

# 2025 Graduate Research Final Examination Procedures

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# Introduction

The graduate research final examination procedures are intended to assist supervisors, Faculty staff, Faculty Research Degrees Committee, the Graduate Research School and the Thesis Examination Committee in administering and making decisions associated with the thesis examination process.

The procedures provide advice and outline responsibilities and expectations for managing the range of options raised by examiner reports, reconciling disparate reports, moderation and re-examination.

## 1. Related documents

- [UTS Student Rules, Section 11 Graduate Research](#)
- [UTS Graduate Research and Supervision Policy](#)
- [UTS Graduate Research Candidature Management, Thesis Preparation and Submission Procedures](#)
- [Australian Council of Graduate Research conflict of interest guidelines](#)

## 2. General principles for finalising examination recommendations

Finalising examination recommendations is based on academic judgment. The procedures outlined in this section are designed to ensure fairness to the student and recognition of the examiners' expertise and assessment of the thesis.

Each examiner has been nominated by the faculty and appointed by the University on the basis of their expertise and standing and as such, their opinions must be respected and treated seriously. All suggestions made by examiners should be considered and acted on by the student where appropriate.

The student has the right to be protected from the effect of a careless or unfair report, regardless of the reputation and standing of an examiner.

The recommendation rating selected by examiners (Appendix A) are useful summary statements, however, the content of reports as a whole should be taken into account.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities for final examination outcomes

Graduate research student:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Responds to examiners recommendations in revised thesis, completing a thesis response document, submits all necessary documentation to the faculty to complete final examination requirements within the time allocated.</li></ul>
Supervisory panel:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provides advice to the RAO and/or FRDC regarding examiners' recommendation, provides guidance and feedback to the student on response to examiners' recommendation, advising RAO/FRDC on appropriateness of student's revised thesis and response document.</li></ul>
Responsible Academic Officer (RAO):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Defining the examination outcome recommendation for the FRDC or TEC, in consultation with supervisory panel;</li><li>- Review revised thesis and confirm amendments (where relevant).</li><li>- Communicates examination outcome to graduate research student and supervisory panel where applicable.</li></ul>
Faculty Research Degrees Committee (FRDC):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Responsible for considering / approving the recommendation of the RAO for examination outcomes</li><li>- Large faculties may establish school-level examination committees, which report to the FRDC, with responsibilities for considering / approving the recommendation of the RAO for examination</li></ul>

	outcomes and communicating the outcome to graduate research student and supervisory panel.
Faculty/School research office:	- Administer all processes associated with faculty/school level responsibilities of thesis examination outcomes
Graduate Research School (GRS):	- Administer all processes associated with university level responsibilities of thesis examination outcomes
Thesis Examination Committee (TEC):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students may request a review of an examination decision by the Thesis Examination Committee</li> <li>- Responsible for providing advice on developing, overseeing, monitoring, reviewing policies and processes in relation to graduate research thesis examination including determining responsibilities related to university-level and faculty-level thesis examination governance, administration and quality assurance.</li> <li>- Responsible for receiving and reviewing any disputes or irregularities arising from the thesis preparation, submission and examination process and make appropriate recommendations to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Higher Degree Research) for recommendation.</li> <li>- Responsible for considering faculty recommendations for, the conferral of doctoral and masters by research awards.</li> <li>- Responsible for considering Faculty nominations to make recommendations on selection of the UTS doctoral graduates for the Chancellor's Award and the Chancellor's Award List and external programs that recognize higher degree thesis excellence as appropriate.</li> <li>- Responsible for assessing and approving variation to thesis examination procedures and arrangements.</li> </ul>
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Higher Degree Research):	- Recommendation of course completion/conferral of award on advice from relevant committee (FRDC or TEC).

## 4. Procedures for compiling and considering thesis examination reports

The Graduate Research School (GRS) receives and compiles examination reports ensuring the confidentiality request of the examiner(s) and the anonymity of the process is observed. When all reports are received, they are sent to the Responsible Academic Officer (RAO) and Faculty (or School) Research Office. At this stage examiner reports are not to be shared with the graduate research student. The student is provided with the examiner reports and an action plan once endorsed by the relevant committee.

