



DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
ADVICE TO EXAMINERS OF HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH:
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (FOLIO)

Introduction

Higher degrees by research are awarded on satisfactory completion of supervised but independent research that is described in a thesis. The Doctor of Philosophy (Folio Pathway) should involve a significant contribution to the theory and practice of the relevant discipline in professional and/or workplace contexts.

The degree program can be completed in two to four years full-time, but the usual period of candidature is five to six years part-time.

The candidate must demonstrate the ability to conduct a substantial research program and to communicate the outcomes of this research effectively. Award of the degree is by examination of a written thesis in the form of a folio. Candidates taking the *folio pathway* must demonstrate a substantial original contribution to the knowledge and practice of the discipline.

The Nature of the Thesis

The thesis takes the form of a folio that consists of two elements: a substantial dissertation and a selection of reports, papers and publications in media appropriate for the professional context. Candidates are required in their dissertation to present, develop and argue a position that they support by empirical study and locate in a clearly expressed understanding of the relevant literature and the relevant issues in theory, policy and professional practice of the discipline.

The folio should be a coherent selection of work carried out by the candidate, not simply a collection of unrelated pieces. It will normally include original evidence, a critical account of the methodology, a selective and critical review of relevant published research, and evidence of relevance to professional practice in the field. It may consist of one document or several, consisting of a selection of the products of research that establish the candidate's claim to have carried out research of doctoral standard. The different parts of the folio should be integrated through a commentary (either within the dissertation or as a separate document) that explains the relationship between the components. The reports, papers and publications may be papers delivered at conferences or published in academic or professional journals; they may be reports on discrete projects relevant to the thesis; they may be exemplars, evaluation reports or critical policy documents; they may be produced collaboratively with others, providing due acknowledgement of the contributions of others is made.

Standard required for the degrees

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

You are asked to assess whether the student has demonstrated the following Course Learning Outcomes for the Doctor of Philosophy degree or Master by Research degree:

Doctoral degree	Master by research degree
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.	Demonstrated an advanced and integrated understanding of a complex body of knowledge in one or more discipline areas by generating substantial contribution to knowledge through the use of appropriate research principles and methods.
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.	Applied critical analysis and reflection to ethically research, synthesize and evaluate complex information, problems, concepts, interpretations and theories to demonstrate cognitive and technical skills in a body of knowledge or practice.
Demonstrated autonomy, authoritative judgement, adaptability, leadership, initiative, resilience and responsibility as an expert and leading practitioner or scholar.	Demonstrated autonomy, expert judgement, adaptability, initiative, resilience and responsibility as a practitioner or learner.

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.

The Recommendation Form

Examiners are asked to select one of the five 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)

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
325 Burwood Highway
Burwood
3125, Australia.

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

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 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.