of your thesis. Your examiners will be asked to provide a written report on the thesis which includes comments on your use of a high standard of English and the professionalism of its presentation.

Editing and proofreading is not something that just happens in the final stages of preparing your thesis for examination – it is an ongoing process that should occur throughout your candidature. The more reading and writing you do, the better you will become at identifying what makes good writing and applying that to your thesis.

It is important to revisit sections of your work that you wrote early in your candidature to ensure that the quality is consistent with work produced later in your candidature.

You should make sure that you are not the only person regularly reading your writing as it can be easy to miss your own mistakes. Aside from your supervisors, you should ask other research candidates you know to read samples of your writing – and be prepared to return the favour.

It is also a good idea to get non-specialists from outside your field including your friends, family or anybody else to read your work as they will often notice things that others might miss, such as confusingly constructed sentences or terms and abbreviations that have not been clearly explained.

## PROFESSIONAL EDITING

You may use a professional editor in preparing your thesis for submission. Professional editing should be used for the purposes of detecting minor typographical or style errors in your thesis.

For more information about finding and working with a professional editor, visit the frequently asked questions on the Graduate Research School [website](#)

**If you use a professional editor, this must be acknowledged in your thesis.**

## TURNITIN ORIGINALITY REPORTS

As noted above, it is your responsibility to ensure that your work is an original contribution and free of any instances of plagiarism. You are required to submit your work through the Turnitin plagiarism checking system to check the originality of your writing and identify referencing errors and omissions.

Turnitin for research candidates is available through the Research Training vUWS site.

Turnitin will provide you with a comprehensive originality report that you should discuss with your supervisors and make changes to your work as required.

For confidentiality reasons, Turnitin submissions made through the Research Training site will not be permanently saved to the Turnitin database.

## STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION

Your research thesis must include a clear statement of authentication. The following paragraph (or an equivalent variation) is compulsory and must be centred on a separate page and be signed by you as the author.

### Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

.....  
(Signature)

Electronic submissions must include a signed statement of authentication. You will need to scan a copy of your signature and insert it into the final document (i.e. an e-signature).

## ABSTRACT

The abstract demonstrates your ability to communicate an overview of the project. It is a sophisticated summary of your work and should address the following:

- Statement of the purpose of the research (aims, hypothesis, research questions);
- Outline of the methodology methods used; and,
- Summary of the findings.

Your abstract should aim to be as informative and accessible as possible, focussing on the central argument pursued in your thesis.

Getting it right will mean that future researchers are more likely to identify your work when conducting library searches.

You should use specific time markers and location indicators (e.g. 'during 2004 in Sydney, Australia'). Your thesis may be accessed internationally so it is important that your abstract places your research in the correct context.

You should refer to previous examples of abstracts written by Western Sydney University candidates via the Library's [Research Profiles and Repository](#).

## FORMAT AND PRESENTATION

Western Sydney University does not prescribe a specific format for the presentation of your thesis as requirements and expectations vary across disciplines.

Some theses may include non-text or creative components that require a different style of presentation to a traditional thesis.

Appendix 1 of this handbook provides some non-compulsory suggestions about how to present your thesis including advice about format and style, order of pages and other general presentation considerations.

You should talk to your supervisor about the specific requirements in your discipline.

You can also refer to previously awarded theses as a guide to style, formatting and presentation in your discipline.

## THESIS LENGTH

A typical doctoral thesis is between 60,000-100,000 words. There is no prescribed word limit and you should seek the advice of your supervisory panel for guidance.

The thesis length does not include footnotes, references or other similar details.

## NON-TEXT AND CREATIVE COMPONENTS

There are an increasing number of creatively presented theses and you may explore these options with your supervisors.

Appendix 2 of this handbook provides detailed suggestions about how to present non-text components of your thesis, specifically for the Doctor of Creative Arts.

If you think non-text components will apply to your thesis submission, it is crucial to begin discussing your

discipline requirements with your supervisors early in your candidature.

## DECLARATIONS

You should include a section on declarations to acknowledge any external support you have received during your candidature. This may include:

- Professional editing services;
- Australian Government funded scholarships;
- Industry funded scholarships;
- Contributions from donors; and,
- Any declarations that are not suited to your personal acknowledgments page.

You should also use this section to declare any conflicts of interest.

Any use of artificial intelligence (AI) including generative AI in any aspect of the research, including all examinable work, must be acknowledged and described in the written work.

If the thesis contains material that is previously published or submitted for publication, or have had any contributions from others, an authorship attribution must be submitted as part of the final thesis submission. It should indicate the name and publication details of each of the published works, as well as specify the candidate's and all other author contributions. See examples on page 9.

## CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL

All examiners are asked to keep all examination material confidential.

When the degree is awarded, a copy of your thesis is made available online via the [Research Profiles and Repository](#).

An electronic copy of the thesis will be made available through the University Library unless other arrangements have been approved by the Dean, GS.

On your request, the Dean, GS may determine in exceptional cases that the thesis will not be made available until after the expiry of a period, which shall not normally exceed one year, unless otherwise determined by arrangements in place under the [Intellectual Property Policy](#).