## 5. Preparation of Thesis Examination Recommendations

The Faculty RAO is responsible for preparing the thesis examination recommendations in consultation with the supervisory panel.

After consultation with the supervisory panel, the RAO will draft a thesis examination recommendation to go before the relevant committee.

The thesis examination recommendation and any required thesis revisions and a timeframe by which the revisions must be completed must be documented in the Thesis Submission and Examination form (ResearchMaster).

The delegated committee for approval of the recommendation:

- Faculty RAO: when **ALL** examiner recommendations are 1 or 2 x 1s and 1 x 2 for examinations with three examiners.

- Faculty Research Degrees Committee (FRDC): when all examiner recommendations are a combination of 1 and 2 or 2 x 2s and 1 x 1 for examinations with three examiners.
- Graduate Research School Board – Thesis Examination Committee (TEC): when any examiner recommendation includes a 3 or 4 or if all examiner recommendations are 3 or 4.

Examiner recommendations for each of masters by research and doctoral theses are listed in Appendix A.

## 6. All examiner recommendations are 1 and/or 2

For cases in which all examiners have recommended either 1 and 2 or 2 x 2s and 1 x 1 (for thesis with three examiners), the thesis examination recommendation and any required thesis revisions will be recommended by the RAO, in consultation with the supervisors, to the FRDC.

Recommendations should be based exclusively on the recommendations provided by examiners.

Possible examination outcome recommendations are:

1. **Pass** - No amendments to content required; or only as amendments involving typographical errors, formatting issues or other amendments that have no bearing on the intellectual quality of the overall thesis. The RAO verifies the edits have been addressed; or
2. **Pass with amendments** - Amendments to content are required. In this case, examiners must provide a list and explanation of each required revision. The student must address the examiners' criticisms to the satisfaction of the RAO. These revisions will be reviewed and verified by the RAO in consultation with the supervisory panel.

Where ALL examiners have recommended 1, or 2 x 1 and 1 x 2 (for examinations with three examiners) the RAO has the delegation to make a recommendation and the recommendation does not need to go to the FRDC. RAO's recommendation to be tabled at the next available FRDC.

Where the recommendations include 2s (2 x 2s and 1 x 1 for examinations with three examiners), the FRDC is responsible for considering / approving the recommendation of the RAO. Deliberations of the FRDC must be recorded in minutes and outcomes communicated to the student and supervisory panel. In their communication to the student and supervisory panel of the recommendation, the Faculty RAO and/or the FRDC must provide the following documents:

1. Copy of the examiner reports
2. Final recommendation approved by the committee and required revisions using the Thesis Submission and Examination form (ResearchMaster)
3. Timeline for student to complete the revisions for supervisor and Faculty approval
4. Timeline for submission for Graduation (6 months from release of results as per Student Rule [11.20.5](#))

The graduate research student is responsible for completing the revisions to the thesis under the guidance of their supervisory panel. When responding to recommendations 1 or 2, the student must also produce a thesis revision response document using the template (Appendix C).

To complete the examination outcome if recommendation is 2, the graduate research student submits the following to the faculty for RAO approval:

- Digital version of the revised thesis
- Thesis revision response document
- Supervisory panel endorsement for thesis revisions

Once the RAO approves the revised thesis based on recommendation 1 or 2, the student moves to submit the thesis to complete the examination process.

To complete the examination process if Recommendation 1, or once the RAO has approved the thesis revisions based for Recommendations 1 or 2, the student submits the following to the faculty/school (via Final Thesis Submission form on ResearchMaster):

- Final thesis in digital form
- Thesis revision response document (if recommendations 1 or 2)
- Supervisory panel endorsement for thesis revisions (if recommendations 1 or 2)
- Thesis must contain Certificate of Authorship, including Research Training Program statement
- 100-200 words abstract
- Embargo request form (if appropriate)

To complete the examination process, the faculty/school sends the Graduate Research School (via ResearchMaster):

- All documents submitted by the student (as above)

Any revisions to the thesis that do not require resubmission for re-examination, must be completed to the satisfaction of the RAO and submitted for graduation within six months of date of examination outcome notification (Rule 11.20 (5) – Examination of Thesis).

