

<b>Policy Hierarchy link</b>	Research Higher Degree Student Policy			
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Director of Research			
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Registrar			
<b>Superseded Documents</b>	Research Higher Degree Thesis Examination Procedure version 1.3 (Aug 2017)			
<b>Associated Documents</b>	Academic Appeals Policy Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of Research Intellectual Property Policy Non-academic Grievance Policy Research Higher Degree Supervision Procedure Research Higher Degree Thesis Progression Procedure Student Code of Conduct			
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## 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This procedure describes the procedures for thesis examination. It applies to all candidates undertaking a Research Higher Degree program at Moore College, supervisors and other positions responsible for the management of RHD programs.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

AHEGS	Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement
HoD	Head of an academic department of Moore College
LSS	Learning Support System
MTC	Moore College
RACC	Research and Centres Committee (of Moore College)
Research Higher Degree (RHD) Program	A postgraduate program for which the main component is an independent research thesis (as defined under levels 9 and 10 of the Australian Qualifications Framework).

## 3. PROCEDURE

### 3.1 Pre-submission issues

#### 3.1.1 Completion seminar

All candidates must present their research findings at a Graduate Seminar at least 6 months before the expected date for submitting their thesis for examination. The findings should comprise a thesis summary and chapter outline of not more than 2,000 words. The seminar should permit time for questions and feedback. Faculty may recommend to the candidate how the thesis might be improved.

#### 3.1.2 Variations in submission time

Variations to requirements regarding periods of minimum and maximum candidacy may be approved by the RACC if exceptional circumstances apply, but only on the recommendation of the Director of Research.

The RACC may approve submission of a thesis for examination in less than the minimum number of semesters, on consideration of the completed research and on the recommendation of the Primary Supervisor and Director of Research.

A candidate who will not be ready to submit within the period of maximum candidacy should apply to the RACC for an extension of candidacy. If an extension is approved the candidate will remain an enrolled student until the thesis is submitted for examination.

#### 3.1.3 Submission as a set of publications

The thesis may contain or be composed of published papers or book chapters derived from the research undertaken for the degree. The candidate may be the sole or joint author.

Candidates submitting wholly or partly by publication should first seek approval to do so from the RACC on the recommendation of the Primary Supervisor at least six months prior to thesis submission.

The following conditions apply to candidates submitting wholly or partly by publication:

- the publication of the work must have occurred within the duration of candidature for the degree
- the depth of analysis and interpretation in the publications should be appropriate
- where the candidate is a joint author, appropriate acknowledgement of the contribution of others to the research must be made in the thesis

- the agreement of any joint authors must be sought to include the jointly authored publication as part of the candidate's thesis submission
- the candidate should seek advice from publisher that their agreement does not preclude the inclusion of the published work as part of their thesis
- the candidate must obtain permission to reproduce any material under copyright
- the submission should be in an appropriate format as outlined in Section 3.2 below.

#### **3.1.4 Restricted access**

A candidate may seek an embargo of up to 2 years on release of the thesis if there are valid reasons. The reasons may include that release may compromise publication of all or part of the thesis.

An application for restricted access should be made on the Restricted Access Application Form, available on the LSS and submitted to the Registrar at least three months prior to submission. The RACC will determine the outcome of the application.

#### **3.1.5 Notice of intention to submit**

A candidate should notify of intention to submit approximately two months before the expectation submission date. This is to enable examiners to be appointed in suitable time.- Candidates should complete the 'Thesis Notice of Intention to Submit' form available on the LSS and email it to the Registrar [registrardept@moore.edu.au](mailto:registrardept@moore.edu.au). The email should contain the following information:

- candidate's name
- ID number
- thesis title
- expected submission date
- name of Primary Supervisor
- approx. thesis word count

### **3.2 Thesis presentation**

The thesis submitted by a candidate shall comply with the following requirements.

