

Schedule C: Oral thesis examination

This Schedule is pursuant to the [Higher Degrees by Research \(HDR\) Assessment procedure](#).

Requirement for oral thesis examination

1. An oral thesis examination may be required as part of the examination of a higher degree by research.
2. The Head of Academic Unit or nominee determines whether an oral thesis examination is required for the discipline.
3. If required, the oral thesis examination will be listed in a student's completed [Candidature Engagement form](#). The student will not be required to do an oral thesis examination if it is not listed in the [Candidature Engagement form](#), but may request to do so with the approval of the Head of Academic Unit.
4. The Head of Academic Unit may exempt a student from the requirement to complete an oral thesis examination on the grounds of disability, student location or other exceptional circumstances.
5. The oral examination will only proceed where at least two examiners support the thesis at the level of the degree being sought.

Composition of the oral thesis examination panel

6. The oral thesis examination panel will consist of:
 - a. the Panel Chair
 - b. one or more of the examiners who have examined the thesis.
7. Students may submit a statement to the Head of Academic Unit giving reasons why a specified person ought not to be appointed as the Panel Chair.
8. The Head of Academic Unit will nominate the Chair of the oral thesis examination panel (Panel Chair).
9. The Panel Chair must:
 - a. be a Deakin academic staff member at level C or above as defined in the *Enterprise Agreement*
 - b. have experience in examining doctoral theses.
 - c. be located in the Academic Unit of the student
 - d. not be supervisor of the student
10. All members of the oral examination panel, including the Panel Chair, make an academic judgement about the examination.
11. Deakin Research will provide secretariat support to the panel.

Cancellation or postponement of the oral thesis examination

12. The Panel Chair may cancel the oral thesis examination where postponement is not appropriate.

13. The Panel Chair may postpone the oral thesis examination if:
 - a. the student is unwell and provides a certificate from a registered medical practitioner to support their claim
 - b. the student is not able to attend for extraordinary personal circumstances and provides a statutory declaration to support their claim
 - c. the panel does not have the minimum required membership
 - d. there are technical difficulties which cannot be resolved within 20 minutes of the commencement of the oral examination process, or which result in the unscheduled termination of examination prior to completion.
14. Where the oral thesis examination is postponed, Deakin Research will reschedule the examination to occur as soon as possible within one month of the original examination date.

The oral thesis examination process

15. Where an oral thesis examination is required, the Head of Academic Unit will select one examiner who will be invited to be the required examiner member of the panel. They may be invited to attend in person or electronically. All other examiners will be invited to attend the examination and may choose to attend electronically or in person.
16. The student and oral thesis examination panel will receive ten working days' notice of the time and location of the oral thesis examination and any other requirements.
17. The Academic Unit will bear the costs of the oral thesis examination.
18. All panel members will read the thesis and all examiners' reports prior to the oral thesis examination.
19. Examiner/s who do not attend the oral thesis examination may arrange for the Panel Chair to ask a question/s on their behalf.
20. Only the student, members of the panel and the secretary may attend the examination.
21. The student may choose to deliver a presentation at the beginning of the oral thesis examination.
22. The hearing will be conducted fairly and all parties will be given an opportunity to ask and answer questions.

Outcomes of the oral thesis examination

23. The panel is not bound to make a decision at the time of the oral examination and may take any additional reasonable time it requires to consider its recommendation, but should take no longer than 10 working days.
24. Following discussion with other panel member/s, the Panel Chair will make a recommendation on the outcome of the examination according to clause 42 of the [Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Assessment procedure](#) to the Thesis Examination Committee.
25. Where there is disagreement between panel members, a report including the comments of panel members will be provided to the Thesis Examination Committee.
26. The panel may verbally advise the student of their recommendation to the Thesis Examination Committee at the conclusion of the oral thesis examination. The student will be advised that the Thesis Examination Committee makes the final decision as to the outcome of the examination.