



GRADUATE STUDIES

POLICY & PROCEDURE

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1.0 Abbreviations

ADGSR Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research

CGS Centre for Graduate Studies

CGSC College Graduate Studies Committee

FNU Fiji National University

GESC Graduate Examination Sub-Committee

UASR University Academic Student Regulations

UGSC University Graduate Studies Committee

2.0 Introduction

This policy aligns with FNU's Strategic vision as a dual-sector tertiary, institution and links with the strategic priorities of the Plan. To access the Strategic Plan, click on the link [[Strategic Plan 2024 - 2026](https://www.fnu.ac.fj/about-fnu/corporate-governance/strategic-plan/)].<https://www.fnu.ac.fj/about-fnu/corporate-governance/strategic-plan/>

The policy is also linked to the College Graduate Committees to enhance graduate studies at FNU. The five Colleges are;

- [College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry](#)
- [College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies](#)
- [College of Engineering & Technical Vocational Education & Training](#)
- [College of Humanities and Education](#)
- [College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences](#)

The Centre for Graduate Studies (CGS) coordinates all graduate programs (from Postgraduate Diplomas to Doctoral Studies) of the university and undertakes periodic evaluations of all programs.

3.0 Purpose

The objectives of this policy are to:

- a. Provide a standard overarching framework to ensure the academic integrity of Graduate Studies at Fiji National University (FNU).
- b. Ensure that Graduate Studies programs at FNU are governed by one unified set of policies and procedures.
- c. Ensure that FNU's Graduate Studies processes are transparent.
- d. Ensure that decisions affecting Graduate candidates are consistent and fair.

4.0 Scope

This policy applies to all:

- a. Graduate Studies programmes at FNU.
- b. Graduate Studies candidates.
- c. FNU staff responsible for Graduate Studies programme supervision.
- d. Deans of Colleges and College Graduate Studies Committees (CGSC)
- e. People external to FNU acting as Graduate Studies supervisors or examiners.



5.0 Policy is Binding

This policy binds the FNU staff, students, and affiliates, including external appointees.

6.0 Policy Content

6.1 Admission

Applicants can apply for Graduate Studies admission through the online portal on the FNU website <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/study/apply/>. Admission is based upon supervisor availability in the specialized area. Master by Research (full thesis) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) are annualised programmes. Students can be admitted at the beginning of each term (semester).

Admission Process can be viewed via [Flowchart](#).

6.2 Enrolment

Applicants can apply for admission to Graduate Studies through the online portal on the FNU website <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/study/apply/>. For more information regarding the course, please visit [Colleges](#).

6.3 Post Graduate Programmes

Graduate Studies at FNU are;

- Post Graduate Diploma
- Master (by Research and Thesis, coursework, and coursework and mini thesis)
- Doctor of Philosophy

6.3.1 Programme Duration

- a. Duration of the Post Graduate Diploma programme is one year for full-time study and two years for part-time study.
- b. Duration of the Master degree by Coursework programme is two years for full-time study and four years for part-time study.
- c. Duration of the Master degree by Coursework and mini thesis programme is two years for full-time study and four years for part-time study.
- d. Duration of the Master degree by Research and Full Thesis programme is two years for full-time study and four years for part-time study.
- e. Duration of the PhD programme is three years for full-time study and six years for part-time study.

6.3.2 Full or Part-Time Study and Course Duration

Candidates may apply to study on a full-time or part-time basis. The CGSC will consider the following in making decisions on the mode of study, either full or part-time.

- a. expected course duration;
- b. scholarship requirements;
- c. course requirements;
- d. regulatory requirements; and
- e. academic progress.



6.3.3 Programme Extension

Master by Research

- a. Full Time Candidate will be eligible for one extension up to six months.
- b. Part Time Candidate will be eligible for one extension up to one year.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

- a. Full Time Candidate will be eligible for one extension up to one year.
- b. Part Time Candidate will be eligible for one extension up to two years.