- It must be the candidate's own work but, if any jointly authored papers are included, the work done by the candidate must be clearly indicated and the co-author(s) must certify that they agree to the inclusion of the paper in the thesis.
- It must relate directly to the approved research topic.
- It must not include, as its main content work, which has been submitted for any other academic award or work conducted prior to the commencement of candidature. Where the main content of the thesis or portfolio consists of any significant extension or elaboration of the candidate's earlier work, that portion referring to previous work must be clearly indicated.
- It must be written in English and must achieve a standard of expression and presentation appropriate to doctoral level writing and must lend itself to easy conversion to published format.
- The candidate should ensure that all typographical and spelling errors have been corrected; the grammar and language are appropriate to a higher degree thesis; the bibliography is thorough and correct and the referencing style is consistent.
- Any substantial assistance provided to the candidate during the conduct of the research and the production of the thesis must be acknowledged. The candidate must obtain written permission from the Primary Supervisor before obtaining paid editorial assistance with the thesis. If permission is granted to obtain paid editorial assistance,

such assistance must be acknowledged in the thesis and if the professional editor's current or former area of academic specialisation is similar to that of the candidate, then this must also be acknowledged. Professional editing of a candidate's thesis is limited to formatting, grammar and style and must not alter or improve the substantive content or conceptual organisation of the thesis.

- The presentation of the theses, including requirements for declaration of authorship by the candidate and readiness for assessment by the Primary Supervisor as set out below.

### 3.2.1 Length

The thesis of the degree of PhD must be no more than 100,000 words including footnotes, but excluding appendices and bibliography. Appendices (such as tables of supporting data) may be permitted on the recommendation of the Primary Supervisor. This maximum length may only be exceeded, and appendices included, with the approval of the RACC.

For the degree of MTh, those enrolled in Pathway 1, a thesis of 40,000-50,000 words including footnotes but excluding the bibliography; those enrolled in Pathway 2, a thesis of 30,000-40,000 words including footnotes but excluding the bibliography and those enrolled in Pathway 3, a thesis of 25,000-32,000 words including footnotes but excluding the bibliography.

Appendices may be permitted on the recommendation of the Primary Supervisor. This maximum length may only be exceeded, and appendices included, with the approval of the RACC.

### 3.2.2 Format

The **thesis order** is normally presented as follows:

- title page
- signed declaration of original authorship
- an abstract of 300 – 500 words in length
- copyright statement
- preface, if applicable
- acknowledgments
- table of contents
- list of tables, figures or illustrations
- main text, divided into chapters
- bibliography
- appendices, if applicable

The **title page** is normally presented with information in the following order:

- title of the thesis
- Student number for examination
- the degree for which the thesis is being submitted
- month and year of submission
- the name of the institution or department where research was carried out
- a statement of whether the thesis is being submitted in full or partial fulfilment of the degree

The **abstract** should indicate the problem investigated, the methodology followed, the general results and the major conclusions.

The **preface** may include:

- description of the work towards the thesis undertaken by the candidate prior to enrolment in the degree

- description of any work towards the thesis undertaken in collaboration with others

When the submission format is **a set of publications** candidates should observe the following additional requirements when the thesis submission includes one or more publications:

- the submission should contain an Introduction or Literature Review section that contextually locates the publication/s within the field of study and provides an overview of the thesis topic as a whole
- the presentation of the publications should demonstrate coherence as a whole. This may require linking chapters
- the thesis should contain a Conclusion chapter that summarises the conclusions of the publications as a body of work and presents a clear articulation of the new contribution to knowledge in the discipline
- publications must be submitted in a high quality format, such as that provided by the publisher
- each publication included in the submission must commence with a declaration as to the candidate's contribution to each publication

### **3.2.3. Declaration**

By Candidate

All thesis copies will include a declaration of original authorship signed and dated by the candidate and using the following wording:

*'I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and to the best of my knowledge contains no materials previously published or written by another person. It contains no material extracted in whole or part by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis. I also declare that any assistance received from others in terms of design, style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged.'*

By Primary Supervisor

The thesis should normally be seen in final form by the Primary Supervisor before it is submitted for examination. However a candidate may submit the thesis against the advice of the supervisor.

*'I consider that this thesis is in a form suitable for examination and conforms to the requirements of Moore College for the degree of <name of award>.'*

### **3.2.4 Copyright statement**

The copyright statement will be agreed to for the final hard copy and the digital copy that are deposited in the College Library conditional upon the outcome of procedures under Section 3.1.4.