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Higher Degree Research)/Chair of the Thesis Examination Committee, acting on behalf of the Thesis Examination Committee considers/endorsees the recommendation.

The Graduate Research School will then proceed to complete the requirements for degree completion and conferral in partnership with Lifetime Learner Experience Unit.

## 7. If any of the examiner recommendations are 3 or 4

For a thesis where any examiner has recommended a 3 or 4, the FRDC must review the examiner reports and suggest a recommendation to the TEC.

Recommendations should only be based on the recommendations provided by examiners.

Possible recommendations for both masters by research and doctoral degrees are:

1. **Pass** - No amendments to content required; or only amendments involving typographical errors, formatting issues or other edits that have no bearing on the intellectual quality of the overall thesis. The RAO verifies the edits have been addressed.
  - The FRDC may recommend that the student address all recommendations without making substantive changes.
2. **Pass with amendments** - Amendments to content are required. In this case, Examiners must provide a list and explanation of each required revision. The student must address the examiners' criticisms to the satisfaction of the RAO. These revisions will be reviewed and verified by the RAO in consultation with the supervisory panel.
3. **Resubmission and re-examination** – Substantial and/or considerable changes to in the content of the thesis are required but can be resolved with major revision. Examiners must provide a list and explanation of the required changes. Based on the examiner recommendation on the revised thesis, the RAO in consultation with the supervisory panel, makes a recommendation to the TEC. A resubmitted thesis may only be awarded a result of 1, 2 or 4\*.
  - Where the re-examination recommendations are 1 or 2. The final recommendation does not need to be reviewed at TEC level, either the RAO/FRDC can make a recommendation.
  - The thesis will go back to the examiner who requested the re-examination if available. Otherwise a new examiner will be appointed.
4. **Fail** - The thesis has serious irredeemable flaws and is not of a standard to be awarded the degree..

The proposed recommendation must be documented via the Thesis Submission and Examination form (ResearchMaster).

The TEC is responsible for considering approving the recommendation of the FRDC. Deliberations of the TEC must be recorded in minutes and outcomes communicated to the Chair of the FRDC who will be responsible for communicating the outcome to the student and supervisory panel following FRDC process.

## **8. Appointing an additional examiner**

Under certain circumstances an additional examiner may need to be appointed after reports have been received in cases where the two examiner reports do not point to a clear outcome or strategy for bringing the examination process to a conclusion.

### **8.1 Process for appointing an additional examiner**

In cases where the faculty is unable to reconcile recommendations of the original examiners, the FRDC may recommend to the TEC that an additional examiner be appointed to examine the thesis.

The additional examiner is appointed to examine the thesis as a full examiner, i.e. complete the usual examiner's report and make a recommendation on the thesis.

The faculty will nominate an additional examiner in consultation with the supervisors or from the original list (if relevant) by completing the [Request New Examiner Form](#) and submitting it to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Higher Degree Research) for approval.

The examiner will be advised that this is the result of a re-examination and will be provided with the revised thesis, the list of revisions in the appropriate format and redacted original examination reports. The identity of the original examiners will not be disclosed.

Upon receiving the examiner report from the additional examiner, the process for reaching recommendation must follow the abovementioned process based on examiner recommendation.

## **9. Procedures for re-examination**

A thesis may be sent out for re-examination if the outcome of the original examination was that the thesis be resubmitted for re-examination (Rule 11.20.6). A thesis may only be submitted for re-examination once (Rule 11.20.7). The list of re-examination recommendations is provided in Appendix A.

### **9.1 Period of re-examination**

The student will be given 6 months from the outcome notification date to re-submit for re-examination. The FRDC may make a recommendation to the TEC, if it assesses that the student will need more than 6 months to resubmit.

A student who is required to resubmit for re-examination will remain in under examination status until the outcome of re-examination is finalised.

### **9.2 When original examiners are available**

The original examiner/s will be used in cases where they have indicated that they are available and are willing to re-examine.

