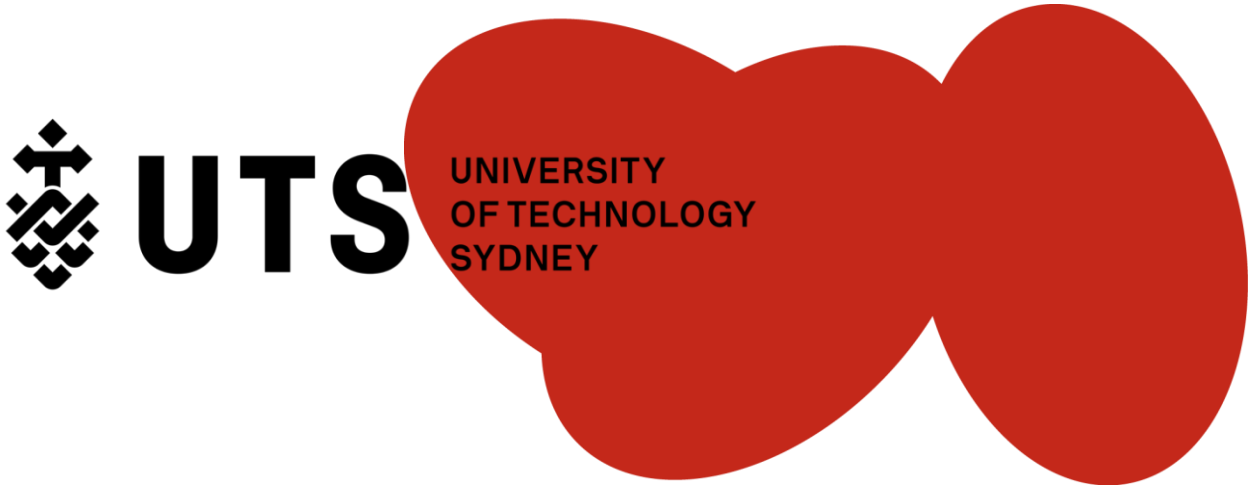

Graduate Research Candidature Management, Thesis Preparation and Submission Procedures

2026

GRADUATE RESEARCH CANDIDATURE MANAGEMENT, THESIS PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Contents

1. The UTS Graduate Research Education Framework (GREF) 4
2. Supervision 4
3. Candidature Duration 4
4. Graduate Research Study Plan 5
5. Candidature Stages 5
6. Mandatory and optional training and development components 9
7. Course variations 11
8. Research Management 16
9. Thesis preparation and presentation 17
10. Inclusion of published or publishable work in the thesis 24
11. Use of professional editor 25
12. Thesis Submission for Examination Process and Requirements 25
13. Thesis Examination Process 29
14. Final Completion and Graduation Requirements 30
15. Graduation and conferral 31
16. Confidentiality and restricted access 31
17. Copyright 32
18. Chancellor's Award 32
19. Higher doctoral degrees 34
20. Research Environment 35
21. Course Withdrawal 36
22. Discontinuation 36
23. General Information 38

Appendix A - ACGR Conflict of Interest in Examination Guidelines 43

This document known as Procedures, is the procedural supplement to the Graduate Research and Supervision Policy (the Policy) and Graduate Research Section 11 of Student Rules. The Procedures have been designed to facilitate graduate research students, supervisors, and graduate research support staff and are implemented by the Faculty, institute, school or centre (known as Faculty) in which a student is officially enrolled and the Graduate Research School (GRS).

This document covers procedures related to:

- Supervisory panels.
- The Graduate Research Study Plan.
- Candidature.
- Stage Assessment
- Mandatory and optional training components.
- Thesis preparation and submission.
- Thesis Examination.

Students and supervisors should consult companion documents for:

- Graduate research environment.
- Graduate research supervision.
- Research Management directives.
- Thesis Examination Procedures.
- Specialised graduate research programs (e.g., collaborative doctoral research degrees, industry doctoral program).
- Faculty-based graduate research and research management guidelines.

These procedures are applicable for both Masters degree (Research) students and Doctoral degree students, collectively referred to as graduate research students (or Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students or candidates).

Faculties provide support to graduate research students including researcher development programs, student engagement activities, and the development and implementation of procedures to manage research degree candidature, including determining specific candidature stage assessment procedures. The development of all Faculty graduate research procedures are coordinated by the Faculty RAO responsible for research and must be submitted for approval to Graduate Research School Board. In addition, each Faculty has staff to ensure appropriate administrative support for graduate research students. These staff can provide assistance and advice on general aspects of student candidature. Faculties will manage candidature difficulties, such as grievances and complaints in line with UTS Student Complaints Policy and Student Complaints Management Procedures.

The GRS is responsible for developing and managing university-wide strategy, policies, processes and systems for graduate research programs at UTS. GRS also provides a range of services to support graduate research students throughout candidature including researcher development programs, mentoring and support programs, scholarships and centralised management of graduate research candidature.

A digital graduate research student file using Content Manager (formerly known as TRIM) is maintained by GRS which holds research student related written communication, documentation received and endorsed in relation to candidature management, thesis

preparation, submission, examination, post examination and completion that is received and/or communicated with GRS.

1. The UTS Graduate Research Education Framework (GREF)

Graduate research programs at UTS are structured in accordance with the Graduate Research Education Framework (GREF).

The UTS GREF is a university-wide initiative that involves Faculties, research centres and the GRS. The framework has two main aims: to support the advancement of knowledge through original graduate research and to develop the graduate research student as a researcher prepared for a career in academia or industry.

This framework articulates the support they will receive and are expected to engage with while undertaking a graduate research degree at UTS.

The UTS Graduate Research Education Framework:

- involves a panel of supervisors
- is guided by a Graduate Research Study Plan (GRSP)
- comprises formal candidature stages including assessment
- includes mandatory and optional training components
- involves undertaking a program of research that adheres to research management best practice
- culminates with the submission of a final thesis for examination
- provides a supportive Research Environment.

2. Supervision

For each graduate research student, a supervisory panel is nominated by the Faculty Responsible Academic Officer (RAO) and approved by Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR)Pro Vice-Chancellor (Higher Degree Research) (Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR)).

The composition of the supervisor panel and roles of the supervisors is outlined in the Graduate Research and Supervision Policy.

3. Candidature Duration

Upon commencement of study a graduate research student will be provided a maximum of 4 EFTSL full-time for Doctoral degree and 2 EFTSL full-time for Masters degree (Research) study [refer to Student Rules 11.7]. 1 EFTSL is equivalent to one year of full-time study load and 0.5 EFTSL is equivalent to one year of part-time study. The candidature ends with the Expected Work Submission date (EWS). The EWS date is the final date by when the graduate research student must submit their thesis for examination. Where a graduate research student is approved for Leave of Absence (LoA) [refer section 7.2] this time period is extended accordingly with no loss of candidature duration. Where a graduate research student is approved for candidature extension [refer section 7.3] the EWS date is extended in proportion to the candidature extension provided.

All graduate research students can access information about their EFTSL and the EWS date via My Student Admin (MSA) against their profile under the subject tab.

4. Graduate Research Study Plan

The Graduate Research Study Plan (GRSP), must be developed, and revisited on a regular basis, by the graduate research student in consultation with their supervisors to guide and track their program goals, action plan, and achievements.

The GRSP is guided by the HDR Capability Framework. Students should reflect on and note goals and accomplishments in each of the five core areas of:

- Research knowledge and skills
- Research communication
- Research governance and research management
- Impact and engagement
- Career development

An initial GRSP should be documented and agreed to by the graduate research student and supervisors no later than two weeks after enrolment and then should be revisited at each stage of candidature.

5. Candidature Stages

The Graduate Research Education Framework comprises of formal candidature stages for both Masters degree (Research) and Doctoral degree research students.

The stages comprise progressive assessment and outcomes designed to make explicit the continued development of knowledge and research skills across the candidature. Upon successful completion of a candidature stage assessment the graduate research student progresses to the next stage.

The objective of each stage, and its associated assessment, is to ensure that the student has the necessary knowledge and skills to complete the research program successfully and in a timely manner [refer to Student Rules 11.15].

Progression through each candidature stage must be aligned with the activities and outputs outlined on the GRSP including a record of any coursework undertaken within the candidature stage, additional research outputs and the draft version of any thesis chapters.

Expected Timeframes for completion of Stage Assessments

Degree	Expected Timing of Stage 1 Assessment	Expected Timing of Stage 2 Assessment	Expected Timing of Stage 3 Assessment
PhD	No later than 1 EFTSL after the candidate's research commencement date	No later than 2 EFTSL after the candidate's research commencement date	No later than 3 EFTSL after the candidate's research commencement date*
Master by Research	No later than 0.5 EFTSL after the candidate's research	Exempt	No later than 1.5 EFTSL after the candidate's research

	commencement date		commencement date

* For Doctoral candidates, Faculties may extend the timelines by up to 3.5 EFTSL after the candidate's research commencement date

5.1. Candidature Stage 1 – confirmation of candidature

The purpose of Candidature Stage 1 is to confirm the student's candidature. Expected timeframes for completion of assessment at Stage 1 are as follows:

5.1.1. CRITERIA FOR STAGE 1 ASSESSMENT

The assessment for Candidature Stage 1 must include both written and oral components. Graduate research students must consult their Faculty for specific requirements of the work expected at this Stage.

The graduate research student must be able to demonstrate the following;

- the ability to select, analyse, synthesise and critically evaluate relevant material and literature pertaining to the field of study;
- understanding of key concepts, problems, issues in relevant literature;
- substantiation of the choice of research topic/questions and its significance as an original contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field of study;
- justification of proposed research design and methods;
- understanding of resource implications;
- understanding of ethical implications;
- adoption of a suitable theoretical or conceptual framework for the proposed study;
- an appropriate Research Data Management Plan developed and recorded in Stash, the official UTS data management repository;
- a feasible plan and capability to complete the proposed research project within the prescribed time for the degree.
- Mandatory coursework subjects must be passed as per the study plan arrangements.

Graduate research students must also complete Research Integrity Modules for the Stage 1 assessment.

5.2. Candidature Stage 2 - confirmation of advanced progress*

The purpose of Candidature Stage 2 is to confirm the student's advanced progress in the candidature. Expected timeframes for completion of assessment at Stage 2 are as follows:

*Only for PhD Candidates

5.2.1. CRITERIA FOR STAGE 2 ASSESSMENT

The assessment for Stage 2 must include a written piece of work (e.g., a draft conference or journal paper, or a draft chapter of the thesis) and an accompanying oral presentation.

