

3. Thesis Examination

1. Receiving examiner reports

Once your thesis is submitted, the Dean of the Graduate School will invite 2 examiners from your list of [nominated examiners](#).

Each examiner is asked to provide a written report with feedback about your thesis. Examiners are requested to return their written reports within:

- 4 weeks for an MPhil, or
- 5 weeks for a PhD.

You will receive your examination reports only when both examiners have completed and returned their reports and the Dean has determined the outcome. Following the receipt of these reports you will then either:

- proceed to an oral examination, or
- receive your examination outcome.

You will be required to do an oral exam if you:

- commenced after 1 January 2017 and have included publications as part of your thesis
- commenced after 1 January 2018
- received a Career Development Scholarship Extension, or
- volunteered to do one (students who commenced before 1 January 2018).

For more information about examiners' reports, see section 3.5 of the [Higher Degree by Research Examination Procedures](#).

Role of Chair of Examiners

When your thesis has been submitted for examination, your school will appoint a Chair of Examiners who will ensure any changes requested by examiners are implemented.

The Chair of Examiners is an academic staff member at UQ who is familiar with your research discipline and will provide advice to the Graduate School.

Further details regarding the Chair of Examiners can be found in the [Higher Degree by Research Examination Policy](#).

Late examiner reports

The Graduate School frequently communicates with examiners to ensure reports are returned in good time. We email before the report is due and send 2 reminder emails – one week apart – if a report is overdue.

If the report is not received after this time, the Dean of the Graduate School can choose to replace an examiner. The Dean of the Graduate School may contact the examiner directly prior to making the decision to appoint a third examiner.

For more information see section 3.0 of the [Higher Degree by Research Examination Procedures](#). A timeline of the entire examination process is also available:

- [Examination process with oral examination \(JPG, 111KB\)](#)
- [Examination process without oral examination \(JPG, 90KB\)](#).

2. Oral examinations (viva voce)

The purpose of an oral examination is to:

- validate thesis work was done by you
- provide an opportunity for you to defend your thesis based on feedback from your examiners
- give you an opportunity to hear critical feedback
- allow academic debate of your thesis and examiner feedback.

The following people will attend your oral exam:

- Chair of Examiners
- Thesis examiners (either in person or via video call).

Your advisory team will not attend.

You will be required to do an oral exam if you:

- commenced after 1 January 2017 and have included publications as part of your thesis
- commenced after 1 January 2018
- received a Career Development Scholarship Extension, or
- volunteered to do one (students who commenced before 1 January 2018). You can indicate your interest on your [Nomination of Examiners request](#).

Some disciplines and HDR programs (for example, joint PhDs or Cotutelle) also require candidates to undergo an oral examination.

For more information about oral examinations, see section 9 of the [Higher Degree by Research Examination Policy](#), or read the information below.

Remember to [review our guides](#) on preparing for your Oral Examination

What to expect during an oral exam

An oral exam is meant to be productive and professional and we hope you'll find it a positive experience.

The panel will want to be supportive and helpful, while offering advice and points of improvement.

Some of the best preparation you can do is minimise your stress levels – try to relax, prepare thoroughly, and take the process in your stride.

First 10 to 20 minutes

To begin the oral exam, you will have to give a brief presentation of your thesis, including:

- results
- significance of your work, and
- your individual contributions to the work.

The presentation is an icebreaker designed to help you relax and introduce yourself and your work to the panel.

Think carefully about what you want to say – you don't have to use PowerPoint slides (or similar) unless you want to.

In your summary, and throughout the oral exam, you should aim to demonstrate your knowledge and explain your process. It's important to be realistic about what you have done, and be clear about your contributions and results.

This isn't the time to apologise or to be too self-critical. It's perfectly OK to confidently acknowledge that your work has limitations and to talk about what these might mean.

We're expecting you to give some personal insight into your understanding of your work and its significance. Feel free to refer to the content of your thesis when you give your summary. This personal summary will help to answer some of your examiners' questions upfront and give them some ideas of additional questions to ask.

Remainder of examination

A typical oral exam can go for up to 3 hours, so make sure you're prepared for a stimulating and constructive intellectual exchange.

The panel will not expect perfect answers to questions and will be considerate of your situation. Don't be afraid to take your time when answering questions – or ask for a question to be repeated – or request a short break if you need it.

You're allowed to respectfully disagree with your examiners. The panel will be impressed by thoughtful academic argument more than agreeableness.

While you're in the room, it's important to pay attention to what your examiners are saying and try to get the right level of detail in your answers. Try to give thoughtful and specific answers, while demonstrating your knowledge and explaining your thinking. If you can do this, both you and your examiners are likely to be relaxed throughout the entire process.

As long as you are familiar with the work in your thesis, can explain it, and can answer questions reasonably well, then there is no reason to be worried.