In such cases, the examiner/s will be advised that the thesis is a re-examination and asked to write a report and make a recommendation (as outlined in Appendix A). The examiners will be provided with the list of corrections completed by the student and the revised thesis.

### 9.3 When original examiners are not available

New examiners must be appointed in cases when the original examiner/s are not available to examine.

In such cases, the examiner/s will be advised that the thesis is a re-examination and asked to write a report and make a recommendation (as outlined in Appendix A). The examiner/s will be provided with the revised thesis, and the list of revisions in the appropriate format and redacted original examination reports. The identity or recommendations of the original examiners will not be disclosed.

## 10. Procedures for finalising re-examination outcomes

The Faculty RAO must review the re-examination reports as well as the original set of examiner reports. The Faculty RAO will consider whether the student can be admitted to the degree, only re-examination outcome 4 needs to be reviewed by the TEC..

Possible recommendations for both Masters and Doctoral degrees are:

1. **Pass** - No amendments to content required; or only amendments involving typographical errors, formatting issues or other edits that have no bearing on the intellectual quality of the overall thesis. The RAO verifies the edits have been addressed; or
2. **Pass with amendments** - Amendments to content are required that do not change the substantive conclusion of the thesis. In this case, examiners must provide a list and explanation of each required revision. The student must address the examiners' criticisms to the satisfaction of the RAO. These revisions will be reviewed and verified by the RAO in consultation with the supervisory panel (does not need to go to the TEC);
  - This recommendation must be accompanied by a list of required revisions and the revisions must be completed within 6 months unless otherwise indicated by the FRDC; or
3. **Fail** - The thesis has serious irredeemable flaws and is not of a standard to be awarded the degree. Theses may only be re-examined once.
  - A student who is not recommended for admission to any research degree will have his/her candidature terminated ([Rule 11.23 - Discontinuation of Candidature](#)).



## Appendix A: Examiner recommendations – initial and re-examination

### 1. Initial examination – recommendations

Examiners are asked to choose one of the following four recommendations:

1. **Pass** - No amendments to content required; or only amendments involving, typographical errors, formatting issues or other edits that have no bearing on the intellectual quality of the overall thesis. The RAO verifies the edits have been addressed; or
2. **Pass with amendments** - Amendments to content are required that do not change the substantive conclusion of the thesis. In this case, examiners must provide a list and explanation of each required revision. The student must address the examiners' criticisms to the satisfaction of the RAO. These revisions will be reviewed and verified by the RAO in consultation with the supervisory panel; or
3. **Resubmission and re-examination** - Substantial and/or considerable changes to in the content of the thesis are required but can be resolved with major revision. Examiners must provide a list and explanation of the required changes. The revised thesis is returned to the RAO who in consultation with the supervisory panel makes a recommendation to the TEC. A resubmitted thesis may only be awarded a result of 1, 2 or 4; or
4. **Fail** - The thesis has serious irredeemable flaws and is not of a standard to be awarded the degree..

### 2. Re-examination – recommendations

If a re-examination is required, examiners are asked to choose one of the following three recommendations:

1. **Pass** - No amendments to content required; or only as amendments involving typographical errors, formatting issues or other edits that have no bearing on the intellectual quality of the overall thesis. The RAO verifies the edits have been addressed; or
2. **Pass with amendments** - Amendments to content are required that do not change the substantive conclusion of the thesis. In this case, examiners must provide a list and explanation of each required revision. The student must address the examiners' criticisms to the satisfaction of the RAO. These revisions will be reviewed and verified by the RAO in consultation with the supervisory panel; or
4. **Fail** - The thesis has serious irredeemable flaws and is not of a standard to be awarded the degree..

## Appendix B: Thesis Revision Response Template\*

Student ID		Student Name		Course Name	
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In consultation with my supervisors, I have revised my thesis in response to each of the examiners' recommendations as indicated below:

Examiner comment	How recommendation addressed in revised thesis	Page number(s) in revised thesis

Note: add rows to the table for each recommendation from each examiner. Respond to ALL the examiners' comments (one-by-one and in order of comments).

