
Higher Doctorates: Guidelines for Applicants and Examiners

Research Policy

1 Purpose

These guidelines provide additional information about the application and examination process for a Higher Doctorate. They should be read in conjunction with the [Higher Doctorates Regulations](#).

2 Organisational Scope

These are University-wide guidelines.

3 Definitions

For the purposes of these guidelines, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

Dean FGR	Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Research (FGR) and Chair of the Board of the FGR.
Faculty of Graduate Research	The body charged with having general responsibility for and oversight of the University's postgraduate research degree programmes.

4 Guidelines

4.1 General Requirements

- (a) In addition to its inherent excellence the quality of the work may be shown by the fact that it has generated important debate, caused a significant change in theory or practice within the discipline, or has influenced scholars or practitioners in the field.
- (b) In general, the submitted work should be publicly accessible. Where the Higher Doctorate is awarded for creative achievement, publication shall be taken to include such things as public performance, public broadcast, commercial recording in audio or video format, in film, or in other digital media, and designs and constructions.

4.2 Application Process

- (a) The application fee is prescribed in the Fees Statute. If the application does not proceed beyond the *ad hoc* committee's initial consideration an administration fee will apply and the balance of the application fee will be refunded to the applicant.
- (b) The amount of work submitted is left to the discretion of the applicant. It will usually exceed a single work and should be sufficient to fully justify the award of the degree.

- (c) Books should be submitted in the form in which they are published; other physical documents should be bound together appropriately. It is the responsibility of the applicant to submit four copies of their material in a format suitable for examination. A digital copy of work may be submitted in place of hardcopy.
- (d) Applicants should provide evidence of the influence of their work by including, for instance, reference to reviews, reference to substantial work which has developed from theirs, reference to the adoption of methods they have pioneered, citations, critical appraisals for their work, prizes received, and other forms of peer esteem.

4.3 Initial Assessment

- (a) Members of the *ad hoc* committee should submit independent reports to the chair of the committee (usually the relevant Head of School) before meeting to discuss the application. The chair of the committee will provide a recommendation to the Dean FGR as to whether the application should proceed to examination. If the decision is that the application should not proceed to examination, the Dean FGR will provide to the candidate a succinct but detailed justification based on the committee members' reports.
- (b) If the decision is to proceed to examination, the *ad hoc* committee will recommend examiners to the Dean FGR, ensuring that:
 - (i) no member is an examiner;
 - (ii) at least two of the examiners are external to the University; and
 - (iii) at least one examiner is from outside New Zealand. However, the Committee may recommend that this rule be waived where good purpose would not be served by an overseas examiner.

4.4 Examination

- (a) The Dean FGR will approve the examiners and initiate the examination process.
- (b) Each examiner will prepare an independent and confidential report which should be returned to the Dean FGR.
- (c) Examiners will consider the work submitted together with the evidence the applicant has provided of their esteem in the field, as witnessed by citations, reviews, invitations to give keynote addresses, prizes, and the like.
- (d) If the examiners disagree on the outcome, the Dean FGR may:
 - (i) consult with the examiners to see if consensus can be reached; or
 - (ii) follow the majority decision; or
 - (iii) appoint a further examiner; or
 - (iv) appoint an independent referee.
- (e) The Dean FGR will consider the examiners' reports and the outcome of any other consultation or independent reports and make a recommendation on the award of the degree to the Vice-Provost (Research).

4.5 Notification of outcome

- (a) The University will act as promptly as possible. However, an applicant may expect the initial assessment to take three to six months. The final examination process may take an additional six months.

(b) The Dean FGR will advise the applicant of the examination outcome.

5 Legislative Compliance

Though the University is required to manage its policy documentation within a legislative framework; there is no specific legislation directing these guidelines.

6 References

[Higher Doctorates Statute](#)

7 Appendices

None

8 Approval Agency

Vice-Provost (Research)

9 Approval Dates

These guidelines were originally approved on: 16 August 2007

This version was approved on: 20 April 2021

This version takes effect from: 20 April 2021

10 Contact Person

The following person may be contacted on a routine basis in relation to this procedure:

Manager
PGR Student Academic Services