*'I hereby grant Moore College the right to archive and make available my thesis in whole or part in the College Library in all forms of media subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I retain all proprietary rights and the right to use in future works all or part of my thesis.'*

See also Section 3.10.

### **3.2.5 Number of copies**

Three hard copies must be submitted for examination. These may be in temporary binding.

A digital copy must also be provided. Examiners will have the choice to receive a hard copy or a soft copy or both.

After the completion of examination and prior to graduation, successful candidates will submit the following to the Registrar:

- One final bound copy and a digital copy for deposit in the College Library
- One final bound copy for the Primary Supervisor
- Digital copy of the thesis abstract for the AHEGS

All final copies must include the declaration of original authorship and incorporate any amendments or revisions required by the examiners.

The final copies should be presented as follows:

- be printed on archival quality paper of A4 size
- double spaced or one and a half spaced
- should be printed in double sided form
- be bound in permanent hard cover binding
- text on spine should state: full name of the author, title of the thesis (abbreviated as necessary), name of the degree eg PhD, year of submission

## **3.3 Thesis submission**

### **3.3.1 Submission checklist**

The candidate should review the Submission Checklist, available on the LSS, to ensure that all submission requirements have been met and that all required documents have been provided prior to the thesis being submitted and sent to the examiners.

### **3.3.2 Supervisor approval**

Normally, a thesis shall be submitted to the Registrar when the candidate and the Primary Supervisor agree that the thesis is ready for examination. Should the Primary Supervisor disagree with the candidate that the thesis is ready for examination, the Registrar shall retain a record of the reasons for disagreement.

### **3.3.3. Where to submit**

Three hard copies of the thesis are submitted to the Registrar. A written receipt via email, identifying what has been submitted is provided to the candidate.

## **3.4 Examiners**

### **3.4.1 Eligibility**

PhD theses will be examined by three examiners, at least two of whom must be external to the College. In exceptional circumstances (such as the specific subject area of the thesis), a faculty member of MTC not involved in supervision of the candidate may be appointed as an examiner by RACC on the advice of the supervisor.

MTh theses will be examined by two examiners, at least one of whom must be external to the College. In exceptional circumstances (such as the specific subject area of the thesis), a faculty member of MTC not involved in supervision of the candidate may be appointed as an examiner by RACC on the advice of the supervisor.

Examiners must have a demonstrated publication track record in the general field of the thesis and normally hold a research-based doctorate level qualification.

Examiners should not have undertaken joint research with the candidate during their period of candidacy or otherwise have a conflict of interest.

The examiners must not be a:

- member of the candidate's supervisory panel
- member of the Faculty of the College (in normal circumstances)
- member of the College's governing body

The examiners should agree to:

- declare any considered conflict of interest
- agree to confidentiality and sign an agreement of confidentiality if required
- agree to provide a written report within two months of receiving the thesis submission

### **3.4.2 Appointment**

When the notice of intention to submit is received, the Registrar will notify the Primary Supervisor who will commence the process to appoint examiners.

Supervisors, in consultation with their HoD, or Director of Research if they happen to be an HoD, will provide candidates with a list of potential examiners from which two primary and one reserve examiner will be selected for MTh candidates and three primary and one reserve examiner will be selected for PhD candidates.

When the proposed examiners have been identified, their names are submitted by the HoD to the RACC for approval. The thesis examiners are approved by the RACC on the recommendation of the Supervisor through the relevant HoD.

The Registrar, on behalf of the Primary Supervisor will then contact the proposed examiners with an invitation to examine and include the following information:

- thesis title
- the degree for which the thesis is being submitted
- expected submission date
- due date for the examination report
- copy of these procedures

Where an examiner becomes unavailable, or fails, to return a report within two months, the RACC may appoint the reserve examiner instead. Any subsequent reports received from the replaced examiner will not be considered.

### **3.4.3 Examiner and Candidate Identity**

The expectation is that the examination will be fair, independent and as free from bias as possible. Normally examiner identity remains confidential until reports of the examination are received and considered. The identity of examiners will not be disclosed to the candidate.

Similarly the identity of the candidate will not be disclosed to the examiner.