### EXAMPLE AUTHORSHIP ATTRIBUTION

*"For the prospective study in Chapter 2, Dr Michael Reynolds processed patient blood samples on occasions when I was unavailable. Associate Professor Priya Sharma and Dr Emily Tan enrolled patients onto the study by obtaining informed written consent when I was unavailable.*

*For Chapter 3 'Clinical outcomes for immunotherapy in Metropolitan Health Services' – I, Daniel Lee, was responsible for original draft preparation, study concept, writing and reviewing the manuscript and thesis chapter, data collection, and minor aspects of the statistical analysis. Dr Samuel Chen and Dr Jessica Wong assisted with data collection. Dr Robert Patel carried out the majority of the statistical analysis. Associate Professor Linda Harris, Associate Professor Matthew Clarke, Professor David Ng, and Associate Professor Priya Sharma provided supervision and conceptual input, were involved in study design, data analysis, and interpretation, as well as reviewing and editing of the manuscript and thesis chapter.*

*For Chapter 4 'The role of TNF in cancer-associated immune responses.....'"*

### EXAMPLE AUTHORSHIP ATTRIBUTION

*"Dr. Mark Evans was the head of the Medical Oncology group at Central Hospital and provided support for the research findings in this thesis, contributing to discussions on the study's conception and providing feedback on the thesis (20%).*

*Dr. Sophie Carter was the primary supervisor and contributed to discussions on study conception and design, data analysis and interpretation, and provided comments on the thesis and manuscript (60%).*

*Dr. Benjamin Hayes was a postdoctoral researcher in Dr. Carter's group and also served as my co-supervisor. He provided technical support and feedback in the lab, participated in discussions on study conception and design, contributed to data interpretation, and provided comments on the thesis (20%).*

*Ms. Rachel Thompson assisted with breeding, mating of the mouse colony, and genotyping of mice.*

*Professor Eleanor Green, Dr. Daniel Foster, Dr. Lina Kim, and Dr. Ryan Mitchell performed quality control, normalization, and initial fold-change analysis for RNA sequencing data and uploaded the data to the research platform....."*

# STEP 3: SUBMITTING YOUR THESIS

## ONLINE THESIS SUBMISSION

You must submit your thesis for examination online using ResearchMaster

1. Save your thesis as a PDF document (maximum file size 40MB)
2. Log in to ResearchMaster and create a Thesis Submission and Examination form.
3. Follow the instructions in the form to upload your thesis and submit it to your Principal Supervisor.

The statement of authentication in your thesis must be signed. You will need to provide your Principal Supervisor with a copy of your Turnitin Originality Report.

The examination will not progress until approval has been provided by your supervisory panel and School/Institute.

If your thesis is not approved for examination, you may be required to make further changes and resubmit.

If you disagree that your thesis is not ready for examination, contact your HDR Director or the Graduate Research School for advice.

There is more information about this process available on the Graduate Research School website:

[http://bit.ly/GRS\\_HDR\\_FAQ](http://bit.ly/GRS_HDR_FAQ)

You will receive an email receipt confirming your submission. If you do not receive this within two weeks, please follow up with the Graduate Research School.

## EARLY SUBMISSIONS

In some circumstances, you may wish to submit your thesis for examination before your thesis submission date. You will need to submit an Application for Early Submission form to the Graduate Research School with the support of your supervisory panel and your School or Institute.

**Examination forms are available here:**

[http://bit.ly/GRS\\_forms\\_guidelines](http://bit.ly/GRS_forms_guidelines)

The Graduate Research School will consult the Research Studies Committee before allowing the examination process to commence.

# STEP 4: EXAMINATION PROCESS

## BASIS OF EXAMINATION

Your thesis should make an original contribution to the knowledge of the subject in the area of your research.

When considering your thesis, examiners will determine if:

- The thesis provides a sufficiently comprehensive study of the topic fitting to the degree in the discipline area, or in related interdisciplinary areas.
- The thesis is an original contribution to knowledge – meeting the aims established in your research questions.
- The methods adopted are suitable for the subject matter and are correctly applied.
- The research findings are suitably set out accompanied by adequate exposition and are discussed critically in the context of the discipline.
- The quality of English expression and general presentation of the thesis has been completed to a high standard.

## LENGTH OF EXAMINATION PROCESS

Examiners are asked to complete their report within six weeks of receiving the thesis for examination.

You should understand that the examination process is complex and delays sometimes occur. An examination without delays will usually take four to six months, but this may vary on a case-by-case basis.

The examination process may be delayed when it is necessary to wait for a preferred examiner to become available or when an examiner experiences an unavoidable delay after the process has started. In most cases, it is better to extend the examination period by a short period of time rather than to restart the process with a different examiner.

The Graduate Research School monitors the progress of examinations and sends reminders to examiners if required. If there is a delay, we request feedback and an updated expected completion date. We will endeavour to update your supervisors of extended delays.

An unexpected delay or extended examination process does not mean that there is a problem with your thesis.

The nature and complexity of some theses requires more time than usual for consideration. We understand that this can be a difficult and stressful time, but unless you are contacted by the Graduate Research School or your School or Institute HDR Director, you can assume that the process is progressing smoothly.

