Master of Research (MRes) Examination Information 2014

Process

Nomination of Examiners

Each Masters of Research (MRes) thesis is to be examined by two experts in the field external to the university. Departments are encouraged to begin approaching examiners six months prior to the thesis submission deadline, which is October 10, 2014. This is to ensure examiners are available and commit to the short examination schedule. The aim is that MRes results will be processed at Academic Senate’s regular examination meeting in December¹.

The university encourages departments to consider appointing panels of examiners to examine several theses. This allows for efficiency and parity of standard. Normally an examiner should not be appointed to mark more than four MRes theses in any examination round. Departments with high enrolment numbers can apply to the Dean HDR, to have this cap extended.

Appointment of examiners should be on the Master of Research Nomination of Examiners form. There should be a separate Nomination form for each candidate, but where an examiner is being nominated for a number of candidates, there only needs to be one set of supporting documentation. Appointment of examiners must conform to the Macquarie University Policy on thesis examination (http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/hdr_thesis/policy.html), and refer to the definition of conflict of interest in the Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Research Conflict of Interest Guidelines (http://staff.mq.edu.au/research/hdr_supervision/useful_links_for_hdr_supervision/ ). For the purposes of MRes examination, the university will not require that at least one examiner be national and one international. Candidates must be given the opportunity to nominate any person they do not want to examine the thesis. Appointment of Examiners forms are approved by the Associate Dean, HDR in the faculty.

Examination Process

Two copies of the thesis should be submitted to HDRO, by the due date accompanied by:

- Submission of Master of Research Thesis form, and
- Author’s Consent Form.

These forms will be available via the HDR website (hdr.mq.edu.au).

MRes theses will be sent out for examination by the Higher Degree Research Office. Examiners will return their reports to HDRO.

¹ It is likely that the results for a small number of candidates will not be finalised by the Senate meeting (due to the candidate requiring an extension, or examiner delay). For these candidates, results will be processed as quickly as possible for the next scheduled Senate meeting. HDR candidature is time-based, which means candidates can enrol on any day of the year and do not need to wait for the beginning of semester to enrol. Candidates waiting for their MRes results in order to enrol in HDR, will be able to enrol as soon as Senate ratifies their result.
Examiners are asked to make a recommendation in one of the four categories used for HDR thesis examination: Award; Award (After Corrections), Revise and Re-examine or Not Award. The Revise and Re-examine category should only be recommended if the thesis mark is less than 50%. Candidates in this category will be re-enrolled for a period of up to six months, and can only receive a mark of maximum 64% after re-examination.

Examiners are asked to provide a percentage mark for each thesis, and the final percentage result for each candidate will be an average of the two marks.

If there is a discrepancy between the two scores of more than ten points, HDRO will ask for the department head to appoint a third examiner, who may be internal to the university. The third examiner’s report, together with the first two examiners’ reports will be forwarded to the Programs and Examinations Sub-Committee (PESC) of HDRC for a final decision. The third examiner shall not have been involved in the supervision of the project. The thesis will be anonymised before being sent to the third examiner.

HDRO will forward all MRes results to PESC, which will make a final recommendation to HDRC in time for the Senate examination meeting. Each faculty MRes Director will submit a report to PESC on the grades received by candidates in their faculty, identifying patterns of grades and any anomalies the committee should consider.

**Examination Criteria**

The MRes is a Masters by Research degree at Level 9 of the *Australian Qualifications Framework* (see: http://www.aqf.edu.au/), which states that:

“Graduates at this level will have expert, specialised cognitive and technical skills in a body of knowledge or practice to independently:

• analyse critically, reflect on and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories;

• research and apply established theories to a body of knowledge or practice

• interpret and transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to specialist and non-specialist audiences.” *(AQF, p.59)*

In the light of the *AQF*, the criteria on which examiners are asked to evaluate an MRes thesis are as follows:

(a) That it has adequately delineated the topic of concern by critically reflecting on current research in the relevant field;

(b) That the research undertaken produces empirical outcomes or analytical evaluations that are clearly justified and that respond to or reflect on the relevant literature;

(c) That, in the case of creative theses, as well as (b), the creative component is able to sustain critical scrutiny; and
(d) That it is satisfactory as regards its literary presentation.

Comment is sought from the examiner as to publishable content of the thesis. This is for information only and should not affect the decision on the award of the degree.

**Outcome**

Examiners of MRes theses will be asked to specify a percentage score for each thesis using the Master of Research Grading Criteria.