

Examiner Nomination Form

Information on examination procedures is available from <https://www.notredame.edu.au/about/policies/list> or from the Research Office. Please type the information below, or provide a separate, printed submission, including the information as outlined below. The completed form and a **copy of the thesis abstract** should be submitted to the Research Office at least **three weeks** prior to the intended thesis submission date.

(1) STUDENT DETAILS

Surname:	Student ID:		
Given Name(s):	Intended Submission Date:		
School/Centre (s):			
Name of Degree:			
Component: <i>(please tick)</i>	Thesis	Exhibition	Recital
	Thesis by Publication		
Supervisor(Principal):			
Thesis Title:			
Other Title: <i>(if applicable)</i>			

(2) DETAILS OF NOMINATED EXAMINERS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Include a full justification for the nomination of each examiner, addressing issues of expertise and relevance:

- Include a rationale if (a) a nominated examiner has not successfully completed at least one HDR student or does not have 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 (Refer to Clause 3.3 of Policy: Nomination of Examiners for a Research Degree). Evidence of supervision and examination experience is required in nominated examiners CVs.
- Please attach a CV which includes a list of all publications for the past five years for each nominated examiner (where this list will exceed 3 pages, please provide URL for complete list, where possible) as well as details of qualifications, academic affiliation(s) and experience as a supervisor and/or examiner of postgraduate research students. Note: where an examiner has no supervision experience, please provide justification for their inclusion.
- Please supply full mailing addresses for each examiner. **DO NOT PROVIDE PO BOX ADDRESSES.** (Couriers will not deliver a thesis to a PO Box number so a complete street address is required to ensure that the thesis arrives at its destination). It is also important that you supply full details of e-mail addresses and telephone numbers to ensure that the examination process proceeds as efficiently as possible.

(3) IMPORTANT NOTES

- (4) For the Doctoral degree the names of three examiners and a reserve fourth examiner are required, all of whom are external to the University, and at least one of whom is normally resident outside of the country.
- (5) For the Master of Philosophy and the Master by Research degree the names of two examiners and a reserve third examiner are required, all of whom are external to the University.
- (6) Students must be consulted to avoid the appointment of potential examiner(s) about whom the student has concerns. Students must not communicate with potential examiners on any issues related to the examination of the thesis.

- Examiners should not have a current or prior working or other relationship with the student and should be well-known scholars who are active in the field of the thesis.
- The University aims for a six-week turnaround for completion of a report.
The Honorarium is currently the Universities Australia recommended amount:
 - Doctorate AUD \$425
 - Masters by Research AUD \$240
 - Masters of Philosophy AUD \$150

Examiner 1	
Name (in full):	
Qualification:	
Correspondence street address:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Justification/rationale: <i>(if applicable)</i>	Examiner notified that the Thesis will be sent as a PDF
Examiner 2	
Name (in full):	
Qualification:	
Correspondence street address:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Justification/rationale: <i>(if applicable)</i>	Examiner notified that the Thesis will be sent as a PDF
Examiner 3 <i>(Doctoral students only)</i>	
Name (in full):	
Qualification:	
Correspondence street address:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Justification/rationale: <i>(if applicable)</i>	Examiner notified that the Thesis will be sent as a PDF

RESERVE

Name (in full):	
Qualification:	
Correspondence street address:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Justification/rationale: <i>(if applicable)</i>	Examiner notified that the Thesis will be sent as a PDF

(4) PLEASE TICK AND NOTE THAT YOUR SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM MAKES THE FOLLOWING DECLARATIONS:

All of the student's supervisors have been consulted about the nominated examiners and agree to their nomination

The nominated examiners have been invited by the Principal Supervisor of the School and have agreed to undertake the examination

A CV is attached for each nominated examiner

I confirm that the nominated examiners comply with the Australian Council of Graduate Research (ACGR) Conflict of Interest Guidelines (please see attached Appendix 1)

The student has been consulted about potential examiners. In particular, the student has had the opportunity to discuss examiners that may not be suitable

AND

(a) I am satisfied that there is no potential for an actual or perceived conflict of interest in the nomination of these examiners

OR

(b) I declare that there is a potential for an actual or perceived conflict of interest pertaining to the nominated examiner/s. A statement addressing this is attached

Either this student

(a) has no issues of confidentiality which will affect the examination of the thesis

OR

(b) supervisor and/or student has/have already notified the Research Office in writing of any confidentiality issues with the thesis



Principal Supervisor name: <i>(please print)</i>	
Principal Supervisor signature:	
Date:	

(5) **Dean's AUTHORISATION:**

Name: <i>(please print)</i>	
Signature:	
Date:	

(6) **Research Office Director's AUTHORISATION:**

Name: <i>(please print)</i>	
Signature:	
Date:	

ACGR Conflict of Interest in Examination Guidelines

The use of independent thesis examiners is an important defining feature of Australian Higher Degree by Research (HDR) programs. The independence of examiners is one indicator of the quality of the examination process and of the course as a whole.