You must not attempt to contact an examiner under any circumstances as this will compromise the examination process and it will need to be restarted with different examiners.

## RESERVE EXAMINERS

Reserve examiners are used in situations where an original examiner becomes unavailable or is unable to complete the examination. The reserve may also be used where there is a significant discrepancy in the outcomes received from the original examiners.

The Graduate Research School will liaise with your supervisors when deciding to use a reserve examiner.

## I HAVE SUBMITTED – WHAT DO I DO NOW?

Remember, the submission process takes somewhere between 4-6 months – it is a long process.

You should try and take advantage of this time by focussing in on your career goals. If you want to pursue an academic career, you can look at publishing your work or attending a conference. You can contact your supervisors or your network and investigate potential research assistant work.

If you have other career ambitions – and about 50 percent of research graduates do not pursue a career in academia – now is the time to look for other opportunities, such as participating in an internship.

After taking a well earned break, you should use this time as productively as possible.

## **CONTACT THE GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL**

For more information and advice about the thesis examination process, contact the Graduate Research School via [WesternNow](#).

# STEP 5: ORAL THESIS EXAMINATION

All PhD students who commence from 1 January 2025 must complete an oral examination (sometimes known as oral defence or viva voce) in addition to submitting their PhD thesis to complete their degree.

PhD students who commenced prior to this date can choose to voluntarily opt-in to complete an oral examination in consultation with their supervisory panel

The oral examination forms part of the overall assessment of your ability to carry out a research investigation. It is used to assess both the candidate and the thesis submitted for the award of the PhD degree. In particular, the oral examination:

- establishes that you fully understand the work and its wider implications
- provides you with an opportunity to reply to criticism or challenge
- enables the examiners to clarify issues in the thesis which may be unclear
- helps the examiners to decide on the nature and extent of any revisions which may be required
- authenticates your contribution to the thesis
- ensures that you have a clear understanding of the contribution of collaborators to the thesis.

## THE PANEL

The oral examination panel is comprised of:

- the Associate Dean, HDR or HDR Director and
- examiners – examiners may participate in person or using video conferencing.
- for theses covering significant Indigenous studies content, the Director, Indigenous Research or another Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander scholar is invited onto the panel.

The supervisory team does not form part of the examination panel but may observe.

## THE PROCESS

You will be asked to give a presentation and respond to questions from the panel. The panel are asked to assess your performance in the oral examination against the following quality measures:

- you demonstrated detailed knowledge of the thesis
- you demonstrated an understanding of your research in the broader context of their discipline
- you were able to defend the methodology and conclusions of the thesis and display an awareness of any limitations
- you effectively communicated the results of the research in terms of impact and application of new knowledge
- you as an individual demonstrated a substantive and independent contribution to the discipline.

# STEP 6: EXAMINATION RESULTS AND REPORTS

Examiners are required to recommend one of the following outcomes and to write a full report on their findings.

- A** The degree be awarded.
- M** The candidate is required to undertake minor rewriting of an editorial nature (as identified by the examiners) to the satisfaction of the School or Institute Research and Higher Degree Committee before the degree is awarded.
- R** The candidate is required to undertake rewriting that is of greater magnitude than minor editorial changes (as identified by the examiners) to the satisfaction of the Research Studies Committee before the degree is awarded.
- X** The candidate is required to revise and resubmit for further examination within a specified time.
- F** The degree is not to be awarded.

## OUTCOME X

If you receive an outcome of X, you will be required to rewrite and address the recommendations as outlined by the examiners.

The rewriting instructions will be composed by your supervisory panel, endorsed by the School or Institute Research and Higher Degrees Committee.

The rewriting instructions will also be provided to the examiner for the re-examination and will form the basis of the second examination.

**You will have up to 12 months to revise your thesis and resubmit.**

In the second examination, no new criticisms can be introduced by the examiner – they may only review the agreed and approved amendments.

If the examiners do not believe the recommended amendments meet the required standard in the second examination, the degree will not be awarded.

## OUTCOME F

An outcome of F is very rarely recommended by examiners as a thesis should not reach the examination stage unless it is written to a standard suitable for the award.

Under an outcome of F, the Research Studies Committee may recommend resubmission for a Master of Philosophy award. The work may have to be rewritten before it is submitted for examination at Master of Philosophy level.

## RESPONDING TO EXAMINER REPORTS

Examiner reports are collated by the Graduate Research School and forwarded to your School or Institute HDR Director. Your supervisory panel will be invited to comment on the reports and prepare a recommendation on the overall outcome.

The supervisors report should address all points raised by the examiners. If your supervisors do not accept a point made by an examiner, they should provide a detailed academic argument justifying their view.

For clarity and thoroughness, your supervisors are advised to list the comments of the examiners and respond to each of them, whether they agree or not, and explain the recommended action. This must be completed in a tabular format and followed up by an overview of their recommendations (see appendix 4).

Examiners recommendations are not averaged to determine a final decision. Each report is considered based on its content and in relation to the other reports, as well as your supervisor's comments.

An examiner's comments cannot be disregarded on the grounds that another examiner did not make the same point.