Graduate research students must consult their Faculty for specific requirements of the work expected at this Stage.

Through these assessments, the graduate research student must be able to demonstrate the following:

- an ability to present emerging findings in a written form appropriate to the discipline;
- an ability to critically analyse emerging findings in the research field;
- an in-depth justification of the developing thesis including the capacity to receive and respond to critical feedback.

5.3. Candidature Stage 3 – confirmation of readiness to submit thesis for examination

The purpose of candidature stage three is to confirm the student's readiness to submit their thesis. Expected timeframes for completion of assessment at Stage 3 are as follows:

For Doctoral candidates, Faculties may extend the timelines by up to 0.5 EFTSL/6 months.

5.3.1. CRITERIA FOR STAGE 3 ASSESSMENT

The assessment for Stage 3 must include a written component and an oral presentation which represents the final draft of the thesis.

Graduate research students must consult their Faculty for specific requirements of the work expected at this Stage.

In the written draft of the thesis, the student must be able to demonstrate the following:

- all criteria used for examination of the final thesis;
- a structure appropriate to the genre;
- clear and cohesive writing;
- accurate grammar, spelling, punctuation;
- a feasible plan for completion before Expected Work Submission (EWS) date.

In the oral presentation, the graduate research student must be able to demonstrate the following:

- a well-argued description and defence of the thesis;
- an original contribution to knowledge.

5.4. Candidature stage assessment process, panels and outcomes

The stage assessment requirements, process, panel composition and appeal process are determined by each Faculty and the information should be available to graduate research students.

In relation to panel composition, as a minimum it must include –

- Student supervisory panel, and
- Two additional academic members drawn from Faculty/wider University/within the sector who have discipline expertise.

Changes to this minimum requirement can be considered and supported by the Faculty RAO/HDR Director/Coordinator.

The Faculty is responsible for informing the graduate research student and the GRS of the result of candidature stage assessment signed by a Faculty RAO, with panel reports attached, within 7 business days of the assessment date.

Where a student is exempt from stage assessment due to circumstances that allow for exemption, such as previous study, agreed arrangements associated with collaborative doctoral research, the faculty is responsible for providing GRS a signed memo by Faculty RAO outlining the grounds for exemption.

Outcomes and relevant documentation will be recorded against Student File.

Possible outcomes of stage assessments are as follows:

Satisfactory	Candidature stage assessment is successful and graduate research student moves to the next candidature stage.
Reassessment required	Candidature stage assessment is unsuccessful and graduate research student must re-sit the candidature assessment. The Faculty must communicate a re-assessment date at the same time as communicating this result of the Stage assessment to the student and are to develop with the Student withing 10 days of the Reassessment requirement notification of a “Faculty Progress Completion Plan”. In a reassessment, the outcome of the reassessed stage assessment is final. Where the student fails to complete the reassessment by the date set by the faculty, the faculty must recommend discontinuation of candidature with right of appeal by graduate research student to GRS with supporting documents.
Unsatisfactory	Where a graduate research student receives unsatisfactory outcome for stage assessments 1, 2 or 3, due to failure to complete within required timeframe and/or failed assessment, the Faculty may: - recommend course transfer (if possible and as appropriate refer to course transfer (refer section 8.4)), or - recommend discontinuation of candidature to be assessed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) of the GRS.

5.5. Review and Appeals

Where a graduate research student's stage assessment outcome is deemed Unsatisfactory, a review process is available. Refer to Student Rules 11.16 for review of an unsatisfactory candidature assessment.

Where a graduate research student's assessment outcome is deemed Unsatisfactory at Stages 1, 2 or 3, a review process is available. Refer to Student Rules 11.16 for review of an unsatisfactory candidature assessment.

Where a graduate research student has failed an assessment (either stage 1, 2 or 3), and a recommendation has been made to discontinue the candidature, an appeal process is available. Refer to Student Rules 11.24 to appeal against discontinuation of candidature and refer to Section 23 of this document for information on the process of appeal against discontinuation.

6. Mandatory and optional training and development components

All graduate research programs include mandatory and optional training components.

6.1. Research integrity training

All graduate research students are required to successfully complete research integrity training.

The module is designed to support students to engage in responsible research practices that are carried out to the high standards of conduct and practice including honesty and integrity, respect for human participants, animals and the environment, acknowledgement of the contributions of others in research, and responsible communication of results.

This training is comprised of one module and one quiz. The number of attempts at the quiz is unlimited. The timeline for completion of this training is prior to the stage 1 assessment.

All graduate research students are required to attain a score of 100% in the quiz and attach their certificate of completion to their candidature Stage 1 assessment documentation. The training is available via Canvas and students are enrolled into the training upon their enrolment in the Higher Degree Research course and will be sent an invitation to complete the training.

6.2. Consent Matters

All graduate research students are required to complete the Consent Matters training which is a compulsory online training about appropriate behaviour and positive intervention. Information on training and exemption can be obtained from Equity and Diversity at UTS.

All graduate research students are required to complete this training once during their candidature.

6.3. Mandatory Coursework

Some Faculties require graduate research students to undertake mandatory coursework. If a student wishes to change the session allocated for their coursework, it is the student's responsibility to submit a variation of program (VOP) form to their Faculty by the required deadlines. For any subjects to be removed from the session's

study plan, the deadline for the VOP form is the session's coursework census date. For any subjects to be added to the session's study plan, the deadline for the VOP is the session's last day to enrol date. Refer to the UTS Principal dates. Both the principal supervisor and Faculty RAO must assess the request. The Faculty is responsible for communicating the outcome of the assessment of the request to the graduate research student. If the request is approved, the Faculty forwards the request to GRS for processing. The GRS communicates to the graduate research student in writing when faculty approved request has been processed. All mandatory coursework must be successfully completed prior to thesis submission. It is the responsibility of graduate research students to check their outcomes for each coursework subject they are enrolled in each session through My Student Admin (MSA). Where a graduate research student does not agree with the outcome for their coursework subject, the student may request a review to their subject coordinator and following the process set out within the faculty responsible for the coursework subject.

Any fail recorded for mandatory coursework may result in an unsatisfactory Stage Assessment. It is the student's and Faculty's responsibility to submit a variation of program form to GRS to re-enrol students in subjects they have failed.

6.3.1. Credit Recognition

For students who have undertaken previous studies, credit recognition may apply to mandatory coursework.

Graduate research students who are seeking credit recognition must submit a supervisor approved credit recognition form to their Faculty before the coursework census date of the session. The form must include official academic transcripts and qualifications and any documentary evidence that supports their application, including but not limited to course or subject outlines, assessment guides or details of their/relevant work experience.

The Faculty RAO completes their sections of the form and indicates whether they grant the application for credit recognition. If the request is not granted, the Faculty advises the outcome to the student. If the request is granted, the request is submitted to GRS for processing. Once the request is complete, GRS contacts the graduate research student in writing.

6.4. Optional Coursework

Graduate research students may request to enrol in coursework subjects that are not a mandatory part of their research degree. In such a case, they must first seek for approval from their supervisory panel and Faculty RAO and submit an approved variation of program form to GRS before the first week of coursework subject commencement date of the session. Refer to the UTS Principal dates. If the coursework subject that a student is requesting to enrol in is not from the student's faculty, it is the student's responsibility to seek permission from the RAO of the faculty under which the subject is located. If the request is approved and processed, GRS sends confirmation email to the graduate research student. If the request is not approved, the Faculty contacts the graduate research student with an explanation.

It is the graduate research student's responsibility to check their outcomes for each coursework subject they are enrolled in each session through My Student Admin (MSA).

In the event that a student fails their optional coursework subject, and wishes to be re-enrolled into the subject, it is the student's responsibility to submit a variation of program form requesting re-enrolment to the Faculty for the principal supervisor and Faculty RAO permission. It is the Faculty's responsibility to communicate the outcome to the graduate research student. If the request is approved by the Faculty, it is forwarded to GRS for processing. The GRS communicates processed changes to the graduate research student in writing.

If a graduate research student requests to be withdrawn from a coursework subject, they must first seek approval to withdraw from supervisory panel and Faculty RAO and submit variation of program form, approved by the Faculty, to GRS before coursework census date. If the request is made after the coursework census date, the request may be approved, however, the student will receive withdrawn/fail. If the request is granted, the request is submitted to GRS for processing. Once the request is complete, GRS contacts the graduate research students in writing. If the request is not granted, the Faculty advises the outcome to the student.

6.5. Researcher Development and Engagement

UTS provides graduate research students with a range of research development and engagement opportunities. University-wide events are coordinated by the GRS including face-to-face and online education in research literacies, methods, management and career development, opportunities for industry mentoring and internships, and cross-Faculty social activities. Faculty-based opportunities provide discipline-based research development and engagement activities. Students are expected to consider development and engagement activities when making and revising their GRSP.

6.6 Research Data Management Plan

All graduate research students are required to have developed and recorded a Research Data Management Plan (RDMP) as part of their Stage One Candidature Assessment. An RDMP is a living file that describes the data to be collected, acquired or generated as part of a research project. It helps HDR students consider how the data will be stored, managed, described and analysed during their project. These are aspects of best practice that facilitate the integrity and reproducibility of research. An RDMP also includes the mechanisms that will be used to share and to preserve the data at the end of the project including ownership of and access to the data.

The official UTS system to develop and record RDMPs is Stash which also has links to a range of eResearch Platform and Storage Services such as OMERO, Gitlab and Labarchives. Stash is also linked to other UTS research systems such as ResearchMaster and Symplectic, providing convenient and integrated cross-referencing to other research project management.

More information on accessing Stash and training on RDMP is available at UTS Library.

7. Course variations

The UTS Handbook provides an annual list of Principal Dates which guide graduate research students for requesting candidature variation(s). These dates differ year to year therefore, we advise students to check the principal dates in the UTS Handbook.

A census date (coursework or research) is set by UTS for each session in accordance with Commonwealth legislation (HESA 2003) and advertised via the UTS Calendar – Principal Dates. Every subject/course has its own census date based on the session in

which it is taught. These dates are important since the University has an obligation to report to the Australian Commonwealth, student enrolment, candidature variations and completion status.

