



EXAMINATION OF HIGHER DEGREE BY RESEARCH CANDIDATES

Procedure for the examination of the MIT (Research) thesis

1. Purpose and scope

- 1.1 This Procedure sets out how the thesis of a Master of Information Technology (Research) candidate (the MITR106 thesis) is examined. It gives effect to Standard 1.4.6, which requires that a major assessable research output such as a thesis be assessed by at least two assessors of international standing in the field of research who are competent to undertake the assessment.
- 1.2 This Procedure applies to the examination of the thesis only. It does not govern coursework examinations, which are covered by the Examinations Policy and Procedures. It operates under the Higher Degree by Research Framework and prevails over any earlier examination criteria where there is inconsistency.

2. Principles

- 2.1 Examination is a rigorous, impartial and independent peer review. It is conducted by examiners who are external to LIHE, of international standing, competent in the field, and free of conflicts of interest. The process is fair to the candidate and applies consistent criteria and outcomes.

3. The examiners

3.1 Number and standing

3.1.1 The thesis is examined by at least two (2) external examiners, each of international standing in the field of research. Both examiners must meet this standard; it is not sufficient for only one to be of international standing, and there is no “where feasible” qualification.

3.1.2 “International standing” means recognised standing in the research field beyond Australia, evidenced by a sustained record of peer-reviewed publication, and may be further evidenced by keynote invitations, editorial or grant-review roles, or comparable international esteem indicators.

3.2 Competence to undertake the assessment

3.2.1 Each examiner must be competent to assess the specific thesis, with demonstrated expertise in the candidate’s field of research (field of education 02 Information Technology or a cognate computing discipline). Competence is evidenced by a doctoral qualification and a strong recent (five-year) publication record in the relevant area.

3.3 Independence

3.3.1 Each examiner must be external to LIHE and independent of the research, the candidate and the supervisory panel. The following constitute conflicts of interest that ordinarily disqualify a person from examining:

- Co-authorship or collaboration with the candidate or a supervisor in the past five years;
- A shared grant, institution or commercial interest in the past five years;
- A prior supervisory, teaching, employment or family/close-personal relationship with the candidate; or
- Any financial or personal interest in the outcome of the examination.



3.3.2 Every nominated examiner completes the Examiner Nomination and Conflict of Interest Declaration (LIHE-RES-FRM-015) before appointment.

4. Nomination and approval of examiners

- 4.1 At least three months before the intended submission, the Principal Supervisor (in consultation with the Associate Supervisor and the candidate) nominates at least two, ordinarily three, potential examiners using the Examiner Nomination and Conflict of Interest Declaration form, so that a reserve examiner is available.
- 4.2 The Research Committee approves the examiners, satisfying itself that each meets the standing, competence and independence requirements in Section 3. The candidate may identify, in writing, any person they consider should not examine (for example on grounds of a known conflict); the Research Committee considers such representations.
- 4.3 Examiners are not told the identity of the other examiner, and their reports are prepared independently.

5. Conduct of the examination

- 5.1 The Research Office sends each approved examiner the thesis, this Procedure, the assessment criteria (Appendix A) and the examiner report template, ordinarily allowing six to eight weeks for the report.
- 5.2 Each examiner independently assesses the thesis against the criteria and provides a written report with an overall recommendation from the outcome categories in Section 6.

6. Examination outcomes

- 6.1 Each examiner recommends one of the following outcome categories. These are outcomes, not “grades”; they do not carry numeric weightings. The externally examined thesis determines the MITR106 subject result; the completion seminar and the response to examiners are hurdle requirements.

Outcome	Meaning and next step
Accept	Award without changes.
Accept subject to minor amendments	Editorial or minor corrections to the satisfaction of the HDR Coordinator, typically within four weeks. The thesis is not re-examined.
Accept subject to substantive revisions	Substantive revisions to the satisfaction of the Research Committee (or a nominated examiner), typically within three months. The thesis is not sent for a fresh examination unless the Research Committee directs.
Revise and re-examine	Significant revision and a second examination, typically within six to twelve months. The revised thesis is returned to the examiners (or new examiners) for a further report.



Outcome	Meaning and next step
Not accepted	The thesis does not meet the standard for the degree. The Research Committee determines the consequence, including any final opportunity available under the Higher Degree by Research Framework.

6.2 Where a candidate completes required amendments or revisions, the HDR Coordinator or Research Committee (as applicable) confirms in writing that the requirements are met before the result is finalised. The confirmation records that the thesis outcome is satisfied; there is no separate re-grading step.

7. Reconciling examiner reports

7.1 Where the examiners' recommendations are consistent, the reports proceed to the HDR Coordinator, panel and candidate. Where they differ materially, the Research Committee adjudicates and may: appoint an additional (third) examiner of equal standing whose report assists the determination; invite the examiners to confer; or determine the matter on the reports. The Research Committee's determination is recorded with reasons.

8. Completion, appeal and records

8.1 Once the outcome is satisfied and any revisions confirmed, the candidate submits the final thesis for deposit in the Research Repository (subject to any approved embargo), and the Research Committee recommends conferral to the Academic Board.

8.2 A candidate may appeal an examination decision under Section 9 of the Higher Degree by Research Framework and the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy, on grounds of procedural irregularity or new and substantial evidence; academic judgement alone is not a ground. Nothing limits access to the National Student Ombudsman.

8.3 Examiner nominations, declarations, reports and determinations are retained by the Research Office for a minimum of seven (7) years, consistent with the Data and Records Integrity Policy and the Research Data and Outputs Procedure.



Appendix A — THESIS EXAMINATION CRITERIA

Each examiner assesses the thesis against the following criteria and provides a rating and written comments for each, then an overall recommendation from Section 6. The criteria map to the MITR106 subject learning outcomes (SLOs) and the course learning outcomes (CLOs), addressing the alignment concern in the Assessment Report.

Criterion	Weighting	Mapped outcomes
Original contribution to knowledge in the field	25%	SLO1, SLO2; CLO1, CLO2
Command of the literature and scholarly context	15%	SLO1; CLO2
Soundness of research design and methodology	20%	SLO2, SLO3; CLO3
Rigour of analysis, results and interpretation	20%	SLO3, SLO4; CLO3, CLO4
Quality of argument, structure and scholarly presentation	20%	SLO4, SLO5; CLO4, CLO5

Rating scale for each criterion: Outstanding / Good / Satisfactory / Needs revision / Unsatisfactory. The overall recommendation is one of the outcome categories in Section 6. This replaces the previous two-level “satisfied / not satisfied” rubric, which the Assessment Report found insufficient for a major output (para 105).