DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
ADVICE TO EXAMINERS OF HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH:
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY AND MASTERS DEGREES IN
PROFESSIONAL WRITING

Introduction
Higher degrees by research are awarded on satisfactory completion of supervised but independent research which is described in a thesis. Coursework may be included in the requirements for the degree, but this is generally minor and preliminary to the research project.
The Doctor of Philosophy program involves two to four years of full-time study, or the equivalent of part-time study. Masters programs are completed in one to two years of full-time study, or the equivalent of part-time study. The PhD degree is awarded for “a substantial original contribution to knowledge” achieved in two to four years of full-time candidature. It is the outcome of a project treated with a greater depth of scholarship and research than is required for a masters degree or possible in the shorter time allowed.

The Nature of the Thesis
The thesis for the degree of Master of Arts or Doctor of Philosophy in professional writing may take one of two forms: a conventional written thesis, or a thesis comprising a contribution in the form of professional writing – for example fiction, non-fiction, poetry or script – and a critical exegesis that extends and develops the contribution to new knowledge.

Theoretical Thesis
The theoretical thesis is a written document which conforms in all respects to the norms in the humanities and social sciences.

Professional Writing plus Exegesis
This form of thesis conveys the outcome of independent research which can explore the development of new knowledge in the form of a professional writing genre. The candidate must demonstrate that the research, critical analysis and evaluation of complex issues and challenges have made an original contribution to knowledge. In the critical exegesis, the candidate should present, develop and argue the position taken in the professional writing in the context of the relevant research literature and relevant critical issues in the area chosen.

The Examiner’s Report
You are asked to complete the formal Examiners Recommendation Form with your recommendation on the outcome of the examination, and to provide a written report in English giving the reasons for the recommendation. The report should be complete in itself; annotations in the thesis or exegesis are not a substitute for the written report.
Examiners are asked to report independently, but may consult with one another if considered necessary. Examiners may require the Candidate to respond to questions on the thesis or exegesis. If there are matters that require elucidation, please send a list of questions to the Examinations Officer HDR (see below for contact details). The responses will be sent to you to enable you to complete your examination.

Your response is requested by the date given in the letter of appointment. If circumstances arise that prevent you completing the examination by the due date, please contact the Examinations Officer HDR.

The Recommendation Form
Examiners are asked to select one of the following recommendations.

**Recommendation 1 (the degree be awarded)**
This recommendation is appropriate where the thesis meets the standard required for the degree. This includes cases where there are small style or typographical errors that do not impact on the substance of the thesis, but should be corrected in the Library copy.

**Recommendation 2**
Make this recommendation where the thesis meets the standards required for the degree but some revisions are required that affect the presentation of the thesis rather than the substance; that is changes that can be approved by the Head of School rather than requiring your input. Please identify in your report the changes and corrections that should be made by the candidate. Your report will be used to provide guidance to the candidate in making the changes, and to the Head of School in determining that the changes are satisfactory.

**Recommendation 2.1 (the degree be awarded provided that the textual errors and other minor matters identified in my report are corrected to the satisfaction of the Head of School)**
Make this recommendation where there are minor textual errors or omissions, or minor corrections to passages of text are required.

**Recommendation 2.2 (the degree be awarded provided that the matters identified in my report are addressed to the satisfaction of the Head of School)**
Make this recommendation if substantial changes or corrections are required to improve the presentation of the thesis. This may include rewriting passages of text, addressing minor omissions, and correcting extensive textual and typographical errors.

**Recommendation 3 (the degree not be awarded but the candidate be permitted to revise the thesis in response to the examiners’ reports and present if for re-examination)**
Make this recommendation if the thesis requires substantial revision and must be returned to the examiners for re-examination. Please state clearly in your report the weaknesses and shortcomings of the thesis which led to your recommendation. Your report will be used to provide guidance to the candidate on how to revise the thesis for
re-examination. The Regulation directs that, as far as possible, the revised thesis should be examined by the original examiners. When the revision is almost complete we will approach you to ask if you are prepared to act again.

**Recommendations 4.1 and 4.2 (the degree not be awarded but the appropriate degree of master be awarded)** *(NOT APPLICABLE TO MASTERS DEGREES)*

The PhD degree is awarded for “a substantial original contribution” achieved in two to four years of full-time candidature. It is the outcome of a project treated with a greater depth of scholarship and research than is required for the Masters degree or possible in the shorter time allowed. Recommendation 4 allows an examiner to recommend the award of a Masters degree for a thesis submitted for a PhD. However in no sense is a Masters degree a “failed PhD”, and this recommendation will only be appropriate in the few cases where the thesis is at the standard of a Masters degree rather than at the doctoral level. A thesis with particular deficiencies rather than simply lacking in depth should receive another response.

If you make one of these recommendations please state clearly in your report the basis for the recommendation. If you make recommendation 4.2 please indicate in your report the minor changes and corrections that should be made by the candidate before the thesis is accepted.

**Recommendation 5 (the degree not be awarded)**

If you make recommendation 5, please state clearly in your report the weaknesses and major shortcomings of the thesis which led to your recommendation.

**Availability of the report**

The examiners reports are given to the candidate at the conclusion of the examination process. In recognising the importance of a visible research community, Deakin University encourages examiners to permit their identity to be disclosed to the candidate; but also respects and abides by the wishes of those who request to remain anonymous.

As a courtesy, a copy of the report for each examiner is sent to the other examiners of the thesis at the end of the examination process.

**Communication with the University during the Examination**

You are asked to conduct all communication in relation to the examination through:

Examinations Officer HDR
Deakin Research
Deakin University
Geelong Waurn Ponds Campus
Locked Bag 20000
Geelong, VIC 3220
Australia
telephone: 03 5227 3492  [international: +61 3 5227 3492]
facsimile: 03 5227 2175  [international: +61 3 5227 2175]
e-mail: research-examinations@deakin.edu.au

All reports are to be submitted through the online system as a single pdf document.
Return of the Thesis
If you requested a hard copy, please return the thesis to the Examinations Officer HDR at the address given above. It is acceptable to return the thesis by surface mail.

Comments on the Examination process
We welcome constructive comments and advice on our examination processes, and encourage you to provide them to the Examinations Officer HDR or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the address given above.