

Procedures for final submission of PhD theses by CHL students

What supervisors need to do

There are two key forms (both of them posted on the CHL Policies site) that you will need to attend to. First is the Nomination of Examiners. University rules require that the supervisor contact potential examiners and get their agreement. Not only that, you have to provide a short CV for each examiner, or a brief statement that includes status, current appointment, research experience, publications and experience as an examiner of theses. This is intended as an assurance to the university that the examiners are suitable for the task; you are not expected to cross-question established academics on their examination experience, but might provide that information if you were suggesting someone who might otherwise seem an unusual choice as examiner. Usually, a printout of the potential examiner's university web-page is sufficient.

There is no objection to the supervisor consulting the student about potential examiners, but the student is not permitted to take part in the final decision, and is not permitted to know the names of the examiners. Once the examiners have been nominated and the thesis submitted, supervisors and students are not allowed to contact or be contacted by the examiners on any matters relating to the examination. Because it can be difficult to find suitable academics to do the job, it is wise to begin contacting potential examiners as soon as there is a reasonably likely date for the submission of the thesis.

The second form is the Supervisor's Comment form, normally completed by the Chair of the Supervisory Panel (in special circumstances by the head of unit) at the time of submission. This form asks you to certify that you believe the PhD to be ready for submission. The student can still submit against your advice and the examiners will not be told that you have withheld approval, but in the rare cases where you disagree with the student's determination to submit the form provides you with some moral protection. The university does not inform examiners about the disapproval of the supervisor, even after the results are in, but the embargo on contact between supervisor and examiners ends when the results are finalized.

The Nomination of Examiners form has space for three examiners, but it is absolutely necessary to nominate only two with at least one examiner not being an ANU academic member of staff. (Under University rules, there is no limit to the number of examiners who can be appointed, but it would be a little strange to appoint more than four.) The examiners have two months to complete the task. If, at the end of the two months, only two reports have been received, and if those reports agree substantially on the terms on which the thesis can be passed, then it is possible to approve award of the degree on the basis of those two reports. In the absence of the third report, however, it is not possible to declare a thesis approved if the two-month deadline has not yet passed.

If the examiners have requested changes (and especially if examiners differ in the scale of the changes they have required), it is the task of the unit head, in consultation with the supervisor if appropriate, to recommend to the Delegated Authority in the School what changes must be carried out before approval. Under no circumstances may the reports be copied or circulated to the

candidate or any other person not directly concerned with the examination process. The reports are distributed by the Examinations Office once the signed recommendation is received.

There are separate examination arrangements in cases of co-tutelle (joint supervision between two universities). If you are involved in such an arrangement, please contact the HDR office for advice.