

| Process   | HDR posthumous submission and examination   |
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| Related Policy:   | Conferral and Graduation Policy   |
| Objectives  | To define the processes involved in posthumous submission and examination for a deceased HDR candidate. |
| Exclusions  | Coursework and Vocational Education students.   |
| Definitions and acronyms  |   |
| <p>Centre: In Higher degrees by research processes this term denotes an academic unit at RMIT Vietnam campus.</p> <p>GRC: Graduate Research Committee</p> <p>For further definitions refer to the <i>Higher Degrees by Research Policy</i>.</p>   |   |
| Process Steps   |   |
| <p><b>1. Eligibility</b></p> <p>1.1 Within one year of the death of a HDR candidate his/her research work may be considered for posthumous examination if:</p> <p>1.1.1 the candidate was enrolled at RMIT in the relevant course of study at the time of his/ her death; OR had an active enrolment at RMIT in the 12 months prior to his/her death; AND</p> <p>1.1.2 he/she had a successful outcome for their Third milestone review; AND</p> <p>1.1.3 an application to undertake this process is made on behalf of the candidate, with the consent of the family; AND</p> <p>1.1.4 the work is substantially complete and of an appropriate level to be examined for the degree, as attested to by two independent assessors (see section 3).</p> <p><b>2. Death of a candidate during examination</b></p> <p>2.1 In the unfortunate event that a candidate dies while their thesis/project is being examined, and the examination outcome is a C3 <i>Revise and resubmit</i>, the Senior supervisor may choose to undertake the revisions on behalf of the candidate. Examiners of the revised work are informed of the circumstances and the standard re-examination process applies.</p> <p><b>3. Review of the research</b></p> <p>3.1 The Senior supervisor will request that the process for a posthumous submission and examination is initiated normally within one year of the death of the candidate</p> <p>3.2 The Dean/Head of School/Centre, in consultation with the Senior supervisor, will identify two assessors to be appointed to review the available work in order to determine whether the research is substantially complete and of an appropriate level to be examined for the degree.</p> <p>3.3 Assessors must be independent of the supervision of the research, but need not be external to the university.</p> <p>3.4 The Senior supervisor must provide a brief statement outlining the research project to facilitate the assessors understanding of the candidate's research contribution, and, in cases in which the work is not complete, outline the remaining work which was planned.</p> <p>3.5 Assessors must unanimously agree that sufficient papers, reviews, laboratory or project work, or other verifiable evidence, have been completed by the candidate so that a coherent summary of the research project can be given to the examiners.</p> <p>3.6 Where minor amendments to the work are recommended, these should be clearly specified by the assessors. Minor amendments can include tasks such as preparation of table of contents, pagination of the document, arrangement of materials into appendices where this had not been done, minor textual amendments for clarity or to account for gaps left by the candidate, or any additions to the text of the candidate's work necessary to prepare it for examination. The changes to the text must fall short of substantive additions to this text.</p> |   |

## HDR posthumous submission and examination process – Approved 01/06/2016

Approval authority: Professor Denise Cuthbert, Dean, SGR

Operational Responsibility: School of Graduate Research

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**4. Authority to approve requests for posthumous examination**

- 4.1 Once the work has been assessed as being appropriate for examination, a written request for posthumous submission and examination of the thesis/project must be made to the Graduate Research Committee by the Dean/Head of School/Centre where the candidate was enrolled.
- 4.2 The Senior supervisor must prepare the request and include:
  - the full name of the student;
  - the student identification number;
  - the name of the qualification for which the student was a candidate;
  - the name/s and address/es of the next-of-kin who endorse the request; and
  - the two assessors' reports.
- 4.3 The GRC has final approval for the request to proceed with the examination.

**5. Preparation of thesis/project for examination**

- 5.1 If posthumous examination is approved, the examination process and the possible outcomes will be explained to the next-of-kin by the Senior supervisor.
- 5.2 If the assessors or the GRC require minor amendments to be made to the research prior to its examination, it is the responsibility of the Senior supervisor to undertake these within two months of the GRC approval for the examination.
- 5.3 A list of any minor amendments or modifications by the Senior supervisor of the thesis/project must be included in the statement.
- 5.4 The statement used for the assessors (section 3.4) is then updated by the Senior supervisor for presentation to the examiners to explain the candidate's research contribution to the work to be examined.

**6. Submission**

- 6.1 The usual process for nominating examiners is followed.
- 6.2 The thesis/project is submitted for examination following the usual submission process with the following changes:
  - the Senior supervisor lodges the submission for examination;
  - there is no requirement for a current enrolment.

**7. Posthumous examination**

- 7.1 Examiners are advised of the circumstances of the posthumous submission. A modified version of the examination report proforma and the guide for examiners reflecting the modified examination criterion are sent for this purpose.
- 7.2 In the case of the candidate having been undertaking research 'by project' mode the requirement for a presentation and defence of the research is waived.
- 7.3 Examiners must recommend either of the following outcomes:
  - Yes, evidence exists to indicate that had the candidate lived, and in the normal course of events, the requirements for the degree would have been satisfied – degree to be conferred,
  - or
  - No, there is insufficient evidence to indicate that had the candidate lived, and in the normal course of events, the requirements for the degree would have been satisfied – the degree will not be conferred.
- 7.4 In order for the award to be granted both examiners' reports must record that there exists a reasonable expectation that, had the candidate lived, and in the normal course of events, the requirements for the degree would have been satisfied.

**8. Post-examination**

- 8.1 After the examination has been classified the SGR sends advice to the members of the supervisory team, the Dean/Head of School/Centre and the HDR Coordinator. A separate notification is sent to the examiners to advise them of the examination classification.
- 8.2 The Dean/Head of School/Centre is responsible for advising the candidate's family of the examination outcome.
- 8.3 If the examination has a successful outcome, the Senior supervisor is responsible for the submission of the final archival version of the thesis/project.
- 8.4 The examination outcome is recorded against the last semester of the candidate's enrolment.
- 8.5 In order for the award to be conferred the *Conferral and graduation policy* and associated

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process must be followed.

**Key words for search engine**

assessor, examination, HDR, Masters, PhD, posthumous, submission

PREVIOUS VERSION