Occasionally, there may be a discrepancy between the examiners. In these cases, decisions on the outcome will be guided by the intention of the report. For example, where an examiner recommends that the degree be awarded under Option A and includes a substantial

list of typographical errors, this would be regarded as reflecting an outcome of Option M.

The School or Institute HDR Director reviews the report and makes a recommendation to the School or Institute Research and Higher Degrees Committee.

If you are required to make amendments (Option M or R) you have three months to complete the amendments.

If one or more of the examiners nominate Option F, the Graduate Research School will refer the matter to the Research Studies Committee for consideration. The Chair of the Research Studies Committee may make a decision by executive authority.

Examination outcomes remain confidential until a final recommendation is made.

In certain circumstances where the outcome is not clear, before making any determination, the Research Studies Committee may take one or more of the following actions:

- Appoint an additional examiner.
- Appoint an independent arbiter to review the examiners' reports and provide a final recommendation on the examination outcome. The original thesis, together with the examiners' reports, will be provided to the arbiter. The arbiter is not given any information about the examiners and is advised that no extra comments on the thesis are required.
- Invite the examiners to confer with each other and with the Research Studies Committee with a view to the presentation of a consolidated recommendation.
- Direct the candidate to undertake further examinations, such as oral, written or practical examination as specified by the Research Studies Committee.

You will be provided with a copy of each examiner's report. An examiner may request that their name is withheld from their report.

## REVISIONS AND RESUBMISSION

In addition to making the changes agreed to by your supervisory panel, you will need to write a detailed report. The report should include what points you were asked to address and how you have responded.

You should confer with your supervisor to ensure this has been completed to a satisfactory standard and that the final copy of your thesis reflects those changes. This is particularly important where a second examination will take place (Outcome X only), as it will be conducted on the basis of your response to directions following the first examination.

In all cases, the School or Institute Research and Higher Degrees Committee will want to see evidence that the work has been satisfactorily completed.

**Note:** You must provide a tracked-changes and a clean version of your revised thesis, and put together a table outlining each of the recommendations and what you have done to respond to each point (see Appendix 4).

## LIBRARY COPY

On the successful completion of your degree, you are required to submit a finalised PDF copy of your thesis and a completed Right of Access form to the Graduate Research School.

**Examination forms are available here:**

[http://bit.ly/GRS\\_forms\\_guidelines](http://bit.ly/GRS_forms_guidelines)

Your thesis will be uploaded to Western Sydney University Library's **Research Profiles and Repository**

Your thesis will also be accessible via the National Library's TROVE portal. See also Page 8.

# STEP 7: GRADUATION

## GRADUATION PROCESS

The Graduate Research School will seek approval for your eligibility to graduate from the Research Studies Committee. You do not need to do anything at this stage, as the Graduate Research School will advise you when you are eligible to graduate and what you need to do for program completion.

Your graduation is dependent on you meeting all Western Sydney University administrative and financial requirements.

## WHEN CAN I GRADUATE?

Graduation ceremonies occur in at different points throughout the year. Candidates who have met all requirements are put forward to the next graduation period.

If you cannot attend a ceremony, you can elect to graduate in absentia.

International students may be able to extend their stay in Australia until their graduation ceremony. If you would like a letter to confirm that you are awaiting graduation, please contact the Graduate Research School via [WesternNow](#).

## WHO WILL TELL ME WHEN I WILL GRADUATE?

The Events team arranges the Graduation ceremonies and will contact you prior to the approved graduation period, inviting you to graduate.

<https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/graduation>

You must continue to monitor your student and personal email for important information and updates until after your graduation ceremony.

## WHEN CAN I START USING THE TITLE DOCTOR?

You can start using the title Doctor (Dr) after your degree is conferred.

## HOW CAN I STAY IN TOUCH?

You will maintain access to your student account for only a short period of time after completion.

We encourage all graduating candidates to stay connected with Western Sydney University by registering with Alumni:

<http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/alumni>

# APPENDIX 1 – THESIS FORMAT GUIDELINES

This section is designed to guide you through the process of formatting your thesis for examination. These suggestions are not compulsory, however, they are strongly recommended and you should discuss them with your supervisors to ensure they meet the specific expectations in your discipline.

## FORMAT AND STYLE

A thesis typically consists of three main parts; the preliminary pages, the main text and the references and appendices section.

- The style of presentation should be maintained throughout the sections.
- You should follow all accepted rules of grammar and your spelling and punctuation should be consistent.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that typographical errors have been eliminated and punctuation corrected, and that the language of the thesis reflects the highest standards of scholarly expression.

Format refers to the overall physical appearance of your thesis.

- Western Sydney University does not prescribe any single style for theses because formats differ across disciplines.
- You should follow the style recommended by your School or Institute and discuss this with your supervisors.
- It may be preferable to follow the style of a standard journal in your discipline.

## ORDER OF ITEMS

### Title page

This page contains the thesis title, your full name, the name of the degree for which the thesis is submitted, the name of the university and the year of submission. This page should not be numbered.

### Dedication page

The dedication honours those who inspired or encouraged the writing of the thesis. A maximum of one page is permitted. This page is not numbered and is optional.