## 3.5 Examination

### 3.5.1 Information provided to examiners

At the time that the thesis is sent to the examiners they are provided with advice on marking criteria and other administrative information.

#### Marking criteria

Each thesis examiner is provided with a copy of the following normally applicable criteria:

- The basis of the assessment is the topic as approved by the RACC
- The originality and significance of the thesis as a contribution to knowledge in the field of study
- The worthiness of the thesis for publication
- The clarity with which the research question/problem is stated and the scope of the study defined
- The appropriateness of the methodology in relation to the research question/problem
- The precision and consistency with which key terminology is used
- The depth of the critical assessment of the relevant literature and strength of links demonstrated between it and the research question/problem
- The degree of skill in constructing and sustaining rigorous evidence-based arguments throughout the thesis
- The level of competency in considering possible objections to the arguments advanced in the thesis
- The clarity of the conclusions reached in the light of the evidence adduced, their justification by the arguments presented and their relationship to the study of the wider discipline
- The careful and accurate presentation of the scholarly apparatus

#### Administrative information

- An email stating the contents of the thesis package and MTC contact details
- Thesis receipt acknowledgment form
- Examiner's report form
- Any notes for the examiner for the relevant degree
- Information and payment forms for honoraria
- Copy of these procedures

### 3.5.2 Format of examination reports

Examiners' reports are designed to assist RACC in determining whether a candidate has completed the requirements of the program.

Examiners will be requested to submit to the RACC a report setting out their detailed review of the thesis (as per the advice to examiners specified in the associated procedures) and to recommend the thesis be:

- 1. Awarded.**
- 2. Awarded pending minor corrections** (to satisfaction of the Director of Research).
- 3. Awarded pending major revisions** (to satisfaction of RACC).
- 4. Not awarded but with possibility of resubmission** following extensive revisions and/or additional research.
- 5. Not awarded and without the option to resubmit.**



### **3.5.3 Oral examination**

In arriving at its recommendation the RACC may require the candidate to undertake an oral examination. In such cases the conditions of the oral examination shall be determined by the relevant Academic Department Head and conveyed to the candidate in writing. Oral examinations ought to be conducted not later than six weeks after receipt of the examiners' reports by the Registrar. Registrar's Dept. will coordinate the examination arrangements.

An oral examination may take the form of a defence of the thesis. However examiners should be free to cover the general background of the topic as appropriate to the standard and scope required of the award. The candidate will be provided with de-identified copies of the examiners' reports prior to the oral examination.

The oral examination will normally take place at Moore College. The Director of Research will act as chair of the oral examination panel. The oral examination panel may consist of the examiners of the thesis. The supervisors may attend the oral examination but will not have a role in determining the result of the examination.

### **3.5.4 Final decision**

The RACC is required to reach its final decision not later than four months after submission of the thesis by the candidate.

## **3.6 Examination process and role of RACC**

The candidate will submit the thesis and any other required documents to the Registrar. The Registrar will acknowledge receipt of thesis by email and confirms to the candidate what has been received.

The thesis is sent, with accompanying material as noted in Section 3.5, to the examiner no later than one week after the submission. The examiners will be asked to complete the thesis receipt acknowledgment form and return it to the Registrar.

Examiners will be asked to provide an examination report within two months of receipt of the thesis. Where a thesis examiner fails to provide a report on a thesis within two months of having received it the RACC may appoint the reserve thesis examiner.

All examiners' reports are returned to the Registrar. If there is any difference among the examiners' recommendations, a copy of each report is then provided to the Primary Supervisor who is to make a written response to the examiners' reports. The final report is to be returned to the Registrar within three weeks of receipt of the examiners' reports. The Registrar collates and forwards all reports to the Director of Research for review.

The Director of Research presents the examiners' reports, and any internal reports, together with his recommendation based on all reports to the RACC using the same categories as the examiners' reports.

In making the overall recommendation to the Academic Board (which will then recommend to the Governing Board) the RACC is required to assess the recommendations and academic arguments of the examiners' reports as well as the internal written reports. The examination is not a vote and hence it is not a matter of strong reports outweighing a less favourable report or vice-versa.

The role of the RACC is to discuss reports on a case-by-case basis, use its collective expertise in assessing theses and reviewing thesis examiners' comments and to apply this expertise in considering the standard of work required for a research degree in an Australian university in making its academic decisions.

