

HDR Thesis Rules

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1. Governing Policy

[Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#) and [HDR Examination Procedures](#)

2. Scope

- a. For the purposes of these rules, a thesis means a single substantial piece of written work, except that:
 - i. if the research degree is in a creative, artistic or other discipline, a thesis means an artefact with a written exegesis, presented as two elements, and
 - ii. if the research degree is a PhD by Prior Published Work, a thesis means the prior published work with a contextual statement.
- b. These rules cover all theses submitted for examination for the award of a higher degree by research.

3. Presentation requirements

- a. Students are responsible for the style and layout of the thesis and selection of the thesis title, in consultation with their supervisor(s).
- b. Students are expected to keep their theses within the word limit guidance below—excluding footnotes, bibliography, tables and appendices—bearing in mind that the quality, scale and scope of the research achieved is relevant to the discipline and the [Course Rules](#).

Award	Minimum	Maximum
Masters by Research	35,000	50,000
Masters by Research with artefact and exegesis (*exegesis component)	*15,000	*30,000

PhD	60,000	100,000
PhD with creative artefact and exegesis (*exegesis component)	*40,000	*60,000
PhD by Prior Published Work (contextual statement)	10,000	40,000
PhD (Clinical Psychology)	60,000	100,000
Professional Doctorate	45,000	55,000

- c. Extensive footnotes or very large appendices may be counted within the word limit if their purpose appears to be to bypass the word limit.
- d. Theses submitted for examination electronically must be submitted in accordance with Procedure 4.1 of the [HDR Examination Procedures](#).
- e. Theses submitted for examination in written format must have a high standard of presentation – refer to the [Laying out your Thesis](#) website for details.

4. Research integrity requirements

- a. All HDR students must ensure their work submitted for examination is compliant with the University's [Research Integrity Policy](#), [Research Data Management Procedures](#) and the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#).
- b. Plagiarism is a form of research misconduct. HDR students are required to ensure that all written work, including previously published work, is put through the University's electronic [text-matching](#) software, available via [REST Flinders Learning Online \(FLO\)](#), at each Milestone and as part of formal submission, as required by the [HDR Progression Procedures](#) and [HDR Examination Procedures](#), except in the following circumstances:
 - i. Where electronic text-matching is explicitly precluded by the terms of a Government or third party agreement which applies to the research, and an exemption application is approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training and Capabilities) and Dean of Graduate Research (or delegate). The work may be put through the [text-matching](#) software as a 'Draft' only.
 - ii. Where Australian Government [Export Controls, or other such legislation](#), apply to the work, contact the Office of Graduate Research before using text-matching software.
- c. Ensuring the electronic text-matching reports are reviewed and signed off by the supervisor(s) in the Milestone reports and at thesis submission.
- d. Ensuring that any material produced jointly by a student and their supervisors or others, is included in the narrative of the thesis along with a clear statement of the student's contribution to the work. The original work of joint authors other than the student must be fully acknowledged in the same manner that the work of any other authors is referenced (and see Section 7 on inclusion of published material).
- e. Ensuring HDR students abide by the University's [Statement on the Use of AI in Research](#).
- f. Signing a declaration as per Section 5.a.iv.

5. Content of thesis for submission

a. All theses must include the following:

i. a title page with

- the title of the thesis in full
- the full name and degrees of the student
- the name of the College of enrolment,
- the name of the degree the thesis submission represents e.g., Thesis submitted to Flinders University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy/Masters by Research, and
- the date when submitted for examination

[the Flinders University logo and thesis template are available from the [Laying out your Thesis](#) website.]

ii. a table of contents

iii. a thesis summary of not more than 500 words

iv. a declaration signed and dated by the student, as follows:

“I certify that:

1. this thesis does not incorporate material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma
2. the research within this thesis will not be submitted for any other future degree or diploma without the permission of Flinders University
3. to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the body of the thesis, and
4. if generative artificial intelligence has been used in my thesis it has been duly acknowledged with details to identify the extent to which generative artificial intelligence formed the final thesis.”