**Submitted by:**

Student Name		Signature		Date	
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Supervisor's approval: On behalf of the supervisory panel, I agree with the responses to the reviewer's comments made and endorse that the thesis is now ready for thesis resubmission / final submission.

Principal Supervisor Name		Signature		Date	

RAO approvals: I am satisfied with the responses to the reviewer's comments and approve student to make the necessary changes for the thesis resubmission / final thesis submission for completion.

RAO Name		Signature		Date	
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- All templates can be downloaded from the GRS [webpage](#).

## Appendix C: Preparing Thesis Examination Recommendations

These procedures are intended to assist the Faculty Responsible Academic Officer (RAO), Faculty Research Degrees Committee (FRDC) and Thesis Examination Committee (TEC) in making decisions associated with the thesis examination outcome. The procedures provide advice and expectations for managing the range of options of examiner recommendations, reconciling disparate reports, moderation and re-examination.

The delegated committees for approval of the recommendation is:

- Faculty RAO: when all examiner recommendations are 1 or 2 x 1s and 1 x 2 (for examinations with three examiners).
- FRDC: when all examiner recommendations are 1 and 2 or 2 x 2s and 1 x 1 (for examinations with three examiners)
- TEC: when any examiner recommendation is a 3 or 4.

Examiner recommendations are listed in Appendix A.

### 1. Overarching considerations

It is advised that the supervisory panel, RAO, FRDC, and TEC consider:

- all examiner reports have equal weighting
- the recommendation reached should not compromise the academic integrity of the thesis nor should it devalue the examiner comments.
- the following must be considered to the level required to be admitted to the degree

Masters by Research degrees	Doctoral degrees
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. demonstrates that the student has made significant contribution to the knowledge of the subject concerned</li><li>2. demonstrates that the student can critically reflect on, synthesise and evaluate a substantial and complex body of knowledge in the discipline(s)</li><li>3. demonstrates that the student can communicate research findings, and explain and critique theoretical propositions, methodologies and discipline;</li><li>4. is of satisfactory literary standard.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. provides evidence that the student conducted original research</li><li>2. demonstrates that the student has made significant contribution to the knowledge of the subject concerned</li><li>3. demonstrates that the student can critically reflect on, synthesise and evaluate a substantial and complex body of knowledge in the discipline(s)</li><li>4. shows that the student has a thorough grasp of the appropriate methodological techniques and an awareness of their limitations</li><li>5. demonstrates that the student can communicate research findings, and explain and critique theoretical propositions, methodologies and discipline;</li><li>6. contains material suitable for publication, and</li><li>7. is of satisfactory literary standard.</li></ol>

## 2. Examiner Recommendations are 1 and/or 2

The Faculty Responsible Academic Officer (RAO) is responsible for preparing the Thesis Examination recommendations in consultation with the supervisory panel once examiner reports are received from the Graduate Research School.

After consultation with the supervisory panel, the RAO will draft a thesis examination recommendation to be submitted for approval by the FRDC.

Recommendations should only be based on the recommendations provided by examiners.

Possible examination outcome recommendations for masters by research and doctoral degrees are:

1. **Pass** - No amendments to content required; or only as amendments involving typographical errors, formatting issues or other edits that have no bearing on the intellectual quality of the overall thesis. The RAO verifies the edits have been addressed; or
2. **Pass with amendments** - Amendments to content are required that do not change the substantive conclusion of the thesis. In this case, examiners must provide a list and explanation of each required revision. The student must address the examiners' criticisms to the satisfaction of the RAO. These revisions will be reviewed and verified by the RAO in consultation with the supervisory panel.

Where ALL examiners have recommended 1 or for examinations with three examiners where ALL examiners have recommended 2 x 1 and 1 x 2, the RAO has the delegation to give a Recommendation 1 and release the reports to the student directly to complete the examination process. All comments by RAO to student and Supervisory Panel must be made using Thesis Submission and Examination form (ResearchMaster). The recommendation does not need to go to the FRDC. The outcome must be communicated to the student and supervisory panel by the Faculty RAO.