### Acknowledgements page

This page is to express recognition of and appreciation for special professional assistance provided by academic supervisors, other persons, agencies and institutions.

This page is not numbered and is optional.

### Statement of Authentication page

This is a signed statement to the effect that the work has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other institution and an undertaking that the work is original and a result of the candidate's own research endeavour.

This page is not numbered and is compulsory.

You must sign this page – even if you are submitting electronically. A scanned copy of your signature is acceptable.

### Declarations page

This page includes declarations to acknowledge any external support you have received during your candidature. This may include:

- Professional editing services;
- Australian Government funded scholarships;
- Industry funded scholarships;
- Contributions from donors; and,
- Any declarations that are not suited to your personal acknowledgements page.

You should also use this section to declare any conflicts of interest.

This page is not numbered and is optional.

- Table of contents page
- The table of contents page is a guide to the contents of the thesis.
- The first item listed should be the first item that appears after the table of contents.
- Every heading and subheading within the text should be listed verbatim in the table of contents.
- The headings on the table of contents page should be indented in a consistent style.
- Page numbers should be aligned with the correct heading or with the last line of multi-line heading.

### List of tables page

Tables (including those in appendices) should be listed and numbered (Arabic numerals) in the order of appearance in the manuscript. Even if there is only one table it should be included in a list of tables.

### List of figures and illustrations page

The list of figures and illustrations can be formatted similarly to the list of tables.

### **Abbreviations page**

Provide a list of acronyms and other abbreviations used in alphabetical order.

### **Abstract page**

The abstract is a sophisticated summary of your research project indicating the purpose of the study, the research methodology and a summary of the outcomes. There is advice about writing the abstract in the first section of this handbook.

### **Text of the thesis**

This section contains the main body of the thesis. Each chapter or major section of the work should begin on a new page.

### **References**

Your thesis must include references for every source mentioned in the text and the reference list should only include items which have been cited in the main text. Refer to the section below for information on formatting.

### **Bibliography**

Background materials or other sources used in carrying out the research that are not specifically listed or referenced in the text should be included in a separate bibliography.

### **Glossary**

An alphabetical list of specialised and technical terms used within the thesis, together with their definitions, can be included.

### **Appendices cover page**

Appendices consist of supplementary, informational, and/or illustrative material too lengthy for inclusion in the text. Each appendix should be labelled on the top margin (at left or centred) sequentially using capital letters and Arabic numerals (for example Appendix A or Appendix 1). Table and figures should be numbered consecutively as A-1, A-2, etc.

### **Index**

An index with entries listed in alphabetical order may be included.

## **FORMATTING**

### **Font style**

Black is the best colour for the font.

Any legible typeface, except script, italic, decorative or ornamental, is acceptable for the body of the text.

Monospaced computer typefaces that look like typewriting such as Courier should not be used except

for computer programs or computer printouts, if they form part of your thesis.

Boldface type should be used for headings.

Italics can be used for quotations and words in a foreign language to emphasise particular points.

Underlining is not recommended.

Type used for references, appendices, charts, drawings, graphs, captions and tables may differ from that used for the text.

### **Font size**

The font size of the main body text should be 12 points, with smaller sizes of 8-9 points permitted for footnotes, graphs, formulae and appendices. Fonts larger than 12 points are not recommended for the main text.

Chapter headings should be centred on the page at least 5cm from the top and should be 4 points larger than the main text.

### **Line spacing**

Line spacing should permit ease of reading and should be suitable for the typeface, page size and line length. Due to the number of possible combinations of these factors, it is difficult to give precise guidelines although some generalisations can be made.

The main text should be one-and-a-half or double spaced, except when the preferred discipline style or journal dictates otherwise.

Footnotes, bibliographic entries, lists, tables and appendices may be single spaced. Single spacing may also be more suitable for lengthy quotes, captions for figures or other descriptive text.

Single lines of orphaned text at the top of any new page should be avoided.

The spacing of subheadings should consistently follow the chosen discipline style or journal standard. Subheadings should not appear as the last line of text on a page.

Numbering of sections or paragraphs should be consistent within each chapter and throughout the thesis.

### **Margins**

Margins for the text, including tables, figures, charts, illustrative materials, references and appendices, should be set 25mm from the left, right, top and bottom edges. The main text should appear within this frame. Running

headers and footers may be placed outside the margins but not closer than 15mm from the outer edges of a page.

### **Spelling**

The Macquarie Dictionary is the basic reference for spelling used in Australian theses.

### **Footnotes, endnotes and in-text references**

Depending on the discipline style or standard adopted, footnotes may be placed at the bottom of text pages and endnotes at the end of each chapter. Footnotes are normally separated from the text by a horizontal line.

In-text parenthetical references that correspond to a reference list at the end of the thesis should be carefully placed so as not to unduly interrupt the flow of the sentence.

Endnotes and footnotes should be numbered sequentially within each chapter.

### **References and bibliographies**

Your School or Institute should have a preferred style for referencing which you should use in your thesis. If there is not a prescribed referencing style, you should discuss the options with your supervisor and use a consistent referencing style suitable to your discipline.