Coursework census date applies to graduate research students for the following course variations:

a) Course transfer (includes transfer from Masters by Research to PhD; transfer from PhD to Masters by Research; transfer courses and/or thesis subjects within or to another faculty.

b) Change study load (also knowns as attendance pattern) (from full time to part time or vice versa).

   Failure to apply for the above course variations by the coursework census date would require the variation to be enabled commencing the next available Session.

   Students who have already passed their candidature duration are not eligible for a change of study load.

c) Withdraw from coursework subject(s) if enrolled in coursework subject(s) – both compulsory and non-compulsory.

d) Withdraw from PhD/Masters by Research course if enrolled in coursework subject(s).

e) Apply for Leave of Absence for student(s) who are enrolled in coursework subjects.

Failure to apply for the above course variations would result in Fail grade for the coursework subject.

Research census dates work like coursework census dates, but are planned according to the research calendar. Research census date applies to graduate research students for the following course variations:

a) Apply for Leave of Absence for student(s) who are not enrolled in coursework subjects.

b) Submit changes to residency.

c) Withdraw from course PhD/Masters by Research if not enrolled in coursework subject.

The above course variations must be submitted with Faculty approvals to GRS no later than one month prior to the Research Census Date.

Failure to apply for the above course variations by the research census date would require the variation to be enabled commencing the next available session.

7.1. Change of study load, thesis title and supervisors

If a graduate research student wishes to make changes to their thesis title or study load, they must consult with their supervisory panel first. Upon receiving approval from the

principal supervisor, graduate research students must submit a change of candidature form to the principal supervisor and Faculty RAO for approval. If the Faculty RAO does not approve the request, the outcome must be communicated to the graduate research student by the Faculty with an explanation and course of action.

Once the Faculty RAO has approved the application to make the changes, the Faculty submits the form to GRS for processing. For change of study load, completed request must be submitted to GRS by the coursework census date in each session. Once the request is completed, GRS provides confirmation to the graduate research student in writing and updates the student record.

If a graduate research student wishes to make changes to their supervisory panel, they must consult with their current and new supervisory panel for approval before submitting a change of supervisor form for Faculty RAO approval. If the Faculty RAO does not approve the request, the outcome must be communicated to the graduate research student with an explanation and course of action. If the Faculty RAO approves the change of supervisor application, the approval is submitted to GRS for processing. Once the request is completed, GRS provides confirmation to the graduate research student in writing and updates the student record. GRS will also notify the outgoing members of the supervisory panel of the changes.

In the case of a request not being approved by the Faculty RAO, the student may lodge a request to review the application to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) within five working days of outcome being communicated.

7.2. Leave of absence

Graduate research students may apply for a leave of absence to suspend studies temporarily [refer to Student Rules 11.9]. The minimum period of leave of absence that can be taken at any point is 8 weeks (56 days). Leave of absence must not exceed total period of one year for the entire candidature, regardless of their study rate. For students who have transferred from other institutions, this one year period includes any leave of absence undertaken at that institution. To be eligible for leave of absence, graduate research students must have completed at least the first six months of their candidature. In exceptional and documented special circumstances a student may request variations to these conditions for leave.

Graduate research students must include supporting documentation in their request to enable their principal supervisor and Faculty RAO to make a considered decision. The Faculty RAO will make the final decision, in consultation with the principal supervisor, and the Faculty will notify the student and GRS of the outcome for processing.

Graduate research students are not eligible to take leave of absence after exceeding the maximum standard EFTSL allowance associated with their degree. In exceptional circumstances, if graduate research students require leave during an extension of candidature period, they must speak to their Supervisory panel and Faculty RAO immediately and seek approval from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) via faculty memo which must be included with the application**.** The memo must outline the extenuating circumstances and timeline for completion.

While on leave of absence, students:

- may not have access to research guidance from their supervisor

- will not have access to University facilities except to the Library's online collection for a period of 1 year
- must ensure their contact details are up to date and continue to check their student email account

Detailed guidelines on Leave of absence requirements for both graduate research students and supervisors are available on UTS Graduate Research Website.

7.3. Extension of candidature

In exceptional circumstances, and with the support of their principal supervisor and Faculty RAO, a graduate research student who is about to reach their maximum period of candidature [refer to Student Rules 11.8] and are not ready to submit their thesis for examination may apply for extension of candidature. Graduate research students must complete extension of candidature form and demonstrate the circumstances, beyond their control, which have interrupted their research as evidenced in their progress reports. It would be expected that circumstances beyond the control of the student would be related to the conduct of their research project. Students who encounter personal difficulties during their candidature are encouraged to request Leave of Absence (see Section 7.2).

For Doctoral degrees, a student may request up to six months' (0.5 EFTSL) extension time. The maximum extension allowance is 12 months (1.0 EFTSL) irrespective of study load.

For Master's by research degrees, a student may request up to six months (0.5 EFTSL). The maximum extension allowance is 6 months (0.5 EFTSL) irrespective of study load.

The request for extension of candidature must be supported by realistic completion plan with a timeline and the most recent stage assessment outcome. If a prior extension application has been approved and further extension is requested, the graduate research student must provide an explanation for the additional delay in thesis submission. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the request is complete, and any requests for additional information are responded to by the requested deadline.

All international sponsored students must obtain approval from their sponsor and advice the UTS International sponsored team prior to submitting the request.

The request must be submitted to the principal supervisor and Faculty RAO for approval. If the request is not supported, the Faculty RAO must communicate the outcome to the graduate research student with a plan of action. If the request is approved by the Faculty RAO, the student must be notified and the outcome submitted to the GRS for processing and notification of new candidature end date to graduate research student, supervisor and Faculty.

Extension applications must be submitted no earlier than six months and no later than two months before the EWS date. If no request for an extension of candidature is received within this timeframe, and the graduate research student does not submit their thesis for examination by the EWS date or notify the Faculty and GRS of any possible delays, the student's candidature may be discontinued within two months after the EWS date [refer to Student Rules 11.8].

Where the request is for beyond the allowed extension time, the request must be submitted to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR). If approved, the period of extension will be based on the proposed completion timeline, supporting documentation and evaluation by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) GRS. The decision of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) GRS is final.

Students need to be aware of tuition fee implications for the period enrolled maximum duration of candidature. Domestic students enrolled from Autumn 2018 will be subject to candidature overtime fee levy for overtime candidature (see Research Training Program Scholarship Policy). All international students will be subject to full session **tuition fee** for the duration of approved extension.

7.4. Course transfer

To be eligible to apply for course transfer, the graduate research student should have completed at least one-half year of full-time study (or equivalent) in the enrolled course. Course conversion could affect any scholarship(s) held therefore graduate research students must check their condition(s) of award and discuss with Faculty of any implications to their scholarship(s).

Course Transfer from Masters by Research to PhD: Graduate research students must demonstrate the capacity for research at the appropriate level by providing the following evidence:

- A revised proposal which addresses how the project will be broadened to doctoral level;
- Evidence of research progress (e.g. a thesis chapter);
- Satisfactory completion of candidature stage 1 assessment and any other stage assessment(s) depending on time of transfer request;
- Revised timeline;
- Completion of subject in research methodology appropriate to the discipline and project, if mandatory to the course;
- Statement of support from principal supervisor. Note: if there are changes to the principal supervisor, the statement of support will need to come from the new principal supervisor.
- Statement of support from Faculty RAO. Note: If the change includes transfer to a new Faculty, statement of support will need to come from the new Faculty RAO

Course Transfer from PhD to Masters by Research: Graduate research students must demonstrate the capacity for research at the appropriate level by providing the following evidence:

- A revised proposal which addresses how the project applies to the Masters level;
- A supporting statement from principal supervisor. Note: if there are changes to the principal supervisor, the statement of support will need to come from the new principal supervisor;
- Revised timeline which accounts for the revised EWS date which must be within a Masters by Research candidature duration (part-time pro-rate will apply).
- Statement of support from Faculty RAO. Note: If the change includes transfer to a new Faculty, statement of support will need to come from the new Faculty RAO

Note: PhD students who have already completed the equivalent time of a Masters by Research degree duration are not eligible for a transfer to Masters by Research from PhD.

Course Transfer across/within Faculty and/or Discipline: Graduate research students must demonstrate the capacity for research at the appropriate level by providing the following evidence:

- A revised proposal which addresses how the project applies to the new Faculty and/or discipline;
- A supporting statement from principal supervisor. Note: if there are changes to the principal supervisor, the statement of support will need to come from the new principal supervisor;
- Revised timeline if applicable. Note: no changes to candidate timeline expected if moving across/within Faculty and/or discipline.
- Statement of support from new Faculty/Discipline RAO.

Course transfer for international students may require additional supporting documents. International sponsored students must seek approval from their sponsor and UTS International sponsored team prior to submitting the application. Completed course transfer application must be submitted to the Faculty by the coursework census date in each session. GRS communicates application closing dates to graduate research students and Faculties by email. Any incomplete application and/or application received after the closing date will be assessed in the next session as allowed by the rules. Students who have already passed their candidature duration are not eligible for a course transfer.

Both the principal supervisor and Faculty RAO must assess the application submitted to the Faculty and make a recommendation on the application. If the request is not endorsed, the Faculty must communicate the outcome to the graduate research student. If the request is endorsed by the Faculty, the request is submitted to GRS for Dean's approval. The GRS communicates the outcome of the request to the graduate research student and the Faculty in writing.

For all course transfers, the new period of candidature will be determined by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR)taking into account the contribution of research already undertaken towards the requirements of the course into which transfer has been approved [refer Student Rules 11.5.4]. Typically, a student is entitled to a maximum duration of the course, including the time enrolled in the previous research degree.

8. Research Management

When undertaking their program of research, a graduate research student must adhere to UTS Research Policy which covers:

- Research funding applications to be administered by UTS;
- Acceptance of research funding;
- Unfunded research projects;
- Research project commencement;
- Research project management and reporting;
- Research project completion.

9. Thesis preparation and presentation

Graduate research students must prepare their thesis for submission in **both** paper and digital form.

9.1. Thesis format options

There are four main thesis formats accepted for examination at UTS:

1. Conventional thesis;
2. Thesis by compilation;
3. Thesis by publication (available only for students enrolled prior to 31 December 2017);
4. Thesis including artefacts, exhibition, performance or portfolio of professional or creative work relevant to the discipline [refer to Student Rules 11.17.1].

NOTE: This section should be read in conjunction with Section 11 of this document (Inclusion of published or publishable work in the thesis).

