



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

POLICY:

NOMINATION OF EXAMINERS FOR A RESEARCH DEGREE

Purpose:	To define the rationale, principles and processes for nominating examiners for a research thesis.
Responsible Executive:	Pro Vice Chancellor Research
Responsible Office:	Research Office
Contact Officer:	Senior Administration Officer, Research Office
Effective Date:	7 April 2014
Modification History:	Created: July 2013. Revisions made and Vice Chancellor approved 4.4.14.
Last edited:	4 April 2014

1 Rationale

- 1.1 The University is committed to attaining and preserving the highest standard of academic integrity in research. This policy is intended to assist in ensuring 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.
- 1.2 This policy must be read in conjunction with the general regulations, research degree regulations, course regulations and any other policies and guidelines relevant to the candidate's chosen degree.

2 Principles

The policy is based on the following general principles:

- 2.1 For Masters degrees, there shall be two examiners both of whom must be from outside the university (unless exceptional circumstances require the appointment of one University of Notre Dame Australia examiner).
- 2.2 For the Doctor of Philosophy and the Professional Doctorate, there shall be three examiners all of whom shall be from outside the university (unless exceptional circumstances require the appointment of one University of Notre Dame Australia examiner) and at least one of whom is normally resident overseas. At least two of the examiners must be independent experts in the relevant field.
- 2.3 Normally, examiners should have a professional doctorate or PhD and have had experience in supervision and/or examination of the equivalent degree.
- 2.4 The nomination of an examiner from within the University will not normally be approved, nor will an examiner who has had a formal association with the University within the past five years. Formal association is normally interpreted as meaning employment at the University in teaching and/or research as either a full-time, part-time or sessional staff member, or in an honorary or adjunct capacity or through direct involvement with the thesis (that is, through reading drafts or discussing the research).
- 2.5 Examiners must be impartial and be free from bias for or against the candidate. If there has been in the last five years, or will be in the near future, any formal association between the proposed examiners and the candidate, or the supervisors or the University of either a personal, professional, family or commercial nature that may be considered as a conflict of interest, they should not be nominated. For greater certainty and clarity on what constitutes a conflict of interest, resort may be had to the "Conflict of Interest Guidelines" promulgated from time to time by the Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Schools in Australia (DDOGS).

3 Procedures

- 3.1 Supervisors should informally contact potential examiners on behalf of the candidate to negotiate willingness and availability.
- 3.2 The principal supervisor, following consultation with the student and other supervisors if applicable, completes the Nomination of Examiners form and forwards it, together with the abridged nominated examiners' CVs, to the relevant Dean for signature. The form and abridged nominated examiners' CVs shall then be forwarded to the Director of the Research Office for authorisation.
- 3.3 A brief rationale is required if (a) a nominated examiner has neither supervision nor examination experience of the equivalent degree, (b) a nominated examiner is clearly not currently or formerly

- affiliated to a university or research institution [or (c) a nominated examiner does not have an earned Doctorate or PhD.]
- 3.4 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, candidate and proposed examiners in order to exclude any possible conflict of interest introduced into the process as a consequence of the proposed appointment.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 The Research Office is responsible for confirming the willingness and availability of examiners prior to the thesis being forwarded. The Research Office will formally invite two examiners for a research masters and three examiners for a professional doctorate or PhD, asking that they complete the examination and accompanying report within six weeks and not exceeding eight weeks. Examiners will also be provided with information relating to the nature of the thesis examination and honorarium and including the University document *Information for Examiners of a Higher Degree by Research*.
- 3.7 Unless exceptional and compelling circumstances exist, the examiners shall be entitled to know the outcome of the thesis examination upon their request for this information.