Generally, references and bibliography entries should be listed in alphabetical order by author surname. Hanging indentation is suggested with single line spacing within entries and double line spacing between entries.

### **Illustrations**

The presentation of illustrative material should be consistent throughout the thesis. Tables, charts and graphs may be presented horizontally (landscape) or vertically (portrait) and must fit within the required page margins.

### **Photographs**

The presentation of photographs should be consistent throughout the thesis. Photographs should be clear and high resolution. They can be produced in colour or black and white and may be presented horizontally (landscape) or vertically (portrait) and must fit within the required page margins.

### **Diagrams and tables**

Diagrams and tables should be designed to fit a standard A4 page or should be reduced to fit if necessary, ensuring that all details remain clearly readable.

All tables and figures should be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals and should be dispersed through the body of the text. In all cases, the table or figure should appear on the page immediately following the first text reference mentioning it. Titles must be on the same page as the table or figure.

Diagrams, tables and figures may be placed in either portrait or landscape mode, with the title and any accompanying information displayed alongside in the same mode.

### **Charts and maps**

Charts and maps on oversized pages can be added as an appendix to the thesis. The quality must be clear and sharp. Maps taken from published sources will usually require copyright permission.

## **ORGANISATION**

### **Page numbering**

Each page of the entire manuscript should be numbered, except where stated otherwise, no less than 15mm from the edge of the page. The placement of page numbers must be consistent throughout the thesis.

Preliminary pages (Abstract, Table of contents, List of tables, Abbreviations, etc.) should be numbered in lower case roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.) and centred 15mm from the edge of the page. The first numbered page (i) is the Table of contents. Page numbers are not placed on the Statement of Authentication, Title page, Dedication page, or Acknowledgements page.

All pages of the main body of the thesis, beginning with the first chapter, should be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals. This includes pages containing illustrations, tables, bibliography, and appendices.

When landscape mode is used for pages containing figures, tables or illustrations, the page number position should be modified so that it appears as on other pages.

After all material has been assembled, the thesis should be verified carefully for completeness, for the order of the pages and sections, and for correctness of pagination.

## CHECKLIST

### Good practices

- Plan the structure of the thesis so that it will be easier to sort material to fit the established structure.
- Be precise, but not simplistic. Concise writing style and carefully chosen language convey much about your scholarly work.
- Ensure that all assertions, claims, purported facts, etc. can be verified, either by your research findings or by sources cited in your work.
- Ensure that your references are complete, accurate, consistent and properly linked to your writing.
- Acknowledge all sources.
- Provide an explanation for any abbreviations used.

### To be avoided

- Overly personalising your writing, overusing exclamation marks and making in-jokes.
- Inventing new words for concepts which already exist.
- Padding out the text unnecessarily.
- Including references which have not been used or having incomplete or inaccurate references.
- Using quotations without acknowledgement.
- Using unsuitable or out of date references.

## FINAL CHECKS

### Format

- Is the title page formatted correctly using the right wording?
- Are all pages numbered consecutively, including figures, appendices, etc?
- Is a signature included below the Statement of Authentication in your thesis?
- Have you included a list of abbreviations?
- Is the order of pages correct?
- Is the quality of the document of a highly professional standard, with all text, images and other figures clear and legible on every page?
- Have all photographs, tables and figures been included and numbered and are the captions suitably positioned.
- Have you acknowledged and detailed the contributions of others?
- Have copyright permissions been obtained and supplied?

### Referencing

- Have you read selected parts of chapters of the text and done a random check of the references to ensure accuracy?
- Are the footnotes formatted and numbered consistently?
- Does every book reference have an author, title, publication date, place of publication and publisher's name?
- Does every journal reference have an author, title, journal name, volume number, page numbers and date?
- Are references formatted correctly?

### Spelling and grammar

- Is the title page free of typographical errors?
- Has a spelling check been run on each chapter of the thesis?
- Has someone read your thesis looking for typographical errors and strong sentence structure?
- Has a professional editor reviewed any chapters or your entire thesis?

# APPENDIX 2 – NON-TEXT AND CREATIVE COMPONENTS

Non-text or creative components may include presentation of material in a form such as film, video, artwork, novel, poetry anthology or computer program. This may form part of a doctoral thesis.

Doctor of Creative Arts candidates develop knowledge through action, undertaking the development of a body of original creative work within the chosen discipline. New knowledge comes from investigatory practice that is intellectually rigorous.

The exegesis explains the contextual and theoretical underpinning of the creative work. It includes a survey of recent representative literature in the chosen discipline(s). It is a reflexive analysis of creative process and is an engaging piece of writing constructed as a scholarly essay of approximately 25,000 to 30,000 words. Photography, sound or video recordings, and web material may also support the writing. The relative weighting of the exegesis as a component of the submission for examination is at least 30% of the total, with the creative work constituting no more than 70%.

In the DCA, the creative work has a different role to non-text creative material in a thesis. The creative work demonstrates independent critical thinking to identify the research niche and constitutes a product that is supported by a written exegesis. In the DCA, the creative work is integral to the research and should be completed at an international standard that is suitable for an international exhibition or broadcast on a widely publicly accessed carrier such as the ABC.