v. an acknowledgment by the student of help given or work carried out by another person or organisation,

vi. [Recipients of RTP support (fees offsets, stipends or allowances) must acknowledge the contribution of an “Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship” in the thesis and in any publications that arise directly from the research undertaken during the candidature.]

vii. if applicable, a page listing all the student’s publications (both sole and co-authored) under submission, accepted and published during their HDR candidature at Flinders university, including a clear indication of publications that are relevant to the thesis or undertaken separately

viii. the body of the thesis (i.e., the substance of the student’s research and outcomes, or the contextual statement and published works, or the exegesis and artefact)

ix. a bibliography, and

x. appendices, if any.

b. Other materials (e.g. digital media, images and other research materials that are not considered an artefact) may be included in the thesis, if the inclusion of which is approved by the University at the time of admission or the College at the Confirmation of Candidature Milestone or other relevant Milestones.

6. Thesis with an artefact and written exegesis

- a. A thesis in a creative, artistic or other discipline may take the form of an artefact with a written exegesis.
- b. The exegesis must include:
 - i. a conceptual framework
 - ii. placement of the research within the current literature
 - iii. placement of the artefact in contemporary or historical artistic or cultural literature
 - iv. a discussion showing the overall significance of the work and significant original contribution to knowledge, the reasons for choosing the mode of thesis, standard research practices, such as research questions, methods, results/theory and analysis plus problems encountered and future directions of the work
 - v. an appropriate bibliography.
- c. Only artefacts commenced during candidature can be included in a degree with an artefact and written exegesis.

7. Inclusion of published material in thesis that follows a time-based supervised program of research and study

- a. A student may publish their research during their candidature, provided it does not change the due date for submission of the thesis.
- b. Except in the case of a PhD by prior published work, publications can only be included in a thesis if the research commenced during candidature.
- c. Publications or significant sections of publications (whether accepted, submitted or in manuscript form) arising out of work conducted during candidature may be included in the body and narrative of the thesis, or submitted as additional evidence as an appendix, on the following conditions:
 - i. they contribute to the overall theme of the work, are conceptually linked to the chapters before and after, and follow a logical sequence
 - ii. they are formatted in the same way as the other chapters, or if presented as reprints they are clearly legible in the final thesis
 - iii. published and unpublished sections of a chapter are clearly differentiated with appropriate referencing or footnotes, and
 - iv. unnecessary repetition in the general introduction and conclusion, and the introductions and conclusions of each published chapter, is avoided.
- d. Multi-author papers may be included within a thesis, provided:
 - i. the student is the major contributing author
 - ii. there is a clear statement in prose for each publication at the front of each chapter, describing the percentage contribution of each author to the paper, from conceptualisation to realisation and documentation
 - iii. the publication adheres to Flinders [Authorship of Research Output Procedures](#), and
 - iv. each of the other authors provides permission for use of their work to be included in the thesis on the [Co-Authorship Approval Form](#).

- e. Papers where the student is not the major contributing author may be included within a thesis if a clear justification for the paper's inclusion is provided, including the circumstances relating to production of the paper and the student's position in the list of authors. However, it is preferable to include such papers as appendices, rather than in the main body of the thesis.
- f. Papers produced during the candidature that are not directly linked to the research, and are not included in the body of the thesis or as an appendix can be listed in the front matter of the thesis as per 5.a.vi.

8. Thesis for PhD by Prior Published Work

- a. The publications for a PhD by Prior Published Work are accepted for publication prior to acceptance into candidature, in accordance with the [PhD Course Rule](#) and [PhD by Prior Published Works Course Information](#) website.
- b. In addition to the relevant publications intended for examination, and all the matters listed in Rules 3. to 5. above, the thesis must include:
 - i. a page listing all the student's publications (sole and co-authored) relevant to the thesis
 - ii. a contextual statement (but not a detailed reworking of individual papers) with:
 - the aims underpinning the publications
 - the field of knowledge within current literature
 - how the publications are linked, and
 - a conclusion synthesising and showing the overall significance of the work and contribution to knowledge, problems encountered and future directions of the work
- c. a statement which indicates which portions of the published works are claimed to be original. For more information refer to [PhD by Prior Published Works Course Information](#) website. Multi-author publications may be included within a thesis, provided:
 - i. the student is the major contributing author
 - ii. there is a clear statement for each publication documenting the contribution of each author to the publication, from conceptualisation to realisation and documentation, in accordance with the Authorship of Research Output Procedures, and
 - iii. each of the other authors provides permission for use of their work to be included in the thesis on the [Co-Authorship Approval Form](#).
- d. Publications where the student is not the major contributing author may be included within a thesis if a clear justification for the publication's inclusion is provided, including the circumstances relating to production of the publication and the student's position in the list of authors. However, it is preferable to include such publications as appendices, rather than in the main body of the thesis.

