FBE Guidelines: Appointment of HDR Examiners

Macquarie University's Higher Degree Research Committee formally appoints examiners of HDR theses, based on advice and information provided by the principal supervisor in consultation with associate supervisors and the candidate. Each doctoral thesis is examined by three examiners, and each Master of Philosophy thesis is examined by two examiners. At least six examiners are normally nominated for each doctoral examination, and at least five for a Masters examination.

The primary objective is to appoint examiners who are authoritative in their field and whose assessment will be respected nationally and internationally. Doing this advantages the candidate and the university, as it preserves the value of the award and brings the work of the candidate to the attention of leaders of the scholarly community.

To maintain the integrity and international standing of a Macquarie University higher degree, and to ensure that the HDR candidate receives the best impartial examination, several factors need to be considered when selecting examiners.

- Examiners should
  - be experts in the topic of the HDR thesis
  - have senior academic appointments in the field of the research
  - have published relevant high quality research
  - have experience in thesis examination
  (Note: The above criteria are critical for theses considered for VC Commendation.)

- Examiners must not
  - have had any involvement with the candidate or supervisors. Specifically, they must not have
    - been at any stage a member of the candidate’s supervisory panel
    - played an advisory academic role for the candidate
    - co-authored any publications with the candidate or with any of the supervisors within the past five years
  - be current or recent staff members of Macquarie University

- A range of national and international examiners should be selected. The list of nominated examiners should include
  - at least one national and one international examiner
  - no more than one examiner from any single institution
  - no more than one examiner from a single university city
    - eg. only one examiner can be located in Sydney
Procedures three months prior to submission

- Supervisors and candidates discuss potential examiners to be nominated; however, candidates are not involved in the final selection.
  - Supervisors obtain evidence of examiners’ expertise, academic affiliation and publication history. (Academic profiles can typically be found on university websites.)
- The principal supervisor contacts each nominated examiner to ascertain willingness to examine the thesis. (Note: Feedback can take up to a month).
  - The supervisor usually provides the following information:
    - the title of the thesis
    - the thesis format: thesis by publication or traditional dissertation
    - the FBE Guidelines (for thesis by publication)
    - a short synopsis
    - the approximate thesis length
    - the expected submission date
  - The supervisor may also inform potential examiners that:
    - the normal timeframe for examination is two months
    - an honorarium of $390 is payable to examiners for PhD degrees and $221 for Masters
    - as six examiners are nominated but only three selected, a specific examiner may not be one of the final examiners selected
- Once the appropriate number of examiners has agreed, the principal supervisor completes and signs the appointment of examiners form:
  - sends the form to the HDR Manager for a compliance check and sign off by either the Departmental HDR Coordinator or by the AD HDR
- The HDR Manager forwards the completed form to the Higher Degree Research Committee for approval of the final list of examiners and the appointment of a reserve examiner in case an approved examiner withdraws during the nomination or examination process.