6.4 Entry Requirement

6.4.1 Post Graduate Diploma

The minimum requirements for admission to a Post Graduate Diploma programmes is:

- a. A Bachelor with a GPA of 3.00 or above (or the equivalent from a recognised University)
- b. An individual for the Postgraduate Diploma in a specified subject or, where appropriate, a related area will normally have completed all requirements of the relevant Bachelor's Degree or Graduate Certificate, or who is deemed to have acquired the relevant skills and knowledge through appropriate work or professional experience, at an additional level.

The medium of instruction at FNU is the English language. Students applying for Graduate studies at the Fiji National University, must be sufficiently fluent in the English language to pursue the Graduate Studies Programme. Applicants will be required to provide evidence from undergraduate qualifications or other English qualifications that confirm their English language competency.

6.4.2 Master by Research/Master by Coursework/Master by Coursework and mini thesis

The minimum requirements for admission to a Master programme is:

- a. A Postgraduate diploma with a GPA of 3.00 or above (or the equivalent from a recognised University)
- b. A bachelor's degree with a GPA of 3.5.
- c. An honours Bachelor's degree with a GPA of 3.00 (from a recognised institution)
- d. Master by coursework
- e. Recognised Professional experience: Evidence of academic qualifications and/or experience inclusive of research reports, or dissertations, or publications or other evidence of professional work that satisfies the Dean of the College that, the applicant has sufficient knowledge of the field of study, and capable of undertaking research and writing the thesis.
- f. Any of the above-listed pre-requisites must have been attained from a recognised institution.



6.4.3 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The minimum requirements for admission to a PhD programme is:

- a. A Master by Research degree.
- b. Where the Master degree is by coursework a GPA of minimum 4.0 is required plus a completion of a research method course.
- c. An Honours Bachelor's degree with a GPA of minimum 4.0 and above or (First or upper Second-class Honours).
- d. Recognized Professional experience: Evidence of academic qualifications and/or experience inclusive of research reports, or dissertations, or publications or other evidence of professional work that satisfies the Dean of the College that, the applicant has sufficient knowledge of the field of study, and capable of undertaking research and the writing of the thesis.
- e. Any of the above-listed pre-requisites must have been attained from a recognised institution.

6.5 Transfer of Candidature

Any candidates who want to transfer to FNU from another institution will be considered by UGSC, in consultation with the Dean of the College. Normally it may be required that candidates have not completed more than two-thirds of their programme.

A candidate of FNU who wants to transfer to another Graduate Studies programme at the University must:

- a. meet the eligibility requirements of the programme to which they wish to transfer; and
- b. satisfy their supervisors and UGSC with their ability to complete the programme in a timely manner.

UGSC may admit a student directly into candidature if they have successfully completed the confirmation requirements for Graduate Studies at another recognised institution.

If approved by the Dean of the College, candidates accepted into FNU Graduate Studies programme from another university will be required to continue their studies from where they are at the point of leaving their previous institution.

In the case of transfer of candidature, whether from one College to another at FNU or from another university to FNU, admission will be based on the availability of supervisor(s) in the respective field of study.

Applications are to be made using the standard application form with evidence of work completed and submitted to CGS through the Student Academic Services (SAS) for CGSC approval.

6.6 Supervisors

The supervision of Graduate students will be decided at the College level by the CGSC chaired by the Dean or his/her nominee. The decision of the Committee will be forwarded to the CGS for archiving.

For Master by Research at least two supervisors are required. One of these will be a principal and the other Co-supervisor. For PhD supervision a maximum of three supervisors is required, with one as a Principal and the other two Co-supervisors. In all cases the supervisory team will be assigned by CGSC.

The College Dean, in consultation with the potential supervisor and student, will ensure that the relevant expertise for supervision is available to provide guidance to the student. The CGSC endorses the Application for Admission and the supervisor allotment.

One of the two supervisors must be assigned to be the Principal supervisor. The Principal supervisor:

- a. must be a staff member of the Fiji National University.
- b. possesses recognised expertise and knowledge in the thesis area as determined by the CGSC.
- c. has administrative responsibility for the candidate; and
- d. must be a registered supervisor with the CGS.

The Principal supervisor is expected to have in-depth knowledge of the candidate's research topic.

Co-supervisors have a more specific or secondary role in the supervision of a candidate's research.