9.1.1. Conventional thesis

A conventional thesis is structured as a series of chapters. The number and title of chapters is to be agreed upon by the student and their supervisory panel. In general, a conventional thesis should include:

- An introduction to the research study and a justification of how it adds to knowledge in the field;
- A review of the literature;
- A description and justification for the research approach and methods;
- A presentation of results;
- A discussion and conclusion.

A conventional thesis may include original published work arising from research by the graduate research student during their candidature in appendices. When published works are included in an appendix, a list of the publications with all reference details on a separate page in the front matter of the thesis is required. A graduate research student may choose to refer to these published works within the chapters of the conventional thesis. If so, footnotes are required in related chapters to indicate a link to the specific paper in the appendix.

9.1.2 Thesis by compilation

A thesis by compilation is structured as a single manuscript that comprises a combination of chapters and published/publishable works (i.e., papers).

There is no prescription about the specific structure of chapters or number of papers to be included in a thesis by compilation. Overall, the quantity and quality of the material presented for examination needs to equate to that which would otherwise be presented in the conventional thesis format in the relevant discipline.

The thesis must present each chapter/paper in a logical and coherent way and may require the addition of linking text to establish the relationship between one chapter/paper and the next. This could, for example, be achieved by the inclusion of a preamble to each chapter.
In general, a thesis by compilation should include:

- An introduction to the research study and a justification of how it adds to knowledge in the field;
- A chapter reviewing literature or literature review paper;
- A chapter or paper(s) that describe and justify the research approach and methods;
- Chapters and/or papers that present results;
- A discussion and conclusion.

Each paper included in the thesis should be distinct. While there may be some overlap, each paper should be substantially different in focus or content.

A thesis by compilation must include a declaration that specifies:

- Title, authorship and publication outlet of each paper;
- The current status of each paper (in press, accepted, submitted/under review);
- The extent of the contribution of the graduate research student and other authors to the research and the authorship of each paper;
- The signature of the graduate research student and all other authors (in the case of co-authored paper(s)).

9.1.3 Thesis by publication

NOTE: This format is available only for students enrolled prior to 31 December 2017. A thesis by publication includes both a manuscript of published works and a thesis:

1. A manuscript comprising a coherent suite of published works where verbatim copies of publications form all chapters of the manuscript. Only published, peer-reviewed publications can be included in the thesis. The manuscript must include a declaration that specifies:

    - Title, authorship and publication outlet of each paper;
    - The extent of the contribution of the graduate research student and other authors to the research and the authorship of each paper;
    - The signature of the graduate research student and all other authors (if a co-authored paper).

    AND

2. A written thesis, which is a significant intellectual undertaking in its own right. The written thesis must not include new results, but may include new insights through providing a synthesis across the conclusions from the published works in the manuscript. The thesis could include:
    - An introduction to the problem area and the various sub-studies;
    - The overall aim and research questions of the dissertation;
    - A research overview, including the disposition of the dissertation, illuminating and positioning the contribution to the research field;
    - The central theoretical and methodological points of departure of the dissertation as a whole, including the motivation for the choices of theory and method;
    - A critical discussion of data choices, collection and analytical processes, interpretations, and other considerations made in the different sub-studies / articles;
    - A description of how the articles are interrelated;

- A summary and synthesis of the main findings, conclusions, and contributions of the dissertation as a whole;
- Recommendations for further research.

9.1.4 Thesis including artefacts, exhibition, performance or portfolio of professional or creative work

A thesis including professional or creative work comprises both:

1. Artefact(s), exhibition, performance or portfolio of professional or creative work relevant to the discipline.
2. A written thesis, which is a significant intellectual undertaking in its own right. The written thesis should include:
   - An introduction to the research area;
   - The overall aim of the research and research questions;
   - A research overview justifying and positioning the contribution to the research field;
   - The central theoretical and methodological approach, and description and justification of theory and method;
   - For creative work: a critical positioning and discussion of approaches, methods and processes employed in the production of the creative work, and a critical discussion of the outcomes achieved;
   - For professional work: a critical discussion of data choices, collection and analytical processes, interpretations, and other considerations made in the different professional studies, and a critical discussion of the outcomes achieved;
   - A summary and synthesis of the main findings, conclusions, and contributions of the dissertation as a whole;
   - Recommendations for further research.

The proportion of creative or professional work component relative to the proportion of the written thesis component should be determined relative to the research topic, type of degree, and disciplinary norms.

If the graduate research student requires more information about thesis format, they should contact their Faculty RAO.

9.2. Word length

Differences in disciplines and the type of thesis will influence the appropriate word limit for a thesis. Maximum word length for PhD is 100,000 (not target or expectation) and Master's by research is 40,000 to 50,000. Exceptions for exceeding word count must be consulted with the Principal Supervisor and approved by Faculty RAO. Minimum word length is relevant to discipline and must be consulted with the Principal Supervisor and approved by Faculty RAO.

9.3. Printing

If a printed copy/copies of the thesis is requested by one or more examiners:

- All printed copies must be typed on International Standard Paper size A4 (297mm x 210mm) except for illustrative material such as drawings, maps and printouts, on which no restriction is placed. If the thesis includes artefacts, exhibition, performance or portfolio of professional or creative work, representations or versions of this work should be incorporated within the written

thesis where possible. Techniques such as fold-out pages for larger representations, or inserted DVDs for recorded work, can be used;
- Paper must have a minimum weight of 80 gsm;
- Copies may be printed either single or double sided.

9.4. Language of the thesis

The language of the thesis must be in English unless otherwise approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR)in accordance with UTS Student Rules 11.17.3.

9.5. Formatting

The typing must be 1.5 spaced or double-spaced and in a legible font. Single-spacing may only be used for appendices and footnotes.

The margins on each sheet must not be less than 40mm on the left-hand size, 20mm on the right-hand side, 30mm at the top and 20mm at the bottom to allow for binding.

9.6. Order of contents

The recommended order of contents of a thesis is as follows:

1. Title Page;
2. Signed certificate of original authorship, including RTP/collaborative degree arrangement acknowledgement (if applicable);
3. Acknowledgment including reference to persons who have assisted in the research work itself or in the preparation of the thesis itself, including any editorial assistance;
4. Statement indicating the format of thesis;
5. List of papers/publications included (if appropriate to format of thesis chosen);
6. Statement of contribution of authors (if appropriate to format of thesis chosen);
7. Preface, if any;
8. Table of Contents;
9. List of illustrations and tables, if any;
10. Abstract;
11. Introduction, if separate from Chapter 1;
12. Chapters/papers in sequence;
13. Appendix or appendices, if any;
14. Bibliography.

9.7. Title page

The title page must contain the thesis title, author's name, degree, University, Faculty and year of submission.

9.8. Certificate of original authorship

Graduate research students are required to make a declaration of original authorship when they submit the thesis for examination and in the final bound copies. Please note, the Research Training Program (RTP) statement is for all students.

All graduate research students must indicate how they have used generative AI tools in the research or preparation of their thesis.

Types of use:

- **No substantive use** means no proactive or deliberate usage of AI beyond what is unavoidably embedded in common software and search engines.

- **Assistive use** supports the researcher's own thinking and expression. It helps with clarity, organisation, grammar, brainstorming, or workflow efficiency, but it does not contribute original ideas, interpretations, or data.
- **Generative use** produces content—text, images, code, summaries, or other material—that may enter the research output. Even if the researcher later edits or rewrites it, the AI is contributing substantive material.
- **Analytical use** engages the AI in interpreting, evaluating, classifying, or drawing conclusions from data, text, or research materials. This includes identifying themes, inferring patterns, critiquing arguments, or suggesting interpretations.

Following is required wording for this certificate:

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, [insert name here] declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of [insert degree here], in the [Insert School/Faculty here] at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

[choose and insert the appropriate statement of your usage of generative AI tools (see below)]

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.
[replace this statement with collaborative degree statement if appropriate (see below)]

[insert Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) acknowledgement if appropriate (see below)]

This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) *doi.org/10.82133/C42F-K220*.

Signature:
Date:

If there has been no substantive use of generative AI tools, the text below must be added:

I did not make substantive use of any generative artificial intelligence tools in the research, analysis, or writing of this thesis, beyond those unavoidably embedded in common software. I take full responsibility for the intellectual contribution, originality, accuracy and integrity of the work. All ideas, interpretations, and written expression are my own.

If generative AI tools have been used in an assistive, generative, or analytical capacity, the text below must be added:

Generative artificial intelligence tools were used in this thesis in an [assistive / generative / analytical] capacity. I take full responsibility for the intellectual contribution, originality, accuracy and integrity of the work. I have listed the tools used and described how the outputs were generated and incorporated. All usage was conducted in accordance with UTS guidelines.

[Include the table below outlining where any usage was incorporated and for each instance, the tool name and version that was used.]

Chapter	Tool, version, and platform (web / app / API)	For what purpose did you use it? How have the outputs been incorporated?
Throughout		*e.g.* • *AI-assisted refinement of content* • *AI-generated production of content* • *AI-assisted interpretation / analysis*
Chapter 1 / Introduction		
Chapter 2 / Literature review		
[Please add your chapters as necessary]		

For collaborative doctoral research degree students, the text below must be added:

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree at any other academic institution except as fully acknowledged within the text. This thesis is the result of a Collaborative Doctoral Research Degree program with [insert collaborative partner institution].

For graduate research students who have included Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) in their thesis, the text below must be added:

This thesis includes Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) belonging to [insert relevant language, tribal or nation group(s) or communities], custodians or traditional owners. Where I have used ICIP, I have followed the relevant protocols and consulted with appropriate Indigenous people/communities about its inclusion in my thesis. ICIP rights are Indigenous heritage and will always remain with these groups. To use, adapt or reference the ICIP contained in this work, you will need to consult with the relevant Indigenous groups and follow cultural protocols.

9.9. Page numbering

Pages must be numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals, beginning with the first page of the introduction or chapter 1, if there is no separate Introduction.
Preceding pages, except the title pages, must be given lower-case Roman numerals.

9.10. Thesis abstract

Each copy of the thesis must have an abstract of less than 400 words.

9.11. Appendices

Long tables, raw or relatively unprocessed data, detailed reports or computer printouts must be appropriately included in an Appendix.

9.12. Large diagrams, charts and tables

For printed theses, large diagrams, charts, maps, tables, illustrations, which exceed A4 size must be folded so that when opened, they can be easily read. They must be clearly referred to in the text and bound in the thesis.

