HD R Examination Guidelines

DATE: November 2012
APPROVED: CMBE/CPMS Education Committee 10/12/12

Purpose
The College of Medicine, Biology & Environment (CMBE), and the College of Physical & Mathematical Sciences (CPMS) guidelines on HDR examinations aim to ensure high quality, independent and timely examination of HDR theses. This document sets out the conditions for examinations and appointment of examiners and should be read in conjunction with the Research Award Rules http://about.anu.edu.au/__documents/rules/researchawardsrules2012-3.pdf

Nomination of Examiners
- Students should be given the opportunity to discuss potential examiners, but must not know the names of the final examiners chosen.
- It is a requirement of the examination that no fewer than two external expert examiners of international standing are appointed.
- Within CMBE/CPMS the expectation for a PhD examination is that at least one of the two external expert examiners is an international academic. If no international examiners are appointed, the School must provide a justification when submitting the Nomination form to the College Student Administration.
- Whether two or three examiners are appointed is at the discretion of the School.
- The examiners are to be appointed before the thesis is submitted to minimise delays in the examination process.
- The examiners must be made aware of the expectation to provide the report within two months.
- The examiners should not have been involved with the project and should not have recently (within 5 years) published or closely collaborated with the candidate or members of the supervisory panel. For further information on Conflict of Interest in HDR examinations see: http://www.ddogs.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2011//2012/06/DDoGS-COI.pdf
- All examiners should be experts in the topic of the thesis (or in different aspects of an interdisciplinary or multi-faceted thesis).
- At least one examiner should have significant expertise in supervising PhD students and in examining theses.
- When submitting a Nomination of Examiners Form, the supervisor should provide a short CV or biosketch for each nominated examiner, which highlights why they are suitable to examine the thesis. A recent publication record (last 5 years) must be included. A print-out with relevant information from website(s) will suffice.

Initial Examination
- The School should monitor the length of the examination and be in contact with the HDR Examinations Office if there are delays beyond 3 months.
- If the delays become excessive they should notify the College and consider appointing an additional examiner.
Prohibited Communications

- Neither the student nor any member of the panel should communicate directly with an examiner during the course of the examination.

Head of Department/Delegated Authority Recommendation on Receipt of Reports

- Under no circumstances are the examiners’ recommendations to be provided to the student by the School. The HDR Examinations Office will send an anonymous version of the reports to the student once the recommendation has been approved.
- If an examiner makes any statement in their report that questions the integrity of the thesis (plagiarism, other forms of misconduct), the School must immediately notify the College.
- A recommendation on the outcome of the examination can be made on receipt of two consistent examiners reports (even in cases where three examiners were nominated). However, this should not occur within the normal timeframe of examination (two months).
- When intending to make a recommendation on the basis of two (out of three) reports, the School should request the Examinations Office to contact the third examiner to ask for the intended date of submission of the report, and/or to give the examiner an opportunity to withdraw from the examination.
- In cases where the recommendations of the examiners are divergent, the Head of Department/Delegated Authority should provide a justification for their recommendation. In cases of significant disparity an additional examiner should be appointed. All examiners reports received must be submitted to the College Office with the recommendation paperwork.

College Approval

- The examiners make a recommendation to the University; the College Dean (in CMBE/CPMS the role is that of the Director of Science Education or Dean of Medicine & Health Sciences dependent on discipline) determines the outcome of the examination.
- The College will require amendments to the thesis before award of the degree if the examiners note typographical or other minor errors, even in cases where the examiners have recommended unconditional award.

Response to Examiners Comments

- When a student is required to undertake revisions to the satisfaction of the Delegated Authority, it is a CMBE/CPMS requirement that they provide a document outlining the revisions made in response to the examiners comments when submitting the revised thesis for approval by the College Dean.

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* There is no requirement for an international examiner, although the examiners should still be of international standing for an MPhil or DPsych examination.

* If there has been a recent collaboration or publication between a nominated examiner and a supervisor, a statement justifying the nomination and addressing the potential conflict of interest must be provided for consideration by the Dean.