Academic advisors or mentors with PhD qualifications may also be engaged in supervision with prior approval from the Principal supervisor. In addition, technical specialists who do not have PhD qualification but have several years of experience in a particular field can be engaged in supervision as technical/clinical experts as Associate Supervisor(s); however, they would normally not be appointed as Principal, secondary or Co-supervisors.

A candidate shall not be assigned a supervisor where a real or perceived conflict of interest could affect a student's candidature.

A full-time candidate in the Graduate Studies programme at FNU may not:

- a. supervise another candidate at either FNU or any other institution; or
- b. be a member of the advisory committee of another candidate at either FNU or any other institution.

A part-time candidate in the Graduate Studies programme who meets the supervision requirements may supervise candidates in a programme at a lower level in accordance with the AQF+1 quality assurance principle in place at FNU, with the permission of UGSC.

6.6.1 PhD Supervision

To qualify as a Principal supervisor, one would normally have:

- a. supervised at least one PhD to completion; or
- b. possess a PhD qualification, completed the FNU Graduate Studies Supervisor Training Programme, published in the field, and shall be mentored by a Senior Academic.

The co-supervisor can be a faculty member of their College with a PhD qualification and has successfully completed the FNU Graduate Studies Supervisor Training Programme.

A co-supervisor would normally have a PhD qualification, completed the FNU Graduate Studies Supervisor Training Programme, published in the field, and shall be mentored by a Senior Academic.

6.6.2 Master by Research Supervision

To qualify as a Principal supervisor, one would normally have:

- a. supervised at least one PhD or Master by Research to completion; or
- b. possesses a PhD qualification, completed the FNU Graduate Studies Supervisor Training Programme, published in the field, and shall be mentored by a Senior Academic.

The co-supervisor can be a faculty member with a PhD and/or Master by Research qualification and successfully completed the FNU Graduate Studies Supervisor Training Programme.

To be a co-supervisor, one would normally have supervised at least one PhD or Master by Research to completion or possess a PhD and/or Master by Research qualification, completed the FNU Graduate Studies Supervisor Training Programme, published in the field, and shall be mentored by a Senior Academic.

6.6.3 Role of Centre for Graduate Studies in Supervision

In situations where there is conflict in the supervision of students, the Dean of the Centre in consultation with the Dean of the respective College, shall endeavor to resolve the conflict.

6.6.4 Adjunct Supervisors

Adjunct supervisors would normally be appointed as co-supervisors. For Adjunct appointments, please refer to Adjunct Appointment SOP and Form on the HR website or contact the Department of Human Resources.

In cases where Colleges lack experts in the subject areas, Adjuncts can be appointed as Principal supervisor(s) but, there must be a co-supervisor from FNU.

The Dean of the college shall recommend, to the CGS, the appointment of an Adjunct Principal supervisor. Appointment and the remuneration should be approved by the Chair of the University Graduate Studies Committee (UGSC).

6.7 Supervisor Availability

All enrolments/admissions will depend on the availability of subject area expert(s) within FNU.

During candidature, if a supervisor ceases employment and or is unable to supervise, the CGS on the recommendation of College Dean shall make all arrangements for a new supervisor to be appointed.

The Principal Supervisor's responsibility is to work with and guide the student till the completion of the Thesis, final examination, and the award of the degree. Where a Principal supervisor has to leave the services of the University without the candidate reaching confirmation status, or there is disagreement between student and supervisor, or any other unforeseen circumstances that can impact the student's progress.

One of following can be adopted:

1. If there are more than two supervisors, one of the co-supervisors may take over.
2. Where none of the Co-supervisors is deemed qualified to take over, an Adjunct can be sought.
3. Where a Candidate has completed more than seventy five percent of the thesis writing it will be expected that the Principal Supervisor continues from his next posting.

6.8 Role of the Supervisor and Student

Supervisors and students have specific roles and responsibilities to perform from the beginning to the end of candidature. Supervisors and Graduate Studies candidates are required to read through the *FNU Supervisor and Student Code of Practice* and conform.

6.9 Probationary Candidature

All candidates are admitted on a probationary basis.