9.13. Referencing

No single method of referencing is prescribed. Graduate research students should consult their Faculty for guidance about the method of referencing appropriate to their discipline. It is essential that graduate research students be consistent and thoroughly familiar with the method selected in consultation with their principal supervisor.

9.14. Examining a thesis with a creative component

A graduate research student's thesis may include creative work (see 10.1.4 above). Artefacts, performances, exhibitions, installations, websites, audio recordings, films, written creative work or technical drawings, for example, are acceptable components of a thesis [refer Student Rules 11.17.1].

The thesis as a whole must conform to the formatting and presentation requirements listed above. The creative component must be recorded in a format which can be lodged together with the written thesis in the library wherever practicable. This may include producing visual representations of the artefact(s), exhibition, installation, etc., which can be bound together and integrated within the thesis. Durational works such as performances, films, etc. should be digitised and recorded on an accessible format. Graduate research students should contact the library for assistance if required.

The graduate research student, principal supervisor and Faculty RAO must propose both the timetable and sequence for the examination of the creative components of the work as follows:

1. In the six months before the graduate research student is ready to have the work examined, the graduate research student must lodge a request with the RAO for approval of the form of examination. On endorsement of RAO, the approval of Dean of GRS must be sought.
2. The creative component and thesis component will be examined at the same time.
3. A session of the presentation of the creative component must be organised by the graduate research student at their own expense.
4. The graduate research student may present the work to the examiners, or the examiners may view the work without the student present in order to maintain examiner anonymity. In the case where the student is present, he or she must be available at the time of the presentation to answer questions. Questioning is intended to clarify technical points or to remind the examiner of points which may

have been missed given the nature of the work. This is not an oral examination of the work.

10. Inclusion of published or publishable work in the thesis

10.1. General conditions

A thesis may incorporate original published or publishable work arising from research by the graduate research student during their candidature.

All publications produced during the candidature must be acknowledged in the thesis based on the chosen, accepted thesis formats.

Graduate research students must consult their Faculty regarding discipline-based conventions that need to be taken into account for the inclusion of published works in the thesis.

Students who are planning to include published (or publishable works) in their thesis are advised to seek advice before signing publisher's agreements. It is important such agreements do not preclude the inclusion or modification of published work in their thesis, or changes if required by a thesis examiner or through the examination process.

Graduate research students must ensure they have requested permission from the publisher to include an online version of the published work in their thesis and thus in the UTS Digital Repository. Graduate research students must retain copies of permissions obtained from a publisher. In cases where permission has not been granted to do so, the Library will replace such work with a hyperlink to the website where the work has been published. More information about this process is available from the UTS Library.

10.2. Reasons for inclusion of publications in the thesis

Reasons for inclusion of publications in the thesis may be:

1. Provides evidence of published output during candidature; and
2. Contributes to the arguments in student's thesis.

10.3. Types of publications

A thesis may include journal articles, conference papers, or book chapters.

10.4. Conditions for inclusion of publications in thesis

The included publications must be original work arising from research by the graduate research student during their candidature, that is, as part of their dissertation project. The included publications must contribute to the argument of the thesis.

In a conventional thesis or thesis by compilation format, included works must be either:

- Submitted for publication (i.e., under review);
- Accepted for publication;
- Published.

In a Thesis by Publication format, included works must be published.

1. Students are required to obtain written permission from the copyright owners if their publications are under copyright or restriction.

2. Graduate research students are required to indicate clearly the contributions of each author in any joint publications.
3. For inclusion of publications in the thesis the graduate research student must be either the first author or have made substantial contributions (50% or more) to the publication.

11. Use of professional editor

Graduate research students are permitted to use editors in the preparation of a research thesis for submission as long as editorial intervention is restricted to copyediting and proofreading.

Graduate research students must obtain permission from their supervisory panel first and the information in Section 12.1 below must be provided to the editor before the work commences.

Supervisors must be familiar with the Australian Standards for Editing Practice and provide editorial advice to graduate research students relating to matters of substance and structure, language, use of illustrations and tables. They may also assist with copy editing and proofreading.

11.1. Acknowledgement of professional editorial advice

When a thesis has had the benefit of professional editorial advice of any form, the name of the editor and a brief description of the service rendered must be printed as part of the list of acknowledgements or other prefatory matter.

If the professional editor's current or former area of academic specialisation is similar to that of the graduate research student, this must be stated in the prefatory matter.

12. Thesis Submission for Examination Process and Requirements

The thesis examination process can take between 3-6 months. This includes the period of nomination of examiners, receipt of thesis and related documentation from Faculty, approval of nominated examiners and their availability, submission of thesis for examination, return of examiners reports to GRS/Faculty and deliberations on results.

12.1. Notification of intention to submit form

Two months prior to thesis submission, the graduate research student must submit a 'notification of intention to submit' form to GRS, available on Graduate Research Website [Refer Student Rules 11.19.1]. The intention to submit date must be on or before your current EWS date. If a student needs to request an extension of the EWS date, please refer to Section 7.3 Extension of Candidature.

Theses for examination can be submitted at any time during the year. Graduate research students will consume prorated EFTSL if the thesis is submitted to GRS for examination by the research census date. If the thesis is submitted to GRS for examination after the research census date, graduate research students consume full EFTSL in that session.

If the thesis contains confidential material, graduate research students must indicate on the form and the examiners must agree with the confidentiality agreement. This request must be made prior to submission of thesis for examination.

12.2. Nomination of examiners

The supervisory panel and graduate research student must discuss a potential list of examiners before the thesis is submitted for examination. Graduate research students have the right to advise their principal supervisor of the names of potential examiners with whom they may have some concern.

The graduate research student commences the nomination of examiner process by listing potential examiners discussed with the supervisory panel on the nomination of examiner form which is available on Graduate Research website. On behalf of the supervisory panel, the principal supervisor then nominates at least 2 thesis examiners (no more than 3), who must remain confidential to the student, and seeks Faculty RAO's endorsement. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR)approves and appoints thesis examiners.

The student must begin the process of nominating a list of potential examiners at least 2 months prior to the intended submission date. The faculty must submit the nomination of examiner form to the Graduate Research School one month prior to the intended thesis submission date.

Collaborative Doctoral Research Degree students must refer to their collaborative doctoral research degree agreements for thesis examination requirements.

12.2.1. Number of examiners

The number of examiners required is as follows:

- For a Doctoral thesis, Faculties must nominate a minimum of two examiners and a maximum of three examiners, all of whom must be external to the University.
- For a Master's thesis, Faculties must nominate two examiners, both of whom must be external to the University.

12.2.2. Criteria for examiner eligibility

The principal supervisor and the Faculty RAO must consider the following when selecting appropriate examiners.

Background and expertise
The nomination of examiner form must clearly demonstrate proposed examiners':

- Expertise in the field and in the methodological approach (e.g. as shown by their research track record, positions held, publications, professional standing, etc.);
- Level of qualifications which should be at least at the level of the thesis being examined (formal qualifications may not be necessary in all cases but the Faculty will need to provide evidence of academic standing in such cases);
- Is an academic at a tertiary institution or holds a research related position;
- Experience as an examiner;

12.2.3 Conflict of interest and risk assessment

Nominated examiners must not have the potential for real or perceived conflict of interest with the graduate research student, supervisory panel or university.

*A **conflict of interest** is a situation in which the examiner might have competing professional or personal interests. Such competing interests could make it difficult for an individual to fulfil his or her duties impartially, and potentially could improperly influence the performance of their examination duties and responsibilities.*

(adapted from the Australian Research Council definition)

In order to ensure the independence and the quality of thesis examination, there must be no potential conflict of interest between the examiner, the student, the supervisory panel and the University, perceived or otherwise which might jeopardise the independence of the examination process.

People who might be perceived to have a conflict of interest include but are not limited to:

- former supervisors;
- co-authors of joint publications;
- named collaborators and/or investigators on research grants;
- current or former colleagues or friends;
- recent graduates;
- employees or honorary members of the University;
- external members of the student's supervisor panel;
- long-term visitors to the University;
- family members.

To support supervisors and Faculties in assessing whether a conflict of interest exists, Higher Degree Research Board endorses and uses the Australian Council of Graduate Research *Conflict of Interest Guidelines (Appendix A)*.

Where a perceived conflict of interest is considered to be immaterial by the research student, supervisory panel, faculty or university, this must be disclosed and a justification provided to move forward with this nomination. Please refer to the Nomination of Examiners Frequently Asked Questions if required.

When collaborating with international examiners, it is crucial to account for various significant regulatory frameworks. UTS is responsible for independently evaluating these international interactions against each relevant regulatory standard. Accordingly, the GRS will perform a risk assessment of nominated examiners to fulfill the university's due diligence requirements.

All nominated examiners will be assessed against the relevant lists in accordance with the UTS research risk framework.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) of GRS has the authority to decline examiners if a significant level of risk is identified.

12.3. Approval of Thesis Examiners

Principal supervisor finalises the 'Nomination of Thesis Examiners Form' by providing the following documentation:

- Evidence that the examiner has agreed to examine;
- CV, Institutional profile URL and/or ORCID ID URL (if current institution is listed, no other links will be accepted);
- Evidence of examiner expertise for cases where the examiner may not meet the usual selection criteria as listed in Section 12.2.2;
- Preference of thesis format (hard copy or soft copy) by the potential examiners.

The Faculty RAO must assess the request, confirm there is no conflict of interest between the examiners and the Faculty and, if endorsed, submit the form to GRS, for the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR)'s approval. If the request is not endorsed by the Faculty RAO, this must be communicated to principal supervisor who will find alternate examiner(s). The Faculty must ensure approved nomination form is submitted to GRS prior to graduate research student's thesis submission.

Upon receiving the nomination form, thePro Vice-Chancellor (HDR)will approve or reject examiners. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR)'s decision is final. If the nomination is not approved, GRS communicates the outcome to the faculty, providing the reasons and request that alternate examiner(s) be nominated.

The nomination of examiners form must be received by the faculty office no later than 2 months prior to the research student's EWS date and by GRS no later than 1 month prior to date the student intends to submit the thesis for examination.

12.3.1. Contact with examiners

Once nominations are approved, GRS contacts all examiners, confirming their availability. If no response is received, GRS may request Faculties to nominate alternate examiner(s).

Once the thesis and all supporting documents are submitted, GRS sends the thesis to examiners who are given 6 weeks to examine the thesis and make a recommendation.

