Guidelines for Examination of PhD Theses

1. **Standard of Examination**
   To qualify for the degree, the Candidate is required:

   (a) to carry out independent research involving a comprehensive study of a scope and size that could normally be expected to be completed in the equivalent of three to four years full-time study.

   (b) to make a substantial contribution to learning and demonstrate a capacity to relate research undertaken by the Candidate to the discipline or disciplines within which it falls, at the standard internationally recognised for the degree in the relevant discipline or disciplines.

   The present Candidate has not been required to submit any material for examination other than the thesis now presented. The present submission, therefore, contains all the written material by which the Candidate's qualifications for admission to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy will be assessed. The candidate may, however, be required to defend the thesis at an oral examination (see Section 2 below).

   A thesis is to be a complete study incorporating an account of the result of the Candidate's work during his/her approved course. The thesis must be a connected piece of writing which may comprise a series of papers on related topics, provided that these are accompanied by an adequate explanation of their relationship to each other and to the wider context of the subject. The thesis or component parts thereof may, if already published, be submitted in the published form.

   Where part of the work has been undertaken with others, the Supervisor(s) will have certified to the University that, to the best of their knowledge, the statement provided by the candidate as to the extent of the candidate's contribution is correct. Examiners should in such cases satisfy themselves that the contribution is sufficient to qualify the Candidate for admission to the degree.

   Theses are normally submitted for examination when both Supervisor(s) and the Candidate agree that the thesis is ready for examination. However, to protect the rights of candidates, a Candidate may submit a thesis for examination, even if this is against the advice of the Supervisor(s).

2. **Oral Examination**
   The Research Students and Scholarship Committee reserves the right to request that an oral examination be held if considered necessary. Oral examinations, at which candidates defend their thesis, are not part of the normal thesis examination process at Edith Cowan University and are only held under exceptional circumstances.

3. **Examiners’ Reports and Recommendations**
   Each examiner is asked to submit an independent report to Research Assessments, Student Services Centre. Examiners are asked to report as promptly as possible, and within six weeks of receiving the thesis. If some delay appears likely Research Assessments should be advised (telephone: (08) 6304 3911 or email: researchassessments@ecu.edu.au) so that alternative arrangements may be made if this seems to be desirable.
The Examiner’s report comprises two parts; a summary recommendation and a detailed report, which outlines the basis for the recommendation.

**Summary report:** The examiner is asked to recommend one of the following:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>that the thesis be accepted as satisfactory of the award of the degree;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>that provided the listed minor textual errors are corrected to the satisfaction of the Supervisor, the thesis be accepted as satisfactory of the award of the degree;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii)</td>
<td>that provided passages referred to are revised to the satisfaction of the Head of School (or nominee), or the candidate provides a satisfactory defence, the thesis be accepted as satisfactory for the award of the degree;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv)</td>
<td>that, although the thesis does not meet the standard expected for the degree, the candidate be allowed to revise and to resubmit it;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v)</td>
<td>that the thesis be rejected and that the degree be not awarded.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In making a detailed report on the thesis, Examiners comments and suggestions should be full enough to enable the University to gauge the quality of the thesis. Comments on the following would be appreciated:

- the extent to which the candidate has demonstrated
  - originality
  - critical insight
  - capacity to carry out independent research; and
- the extent of the contribution to knowledge made by the thesis, and in particular its contribution to the understanding of the subject with which it deals.

Guidance for any revision or textual correction referred to in the examiner’s summary recommendation should be included. If your summary recommendation is for admission to the degree subject to minor amendments, please specify clearly what is required of the candidate before admission to the degree.

When a recommendation is made that the candidate be allowed to revise and resubmit the thesis, it is particularly important to give sufficiently specific indications of the nature of the required revisions.

Examiners are invited to provide reports on the basis of a written undertaking from the University that their reports will be treated on an *in confidence* basis. Other than as set out below, access to such reports will therefore be limited to the Dean of the Graduate Research School, Head of School, supervisors(s), the Candidate and, where appropriate, to committees considering the award of prizes for excellence in higher degrees by research.

The Examiner may wish to provide a report on the basis that their identity is concealed from the Candidate or Candidate and Supervisor after they have been considered by the Research Students and Scholarships Committee.
4. **Subsequent University Procedures**

The Research Students and Scholarships Committee will determine the outcome of the thesis examination and recommend that: the thesis be passed in its current form; or the Candidate be required to make amendments to the thesis that are checked and certified by the relevant Head of School; or, the thesis be revised and submitted for re-examination; or the thesis be failed. Where a thesis is to be revised and submitted for re-examination, the candidate will be required to submit the thesis within one year for re-examination, and it will normally be returned to those examiners that recommended the re-examination.

**More information**

Research Assessments, Student Services Centre
Telephone: (61 8) 6304 3911
Email: researchassessments@ecu.edu.au