### 3.7 Examination outcomes

The RACC may recommend that the thesis be:

1. **Awarded.**
2. **Awarded pending minor corrections** (to satisfaction of the Director of Research).
3. **Awarded pending major revisions** (to satisfaction of RACC).
4. **Not awarded but with possibility of resubmission** following extensive revisions and/or additional research.
5. **Not awarded and without the option to resubmit.**
6. **Re-examination**

Where there is major disagreement between the examiners' reports, for example a result of 1 and a result of 5, RACC may seek an external review of the examiners' reports by the reserve examiner or an appointed moderator.

**Outcome 2: Awarded pending minor corrections** (to satisfaction of the Director of Research ).

The candidate shall normally provide an adequate response within four weeks of the notification of the required amendments. If the candidate does not make satisfactory progress in making the required corrections the candidature may be terminated.

**Outcome 3: Awarded pending major revisions** (to satisfaction of RACC).

Where the RACC determines 3. Awarded pending major revisions requires the candidate to make substantive amendments to the thesis, the Primary Supervisor will provide the candidate with written instructions regarding decision of the RACC. The candidate shall normally provide an adequate response within six months of the notification of the required revisions. If the candidate does not make satisfactory progress in making the required revisions the candidature may be terminated.

**Outcome 4: Not awarded but with possibility of resubmission** following extensive revisions and/or additional research.

A candidate receiving a result of revise and resubmit will be invited to make a written response to the examiners' reports.

A candidate, for whom the consensus of RACC, based on the examiner's reports, is to grade the thesis as a 4. Not awarded but with possibility of resubmission may resubmit to the examiners (or new examiners if the former decline to re-examine). A resubmitted thesis may only be graded 1, 2, 3 or 5, that is, only one resubmission is permitted.

Alternatively, where it is determined by RACC that a doctoral thesis is graded 4. Not to be awarded but with possibility of resubmission on the basis of the scope or originality of the work, a candidate may apply to RACC to have the thesis accepted for a MTh.

The date for resubmission of a revised thesis shall normally be within twelve months of the notification of revision, although the RACC may specify a longer period.

The original or replacement examiners of a revised and resubmitted thesis shall be provided with:

- the revised thesis
- the student's response to examiners' reports if provided
- the de-identified reports from the other examiners to determine if the revisions have been satisfactorily completed

**Outcome 5: Not awarded and without the option to resubmit.**

Where the RACC determines that the degree is 5. Not awarded and without the option to resubmit it makes a formal recommendation to that effect to the Academic Board which then assumes responsibility for all aspects of the decision, including appeals.

**Outcome 6: Re-examination**

Where a candidate has resubmitted an MTh thesis for re-examination, but the examiner recommends that the degree not be awarded, the Academic Board may recommend to the Governing Board of the College one of the following:

- that the candidate be offered advanced standing (at an appropriate level) in the Master of Arts in Theology; or
- that the candidate's enrolment be terminated without the award of a degree.

Where a candidate has resubmitted a doctoral thesis for re-examination, but the examiner recommends that the degree not be awarded, the Academic Board may recommend to the Governing Board of the College one of the following:

- that either no degree be awarded; or
- that, based on the advice in the re-examiner's marker's report, the MTh be awarded instead.

**3.8 Notification of Thesis Examination Outcome**

Upon RACC's determination, the Director of Research will inform the candidate of the outcome of examination. Copies of the examiners reports, annotated thesis, Head of Department and Supervisor recommendations are provided. This letter will include ant conditions of the award, revision or recommendations of the RACC.

**3.9 Appeals**

Candidates may submit an appeal in relation to any aspect of the application of this procedure. Appeals are made according to the Academic Appeals Policy. All appeals are submitted in writing to the Registrar.

**3.10 Confidentiality**

In some cases it may be necessary to use confidential information in a thesis. In other cases the research itself may generate confidential information. Some data may be covered by non-disclosure agreements.

On the recommendation of the supervisor and the HoD, the Director of Research may request that the College Library restrict or prohibit access to a part or the whole of the thesis for a specified time.