9. Thesis in language other than English

- a. Unless written into a Cotutelle Agreement (prior to May 2025), students are not permitted to submit their theses in a language other than English.
- b. In the case of students enrolled in foreign language disciplines, permission to submit a thesis in a language other than English may be approved as part of the Confirmation of Candidature Milestone, taking into account:
 - i. the competence of the supervisors in the language proposed

- ii. the availability of a sufficient range of qualified examiners competent in the language, and
 - iii. evidence of an appropriate link between the subject of the thesis and the language in which it is proposed to submit the thesis.
- c. If submission of a thesis in a language other than English is approved, the thesis summary (Rule 5.a.iii.) must be in English.

10. Paid professional editing

- a. Engagement of a paid, professional editor is permitted, on the following conditions:
- i. the editing is undertaken before the final version of the thesis is submitted to the student's supervisor for approval for submission
 - ii. editing is limited to formatting, grammar and style; does not alter or improve the substantive content or conceptual organisation of the thesis; and does not alter errors in primary sources, including graphs, tables, direct quotes and translation, though may draw attention to them
 - iii. supervisors oversee the process and monitor professional editing to ensure the consistency of thesis quality, and
 - iv. students include an acknowledgement of the help given or work carried out by another person or organisation in editing their thesis.
 - v. The Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship provides an allowance for ancillary cost of research degrees, refer to the [RTP Scholarship Administrative Rules](#).
- b. Note that:
- i. supervisors are responsible for reviewing the changes made by an editor to a thesis, and
 - ii. all professional thesis editing is considered to be a private arrangement between the student and a third party, and the University is not responsible for the payment or working conditions of editors engaged by students.

11. Uploading thesis

11.1. Submitting a thesis for examination

All HDR theses must be submitted for examination:

- a. in the format specified in these Rules, and
- b. by uploading the thesis in [Inspire](#) in a pdf file.

11.1. Student-generated research data

It is the Principal Supervisor's responsibility to ensure the student-generated research data has a [research data management plan](#), and data is stored on a University system/facility and the data custodian is the Principal Supervisor, as specified in the [Research Data Management Procedures](#) at section 5.7 Retention and disposal.

11.3. Uploading a thesis for award

- a. Before a student's award will be conferred, the student must:
- i. complete any required amendments, as per the [HDR Examination Procedures](#)

- ii. include on the thesis the date of award (in place of the date of submission) – the date of award is the date the student is notified that the thesis has been accepted for award, subject to any specified conditions
 - iii. consider and apply for any restrictions on open access as per the [HDR Examination Procedures](#), and
 - iv. upload the thesis, in its final format, to Flinders University Library in accordance with the [thesis submission process](#) specified by the Library, including obtaining approval from the copyright owner for material in which the copyright is owned by a third party.
- b. This uploaded thesis is the authoritative version of the thesis, and will be available in perpetuity for open access, unless restricted access is otherwise approved in accordance with the [HDR Examination Procedures](#).

12. Printed copies of thesis

- a. Students are not required to print or bind a copy of their thesis, except as required under the [HDR Examination Procedures](#) 4.3.b.
- b. Nothing in these Rules prevents a student from printing or binding a final thesis for use and distribution as they see fit.

Approval Authority	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training and Capabilities) and Dean of Graduate Research, under authority given in the HDR Examination Procedures
Approval Date	4 July 2025
Effective Date	4 July 2025
Review Date*	2028
Last amended	
CM file number	CF18/306

* Unless otherwise indicated, this procedure will still apply beyond the review date.

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