To complete the examination outcome if recommendation 1, the graduate research student submits the following to the faculty/RAO for recommendation to be admitted to the degree (via Final Thesis Submission form on ResearchMaster):

- Final thesis in digital form
- Thesis revision response document (see template provided Appendix C)
- Supervisory panel endorsement of final thesis and any thesis revisions
- Thesis must contain Certificate of Authorship, including Research Training Program statement
- 100-200 words abstract
- Embargo request form (if appropriate)

All revisions must be made and approved by the Faculty RAO and final thesis must be submitted for graduation within 6 months from date of notification [refer Student Rules 11.20.5].

To complete the examination process, the faculty/school sends the Graduate Research School:

- All documents submitted by the graduate research student (as above)

The FRDC is responsible for considering / approving the recommendation of the RAO for recommendations where there is a 1 and 2 or where there are two 2s and a 1 (for examinations with three examiners). The FRDC must meet on a monthly basis or as required in order to deliberate on examination recommendation for an HDR student. Deliberations of the FRDC must be recorded in minutes and outcomes communicated by the FRDC to the student and supervisory panel. If the meeting was done via electronic means, communication must be held on record. In their communication to the graduate research student and supervisory panel, the FRDC must provide the following documents:

- Copy of the examiner reports
- Copy of the final recommendation approved by the committee including revisions that need to be addressed by the student (see template provided Appendix B)

- Timeline for student to complete the revisions for supervisor and Faculty approval

The graduate research student is responsible for completing the revisions to the thesis under the guidance of their supervisory panel. When responding to recommendations 1 or 2, the graduate research student must also produce a thesis revision response document using the Thesis Revision Response template (Appendix C) available on the Graduate Research website.

To complete the examination outcome if recommendation 1 or 2, the graduate research student submits the following to the faculty for RAO approval:

- Digital version of the revised thesis
- Thesis revision response document (see template provided Appendix C)
- Supervisory panel endorsement for thesis revisions

Once the RAO approves the revised thesis based on recommendation 1 or 2, the graduate research student moves to submit the thesis to complete the examination process.

Once the RAO has approved the thesis revisions based for Recommendations 1 or 2, the graduate research student submits the following to the faculty/school (via Final Thesis Submission form on ResearchMaster):

- Final thesis in digital form
- Thesis revision response document (if recommendations 1 or 2)
- Supervisory panel endorsement for thesis revisions (if recommendations 1 or 2)
- Thesis must include Certificate of Authorship, including Research Training Program statement
- 100-200 words abstract
- Embargo request form (if appropriate)

To complete the examination process, the faculty/school sends the Graduate Research School:

- All documents submitted by the graduate research student (as above)
- A memorandum of recommendation from the RAO that the student be admitted to the degree.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Higher Degree Research)/Chair of the TEC, acting on behalf of the TEC considers/endorsees the recommendation.

The Graduate Research School will then proceed to complete the requirements for degree completion and conferral in partnership with the Lifetime Learner Experience Unit.

### **Workflow and Timeline**

Steps	Responsibility	Action	Recommended Timeline
1	GRS	Forward reports to Faculty upon receipt of all examiner reports meeting UTS guidelines	1 working day
2	Faculty RAO	Reviews examiner reports and forward reports to Supervisory Panel. If ALL examiner recommendations are 1 or 2 x 1 and 1 x 2 (three examiners) then proceed to step 7	Within 2 working days
3	Supervisory Panel and RAO	Consult on examiner recommendations	Within 5 working days
4	Faculty RAO	Commence drafting recommendation for FRDC	Within 5 working days
5	Faculty RO	Organise FRDC meeting	As per RAO timeline
6	FRDC	Review RAO recommendation and approve or recommend alternate recommendation	Within 1 working day
7	Faculty RO	On behalf of RAO/FRDC, inform supervisory panel and student of outcome	Within 1 working day
8	Supervisory Panel	Advise student on addressing the Recommendation	Within 1 working day