Wherever possible confidential information should be placed in an appendix to the thesis.

An application to restrict or prohibit access to a part or the whole of the thesis should be made prior to submission and submitted to the Registrar.

### **3.11 Intellectual Property**

A candidate owns the copyright in the original content of his or her thesis.

All copies, other than the College Library copy remain the property of the candidate and should be returned to the candidate after examination and the result is finalised.

## **4. ROLES**

### **4.1 Primary Supervisor**

- May recommend early submission of thesis
- May recommend thesis as a set of publications
- Provide advice to candidate and approve candidate use of editorial assistance, use of appendices in thesis submission
- Sees final form of thesis prior to submission
- Certify that the thesis is in a form suitable for submission
- Receives one bound copy of thesis after examination
- Nominates and liaises with proposed examiners
- Responds to examiners' reports
- Liaises with candidate if examination result requires revision of thesis
- May recommend restricted access to thesis

### **4.2 Director of Research**

- Recommends to RACC variations in thesis submission time
- Consults with supervisors re nominated examiners
- Approves minor corrections to a thesis if required in the awarding of a degree
- Acts a chair of oral examination panels
- Makes a recommendation of award to RACC based on all external and internal examination reports
- Approves applications for restricted access to theses

### **4.3 RACC**

- Approves variations in thesis submission time
- Approves final format of thesis submission eg as a set of publications; inclusion of appendices
- Approves restricted access of thesis
- Approves appointment of examiners
- Receives final reports form examiners
- Determines outcome of thesis examination or oral examination
- Approves extension of candidacy in the event of resubmission
- Recommends to Academic Board candidates for graduation

## 5. TIMELINES

Weeks from submission	Action	Responsibility
- 8 weeks	Notice of intention to submit	Candidate
- 2 weeks	Examiners appointed	Supervisors, HoD, RACC
0	Submission of thesis	Candidate
+ 1 week	Thesis sent to examiners	Registrar
+ 8 weeks	Examination reports received	Examiners
+ 10 weeks	Internal reports received	Supervisor, HoD
+ 12 weeks	Final decision	RACC
+ 16 weeks	Minor corrections completed (if applicable)	Candidate
+ 38 weeks	Major revisions completed (if applicable)	Candidate
+ 64 weeks	Resubmission (if applicable) with notice of intention to submit 8 weeks prior to submission	Candidate

## 6. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1.0	Principal	09/05/2014	09/05/2014	New procedure
1.1	Principal	04/12/2015	04/12/2015	Replaced title Director of Postgraduate Studies with Director of Postgraduate Studies
1.2	Principal	18/03/2016	8/03/2016	Amendment to §3.4.2 RACC to approve thesis examiners before contact by Primary Supervisor
1.3	Principal	17/08/2017	17/08/2017	1. Amendments to §3.1.5 Notice of Intention to submit procedure, §3.2.1 Thesis length to incorporate MTh pathways. 2. Additional section added §3.8 Notification of thesis examination outcome.
1.4	Principal	05/12/2018	05/12/2018	1. Replace Director of Postgraduate Studies with Director of Research throughout. 2. Update name of Academic Appeals Policy. 3. Update next review date. 4. Add <i>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research</i> as an Associated Document
1.5	Acting Principal	24/05/2019	24/05/2019	Amendments: 1. Update Associated Documents with: Intellectual Property Policy. 2. From PhD Course Review: § 3.7 Examination Outcomes Append new section: Outcome 6: Re-examination

1.6	Principal	2/12/2019	2/12/2019	Amendments: § 3.6 Examination Process Update who provides final report from examiners' reports.
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## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Australian National University. *Guideline: Research Theses Submission and Examination: Information for Higher Degree Research Students*. Document ANUP\_000819.

University of Melbourne. *Examination of Graduate Research Students Procedure (MPF1262)* Version 1. 6 December 2013.

University of Melbourne. *Preparation of Graduate Research Theses Procedure (MPF1263)* Version 1. 6 December 2013.

University of New South Wales. *Thesis Examination Procedures*. Version 2.0 Effective 18 December 2012.

University of Technology Sydney. *Thesis Presentation and Submission Procedures for Higher Degree by Research Students*. Version 1. 30.11.2012.