

Process	Masters by research grading
Related Policy:	HDR policy Program and course policy
Objectives	To define the processes for providing a graded outcome to candidates who successfully complete a masters by research degree at RMIT.
Exclusions	PhD candidate outcomes.
Definitions and acronyms	
<p>ADVC, RT&D: Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Training and Development</p> <p>Moderator: an RMIT staff member who is appointed to review examination reports and grades for a Masters by research examination when the examiner's grades differ by more than 15 percentage points. For further definitions refer to the <i>Higher Degrees by Research Policy</i>.</p>	
Process Steps	
<p>1 Additional requirement for Masters by research examiners</p> <p>1.1 In addition to providing an examination recommendation of R1 to R4, examiners of Masters by research theses/projects are asked to recommend a numerical grade. The grades available to the examiners are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Distinction (80-100%) • Distinction (70-79%) • Credit (60-69%) • Pass (50-59%) • Fail (<50%) <p>2 Determining and awarding the final grade</p> <p>2.1 Grades for Masters by research examinations are only provided for final examination outcomes; the classification of C3 <i>Revise and Resubmit</i> is regarded as an interim examination outcome and candidates receiving this classification are not provided with a grade.</p> <p>2.2 All Masters by research grades must be approved by the ADVC, RT&D before they are considered to be final.</p> <p>2.3 Final grades with a decimal point between .1 - .4 will be rounded down, e.g. 81.3 = 81%. Grades with a decimal point between .5 - .9 will be rounded up, e.g. 81.8 = 82%.</p> <p>2.4 Candidates receive the final grade as approved by the ADVC, RT&D. They do not receive the individual grades from each examiner.</p> <p>2.5 Candidates are informed of their grade when they receive their final examination classification.</p> <p>2.6 Exams with similar examination recommendations (R1 to R4)</p> <p>2.6.1 If the examiners' recommended grades are within 15 percentage points of each other, the SGR Examinations team will derive a grade from the mean of the two recommended grades to recommend to the ADVC, RT&D.</p> <p>2.6.2 If the examiners' grades differ by more than 15 percentage points the ADVC RT&D may refer to the College to appoint a moderator. The moderator is an internal appointment, and therefore not considered to be wholly independent. For this reason their grade cannot supersede the examiners' grades but rather, must consolidate their grades.</p> <p>2.6.3 The moderator must be an RMIT academic staff member who has not been involved in the candidature or the research. The preferable appointment is an HDR Coordinator or Deputy Dean/Head R&I in the same College.</p> <p>2.6.4 They are given the following documents: <i>Moderator's grade form – Masters by Research</i>; the candidate's thesis/project; the examiners' written report and recommendation; <i>RMIT Guidelines for examiners of Masters by Research</i>.</p> <p>2.6.5 A moderator is given two weeks in which to complete their moderation, which must include recommending a grade that:</p>	

- 2.6.5.1 agrees with one of the examiner's grades, in which case this shall become the candidate's final grade after approval, or
- 2.6.5.2 is within the limits set by the examiners' grades. In this case the SGR Examinations team will derive a grade from the mean of the grades recommended by both examiners and the moderator.
- 2.6.6 A moderator is required to attach a one page written rationale for the grade when they submit the completed *Moderator's grade form – Masters by Research* to SGR.
- 2.7 Exams with significantly differing examination recommendations (R1 to R4)
- 2.7.1 If examiners' recommendations (R1 to R4) are significantly different the examination outcome may be referred to a College HDR Advisory Committee (CHEAC) in accordance with section 8 of the Thesis/project submission and examination process.
- 2.7.2 A CHEAC may recommend a C3 classification of an examination, or use of an adjudicator. The adjudicator is an independent assessor appointed to reconcile diverging examination recommendations and grades.
- 2.7.3 If an adjudicator is used and they recommend the thesis/project be classified as R1 or R2 they must provide an additional grade within the range of 50% and the grade nominated by the examiner who recommended the R1 or R2 outcome. The adjudicator is an independent assessor appointed to reconcile recommendations and grades, for this reason their recommended grade will become the final grade, once approved by the ADVC RT&D.

3 Grading standards

Grade range	Level	Standard ¹
80-100%	HD: High Distinction	<p>Work of exceptional quality showing clear understanding of subject matter and appreciation of issues; well formulated; arguments sustained; figures and diagrams where relevant; appropriate literature referenced; strong evidence of creative ability and originality; high level of intellectual work.</p> <p>Excellent analysis, comprehensive research, sophisticated theoretical or methodological understanding, impeccable presentation.</p> <p>The candidate demonstrates outstanding potential for doctoral level study and warrants strong scholarship support.</p>
70-79%	DI: Distinction	<p>Work of high quality showing strong grasp of subject matter and appreciation of dominant issues though not necessarily of the finer points; arguments clearly developed; relevant literature referenced; evidence of creative ability and solid intellectual work.</p> <p>Very good work that is very well researched, shows critical analytical skills, is well argued, with scholarly presentation and documentation.</p> <p>The candidate is capable of doctoral level study.</p>
60-69%	CR: Credit	<p>Work of solid quality showing competent understanding of subject matter and appreciation of main issues though possibly with some lapses and inadequacies and with clearly identifiable deficiencies in logic, presentation or originality.</p> <p>Some evidence of critical analysis and creative ability; well researched, prepared and presented.</p> <p>The candidate may be capable of doctoral level study under close supervision.</p>

¹ Standard definitions taken from section C in the *RMIT Research components in coursework programs* instruction

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Approval authority: Professor Denise Cuthbert, Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Training and Development
Operational Responsibility: School of Graduate Research

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50-59%	PA: Pass	<p>Completion of key tasks at an adequate level of performance with demonstrated understanding of key ideas and some analytical skills. Satisfactory presentation, research and documentation.</p> <p>Adequate report, reasonable quality but showing a minimal understanding of the research area with deficiencies in content or experimental rigour; little evidence of creative ability or original thought.</p> <p>The candidate is unlikely to be capable of doctoral level study.</p>
0-49%	NN: Fail	<p>The research does not meet the criteria for the degree as specified by the University and a significant amount of additional research work and/or major substantive revision will not raise it to an acceptable standard.</p>
Key words for search engine		
Adjudicator, candidature, CHEAC, examination, grade, grading, HDR, Masters, moderator, research.		

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