

Policy number	P28	Version	3
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## 1 Purpose

This policy is to provide clarity for National Institute of Organisation Dynamics Australia (NIODA) candidates about the examination of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree.

This policy is informed by the Australian Council of Graduate Research Framework for Best Practice in Doctoral Examination in Australia<sup>1</sup>.

## 2 Scope

This policy applies to the PhD Course Lead/s, teaching staff, supervisors and candidates.

## 3 Eligibility to Submit

In order to be eligible to submit a thesis for examination, candidates must have:

- been enrolled for at least the minimum duration of candidature in accordance with the *PhD Progression and Exclusion policy*
- successfully completed all PhD progression requirements in accordance with the *PhD Progression and Exclusion policy*
- have paid any outstanding fees or be up-to-date with approved payment arrangements.

## 4 Preparing for Submission

Requirements for submission are that the:

- candidate has a current enrolment when they submit
- principal supervisor has approved the thesis as being of examinable standard
- PhD Course Committee has approved the thesis for submission.

## 5 Format for Submission

An electronic copy of the thesis in PDF format must be forwarded to the primary supervisor.

The thesis shall contain all of the following, in the order outlined below:

- a title page including the name of the thesis, the full name and qualifications of the candidate, the name of the Institute of Higher Education (i.e. NIODA), the award for which the thesis is being submitted (i.e. Doctor of Philosophy)
- the following signed and dated declaration by the candidate:

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Council for Graduate Research, <http://ddogs.edu.au>

- except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the candidate alone
- the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or part, to qualify for any other academic award
- the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research course
- any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged
- ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed
- acknowledgements, if any
- a table of contents and where applicable, lists of diagrams, tables, images etc.
- an abstract of the research in not more than 1,000 words
- a list of references conforming to a recognised international standard appropriate to the discipline
- the thesis must be in English and written in a clearly readable font (no smaller than ten point)
- figures, tables, images etc. must carry a number and a caption placed as close to the relevant text as possible
- the pages of the thesis, from the title page to table of contents, must be numbered in Roman numerals then, commencing with the first page of the abstract, Arabic numerals must be used.

### **6 Appointment of Examiners**

The appointment of examiners is in accordance with the Australian Council for Graduate Research Conflict of Interest Guidelines (Appendix 1).

Candidates may request the exclusion of specific individuals as their examiners. The request, including broad justification should be provided to the principal supervisor.

The principal supervisor nominates potential examiners, in consultation, with the candidate to the PhD Course Committee.

Potential examiners are provided with:

- name of the candidate
- an abstract of the research
- Guidelines for Examiners: Doctor of Philosophy Examination Criteria
- likely submission date for the thesis

The PhD Course Committee should satisfy themselves that examiners have the necessary knowledge and experience to examine the topic and have the time available to examine the thesis.

The PhD Course Committee appoints three external and independent examiners, at least one of whom must come from out of Australia. In the first instance, two of the examiners are invited to examine the thesis. In the event that these examiners cannot concur, the third examiner is invited to examine the thesis.

Potential examiners must be informed that:

- they will receive an electronic copy of the thesis for examination
- the final recommendation and Examiners Report must be completed by the examiner within three months of receiving the electronic copy of the thesis unless otherwise negotiated with the primary supervisor
- a candidate may request full details of their examination including examiners reports and names.

## 7 Examination Criteria

Examiners assess theses according to the following examination criteria:

- a substantial, original and significant contribution to the knowledge or understanding to the field of systems psychodynamics
- an expert understanding of theoretical knowledge and the ability to reflect critically on relevant theory and practice
- intellectual independence in evaluation existing knowledge and ideas, and planning and undertaking systematic investigation to generate original knowledge
- technical and creative skills, including use of relevant research principles and methods, application to the field of systems psychodynamics
- communication skills to explain and critique the field of research, including the ability to present a sustained argument
- an ethical approach and a high level of research integrity.