The process of examination/classification of theses assumes that those responsible undertake the task independently and without bias. Professional and personal relationships between examiners, candidates and their supervisors/advisors, and relationships between examiners and the University, have the potential to introduce bias and thus compromise the independence of the examination, in fact or in perception.

The independence of examiners can be ensured by the use of:

- internal guidelines on what might constitute (risk of perception of) conflict of interest,
- a nomination process with a formal review procedure.

There are a range of circumstances that can lead to a conflict of interest. The guidelines below list examples of different types of conflict of interest that may arise between the various parties including the candidate, the supervisor/advisor, the University, the subject matter itself and another examiner. The list is indicative and is not to be considered exhaustive.

In managing conflicts of interest in the examination process it is useful to:

- Distinguish major (potential) conflicts of interest that would normally result in the non-appointment of the examiner from minor (potential) conflicts that should be declared and explained but which should not normally, independently of other considerations, inhibit the appointment of the examiner.
- Recognise that some conflicts of interest arising through collaboration on publications and/or research grants, or membership of an advisory board, may be mitigated by the size of the team and a corresponding relative independence of some members of the team. Indeed in some cases, members of a team may never have met nor corresponded directly.

It is also important to note that the presence or perception of possible conflict of interest between the examiner and the candidate or other parties should not necessarily and automatically preclude the use of that examiner. What is important is that a fair and transparently “unconflicted” examination can take place. With responsible management of a declared conflict it may be possible to achieve this aim.

Conflicts of Interest

Listed below are examples of different types of conflict of interest that may arise between the examiner and various parties including the candidate, the supervisor/advisor, the University, the subject matter itself and another examiner. The list is indicative and is not to be considered exhaustive.

A. Conflict with the Candidate

Working relationship

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------|
| A1. | Examiner has co-authored a paper with the candidate within the last five years | MAJOR |
| A2. | Examiner has worked with the candidate on matters regarding the thesis e.g. previous member of the advisory team | MAJOR |
| A3. | Examiner has employed the candidate or been employed by the candidate within the last five years | MAJOR |
| A4. | Examiner is in negotiation to directly employ or be employed by the candidate | MAJOR |
| A5. | Examiner has acted as a referee for the candidate for employment | MAJOR |

Personal relationship

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| A6. | Examiner is a known relative of the candidate | MAJOR |
| A7. | Examiner is a friend, associate or mentor of the candidate | MAJOR |
| A8. | Examiner and the candidate have an existing or a previous emotional relationship of de facto, are co-residents or are members of a common household | MAJOR |

Legal relationship

- | | | |
|------|--|-------|
| A9. | Examiner is or was married to the candidate | MAJOR |
| A10. | Examiner is legally family to the candidate (for example, step-father, sister-in-law) | MAJOR |
| A11. | Examiner is either a legal guardian or dependent of the candidate or has power of attorney for the candidate | MAJOR |

Business, Professional and/or Social Relationships

- | | | |
|------|---|-------|
| A12. | Examiner is currently in or has had a business relationship with the candidate in the last five years (for example, partner in a small business) | MAJOR |
| A13. | Examiner is in a social relationship with the candidate, such as co-Trustees of a Will or god-parent | MAJOR |
| A14. | Examiner has a current professional relationship, such as shared membership of a Board or Committee (including editorial and grant decision boards), with the candidate | MINOR |
| A15. | Examiner has had personal contact with the candidate that may give rise to the perception that the examiner may be dealing with the candidate in a less than objective manner | MINOR |



B. Conflict with the Supervisor/Advisor

Working Relationship

B1.	Examiner was a candidate of the supervisor within the past five years	MAJOR
B2.	Examiner has co-supervised with the supervisor in the past five years	MAJOR
B3.	Examiner holds a patent with the supervisor granted no more than eight years ago and which is still in force	MAJOR
B4.	Examiner had directly employed or was employed by the supervisor in the past five years	MAJOR
B5.	Examiner holds a current grant with the supervisor	MAJOR ¹
B6.	Examiner has co-authored a publication with the supervisor in the past five years	MAJOR ²

Personal Relationship

B7.	Examiner is in negotiation to directly employ or be employed by the supervisor	MAJOR
B8.	Examiner is a known relative of the supervisor	MAJOR
B9.	Examiner and the supervisor have an existing or a previous emotional relationship of de facto, are co-residents or are members of a common household	MAJOR