Where the creative work is text based, you may present it as a separate volume, following the same guidelines for the general presentation of a thesis as described above, unless the presentation forms a component of the creative development.

Exhibitions and performances should be organised through your School or Institute. Performances and exhibitions should occur at Western Sydney University or associated venues. Consultation with your supervisory panel in conjunction with your School or Institute HDR Director may lead to external or professional engagements being considered as part of the submission.

A candidate presenting a body of creative work is required to present the exegesis concurrently. However, where the creative work is public performance or exhibition, you are required to submit the exegesis no later than three months after the final event. You will

need to plan carefully to ensure that your submission is made within the time specified for candidature.

## **Communication**

A substantial portfolio of work in the communication discipline is required. It should be equivalent to a series of programs for television, radio or multimedia presentation, or one program of substantial length. The work should be broadcast to a public audience; and an exegesis of approximately 25,000 to 30,000 words in length should be submitted. Other formats for communication dissertations can be developed on digital media.

## **Dance**

High level choreography or leading role performance in publicly presented productions, including at least one of 90 minutes duration; and an exegesis of approximately 25,000 to 30,000 words in length.

## **Electronic arts**

Three solo exhibitions in galleries and festivals, or presentations in performative modalities. These may include tele-presencing, online interactivity, sensor driven interactivity, as well as the use of archival and recording technologies; and an exegesis of approximately 25,000 to 30,000 words in length.

## **Music and sound arts - Composition**

A folio of compositions including works that employ large resources or performance media demonstrating a variety of 'architecture', colours, textures - for example a full-length musical, opera or symphonic score, or 6-8 equivalent compositions for smaller resources or other media; and an exegesis of approximately 25,000 to 30,000 words in length.

## **Music and sound arts - Performance**

Three 60-90 minute recitals demonstrating high levels of artistry. For example, a full-length solo and chamber music performances, a concerto or its equivalent in western or non-western performance traditions; and an exegesis of approximately 25,000 to 30,000 words in length.

## **Theatre**

High level direction or leading role performance in publicly presented productions, including one of 90 minutes duration; and an exegesis of approximately 25,000 to 30,000 words in length.

## **Visual arts**

Three solo exhibitions in painting, in photo-media, in sculpture; or a 90-minute video or film; or video

installation and exhibition; and an exegesis of approximately 25,000 to 30,000 words in length.

**Writing**

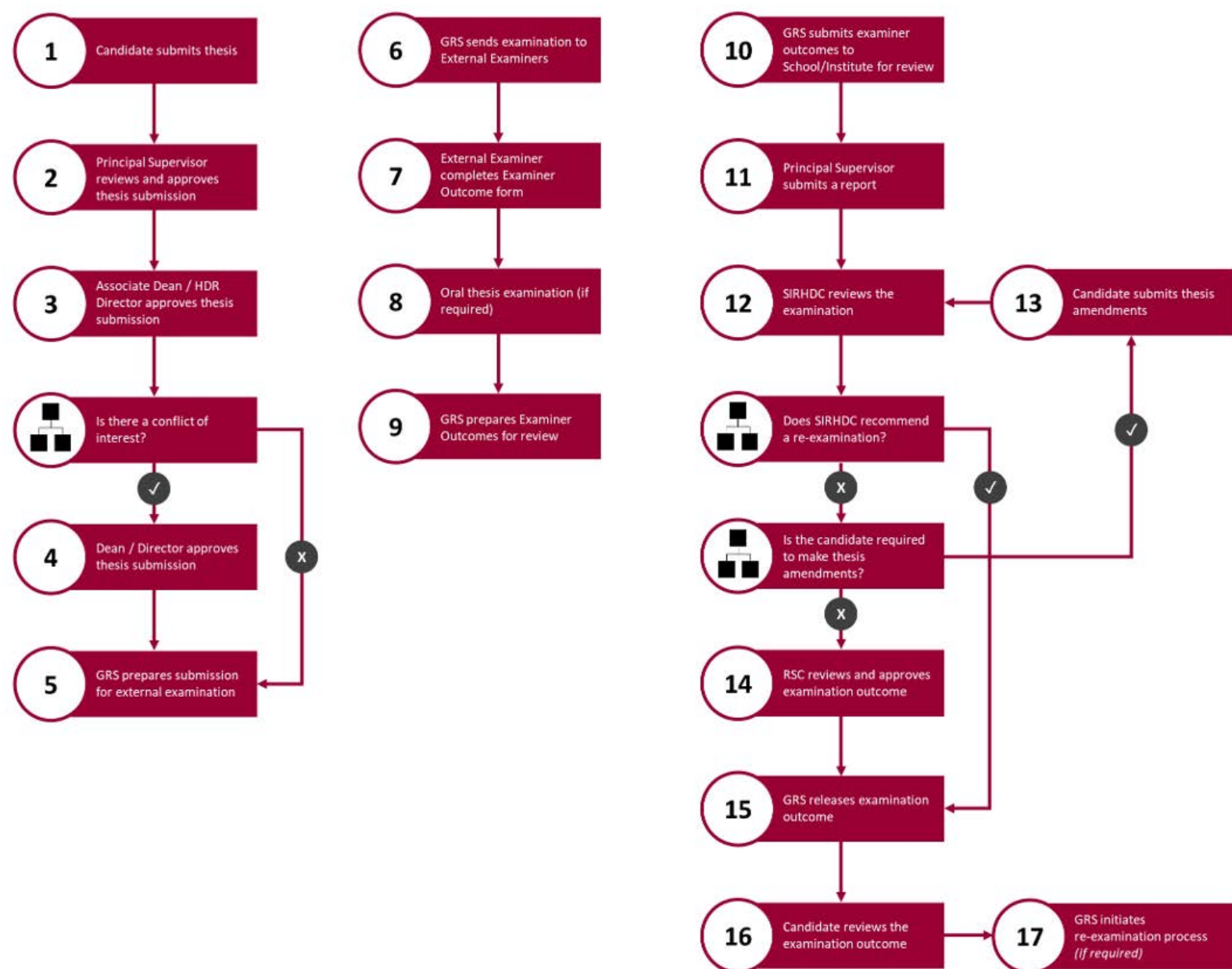
A folio of creative work such as a poetry collection (70-80 pages), a play script or film script (90 minutes production), or a novel (70,000 words); and an exegesis of approximately 25,000 to 30,000 words in length.