If an examiner requests an extension of time to submit a report, GRS contacts the faculty seeking advice on 1) endorsement for extension of thesis examination period or 2) nomination of an alternate examiner.

Faculties must communicate any delays to graduate research students and supervisory panels.

GRS is the point of contact for thesis examiners. Faculty and supervisors must not contact examiners during examination period.

If no report is submitted by an examiner within the agreed timeframe, GRS sends overdue reminders to the examiner. If no report is received within proposed timeframe or there is no communication received from the examiner with respect to delays, GRS will consult with the faculty prior to advising the examiner of withdrawal of their service. Faculty will be asked to nominate new examiner(s). If examiner reports have been received at GRS from two of the three nominated examiners, the Faculty RAO can request the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) to release the two received reports to decide if the faculty have enough information to make a decision.

If an examiner would like to communicate with another examiner, they may send a request to GRS by email. GRS circulates the request to all examiners and the opportunity is made available only to those who have agreed to exchange opinions.

12.3.2. Examiner Confidentiality

The identity of the examiners must not be disclosed to the student until the examination reports are ready for release. All examiners are given options to disclose their identity on the recommendation form.

An examiner may choose to remain anonymous once the reports are released, in which case the examiner's name will not be disclosed to the graduate research student. Graduate research students, supervisory panels and Faculty RAOs/administrators must not make contact with examiners during the examination period. If contact is made, the examiner must be replaced.

12.4. Documents required for thesis submission

Students must submit the thesis and required documents to the Faculty. Upon approval, the Faculty submits the thesis and documents to the GRS for the examination process.

The date on which the thesis documents and nomination of examiners are received by GRS is the date recorded as the official thesis submission date. In situations where a graduate research student may be inadvertently impacted such as being liable for fees GRS will amend the date if required.

12.4.1. Thesis documents

A digital copy of the thesis must be submitted to the Faculty for examination. If examiner(s) prefer a hard copy thesis, GRS will forward hard copies to the examiners.

12.4.2. Supervisor Certificate

Examination copies of theses must be submitted to the Faculty with the online 'supervisor certificate' endorsed by the principal supervisor stating that the student's work is ready for examination. The Faculty RAO must verify that the thesis is ready for examination.

If the principal supervisor and Faculty RAO do not certify that the thesis is ready for examination, the graduate research student must be given detailed feedback from the supervisor(s) as to why the thesis is not deemed ready for examination. If the graduate research student does not agree with the feedback, and the issues cannot be resolved within the Faculty, the graduate research student may request a review of this decision by the University Thesis Examination Committee [Refer Student Rules 11.19.6 – 11.19.10 inclusive].

12.4.3. Student statement

Graduate research students must submit the 'student statement form' to Faculty to accompany the thesis for examination. The student statement form is available on Graduate Research website.

13. Thesis Examination Process

The Thesis Examination Committee, acting for the Graduate Research School Board, establishes and oversees the Thesis Examination Process. This includes (but not limited to):

- Setting the examination criteria and reporting requirements;
- Requirements for faculties to make recommendations related to examination outcomes;
- Consideration of examination outcomes including consideration to Rules 11.20.5 to 11.20.7;
- Re-examination procedures;
- Recommendations to admit/not to admit candidates to degrees.

Communication between the Thesis Examination Committee and faculties is facilitated by the GRS.

The graduate research student will be notified of the outcome and any additional requirements by their Faculty.

Please refer to the Graduate Research Final Examination Procedures for more information if thesis was submitted for examination prior to 31st December 2023. For thesis submitted for examination from 1st January 2024 onwards, please refer to the 2024 Graduate Research Final Examination Procedures.

14. Final Completion and Graduation Requirements

In order to allow reasonable time for conferring of the degree, the graduate research student must satisfy all requirements well in advance of the expected conferral deadline or graduation ceremony. Information is provided on graduate research website of the specific deadlines for each conferral.

Once the graduate research student is notified by the Faculty that they can submit their final thesis for graduation processing, the student must submit a Final Thesis Submission form to the Faculty including the following:

- Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS) – summary of research in 100-200 words;
- Digital copy of final thesis
- Digital copy of final thesis with mark ups*
- All thesis examiner reports
- Thesis revision response document

A final bound copy of the thesis may be required by the Faculty.

14.1. Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS)

The University requires graduate research students to submit 100-200 words summarising their research. This summary will be printed on the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS). The summary must not have texts in italics, bold, super/subscripts and symbols that are not available on a standard keyboard and must uploaded via RM as a Word document to the Faculty.

14.2. Digital copy of the thesis

Students must submit a digital copy of their final thesis to the Faculty and Library. The thesis must include a signed, Certificate of Original Authorship.

Graduate research students must lodge their digital copy before the conferral of their degree, regardless of existing confidential agreement and/or embargo conditions. The Library will suppress confidential material if there is any approved restriction as explained in this document. The digital copy will be uploaded to the Library website.

The digital format of the thesis must be a single Portable Document File (PDF). The maximum size of upload is 40MB. If a single file is not possible, graduate research students must use Zip for multiple files. If the file is larger than 40MB, graduate research students must consult the UTS Library for information about how to submit their thesis.

There must be no security settings on the document; the library will add the settings.

Research work that is not printed on paper such as artefacts, exhibition, performance or portfolio of professional or creative work must be recorded or produced in a format approved by the UTS Thesis Examination Committee on the advice of the UTS Librarian in regard to its preservation and maintenance. Once the thesis has been successfully uploaded, the students will receive a confirmation email from the Library. Students are requested to forward this email confirmation to the Faculty.

14.3. Bound copy of thesis

If required by the graduate research student's faculty, a final bound hard copy of the thesis must be bound in boards, covered with dark red buckram for Doctoral degrees and in University blue (dark blue) for Master's degrees and embossed in gold lettering on the spine. There are several thesis binding services close to UTS.

14.4. Final approval

Upon receiving above documents and Faculty's recommendation for admission to the degree, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR)will review and approve for GRS to submit the request to Lifetime Learner Experience (LLE) for student to be set as having passed their degree on CASS. Upon receiving confirmation from LLE, GRS provide the student with a completion letter outlining that they have completed their degree requirements. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) submits a signed report to the Academic Board that the graduate research student be admitted to the degree.

15. Graduation and conferral

Upon the approval of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) GRS of all requirements mentioned above, the graduate research student's degree will be conferred on the next available conferral date. UTS Graduations contacts graduate research students with details about the graduation ceremony.

Doctoral graduate research students are able to use the title of Doctor once the degree has been conferred.

16. Confidentiality and restricted access

The University recognises that there is a need to protect the right of graduate research students to take advantage of their own research work and to restrict access to any material which may have been available on a confidential basis. In this case, Student Rules 11.19.2 and 11.22.2 apply and graduate research students must apply to the Faculty RAO with the support of the principal supervisor for the thesis to have restricted access or confidential information status.

On submission of final thesis for conferral, for restricted access, graduate research students must request for an embargo to the Faculty RAO with the recommendation of the principal supervisor. The Faculty RAO may approve such embargo for a period not exceeding two years and may impose conditions on disclosure [refer Student Rule 11.22.2]. The student will be notified of the request outcome by the Graduate Research School.

The restricted information must be placed in an appendix to the thesis.

Any variation to the restriction request must be submitted to the Graduate Research School. The variation can take effect before the digital copy is published to UTS Digital

Repository. Otherwise, the whole digital thesis can be published when the period of restriction has expired.

17. Copyright

In accordance with the UTS Intellectual Property policy, graduate research students own the copyright in the original content of their thesis, unless there is a pre-existing arrangement. Information and advice about copyright is available from the UTS Library.

After graduation, the digital copy of the thesis will be published in the UTS Digital Repository which is an online digital repository that aims to provide open access to the University's research output. If a graduate research student's digital thesis contains any third party material protected by copyright, they must either obtain copyright clearance to publish this material online in the UTS Digital Repository or indicate to the UTS Library which portions do not have permission. Graduate research students must retain copies of permissions obtained from a publisher or copyright holder.

Digital theses that include previously published work may be partially exempt from inclusion in UTS Digital Repository if copyright clearance cannot be obtained for some portions. In such cases, graduate research students are still required to submit the complete digital copy but only the copyright cleared portions, or the abstract will be published in the UTS Digital Repository.

In cases where the UTS Library removes material which does not have copyright clearance from the online version published in the UTS Digital Repository, appropriate hyperlinks may be inserted instead.

The UTS Library has more detailed information about copyright and advice on seeking permission to use third party material.

18. Chancellor's Award

The Chancellor's Award are given each year for the best Doctoral theses and completed the PhD within the preceding calendar year.

The criterion for eligibility for nominations for the Award are as follows:
Examiner recommendation outcome as follows:

a) All recommendation 1; or
b) 2x recommendation 1, plus 1x recommendation 2, where there are 3 examiners.

* For PhD students examined under previous recommendation framework (6 possible outcomes), previous eligibility outcome eligibility will apply:

a) All recommendation of 1; or
b) 2 x recommendation 1 and 1 x recommendation 2

The criteria for selection of the Doctoral graduates for the Chancellor's Award are:

1. Significance of the work in the field;
    a. the extent to which the research addresses an important matter within the discipline; and
    b. the potential benefits of the research to knowledge within the discipline and/or to society;

2. Quality of the thesis

In making its recommendations for the Award, the Selection Committee shall have access to:

- Examiners' reports
- Supporting statement from the Faculty addressing the selection criteria. This may be written by the Principal and/or other Supervisor by invitation of the Faculty, but must be approved by the Faculty RAO on behalf of the Faculty.

18.1. The Selection Committee

The Selection Committee will be the UTS Thesis Examination Committee (TEC).

18.2. Selection Process

The list of eligible graduates for the Chancellor's Award;

- is based on a calendar year and is determined at the first TEC meeting the following the calendar year
- comprises graduates who meet the eligibility criteria
- is drawn up by the Graduate Research School

- The faculties nominate 1 PhD student to put forward for the Chancellor's Award. The nomination must include a supporting statement from the Principal Supervisor (and/or another supervisory panel member if applicable), approved by the Faculty RAO.
- TEC makes final decision.
- TEC provides Chancellor's Award winner and those to be placed on the Chancellor's List to the GRSB for noting.
- The decision of the TEC is final.