Legal Relationship

B10.	Examiner is or was married to the supervisor	MAJOR
B11.	Examiner is legally family (for example, step-father, sister-in-law) to the supervisor	MAJOR
B12.	Examiner is either a legal guardian or dependent of the supervisor or has power of attorney for the supervisor	MAJOR

Business, Professional and/or Social Relationships

B13.	Examiner is currently in or has had a business relationship with the supervisor in the last five years (for example, partner in a small business or employment)	MAJOR
B14.	Examiner is in a social relationship with the supervisor, such as co-Trustees of a Will or god-parent	MAJOR
B15.	Examiner has a current professional relationship, such as shared membership of a Board or Committee (including editorial and grant decision boards), with the supervisor	MINOR
B16.	Examiner has had personal contact with the supervisor that may give rise to the perception that the examiner may be dealing with the candidate in a less than objective manner	MINOR

^{1.} Mitigating circumstances may exist, for example where the grant in question is held by a large consortium of relatively independent researchers.

^{2.} Mitigating circumstances may exist, for example where the paper in question has a large author list and where the examiner and supervisor have not collaborated directly.



C. Conflict with The University

Working Relationship

- | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------|
| C1. | Examiner is currently in negotiation with the University for a work contract (other than examining thesis) | MAJOR |
| C2. | Examiner is currently working for the University pro bono (for example, on a review) | MINOR |
| C3. | Examiner has examined for the University two or more times in the past 12 months and/or five or more times in the past five years | MINOR ³ |

Other Relationship

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------|
| C4. | Examiner has received an Honorary Doctorate from the University within the past five years | MAJOR |
| C5. | Examiner graduated from the University within the past five years | MAJOR |
| C6. | Examiner has/had a formal grievance with the University | MAJOR |

Professional Relationship

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------|
| C7. | Examiner is a current member of staff or has a current Honorary, Adjunct or Emeritus position with the University or has had such a position during the candidature of the candidate or in the past five years | MAJOR |
| C8. | Examiner has a current professional relationship with the University (for example, membership of a Board or Committee) | MINOR |
| C9. | Examiner has a current Visiting position with The University or has had such a position during the candidature of the candidate or in the past five years | MINOR |

- ^{3.} Mitigating circumstances may exist, for example where an examiner has examined candidates across different Schools of the University

D. Conflict with the subject matter

Research

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| D1. | Examiner has a direct commercial interest in the outcomes of the research | MAJOR |
|-----|---|-------|

E. Conflict with other examiners

Working Relationship

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------|
| E1. | Examiner works in the same department/school as another examiner | MAJOR |
|-----|--|-------|

Personal Relationship

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| E2. | Examiner is married to, closely related to or has a close personal relationship with another examiner | MAJOR |
|-----|---|-------|

Professional Relationship

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------|
| E3. | Examiner has a professional relationship with another examiner | MINOR |
|-----|--|-------|

Additional notes on management of the guidelines

In managing the Conflict of Interest guidelines it is useful to remind those who are nominating examiners that the purpose of the guidelines is to ensure the independence of the examination in both fact and perception. The guidelines are designed to protect the candidate, examiner and the University against potential negative perceptions during and beyond the examination process. There is no presumption that any individual will behave inappropriately.

It would be unreasonable to expect potential examiners to make decisions about their suitability to examine (with reference to these or other guidelines), though it is reasonable to expect them to declare conflicts of interest and to make provision for this in examiners' reporting forms. The nomination of examiners is best made by the supervisory team and/or enrolling school and subsequently formally approved by a third party. In many institutions formal approval will be by delegated authority of the Board of the Graduate Research School or equivalent.

The most frequent concerns raised by supervisors relate to conflicts of interest between an examiner and a supervisor/advisor, especially with respect to co-authorship (B6). There is occasionally a tension between the need to find an independent examiner and the need to find an examiner with expertise in the field of the thesis, especially where that field is considered to be particularly narrow. It may be useful here to keep in mind that specific expertise in the narrow field of the thesis is not the only (nor necessarily the primary) consideration in selecting a potential examiner. An examiner's broad knowledge of the particular field of research, experience as a supervisor of HDR candidates and examiner of HDR theses, plus their broad familiarity with the expectations of Australian HDR courses are all considerations in the selection of appropriate examiners.

The most frequent concern raised by candidates is in relation to formal and informal contact between the candidate and potential examiners (A2). Candidates often ask if they should avoid attending conferences organised by a potential examiner or at which they may have contact with a potential examiner, avoid presenting papers in a department at which a potential examiner works, or avoid submitting papers to a journal edited by a potential examiner. No conflict of interest exists in these cases and it would defy common sense to consider proscribing such valuable activities. As a general rule of thumb, a conflict of interest exists where a potential examiner has worked with the candidate on matters of synthesis or analysis or has maintained a correspondence or other contact over an extended period in which the research has been discussed.

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