The probationary periods are until a candidate satisfactorily meets the requirements of candidature confirmation within:

- a. A minimum of six months and a maximum of eight months for a full-time Master Degree by Research candidate.
- b. A minimum of six months and a maximum of 12 months for a full-time PhD candidate.
- c. Twice the time of a full-time candidate in the relevant Graduate Studies programme for part-time candidates.



6.10 Candidature Conditions

Candidates must:

- a. Conform to enrollment requirements.
- b. Conform to the scholarship and/or sponsorship requirements.
- c. Attend induction programmes.
- d. Enroll in and register for coursework subjects as required.
- e. Undertake other training/preparatory/ and mandatory courses where required.

Candidates and their supervisors must comply with the Graduate Studies Supervisor and Student Code of Practice and confirm:

- a. supervisory expectations and arrangements; and
- b. a schedule of supervisory meetings.

To maintain candidature, candidates must:

- a. maintain satisfactory academic progress.
- b. complete and attain satisfactory progress for all the milestones, including meeting the academic standards of the programme.
- c. agree to FNU's terms and conditions of enrollment each year.

The UGSC, acting on recommendations from the Dean of the College, may suspend, vary the terms of, or terminate a candidate's candidature for failure to comply with the:

- a. regulations, policies, and processes of the FNU.
- b. conditions of admission, enrolment, milestone reviews, or examination in their programme of study.

UGSC, acting on recommendations from the Dean of the College may impose a range of conditions on candidates including:

- a. required levels of achievement and milestones;
- b. engagement with support services; and/or
- c. expected behavior.

Graduate Studies candidates and their supervisors are required to develop a research data plan based on *FNU Research Data Management Policy and Procedure for Staff, Adjuncts, Graduate Studies Candidates, and Visitors*.

6.11 Changes to Candidature

Changes to a candidate's enrolment must be approved by the CGS and UGSC.

6.12 Leave Entitlement and Candidature

Supervisors must assess and approve applications for leave and inform the Dean's Office for approval and notification of the CGS.

For all categories of approved leave other than recreational leave:

- a. enrolment in the course is suspended for the duration of the leave;



- b. time spent on leave is not included in the enrolment entitlement;
- c. candidates are provided with access to University services such as a student email account, library, and student advising system; and
- d. progression milestone dates are adjusted to reflect periods of leave.

6.13 Deferral of Candidature

Applicants may apply to the UGSC through the Dean of the College, for the approval of deferral of the commencement of their programme prior to enrolment.

The maximum period of deferral is 12 months; a lesser period may be granted at the discretion of the College.

Deferral is not automatically granted, and the UGSC is not obliged to grant deferral. It will be based on a reason considered genuine by the UGSC.

When making decisions on requests to defer, factors that may be considered are:

- a. restrictions or conditions applying to any scholarship held by or offered to the candidate;
- b. course-specific criteria as documented in the course documents;
- c. regulatory requirements; and
- d. the capacity to provide supervision, and the availability of staff and resources required for the programme of study.

6.14 Study Away from the University

Candidates may spend time away from university for research-related activities; however, they must comply with *FNU Finance Policy*.

During time away from university, candidates are required to fulfil all the requirements that include milestone achievements and submission of work on the agreed timeframe or deadlines.

Any time spent away from the University will be factored into the candidates' candidature period.

The CGS, in consultation with the Dean of the College, will assign an external supervisor located near the candidate for periods of study away at another institute or obtain evidence of online meeting plans with supervisor/s.

6.15 Other Variations to Candidature

Candidates may apply to UGSC through the Dean of the College to vary the condition of their candidature after commencement in their programme, including:

- a. change between full and part-time enrolment;
- b. change of supervisor;
- c. change of College;

- d. convert from one graduate research programme to another; or
- e. change of research topic if required after candidature confirmation.

Any change to the supervisory arrangement shall be done formally through application to the Dean applying to the CGS for UGSC approval using the Change of Supervisor Form.

When making decisions on any variation to candidature applications, factors that the UGSC will consider include:

- a. programme-specific requirements;
- b. academic progress to date;
- c. supervisor availability;
- d. the candidate's prospects of success and capacity to complete on time;
- e. FNU resources and capacity;
- f. Graduate Studies Supervisor and Student Code of Practice;
- g. regulatory requirements; and/or
- h. compassionate or compelling circumstances.

