

Higher Doctorate Procedures

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1. Governing Policy

[Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#)

2. Purpose

- a. These procedures specify the admission, enrolment and examination processes for a candidature for a higher doctorate.
- b. The requirements for admission to candidature and to qualify for the award of a higher doctorate are as specified in the [Higher Doctorate Course Rules](#).

3. Admission

- a. Before making an application for admission to a higher doctorate candidature, a candidate is advised to:
 - i. check the requirements for a higher doctorate in the relevant [Course Rules](#), and
 - ii. contact the Dean of Graduate Research to discuss the body of work to be submitted for assessment of the award. The Dean of Graduate Research will liaise with the relevant College about the proposed applicant.
- b. A formal application must be made on the prescribed form (*link pending*) to the Office of Graduate Research, including the following information:
 - i. a brief summary of the applicant's research experience. Include details of any publications, research grants, patents, creative works or employment experience relevant to the proposed research project

- ii. certified academic transcripts
 - iii. an overview of the body of work to be submitted for examination
 - iv. a statement summarising the applicant's broad field of research and why the applicant meets the requirements for the award, and
 - v. a statement indicating what parts of the body of work, if any, have been previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university.
- c. The Office of Graduate Research will refer the application for a determination on admission to the University HDR Committee, which may co-opt experts as appropriate.
 - d. To admit the applicant, the University HDR Committee must be satisfied that there is a prima facie case that the applicant meets the requirements for award of the degree, and that the applicant complies with any University policy, legislative or Government requirements.
 - e. If the applicant is accepted, the Office of Graduate Research, will:
 - i. assign a Principal Supervisor, in conjunction with the relevant College HDR Coordinator in accordance with the [HDR Supervisor Procedures](#), and
 - ii. make an offer of admission to the applicant (for international applicants, this will be in conjunction with Flinders International).
 - f. If the applicant is not accepted, the Office of Graduate Research will notify the applicant. An applicant who is not accepted may not reapply for five years after the date of the previous application.

4. Enrolment

- a. On receipt of an offer of admission, the applicant must log into the Student Information System within the specified time, as stated in the letter of offer, and follow the prompts to accept or decline the offer. [Note: deferment is not an option].
- b. Once the offer is accepted, the applicant must contact the Office of Graduate Research within the time specified in the letter of offer, to arrange formal enrolment. [As provided in the [Enrolment Policy](#), only an enrolled student may submit work for examination.]
- c. The period of enrolment is used for preparation of the candidate's body of work, together with a contextual statement, in consultation with the Principal Supervisor, for submission for examination by the due date.
- d. The due date for submission for examination is between three and six months from the date of enrolment, and examiners will be engaged to examine in accordance with 6.3.
- e. A candidate may apply for an extension to the Dean of Graduate Research. An extension will not be approved unless the Dean is satisfied that submission will occur within the period of the extension. The absolute maximum duration of candidature is 12 months from the date of enrolment. If the work has not been submitted by this time, the candidature will be withdrawn.
- f. The University may withdraw an offer of admission or cancel enrolment on the grounds specified in Procedure 4.5 or 6.8 of the [HDR Admission and Enrolment Procedures](#).

5. Fees

A candidate must pay such fees as determined by the Vice-Chancellor or delegate. All fees are non-refundable.

6. Examination

6.1. Number of examiners

Three examiners must be engaged for all higher doctorate candidatures.

6.2. Criteria for selection of examiners

- a. Examiners must be external and independent of Flinders University, and at least two examiners must be from outside Australia.
- b. Examiners must:
 - i. be full professors with an international reputation, who are recognised as eminent authorities in the relevant field of knowledge or interdisciplinary scholarship
 - ii. be researchers of international standing in the discipline with respect for disciplinary norms and disciplinary excellence (with at least 10 publications or equivalent within the last 5 years, including peer-reviewed articles, books and book chapters), including recent publications that provide evidence that their knowledge of the field or area of professional practice is current
 - iii. be external and independent of Flinders University, free from real or perceived bias, and not have any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, with the student, the supervisor(s), the other examiner(s) or the University, in either a personal, professional or commercial capacity.
[Examiners who have had a close personal or professional relationship with any supervisor or the student in the previous five years – for example co-publication, grants and/or supervision, and recent graduates from Flinders University – are not regarded as being external and/or independent.]
 - iv. hold a Doctor of Philosophy or equivalent qualification, and
 - v. not be from the same institution.

6.3. Nomination of examiners

- a. No later than 3 months after the candidature commences, the Principal Supervisor must nominate at least 3 potential examiners, on the prescribed form (*link pending*), to the [Office of Graduate Research](#), together with information on their eminence.
- b. While the identity of examiners will not be revealed to the candidate, the candidate will be invited to supply the names of any persons they do not wish to be examiners, and this will be taken into account in the examiner selection.

