



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**NOTRE DAME**  
A U S T R A L I A

# Procedure:

## Nomination of Thesis Examiners for a Higher Degree by Research

Effective: 29 November 2023

Audience: staff and students

Policy category: academic

Policy sub-category: research

Key words:	Examiners, Research, Thesis
Procedure Owner:	Pro Vice Chancellor Research
Responsible Officer:	National Director Research
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## 1 PURPOSE

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- 1.1** This procedure is intended to assist in ensuring that the nomination of examiners for higher degrees by research aligns with best practice in the sector, including transparency, independence and rigour of the examination process and the elimination of any actual and perceived conflict of interest

## 2 RELATED POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

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- 2.1** This procedure should be read in conjunction with any relevant regulations, codes, policies and procedures including the following:
- 2.1.1 Policy: Higher Degree by Research Supervision
  - 2.1.2 Procedure: Higher Degree by Research Supervision
  - 2.1.3 Procedure: Higher Degree by Research Candidature
  - 2.1.4 Code of Conduct: Research
  - 2.1.5 Code of Conduct: Students
  - 2.1.6 Employee Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour
  - 2.1.7 Policy: Academic Integrity
  - 2.1.8 Procedure: Academic Integrity
  - 2.1.9 Policy: Student Appeals
  - 2.1.10 Policy: Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment
  - 2.1.11 Procedure: Student Grievance
  - 2.1.12 Procedure: Disclosing Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment
  - 2.1.13 General Regulations
  - 2.1.14 Program requirements
  - 2.1.15 Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018
  - 2.1.16 Australian Council of Graduate Research Conflict of Interest Guidelines
  - 2.1.17 National Health and Medical Research Council Conflict of Interest Guide
  - 2.1.18 Universities Australia Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships

## 3 SCOPE

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- 3.1** This procedure applies to HDR students and all staff involved in HDR student supervision, including general staff who administer HDR supervision or support HDR students.

## 4 NOMINATION OF EXAMINERS

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- 4.1** For Masters degrees, there shall be a minimum of two examiners who must have international standing in a relevant discipline or national standing in fields specific to Australia, are independent of the conduct of the research, competent to undertake the assessment, do not

have a conflict of interest and at least one of whom is external to the university.

- 4.2** For the Doctor of Philosophy and the Professional Doctorate, there shall be a minimum of two examiners who must have international standing in a relevant discipline or national standing in fields specific to Australia, are independent of the conduct of the research, competent to undertake the assessment, do not have a conflict of interest and are external to the university.
- 4.3** Examiners should have a professional doctorate or PhD and have had experience in supervision and/or examination of the equivalent degree. Any exception to these requirements will need approval on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.4** The supervisory team and HDR student must discuss and provide a list of potential examiners before the thesis is submitted for examination. The HDR student has the right to advise their principal supervisor, of the names of potential examiners with whom they may have some concerns and wish to exclude from the potential list. While it is appropriate to discuss potential examiners with the HDR student, the final shortlist of nominated examiners must not be disclosed to the HDR student.
- 4.5** In nominating potential examiners, the HDR student and supervisors must follow the Staff Code of Conduct, the Code of Conduct: Research as well as ACGR conflict of interest in examination Guidelines. Where a potential conflict of interest arises, they must declare it as it became apparent.
- 4.6** Examiners must be impartial and be free from bias for or against the HDR student, as per the UNDA Code of Conduct Research and the Australian Council of Graduate Research Good Practice Guidelines on Disclosing and Managing Interests in Graduate Research. Any real or perceived conflict of interest must be declared and justified on the *Nomination of Examiner form*.
- 4.7** Theses that involve topics with a significant focus on Indigenous research, Indigenous peoples, and/or Indigenous data and knowledges should have at least one examiner who is an Indigenous researcher or is experienced in Indigenous research.

## 5 NOMINATION PROCESS

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- 5.1** The principal supervisor is responsible for making the initial contact with potential examiners to check willingness and availability to examine the thesis and provide them the essential information such as: type of thesis (e.g. thesis by publication, practice-based, etc.); topic of the thesis; HDR student's degree; planned submission date; expected length of time to complete the examination; reference to relevant UNDA procedures for examination.
- 5.2** The principal supervisor completes the Nomination of Examiners form and forwards it, together with the abridged nominated examiners' CVs, to the relevant faculty Associate Dean Research for approval. The principal supervisor should also consult other members of the supervisory team about potential examiners and avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest with the potential examiners prior to their nomination.
- 5.3** The signed form and nominated examiners' CVs (with ORCID IDs) are then submitted to the Director of the Research Office for authorization.
- 5.4** Any variation to the eligibility criteria of examiners, as above, requires a submitted justification explaining that the unique expertise is essential to the examination, and

documenting the relationship between the supervisor/s, HDR student and proposed examiners in order to manage any possible conflict of interest introduced into the process as a consequence of the proposed appointment.

- 5.5 Examiners should be nominated within a timeframe that coincides with the examination readiness of the thesis to avoid delays with the commencement of the examination.
- 5.6 The Research Office will provide examiners with information relating to the thesis examination process and honorarium and including the University document *Information for Examiners of a Higher Degree by Research*.

## 6 DEFINITIONS

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- 6.1 For the purpose of this procedure, the definitions outlined in the *Policy: HDR Supervision*, *Procedure: HDR Supervision* and *Procedure: HDR Candidature* apply.

Version	Date of approval	Approved by	Amendment
1	29 November 2023	Vice Chancellor	Effective date - new procedure, replacing Policy: Nomination of Examiners for a Research Degree