The UGSC does not reserve the right to approve all requested changes; however, they will consider the matter on a case-by-case basis.

6.16 Lapsed Candidature Application and Approvals

Lapsed candidature is a status intended to allow candidates to submit their thesis for examination following the expiration of their candidature entitlement and any approved extensions. Applications to lapsed candidature must be approved by UGSC.

Lapsed candidature may be granted by UGSC upon recommendations from the Dean of the College, where compelling personal, medical, or compassionate grounds exist:

- a. for one calendar year for a Master candidates; and
- b. for two calendar years for Doctoral candidates.

Approval for lapsed candidature may only be granted if, in the opinion of the candidate's supervisor the:

- a. candidate has demonstrated sufficient understanding of the research topic that can lead to completion;
- b. candidate has provided a credible plan for completion; and
- c. candidate's personal circumstances are such that completion is likely.

If a candidate's application is rejected, the candidate is regarded as making unsatisfactory academic progress, and the UGSC will issue a formal decision on unsatisfactory progress.

If a candidate does not submit their thesis or its creative equivalent within the agreed period of the lapsed candidature, their enrolment is terminated.

6.17 **Withdrawal from Programme**

A candidate may permanently withdraw from the programme they are enrolled in at any time but not after they have:

- a. submitted a thesis or its creative equivalent for examination; or
- b. had their candidature terminated for unsatisfactory academic progress; or
- c. had their candidature terminated for misconduct; or
- d. had their candidature terminated for failure to submit for examination by the maximum submission date.

6.18 **Late Submission Applications and Approvals**

Applications for late submission are assessed by the Principal supervisor, endorsed by the College Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research, approved by the respective College Dean and final endorsement by the Dean CGS.

UGSC may deliberate on late submissions based on the Principal supervisors' recommendations and may grant approval if:

- The candidate meets the Graduate Studies requirements, demonstrates sufficient understanding of the research topic, and submits a work plan for completion within the specified timeframe.

UGSC shall consider applications for late submission on the following circumstances:

- a. compelling and serious research-related reasons beyond the candidates' control;
or
- b. compelling or unexpected, personal, or medical reasons which have arisen during the candidature period.

Candidates who are permitted to make a late submission will not be enrolled and will not have an enrolled status in the student management system.

If candidates are granted late submission and require access to the University facilities for research-related reasons, such as the library, laboratory, or studio space, they must be enrolled for administrative purposes. An identifying status will be assigned to these candidates in the student management system.

If a candidate does not submit their thesis or its creative equivalent by the maximum submission date granted by the UGSC under this provision, their progress is shall be deemed unsatisfactory, and their enrolment may be terminated.

6.19 Maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress

Candidates are required to make satisfactory progress towards the timely completion of their programmes as outlined below:

For full-time PhD candidates:

- a. Candidature confirmation within 10 months of enrollment.
- b. Completion seminar including oral presentation within 30 months of enrollment.
- c. Submission of the thesis for examination at the end of 36 months of enrollment.

For part-time PhD candidates:

Twice the times listed above for full-time PhD candidates.

For full-time Master by Research candidates:

- a. Candidature confirmation within 8 months of enrollment.
- b. Completion seminar including oral presentation within 18 months of enrollment.
- c. Submission of the thesis for examination at the end of 24 months of enrollment.

For part-time Master by Research candidates:

Twice the times listed above for full-time Master by Research candidates.

Graduate Studies supervisors must monitor and report on candidates' academic progress.

They must:

- a. Discuss, confirm, and record discussions and meetings with supervisors using the *Graduate Studies Supervisor and Candidate Meeting Log*. Both parties must sign the meeting log.
- b. Inform the candidate of satisfactory academic progress requirements and expectations for the award of the degree.
- c. Continuously monitor student work according to the work plan and emphasise the standard required for the award of the degree.
- d. The supervisor is to provide constructive comments to the candidate on their work and communicate to the candidate positively on any area of improvement needed due to inadequate progress demonstrated by the candidate.
- e. Prepare candidates for progress reviews (candidature confirmation and completion seminar with oral presentation); and
- f. Assist and guide candidates who are or may be at risk during the candidature period.
- g. Supervisors must meet with the candidate to discuss their academic progress and provide constructive feedback at least once a month and keep a record of the discussions in the *Graduate Studies Supervisor & Candidate Meeting Log*.
- h. Support candidates throughout their candidature to successful completion.