## 8 Examiners Recommendations

After examination, examiners shall prepare a brief report making one of the following recommendations:

Recommendation	Definition
<p>Passed (R1)</p>	<p>The candidate should be awarded the degree with no requirements for amendment other than corrections of an editorial nature.</p> <p>Amendments, if any, to be made within four weeks of classification.</p> <p>Amendments must be approved by the primary supervisor, without further reference to the examiner/s.</p>
<p>Passed subject to specific, minor amendment (R2)</p>	<p>The candidate should be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments, based on the examiners' specific recommendations. Recommended amendments should facilitate an improved presentation of the research and its conclusions.</p> <p>Amendments should be made within six weeks of classification.</p> <p>Amendments must be approved by the principal supervisor and the PhD Course Committee, without further reference to the examiner/s.</p>

Revise and resubmit (R3)	The candidate should <b>not yet</b> be awarded the degree. Substantial revisions and a re-examination are required before a pass can be considered. Recommendations from the examiner/s may include further research, rewriting, re-organisation and/or re-conceptualisation of the research.  Amendments must be approved by the principal supervisor and the PhD Course Committee.  Resubmission for further examination is to take place within 12 months of the initial classification.
Failed (R4)	No amendments allowed. The candidate should not be awarded the degree. The research does not meet the examination criteria for the degree specified by NIODA.

## 9 Advice to Candidates

The Principal Supervisor, by notice in writing, advises candidates of the results of the examiners assessments.

In the case of **Passed** or **Passed Subject to Specific Minor Amendment** results, the PhD Course Committee notifies the candidate of the submission date for the final electronic archival copy of the thesis and/or required amendments if necessary.

For **Revise and Resubmit** results, the PhD Course Committee notifies the candidate and supervisors of the expected resubmission date for the amended thesis.

Revise and Resubmit results are not considered final results because further examination of the work must be undertaken.

Following resubmission the original examiners are invited to re-examine the thesis. If either are not available, new examiners are appointed. Original examiners are provided with a copy of their original examiners' report.

Following a **Failed** result, candidates are not permitted to revise and resubmit their thesis and are not awarded a degree.

## 10 Duration

In general, it takes approximately three months from the date of submission to the date the examiners reports are received, but delays can sometimes occur for various reasons:

- delays in appointment of examiners
- examiners may take longer than three months due to personal or professional reasons. In this case the PhD Course Committee makes regular contact with the examiner to agree and uphold a revised time frame.

## 11 Final Form and Library Copy

Within four weeks of the completion and approval of amendments required by the examiner/s (or the presentation of a case why they do not need to be made) candidates must provide a final electronic archival copy and two bound hard copies of the thesis to their primary supervisor who forward it to the

PhD Course Committee. The bound copies of the thesis are normally printed single-sided. To allow for binding, they must be printed with a margin of 4 to 4.5 cm on the left-hand edge of each page.

The final copies of the thesis must have deep blue cover with gold lettering on the spine that identifies the candidates initials and surname, the name of the thesis, the name of the award, i.e. PhD, the year awarded and the name of the awarding institution i.e. NIODA. All final copies must include a NIODA branded title page.

A doctoral citation (for inclusion in the graduation program) must be submitted with the final copies of the thesis. The citation is to be prepared by the candidate (in conjunction with the primary supervisor) and should be written in a manner which clearly describes the nature of the research and its outcomes and value.

All citations are reviewed and approved by the PhD Course Committee.

## **12 Graduation and Conferral**

The PhD Course Committee notifies candidates and supervisors in writing when all of the academic and administrative requirements for the award of the degree have been fulfilled, and the anticipated date of the graduation ceremony.

This is then referred to the Academic Board of Governance who recommends to the NIODA Board of Governance to confer the award.

Candidates are not permitted to use the title 'Doctor' until the award has been conferred at the graduation ceremony. If candidates are unable to attend the ceremony they can apply to the PhD Course Committee to have the degree conferred by mail.

## **13 Grievances**

Further and final appeal about PhD examination issues can be made to the Academic Board of Governance as per Candidate and Student Grievance Policy. The policy is published on the NIODA website (<http://www.nioda.org.au>)

## **14 Related Documents**

Assessment Policy

PhD Progression and Exclusion policy

Guidelines for Examiners: Doctor of Philosophy

PhD Examiners Report

Candidate and Student Grievance Policy

## Appendix 1: Australian Council of Graduate Research (ACGR) Conflict of Interest 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 and classification of theses assumes that examiners undertake the task independently and without bias. Professional and personal relationships between examiners and a candidate 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 of 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 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.