Examination will incorporate the creative component but recommendations of examiners for any additional work described in examination outcome options M, R, X or F will be made only to the exegesis.

# APPENDIX 3 – SUMMARY OF THESIS SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. Inform your supervisor of your intention to complete, six months prior to submission.
2. Your supervisor contacts examiners to confirm their availability to examine your thesis.
3. Your supervisor submits the Nomination of Examiners Form to the School or Institute Research and Higher Degrees Committee for consideration three months prior to submission.
4. Your School or Institute Research and Higher Degrees Committee approve the nomination of examiners.
5. You generate the Turnitin Originality Report and discuss with your supervisors
6. You submit the Thesis Submission and Examination form and provide your Principal Supervisor with a copy of the Turnitin Originality Report.
7. After approval by your supervisor, your thesis is sent to the School or Institute HDR Director for quality checking and endorsement. The form is returned to the Graduate Research School.
8. The Graduate Research School contacts examiners to confirm availability.
9. Your thesis is sent to the nominated examiners, after they have accepted the invitation via ResearchMaster to examine.
10. Examiners are sent a reminder two weeks before their report is due.
11. All examiners' reports are received by the Graduate Research School
12. If you are doing an oral thesis examination, it will occur at this point.
13. All examiners' reports are sent to the School or Institute HDR Director.
14. School or Institute HDR Director forwards reports to the supervisory panel for comment and recommendation.
15. The supervisory panel forwards their recommendation and a written response to the School or Institute Research and Higher Degrees Committee.
16. The School or Institute Research and Higher Degrees Committee recommends an outcome based on the examiners recommendation.
17. Your School advises you, your supervisor of the outcome.
18. You will need to contact your supervisor to discuss any changes that may be required. You must document and track all changes for reporting purposes.
19. You and your supervisor report that changes have been made, and send a copy to the School or Institute HDR Director for endorsement via ResearchMaster.
20. The School or Institute Research and Higher Degrees Committee forward a revised thesis, with and without tracked changes, and a list of completed amendments to the Graduate Research School.
21. The Research Studies Committee approves the award of the degree, or will advise if there are further requirements. The Graduate Research School advises you, your supervisors and the Events Team
22. This can be a lengthy process of up to 6-8 months. You will receive minimal updates about the progress of your examination from the time that you submit until you receive an outcome.

# APPENDIX 3 – SUMMARY OF THESIS SUBMISSION PROCESS



# APPENDIX 4 – RESPONDING TO EXAMINER RECOMMENDATIONS

If you are required to make changes to your thesis (Outcome M, R or X), you will need to provide evidence that the work has been satisfactorily completed. As well as providing a tracked and clean version of your revised thesis, you are required to put together a table outlining each of the recommendations and what you have done to respond to each point. Make it very clear what changes you have made and where they occur.

EXAMINER A	CHAPTER PAGE NUMBER	SUPERVISOR RESPONSE	CANDIDATE RESPONSE
<b>1.1. Abstract requires more background.</b>	Chapter 1 Pages 6-8	Candidate to review Abstract outlining the purpose and aims of the research, as well as outcomes.	I have redrafted the Abstract as follows:  [Insert updated text]
<b>1.2. Section 6.8: Requires a connection to the aims.</b>	Chapter 6 Pages 25-29	It is recommended the candidate review the first part of this section to cross reference the research questions and embed the research questions through this section.	I have undertaken the requested changes.  [Insert updated text]
<b>1.3. Reference images.</b>	Chapter 7 Pages 30, 33, 34, 36	Candidate to ensure all images are referenced.	I have now appropriately referenced all images and added a Table of Images.

Western Sydney University  
Locked Bag 1797  
Penrith NSW 2751 Australia



**[WESTERNSYDNEY.EDU.AU](https://westernsydney.edu.au)**