9	Graduate Research Student	Address the requirements of the Recommendation	Within 6 months from date of FRDC advice (Student Rules 11.20.5)
10	Student/Supervisor Panel	Recommendation 1 – submit thesis to complete examination process	
11	Graduate Research Student	Recommendation 2 – submit thesis to Supervisor Panel for approval	
12	Supervisory Panel	Review thesis and provide feedback to student	
13	Graduate Research Student	Finalise thesis	
14	Supervisory Panel	Approve thesis	
15	Graduate Research Student	Submit thesis to RAO for approval	
16	RAO	Approve/not approve thesis to complete examination process	
17	Graduate Research Student	If approved, complete submission to Supervisor Panel	
18	Supervisor Panel	Forward final submission to Faculty	
19	RAO	Sign off on final submission	
20	Faculty RO	Forward final submission to GRS	

### 3. If any of the examiner recommendations are 3 or 4

For a thesis where any examiner has recommended a 3 or 4 the FRDC must review the examiner reports and in consultation with the supervisory panel suggest a recommendation to the TEC. Recommendations should be based on the recommendations provided by examiners.

The TEC is responsible for considering / approving the recommendation of the FRDC. The TEC must meet on a monthly basis or as required in order to deliberate on examination recommendations for HDR students. Deliberations of the TEC must be recorded in minutes and outcomes communicated to the Faculty who then communicates the outcome to the student and supervisory panel. If meeting was done via electronic means, communication must be held on record.

Possible recommendations for are:

1. **Pass** - No amendments to content required; or only as amendments involving typographical errors, formatting issues or other edits that have no bearing on the intellectual quality of the overall thesis. The RAO verifies the edits have been addressed.
2. **Pass with amendments** - Amendments to content are required that do not change the substantive conclusion of the thesis. In this case, examiners must provide a list and explanation of each required revision. The student must address the examiners' criticisms to the satisfaction of the RAO. These revisions will be reviewed and verified by the RAO in consultation with the supervisory panel.
  - This recommendation must be accompanied by a list of required revisions and the revisions must be completed within 6 months unless otherwise indicated by the FRDC.
3. **Resubmission and re-examination** - Substantial and/or considerable changes to in the content of the thesis are required but can be resolved with major revision. Examiners must provide a list and explanation of the required changes. The revised thesis is returned to the RAO who in consultation with the supervisory panel makes a recommendation to the TEC. A resubmitted thesis may only be awarded a result of 1, 2 or
  - This recommendation must be accompanied by a suggested period of further study (default period is 6 months) and clear guidance for the focus of the further study.
  - **Fail** - The thesis has serious irredeemable flaws and is not of a standard to be awarded the degree. A student who is not recommended for admission to any research degree will have his/her candidature terminated ([Rule 11.23 - Discontinuation of Candidature](#)).

The proposed recommendation must be documented using the Thesis Submission and Examination form (ResearchMaster). In some circumstance the FRDC may recommend that an additional examiner be appointed, this will need to be requested via the Thesis Submission and Examination form (ResearchMaster) and if approved using the Request New Examiner form (ResearchMaster).

