



**DEAKIN UNIVERSITY**  
**ADVICE TO EXAMINERS OF HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH**  
**DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY RE-EXAMINATION**  
**MAJOR INVESTIGATIVE PROJECT**

**Introduction**

Higher degrees by research are awarded on satisfactory completion of supervised but independent research which is described in a thesis. The Doctor of Psychology (DPsych) degree is a research degree which includes a number of advanced coursework units comprising one third of the course. It is equivalent in standard but differs from the PhD, with the difference being its orientation to the development of professional practice, rather than primarily as a contribution to academic knowledge and the discipline. There are three streams to the Doctor of Psychology: clinical psychology, health psychology and forensic psychology.

The usual period of candidature for the DPsych is around three years of full-time study, although the rules allow that the degree can be completed in two to four years of full-time study.

Award of the degree is by examination of a thesis. The thesis should comprise a substantial original contribution to knowledge in the field with particular emphasis on contributions to research and practice in the specialist area or professional practice.

**The Nature of the Thesis**

The thesis is presented as a portfolio of research work (major investigative project and professional research component) that represents the equivalent of two years of full-time study and has significant implications for practice in a specialty area of psychology. The focus of both pieces of research is on the critical analysis and evaluation of complex issues and challenges arising in professional practice or affecting an area of professional practice. **You have been appointed as an examiner for the major investigative project part of the thesis.**

***The major investigative project – conventional thesis***

The major investigative project is a report of research undertaken by the candidate in the specialty area designated by the degree: clinical psychology, health psychology or forensic psychology. The project has a major empirical component (one or more studies) and it should include a scholarly review indicating understanding of relevant literature, the aims and significance of the research, the approaches used and methodological issues, and the outcomes of the studies and their application to the professional field. The report on this project should not exceed 50,000 words in length.

## **The Examiner's Report**

You are asked to complete the online Examiner's 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 are not a substitute for the written report but can be sent via email or post if you have made any typographical corrections in the thesis. Examiners are asked to report independently and then upload their report and recommendation electronically.

Examiners may require the candidate to respond to questions on the thesis. 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.

There is no prescribed format for the report as conventions vary between disciplines but it should be at least 1 page and can be up to 10 pages, depending on the changes required. Reports can be structured commenting on the learning outcomes of the thesis or a chapter-by-chapter review of the thesis. You can also include any suggestions to the student regarding future publications and a list of typographical errors if appropriate

Your response is requested within eight weeks of receipt of the thesis. If circumstances arise that prevent you completing the examination by the due date, please contact the Examinations Officer HDR.

## **Standard required for the degrees**

On completion of research training, students should have met Course Learning Outcomes applicable to their degree.

Examiners are asked to assess whether the student has demonstrated the key course learning outcomes for the Doctor of Psychology degree:

1. Demonstrated systematic and critical understanding in one or more specialist fields or discipline areas by planning and generating a substantial and original contribution that advances scholarship or professional practice.
2. Synthesised, applied and analysed existing and new knowledge in one or more discipline areas to develop new concepts or interpretations through engagement in ethical research, critical reflection, continuous evaluation and demonstration of research skills.
3. Demonstrated autonomy, authoritative judgement, adaptability, leadership, initiative, resilience and responsibility as an expert and leading practitioner or scholar.

## **The Recommendation Form**

Examiners are asked to select one of the three following recommendations.

**Recommendation 1 (the degree be awarded subject to satisfactory completion of the other components of the program)**

This recommendation is appropriate where the major investigative project report meets the standard required for the degree.

**Recommendation 2**

Make this recommendation where the major investigative project 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, subject to satisfactory completion of the other components of the program and 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, subject to satisfactory completion of the other components of the program and 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 major investigative project. This may include rewriting passages of text, addressing minor omissions, and correcting extensive textual and typographical errors.

**Recommendation 3 (the degree not be awarded)**

If you make recommendation 3, please state clearly in your report the weaknesses and major shortcomings of the major investigative project report 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  
325 Burwood Highway  
Burwood  
3125, Australia.

telephone: 03 5227 1090 [international: +61 3 5227 1090]

e-mail: [research-examinations@deakin.edu.au](mailto:research-examinations@deakin.edu.au)

**Return of the Thesis**

If you requested a hard copy and have made comments for the student, please return the thesis to the Examinations Officer HDR at the address given above. If not, please destroy the thesis and do not disseminate to any third party.