Eligible Graduate Identification Procedure

- GRS will forward to Faculties the list of eligible graduates, along with examiners' reports by 15 January each year.
- Faculties/Institute provide their nominee by 31 January of each year.
- Recommendation scores can be sourced via RM report.
- Divide into Faculties/Schools/Centres and highlight the eligible graduates for each.

<u>TEC Decision Process</u>:

Once nominees are received, GRS will collate each nominee's documents, including:

- Thesis abstract
- Examination reports
- Supporting document

- TEC meets to decide on Chancellor's Award on the first TEC of the year.
- TEC members are given 1 week prior to the TEC meeting to review nominations.
- TEC members must rank numerically from 1, with 1 being the highest score. No double ranking is allowed, i.e. cannot have two students ranked 1 or 2 etc.

- At its meeting the TEC will select the Chancellor's Awardee and the other nominees will be automatically recommended to be placed the Chancellor's List.
- In the event that the TEC cannot distinguish between two finalists for the Award, a joint winner for the Award may be selected.
- The TEC may also decide that no selection for the Award should be made.
- The TEC provides the Chancellor's Award and List to the GRSB for noting.
- The decision of the TEC is final.
- The Chancellor's Award and nominees to the Chancellor's List is confidential until the outcome is communicated to recipients and their supervisors post TEC.

Notification and award process

GRS will organise notification of the outcome to Awardee and Chancellor's List students. Letter will also advise that their thesis abstract may be nominated for publication in the Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New south Wales.

GRS will arrange for the payment to be made to the award recipient/s of $1,000 each.

19. Higher doctoral degrees

The process for consideration and assessment of Higher Doctoral Degrees referred to in UTS Student Rule 12 are as follows:

Candidate must meet the eligibility criteria as set out in the UTS Student Rule 12.3 and discuss and seeks support for the application from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) of the Faculty.

Dean of relevant Faculty, in consultation with appropriate senior academic(s) in area considers:

1. Works of which the candidate is author or creator (alone or with others) and which are publicly available (Student Rule 12.5.1).
2. In cases of joint work, statements by co-authors/co-creators as to the role of the candidate in producing the work (Student Rule 12.5.2).
3. Statements from peers, supplied by the candidate, attesting to the standing of the candidate as a major authority in the field; and contribution of the published work to the advancement of the field of knowledge. (Caution to be exercised here to avoid diminution of the field of potential Examiners.)
4. Independent evidence may also be provided by the candidate to demonstrate the calibre of his/her contribution in terms of their being a major authority, e.g. critical, public review of work, patterns of citation, impact in practical spheres.

Note: Recommendations concerning revision of the candidate's primary material cannot be made although there may be suggestions made to the candidate regarding accompanying documentation.

If the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) of relevant Faculty considers the work is worthy of assessment for Higher Doctorate award, the candidate must submit an application for Higher Doctorate using the application form available from the Graduate Research website. The application must include:

- Certified copy of highest academic qualification (not required if qualification obtained at UTS)
- Certified copy of citizenship or residency status
- Letter of recommendation from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) of the Faculty endorsing the candidate as being qualified for a Higher Doctoral degree by reason of eminence in learning or creative achievements
- 3 copies of published works to support the application. In cases of joint work, statements by co-authors/co-creators as to the role of the candidate producing the work (submitted works for consideration of the award must comply with Student Rules 12.5 Submitted works)
- An updated version of curriculum vitae
- A statement from the candidate demonstrating achievements to the standard of a Higher Doctorate degree
- Nomination of up to 5 potential assessors

and submitted to Thesis Examination Committee (TEC) at grs@uts.edu.au.

The TEC will review and forward the application for assessment by 3 of the nominated assessors. Each assessor will be requested to provide a separate and independent report to the TEC to consider the assessors' reports and make recommendation to the Chair, TEC who will formulate a response to the Academic Board on behalf of the Higher Degree Research Board on award of the degree.

20. Research Environment

UTS provides a number of resources and activities with the goal of creating a supportive and academically engaging research environment. Information about resources and supports available to students is available in the Graduate Research Environment Guidelines.

20.1. Support for graduate research students on distance mode

Commencing Research Session 2, 2023, UTS has established guidelines that enable international students to undertake doctoral study by distance mode. Study by distance mode must be agreed and approved **prior** to application. Faculties are required to consider the following when making an assessment about adequate support for the student and include the information for consideration by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR), Graduate Research School as part of the application process:

- Engagement in a research environment;
- Supervisory arrangements;
- Access to resources and activities relevant to candidature
- Language environment;
- Capacity of the student for autonomous independent study
- Financial capacity to support the study for the candidature duration

20.2. Students on field work

Students planning on travel for part of their degree must refer to both the UTS Student Travel and Expenses Policy and the Student Travel and Expenses Procedure before travelling. For both domestic and international travel, students need to complete and submit to their Faculty a travel approval request regardless of whether the travel is UTS funded or self-funded. This ensures that the travel is covered by the University's insurance policy as well as the funding approval for the travel expenses.

In addition to the required travel procedure, students must also follow the Research Risk at UTS Guidelines before an approved period of fieldwork commences.

Students who are away from the University for at least 4 months are eligible for Student Services and Administration Fee (SSAF) waiver which they can request to GRS in writing.

21. Course Withdrawal

Graduate research students who do not wish to continue with their studies have a right to withdraw from the course and can apply online for a course withdrawal link available at **Varying your degree**.

Graduate Research Students can withdraw at any time, except in cases when the University has lodged a notification of discontinuation of a student's candidature. If the withdrawal is requested prior to the thesis submission for examination, the result for the thesis component will be recorded as withdrawn. If the withdrawal is requested after the thesis has been submitted for examination, the result for the thesis component will be recorded as fail.

The course withdrawal is effective from the date the withdrawal application is approved by the Faculty RAO, and course withdrawal lodged before the research census date will incur no academic penalty. If applicable, a refund of any tuition fees paid will be calculated and repaid to the graduate research student. Course withdrawal after the research census date will result in the full session's fee or load being charged to the graduate research student.

Before lodging their application for course withdrawal, the graduate research student should seek advice from their supervisor or other relevant faculty staff member to ensure that they understand all of the options that are available to them. They may also seek advice from the staff in the Graduate Research School.

Once they have discussed their options with their faculty, and if withdrawal is still sought, the graduate research student needs to complete the online withdrawal form application which is submitted directly to the Faculty for checking. In the form, the graduate research student is required to provide his/her reason for withdrawal.

Once the Faculty has completed their process, the Faculty will send the Faculty endorsed form to the Graduate Research School for processing. The graduate research student will be notified through their student email account once the withdrawal has been processed.

22. Discontinuation

The University may discontinue a graduate research student's candidature in a higher degree research course in certain circumstances including but not limited to:

- unsatisfactory outcome for stage assessment
- unsatisfactory examination
- student misconduct determined under Student misconduct and appeals [refer Student Rules section 16]

- supervisory arrangement ceases and an appropriate alternative cannot be identified
- when a student's project is no longer viable and an appropriate alternative cannot be identified.

Where a recommendation is made for a graduate research student's candidature to be discontinued in accordance with Student Rule 11.23;

- the graduate research student will be advised in writing by GRS (on behalf of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR))
- the GRS will provide procedural guidelines, including details on the appeals process (refer to Student Rule 11.24).

If the graduate research student decides to appeal, the graduate research student needs to:

- Submit the appeal in writing
- The appeal must specify and substantiate the grounds for appeal (refer to Student Rule 11.24.4)
- The appeal must be sent to the GRS within 20 working days of the day of the written advice by GRS

Once the appeal is received by the GRS, it will be forwarded to the Faculty Responsible Academic Officer (RAO) for their recommendation whether the appeal should be 'upheld' or 'dismissed'.

The GRS will send the faculty's recommendation to the graduate research student and the graduate research student will then have the opportunity to respond to the recommendation. The student will be provided 10 working days to provide the response.

Once the response is received by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR), the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) will consider the appeal and come to a decision.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) decides to uphold the appeal

- The discontinuation is withdrawn and appeal process is finalised.
- The GRS will inform the Faculty RAO and the graduate research student of the decision within 5 working days from when the decision is made.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR) decides to dismiss the appeal

- The GRS will inform the Faculty RAO and the student of the decision within 5 working days from when the decision is made

- The graduate research student has a right of reply to the Graduate Research School Dean's decision. The graduate research student will be provided 20 working days of the date of notification.

Up until the Appeals Committee convenes the graduate research student has the right to discontinue the appeal by notifying thePro Vice-Chancellor (HDR), Graduate Research School in writing. Were the graduate research student to exercise this right,

the decision of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR), Graduate Research School to discontinue the graduate research student will remain.

22.1 Further Appeal to the Appeals Committee

If the graduate research student appeals the Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR)decision to discontinue their candidature, upon receiving the graduate research student's response, the Graduate Research School will send all documents related to the appeal to the Graduate Research Students' Appeals Committee (in accordance with Student Rule 11.24), who will then consider the appeal.

The Graduate Research Students' Appeals Committee is a committee by appointment of the UTS Academic Board and the role and responsibilities of the Committee and the Graduate Research Students' Appeals Committee Procedures are available at [http://www.gsu.uts.edu.au/academicboard/committees/appeals-gradresearch.html].

The appeal committee outcome is final and no further review is available.

23. General Information

23.1. Communication and information

All graduate research students are allocated an email address upon enrolment at UTS. Official communications from UTS are sent to this email address (see Student Rule 2.3.2). Graduate research students must use their UTS student email address when communicating with the University.

All graduate research students are obliged to check their UTS email regularly for official communications from the University, including the Faculty and the GRS. Students also need to maintain their inbox so that communications are received on a regular basis. Information about candidature management and researcher development workshops and activities is available from the UTS website. Faculties may also have online spaces for students to gain access to information, including websites, intranets and wikis.

23.2. Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to, the following:
a. Financial interests
b. Personal interests and family relationship, as well as friendship

Where such relationships exist between current or prospective Staff and graduate research student, there is potential for a conflict of interest to arise. Graduate research students must disclose any actual or apparent conflict of interest as soon as it becomes apparent, to the Faculty RAO, who will determine ethical obligations to protect and support those making disclosures and to prevent, monitor and report fraud and corrupt conduct.

23.3. Annual Leave

All graduate research students are entitled to a period of 20 working days annual leave per year which is not accruable. Students are not required to apply for official leave for these periods however are required to discuss and agree on the period of leave with their supervisory panel.