After the oral exam

Your Chair of Examiners will now send a written report summarising the oral exam panel feedback to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will send both the oral summary report and the examiner reports to the Dean of the Graduate School, who will decide what your examination outcome is.

In making a decision, the Dean will consider both your thesis examiners' reports and the report from the Chair of Examiners.

The Graduate School will send you an email with your examination outcome and the report of the oral exam panel.

3. Examination outcomes

You will receive your examination reports and outcome once the Dean of the Graduate School has made a decision. This will be emailed to your UQ student account.

Possible examination outcomes include:

- Degree awarded with no further changes to the thesis.
- Degree awarded with changes to the thesis. You will have 3 months to complete the changes
- Revise and resubmit the thesis based on examiners' reports. You will have 12 months to revise and resubmit.
- Repeat oral examination based on the recommendation of the oral exam panel.
- Fail, but only after re-examination of your revised and resubmitted thesis.

If you need a letter for your employer or sponsor to show that your thesis is being corrected following feedback from your examiners, you can submit a request through the [Student Centre](#).

No further changes

All you have to do now is upload your final thesis to UQ eSpace.

[Read more about final thesis upload](#)

Changes

Most candidates are required to make some changes – or corrections – to their thesis.

Any changes you make have to be recorded in a separate document to the thesis. In the document you have to clearly explain your response to each change request.

You don't have to make every change your examiners suggest – you are allowed defend your thesis.

Most candidates use the following format:

Examiner	Recommendation	Old page, paragraph nos.	New page, para nos.	Response
A	Correct referencing on these two pages	14–15, all paragraphs	14–15, all paragraphs	All referencing has been corrected and standardised using Chicago Style
B	Develop the argument further	66–68, all paragraphs under 'Historical overview' subheading	66–72, all paragraphs under 'Historical overview' subheading	{Put a detailed explanation here}
etc.				

Once your list of changes has been reviewed by your advisors, you will have to upload your corrected thesis and the list of changes to UQ eSpace – you do not need to submit another Thesis Submission Request in My.UQ

[For more information, read the UQ eSpace guide – corrections \(PDF, 908KB\).](#)

Revise and resubmit

If your examination outcome was revise and resubmit, you will have to:

- upload your revised thesis, abstract and list of corrections – in 3 separate PDF files to UQ eSpace in one upload.
- submit a fully endorsed [Thesis submission request](#) in the my.UQ dashboard.

The changes you make have to be recorded in a separate document to the thesis. In the document you have to clearly explain your response to each change request.

You don't have to make every change your examiners suggest – you are allowed defend your thesis.

Most candidates use the following format:

Examiner	Recommendation	Old page, paragraph no.	New page, para no.	Response
A	Correct all referencing	All pages	All pages	All referencing has been corrected and standardised using Chicago Style

Examiner	Recommendation	Old page, paragraph no.	New page, para no.	Response
B	Develop the argument further	Chapter 2	Chapter 2	{Put a detailed explanation here}
etc.				

Wherever possible, your original examiners will re-examine your thesis.

Once your list of changes has been endorsed by your advisors, you can upload your revised thesis, abstract and the list of corrections to UQ eSpace

For more information, read the [UQ eSpace guide – resubmission \(PDF, 815KB\)](#).

Repeat oral examination

If you have to repeat your oral examination, the Graduate School will send you an email advising you of a new time.

To prepare, make sure you've read our [advice about oral examinations](#). Student Services (through the Graduate School) also offers [learning workshops](#) that could help you prepare.

Fail

A thesis can fail if:

- the first examination outcome is revise and resubmit, and
- the revised thesis is deemed not to be of an appropriate standard for any higher degree by research.

This outcome is only issued after a second examination and if the thesis is not of the appropriate standard for the award of any research higher degree.

Award of MPhil if PhD attainment is unsuccessful:

This outcome is only issued after a second examination and if the thesis is not of an appropriate standard for a PhD but fulfils the criteria for an MPhil

More information is in section 10 of the [Higher Degree by Research Examination Procedures](#).

If your examiners disagree

If your examiners' reports are radically divergent, the Dean of the Graduate School will seek advice from the Chair of Examiners. In some cases, a third examiner can be appointed.

For more information about examination outcomes, read the [Higher Degree by Research Examination Policy and Procedures](#).

4. After the examination process

If your corrected or revised thesis has been approved by the Dean, or if you had no changes, all you have to do is upload your final thesis to UQ eSpace.

[Learn more about final thesis upload](#)

Once all requirements have been met, the Dean of the Graduate School will make the recommendation for the conferral of your degree.

5. Thesis completion

Uploading your final thesis

To upload your final thesis, follow the instructions in the [UQ eSpace guide – award of degree \(PDF, 880KB\)](#).

If you have problems uploading your thesis after reviewing the guide, please [contact the Graduate School](#).

Your final thesis upload will be reviewed by Graduate School staff to ensure that it meets all requirements.