6.4. Engagement of examiners

- a. Examiners will be approved by the Dean of Graduate Research, and reported to the University HDR Committee for noting, following confidential consultation with the relevant College Dean (Research) and any other expert the Dean of Graduate Research chooses.
- b. Ascertaining the availability of potential examiners will be conducted by the Office of Graduate Research.
- c. On approval, examiners will be formally engaged by the Office of Graduate Research, who will provide them with the necessary information, using Procedure 3.3.d.v. of the [HDR Examination Procedures](#) as a guide.
- d. Once the examination process is finalised, examiner names may be released to the candidate, provided the examiner gives permission.

6.5. Examination process

- a. To be eligible for examination, the contextual statement and body of work must be submitted in the format prescribed in the [Higher Doctorate Submission Rules](#), subject to any variation approved by the Dean of Graduate Research.
- b. Submission occurs by emailing the following to the HDR Examination Team in the Office of Graduate Research (HDR.Exams@flinders.edu.au):
 - i. the contextual statement, and
 - ii. the body of work (to the extent that digital uploading is possible)

—with the prescribed form (*link pending*). Where published works are not available in digital format, 4 copies (3 for examiners and 1 for the University) must be lodged physically with the Office of Graduate Research. These will not be returned to the candidate.

- c. Once the contextual statement and body of work is lodged and approved for examination, the Office of Graduate Research will:
 - i. ensure the submission complies with the University’s requirements
 - ii. change the candidate’s enrolment status to “Under Examination”
 - iii. send the submission to the examiners
 - iv. actively monitor examination deadlines, and
 - v. keep the candidate informed of progress.
- d. The candidate and Principal Supervisor must make no attempt to identify or communicate with the examiners or potential examiners.
- e. The deadline for the return of the completed Examiner Reports is 8 weeks from the date it is approved for examination.

6.6. Examiner Report requirements

- a. In examining the candidate’s submission, each examiner must judge whether it demonstrates the requirements specified in the [Higher Doctorate Course Rules](#).
- b. Each examiner must submit a written report in English (minimum of one page) on the supplied Examiner Report form, with the reasons for their recommendation.
- c. Examiners must not consult each other at any stage of the examination process.
- d. The report must recommend one of the following two outcomes:

A: Award: that the degree be awarded

F: Non-Award: that the degree not be awarded and the candidate not be allowed to present for the degree for 5 years from the notification of the outcome of the Examiners’ recommendation.

Note: the option to submit revised material for further examination is not available.

7. Consideration of Examiner Reports

- a. If:
 - i. all three examiners recommend that the degree be awarded, or
 - ii. two examiners recommend that the degree be awarded, and one recommends that it not be awarded, or
 - iii. two examiners recommend that the degree not be awarded, and one recommends that it be awarded—the University HDR Committee will make the final determination on award of the degree.
- b. If all three examiners recommend that the degree not be awarded, the Dean of Graduate Research will make a determination that the degree is not awarded and the University HDR Committee is notified.

8. Open access

On award of the degree:

- a. The candidate must prepare a list of publications containing full and unabbreviated citations of outputs comprising the body of work. Where available, a digital object identifier (DOI) is to be included.
- b. The candidate must submit the title page, declaration, list of publications and the contextual statement, prepared in accordance with the [Higher Doctorate Submission Rules](#), to the University Library in digital format for immediate open access. The body of work will not be made available.

9. Review and appeals

- a. A candidate who receives an F determination (non-award) and can provide documented evidence of a flaw in the examination process, such as bias or conflict of interest on the part of one or more examiners, may request a review of the determination in accordance with the [Student Review and Appeal Policy](#) and procedures.
- b. A candidate who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the review may appeal to the Student Appeals Committee, if specified grounds are met, in accordance with the [Student Review and Appeal Policy](#) and procedures.
- c. If the reviewer or the Student Appeals Committee decides in favour of the candidate, they may determine that new examiners be engaged to re-examine the submission, in which case Procedure 6 will be applied.

10. Authorities

Delegate	Authority
Admission and Enrolment	
University HDR Committee	Approve, reject or withdraw applications for admission, including equivalency of qualifications, into a Higher Doctorate candidature. <i>[Actual offers will be issued by the Office of Graduate Research (for domestic applicants) or the International Centre (for international applicants).]</i>
Dean of Graduate Research	Approve extension of candidature under Procedure 4.e.
Examination	
Dean of Graduate Research	Approve the <i>Higher Doctorate Submission Rules</i>
Dean of Graduate Research	Approve the engagement of examiners
University HDR Committee	Determine award of the degree under Procedure 7.a.
Dean of Graduate Research	Determine award of the degree under Procedure 7.b.

11. Forms

Refer to the [Higher Doctorate website](#) (*under development*).

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Responsible Officer	Dean of Graduate Research
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* Unless otherwise indicated, this procedure will still apply beyond the review date.

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