### **Workflow and Timeline**

Steps	Responsibility	Action	Recommended Timeline
1	GRS	Forward reports to Faculty RAO upon receipt of all examiner reports meeting UTS guidelines	1 working day
2	Faculty RAO	Review examiner reports and forward reports to Supervisory Panel	Within 2 working days
3	Supervisory Panel and RAO	Consult on examiner recommendations	Within 5 working days
4	Faculty RAO	Organise FRDC meeting	Within 2 working days
5	FRDC	Review examiner reports, consult with supervisory panel and form a recommendation	Within 5 working days
6	FRDC	Forward recommendation to Thesis Examination Committee (via GRS)	Within 2 working days
7	TEC	Review recommendation and approve or propose alternate recommendation	At TEC meeting
8	GRS	Forward TEC outcome to Faculty RAO	Within 1 working day
9	RAO	Review recommendation and advise student and supervisory panel	Within 2 working days
10	Supervisory panel	Review and advise student on addressing the Recommendation	Within 2 working days
11	Student	Address the requirements of the Recommendation and finalise thesis	As per TEC advice
If Recommendation 2			
1	Graduate Research Student	Submit thesis for Supervisor Panel for approval	Within 6 months from date of TEC advice (refer Student Rules 11.20.5)
2	Supervisor Panel	Approve/not approve thesis to be forwarded to Faculty RAO	
3	Faculty RAO	Review and approve/not approve thesis submission	
4	Graduate Research Student	Finalise and forward final thesis submission to Faculty with Supervisor Panel sign off	
5	RAO	Sign off on final submission	
6	Faculty RO	Forward final submission to GRS	
If Recommendation 3			
1	GRS	Retain student status as ‘under examination’	Within approved candidature period (refer Student Rules 11.20.6) If not specified default 6 months.
2	Supervisory panel	Supervise student through a period of further study and revise thesis for re-examination	
3	Student	Undertake a period of further study and revise thesis for re-submission	
4	Student/Supervisor Panel	Prepare for thesis re-examination; if previous examiners are not available for re-examination nominate new examiners as per nomination of examiner process and forward to Faculty for approval	
5	RAO	If new examiners are required, forward nomination of examiners to GRS as per nomination of examiner process	
6	GRS	Finalise nomination of examiners	

7	Supervisory Panel	Review thesis and provide feedback to student	
8	Student	Finalise thesis	
9	Supervisory Panel	Approve thesis	
10	Student	Submit thesis to RAO for approval	
11	RAO	Approve/not approve thesis to complete examination process	
12	Student	If approved, complete submission to Supervisor Panel	
13	Supervisor Panel	Forward thesis submission to Faculty for re-examination	
14	RAO	Sign off on thesis submission for re-examination	
15	Faculty RO	Forward thesis submission to GRS	
16	GRS	Follow Thesis Re-examination Process	
<b>If Recommendation 4</b>			
1	GRS	Commence Discontinuation Process as per Student Rule 11.23.2 (b)	Discontinuation Process Timeline

To complete the examination outcomes, the graduate research student submits the following to the faculty for RAO approval:

- Digital version of the revised thesis
- Thesis revision response document (see template provided Appendix C)
- Supervisory panel endorsement for thesis revisions

Once the RAO approves the revised thesis, the graduate research student moves to submit the thesis to complete the examination process. The graduate research student submits the following to the faculty/school (via Final Thesis Submission form on ResearchMaster):

- Final thesis in digital form
- Thesis revision response document (if recommendations 1 or 2)
- Supervisory panel endorsement for thesis revisions (if recommendations 1 or 2)
- Thesis must contain Certificate of Authorship, including Research Training Program statement
- 100-200 words abstract
- Embargo request form (if appropriate)

To complete the examination process, the faculty/school sends the Graduate Research School:

- All documents submitted by the graduate research student (as above)

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Higher Degree Research)/Chair of the TEC, acting on behalf of the TEC considers/endorses the recommendation.

The Graduate Research School will then proceed to complete the requirements for degree completion and conferral in partnership with the Lifetime Learners Experience Unit.



<b>Policy contact</b>	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Higher Degree Research)
<b>Approval authority</b>	Higher Degree Research Board
<b>Review year</b>	3
<b>Version</b>	1.5
<b>File number</b>	TBA
<b>Superseded documents</b>	Higher Degrees by Research Examination Guidelines for Faculties

#### *Version history*

<b>Version</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Approval date</b>	<b>Effective date</b>	<b>Sections modified</b>
1.0	Graduate Research School Board (03/20-8.3)	2 June 2020	2 June 2020	New Instrument
1.1	Graduate Research School Board (01/21)	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2021	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2021	Updated according to Action Item
1.2	Graduate Research School board	12 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	12 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Appendix A, B and D
1.3	Graduate Research School Board	1 <sup>st</sup> June 2021	1 <sup>st</sup> June 2021	10, Appendix A and B
1.4	Higher Degree Research Board	7 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	7 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	Reflection of change of Graduate Research School Board name to Higher Degree Research Board

				plus Sections 6 and Appendix B
1.5	Higher Degree Research Board (05/22)	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	Approved changes to examination outcomes