In managing conflicts of interest 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.

### Conflicts of Interest

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.

This list is indicative and is not to be considered exhaustive.

<b>A. Conflict with the Candidate</b>	
<i>Working Relationship</i>	
A1. Examiner has co-authored a paper with the candidate within the last five years	MAJOR

## PhD Examination Process Policy

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
<b>Personal Relationship</b>	
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
<b>Legal Relationship</b>	
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
<b>Business, Professional and/or Social Relationships</b>	
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>B. Conflict with the Supervisor/Advisor</b>	
<b>Working Relationship</b>	
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

## PhD Examination Process Policy

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 <sup>1</sup>
B6. Examiner has co-authored a publication with the supervisor in the past five years	MAJOR <sup>2</sup>
<b><i>Personal Relationship</i></b>	
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
<b><i>Legal Relationship</i></b>	
B10. Examiner is or was married to the supervisor	MAJOR
B11. Examiner is legally family to the supervisor (for example, step- father, sister-in-law)	MAJOR
B12. Examiner is either a legal guardian or dependent of the supervisor or has power of attorney for the supervisor	MAJOR
<b><i>Business, Professional and/or Social Relationships</i></b>	
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)	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 paper in question has a large author list and where the examiner and supervisor have not collaborated directly.

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### C. Conflict with the University



# PhD Examination Process Policy

<b>Working Relationship</b>	
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 <sup>3</sup>
<b>Other Relationship</b>	
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
<b>Professional Relationships</b>	
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

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

<b>D. Conflict with the subject</b>	
<b>Research</b>	
D1. Examiner has a direct commercial interest in the outcomes of the research	MAJOR

<b>E. Conflict with other examiners</b>	
<b>Working Relationship</b>	
E1. Examiner works in the same department/school as another examiner	MAJOR
<b>Personal Relationship</b>	

E2. Examiner is married to, closely related to or has a close personal relationship with another examiner	MAJOR
<b><i>Professional Relationships</i></b>	
E3. Examiner has a professional relationship with another examiner	MINOR

## **Additional notes on management of the guidelines**

In managing the Conflict of Interest guidelines, it is useful to remind those who are nominating examiners that the purpose of the guidelines is to ensure the independence of the examination in both fact and perception. The guidelines are designed to protect the candidate, examiner and the University against potential negative perceptions during and beyond the examination process. There is no presumption that any individual will behave inappropriately.

It would be unreasonable to expect potential examiners to make decisions about their suitability to examine (with reference to these or other guidelines), though it is reasonable to expect them to declare conflicts of interest and to make provision for this in examiners' reporting forms. The nomination of examiners is best made by the supervisory team and/or enrolling school and subsequently formally approved by a third party. In many institutions formal approval will be by delegated authority of the Board of the Graduate Research School or equivalent.

The most frequent concerns raised by supervisors relate to conflicts of interest between an examiner and a supervisor/advisor especially with respect to co-authorship (B6). There is occasionally a tension between the need to find an independent examiner and the need to find an examiner with expertise in the field of the thesis, especially where the field is considered to be particularly narrow. It may be useful here to keep in mind that specific expertise in the narrow field of the thesis is not the only (nor necessarily the primary) consideration in selecting a potential examiner. An examiner's broad knowledge of the particular field of research, experience as a supervisor of HOR candidates and examiner of HOR theses, plus their broad familiarity with the expectations of Australian HOR courses are all considerations in the selection of appropriate examiners.

The most frequent concern raised by candidates is in relation to formal and informal contact between the candidate and potential examiners (A2). Candidates often ask if they should avoid attending conferences organised by a potential examiner or at which they may have contact with a potential examiner, avoid presenting papers in a department at which a potential examiner works, or avoid submitting papers to a journal edited by a potential examiner. No conflict of interest exists in these cases and it would defy common sense to consider proscribing such valuable activities. As a general rule of thumb, a conflict of interest exists where a potential examiner has worked with the candidate on matters of synthesis or analysis or has maintained a correspondence or other contact over an extended period in which the research has been discussed.