Policy contact	Director, Graduate Research School
Approval authority	Higher Degree Research Board
Review year	3
Version	1.17
File number	UR17/4141
Superseded documents	• Candidature Assessment Guidelines • Guidelines for Faculties: Transfer from Master to Doctoral Program • UTS Framework for Doctoral Education • Review of Progress Guidelines • Thesis Presentation and Submission Procedures • Higher Degrees by Research Examination Guidelines for Faculties • Guidelines on the Use of Editors • Processes for the Examination of Higher Doctorates • Chancellor's Award Guidelines • Chancellor's Award Procedures

Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
1.0	Graduate Research School Board (04/17-4/2)	28 November 2017	1 January 2018	New instrument.
1.1	Graduate Research School Board (01/18-7/0	3 February 2018	4 February 2018	18. Chancellor's Award
1.2	Graduate Research	12 June 2018	13 June 2018	Sections 6, 7, 9, 18. 20, 21

	School Board (03/18-14/0)			
1.3	Graduate Research School Board (01/19-10/4)	12 February 2019	12 February 2019	Clarifications throughout
1.4	Graduate Research School Board (03/19-10/3)	12 June 2019	12 June 2019	4.1.1 – Criteria for Stage 1 assessment
1.5	Graduate Research School Board (04/19-10/3)	24 July 2019	24 July 2019	Clarifications throughout
1.6	Graduate Research School Board (05/19 –10/2)	10 September 2019	10 September 2019	Clarifications throughout
1.7	Graduate Research School Board (01/20 – 10.4)	3 March 2020	3 March 2020	Introduction, Sections 3 (new), 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 19, 23 (new)
1.8	Graduate Research School Board (03/20-8.3)	2 June 2020	2 June 2020	Revision to Section 13

1.9	Graduate Research School Board (05/20-10.4)	8th September 2020	8th September 2020	Addition to Section 5.4
1.10	Graduate Research School Board (03/21-11.4)	1st June 2021	1st June 2021	Introduction, Sections 4, 5, 6, 7,8, 21
1.11	Higher Degree Research Board (05/21-11.4)	7th September 2021	7th September 2021	Reflection of change of Graduate Research School Board name to Higher Degree Research Board plus Sections 5, 6, 8 and 20
1.12	Higher Degree Research Board (02/22-10.5)	12th April 2022	12th April 2022	Sections 4, 5, 8 and 20
1.13	Higher Degree Research Board (04/22 – 10.1)	6th September 2022	6th September 2022	Sections 6, 8, 13, 15,17 and 21
1.14	Higher Degree Research Board (Flying Minute)	21st April 2023		Sections 1, 5, 15 and 18

1.15	Graduate Research School Board (Flying Minutes)	27th September 2023	27th September 2023	Sections 17 and 19
1.16	Graduate Research School Board	22nd February 2024 and 24th April 2024	21st August 2024	Removal of Section 6 and edit of impacted sections; amendment to sections 14 and 15
1.17	Graduate Research School Board (Flying Minute)	13th September 2024	24th September 2024	Edit made to Section 12.2.3 to include risk management of examiner nominations.
1.18	N/A	N/A	N/A	Edit made to delegation as per Student Rules Section 11 change from Dean, GRS to Pro Vice-Chancellor (HDR).
1.19	Graduate Research Board (26/3 – 9.1)	26th May 2026	26th May 2026	Amendment to Section 9.8 to include requirements on use of Generative Ai tools in research and/or writing

Appendix A - ACGR Conflict of Interest in Examination Guidelines

The use of independent thesis examiners is an important defining feature of Australian Higher Degree by Research (HDR) programs. The independence of examiners is one indicator of the quality of the examination process and of the course as a whole.

The process of examination/classification of theses assumes that those responsible undertake the task independently and without bias. Professional and personal relationships between examiners, candidates and their supervisors/advisors, and relationships between examiners and the University, have the potential to introduce bias and thus compromise the independence of the examination, in fact or in perception.

The independence examiners can be ensured by the use of:

- internal guidelines on what might constitute (risk of perception of) conflict of interest,
- a nomination process with a formal review procedure.

There are a range of circumstances that can lead to a conflict of interest. The guidelines below list examples of different types of conflict of interest that may arise between the various parties including the candidate, the supervisor/advisor, the University, the subject matter itself and another examiner. The list is indicative and is not to be considered exhaustive.

In managing conflicts of interest in the examination process it is useful to:

- Distinguish major (potential) conflicts of interest that would normally result in the non- appointment of the examiner from minor (potential) conflicts that should be declared and explained but which should not normally, independently of other considerations, inhibit the appointment of the examiner.

- Recognise that some conflicts of interest arising through collaboration on publications and/or research grants, or membership of an advisory board, may be mitigated by the size of the team and a corresponding relative independence of some members of the team. Indeed in some cases, members of a team may never have met nor corresponded directly.

It is also important to note that the presence or perception of possible conflict of interest between the examiner and the candidate or other parties should not necessarily and automatically preclude the use of that examiner. What is important is that a fair and transparently “unconflicted” examination can take place. With responsible management of a declared conflict it may be possible to achieve this aim.

Listed below are examples of different types of conflict of interest that may arise between the examiner and various parties including the candidate, the supervisor/advisor, the University, the subject matter itself and another examiner. The list is indicative and is not to be considered exhaustive.

A. Conflict with the Candidate		
Working relationship		
A1.	Examiner has co-authored a paper with the candidate within the last five years	MAJOR
A2.	Examiner has worked with the candidate on matters regarding the thesis e.g. previous member of the advisory team	MAJOR
A3.	Examiner has employed the candidate or been employed by the candidate within the last five years	MAJOR
A4.	Examiner is in negotiation to directly employ or be employed by the candidate	MAJOR
A5.	Examiner has acted as a referee for the candidate for employment	MAJOR
Personal relationship		
A6.	Examiner is a known relative of the candidate	MAJOR
A7.	Examiner is a friend, associate or mentor of the candidate	MAJOR
A8.	Examiner and the candidate have an existing or a previous emotional relationship of de facto, are co-residents or are members of a common household	MAJOR
Legal relationship		
A9.	Examiner is or was married to the candidate	MAJOR
A10.	Examiner is legally family to the candidate (for example, step-father, sister-in-law)	MAJOR
A11.	Examiner is either a legal guardian or dependent of the candidate or has power of attorney for the candidate	MAJOR
Business, Professional and/or Social Relationships		
A12.	Examiner is currently in or has had a business relationship with the candidate in the last five years (for example, partner in a small business)	MAJOR
A13.	Examiner is in a social relationship with the candidate, such as co-Trustees of a Will or god-parent	MAJOR
A14.	Examiner has a current professional relationship, such as shared membership of a Board or Committee (including editorial and grant decision boards), with the candidate	MINOR
A15.	Examiner has had personal contact with the candidate that may give rise to the perception that the examiner may be dealing with the candidate in a less than objective manner	MINOR

B. Conflict with the Supervisor/Advisor		
Working Relationship		
B1.	Examiner was a candidate of the supervisor within the past five years	MAJOR
B2.	Examiner has co-supervised with the supervisor in the past five years	MAJOR
B3.	Examiner holds a patent with the supervisor granted no more than eight years ago and which is still in force	MAJOR
B4.	Examiner had directly employed or was employed by the supervisor in the past five years	MAJOR
B5.	Examiner holds a current grant with the supervisor	MAJOR[1]
B6.	Examiner has co-authored a publication with the supervisor in the past five years	MAJOR[2]
Personal Relationship		
B7.	Examiner is in negotiation to directly employ or be employed by the supervisor	MAJOR
B8.	Examiner is a known relative of the supervisor	MAJOR
B9.	Examiner and the supervisor have an existing or a previous emotional relationship of de facto, are co-residents or are members of a common household	MAJOR
Legal Relationship		
B10.	Examiner is or was married to the supervisor	MAJOR
B11.	Examiner is legally family (for example, step-father, sister-in-law) to the supervisor	MAJOR
B12.	Examiner is either a legal guardian or dependent of the supervisor or has power of attorney for the supervisor	MAJOR
Business, Professional and/or Social Relationships		
B13.	Examiner is currently in or has had a business relationship with the supervisor in the last five years (for example, partner in a small business or employment)	MAJOR
B14.	Examiner is in a social relationship with the supervisor, such as co-Trustees of a Will or god-parent	MAJOR
B15.	Examiner has a current professional relationship, such as shared membership of a Board or Committee (including editorial and grant decision boards), with the supervisor	MINOR
B16.	Examiner has had personal contact with the supervisor that may give rise to the perception that the examiner may be dealing with the candidate in a less than objective manner	MINOR

1. Mitigating circumstances may exist, for example where the grant in question is held by a large consortium of relatively independent researchers.

2. Mitigating circumstances may exist, for example where the paper in question has a large author list and where the examiner and supervisor have not collaborated directly.

C. Conflict with The University		
Working Relationship		
C1.	Examiner is currently in negotiation with the University for a work contract (other than examining thesis)	MAJOR
C2.	Examiner is currently working for the University pro bono (for example, on a review)	MINOR
C3.	Examiner has examined for the University two or more times in the past 12 months and/or five or more times in the past five years	MINOR[3]
Other Relationship		
C4.	Examiner has received an Honorary Doctorate from the University within the past five years	MAJOR
C5.	Examiner graduated from the University within the past five years	MAJOR
C6.	Examiner has/had a formal grievance with the University	MAJOR
Professional Relationship		
C7.	Examiner is a current member of staff or has a current Honorary, Adjunct or Emeritus position with the University or has had such a position during the candidature of the candidate or in the past five years	MAJOR
C8.	Examiner has a current professional relationship with the University (for example, membership of a Board or Committee)	MINOR
C9.	Examiner has a current Visiting position with The University or has had such a position during the candidature of the candidate or in the past five years	MINOR

3. Mitigating circumstances may exist, for example where an examiner has examined candidates across different Schools of the University

D. Conflict with the subject matter		
Research		
D1.	Examiner has a direct commercial interest in the outcomes of the research	MAJOR

E. Conflict with other examiners		
Working Relationship		
E1.	Examiner works in the same department/school as another examiner	MAJOR
Personal Relationship		
E2.	Examiner is married to, closely related to or has a close personal relationship with another examiner	MAJOR
Professional Relationship		
E3.	Examiner has a professional relationship with another examiner	MINOR

Original May 2011
Updated as ACGR Inc September 2015
Additional text proposed for introduction November 2016