6.20 Progress Reports

Candidates will be required to submit two progress reports. One in mid-year and the other at the end of the year. This will be provided using the *Graduate Studies progress report template*. Supervisor's must provide comprehensive comments on the students' performance.

The progress reports will be presented to CGSC and endorsed by the chair of CGSC.

Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research to present a summary of progress report every 6 months to the UGSC before submission to CGS.

With approval of UGSC, the Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research will provide written feedback to the students and notify the Centre of the same.

6.21 Progress Reviews

The supervisors shall prepare the candidates for the milestone assessment/review based on the following guidelines. Assessment/review panel members should also familiarise themselves with the milestone guidelines.

Master by Research Candidates

Progress reviews for all Master By Research candidates will require successful completion of one preparatory research course (offered by respective Colleges) as pre-requisites for candidature confirmation unless exempted due to prior learning and one mandatory course on Pacific studies course (offered by CGS) must complete before completion of their graduate journey.

The preparatory courses to be completed will be decided by the candidate and the Principal supervisor based on the candidate's prior learning and skills required to undertake research. The Principal supervisor may waive the courses where there is evidence that they were not needed by the candidate.

For progress reviews, each full-time candidate has to satisfy the requirements for:

- a. Candidature confirmation within 8 months of candidature (16 months for part time candidates).
- b. Completion seminar with oral presentation within 18 months of candidature prior to the submission of the thesis at the end of 24 months of candidature.

Doctor of Philosophy Candidates

Progress reviews for all PhD candidates will require successful completion of one preparatory research course (offered by respective Colleges) and one mandatory course (offered by CGS) as pre-requisites for candidature confirmation unless exempted due to prior learning. The two courses to be completed will be decided by the candidate and the Principal supervisor based on the candidate's prior learning and skills required to undertake research. The Principal supervisor may waive the courses where there is evidence that they were not needed by the candidate.

For progress reviews, each full-time candidate must satisfy the requirements for:

- a. Candidature confirmation within 10 months of candidature (20 months for part time candidates)
- b. Completion seminar with oral presentation within 30 months of candidature, prior to submission of the thesis at the end of 36 months.

6.22 Candidature Confirmation

The candidate will submit a research proposal to the College. A candidate who does not comply with this requirement will normally be required to withdraw their enrolment from the programme.

The research proposal will clearly explicate:

- a. Project scope, research challenge/problem, and nature of innovation;
- b. Research framework/design;
- c. Key activities and timelines; and
- d. Expected research results and outcomes.

The research report will entail a literature review and analysis, and any chapters completed around 4,000 – 6,000 words at the time of candidature confirmation for PhD candidates and around 3,000 – 5,000 words for Master Degree by Research (full thesis) candidates.

Candidates are required to submit their proposals to the College Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research at least two weeks before the presentation date. The CGSC will establish the panel for the proposal presentation and issue an invitation. At the presentation, candidates will make a case for doing the research and justify the research design to be the best approach to address the research problem.

The candidature confirmation panel will determine one of the following outcomes:

- a. That the candidate's programme of work (research proposal) is approved, in which case the candidate is confirmed, and their proposal is registered with the CGS, and the candidate progresses to the next stage of their research.
- b. That the candidate's programme of work (research proposal) is approved, subject to completing amendments to the research proposal within 2 to 4 weeks of the assessment. Written guidance is to be given to the candidate with the report compiled by the Chair of the panel, Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research of the respective College or their representative and the Director for Centre for Graduate Studies. Once the research proposal is approved, it will be registered with the CGS, and the candidate will progress to the next stage of their research.
- c. If the candidate's proposal is not approved, in which case the candidate will be given a second chance within four to six weeks to improve and present. If the candidate does not get through a second time, their enrolment under this schedule will be withdrawn.

6.23 Panel for Candidature Confirmation

6.23.1 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Candidature confirmation for PhD programme will entail a presentation by the student to a panel. The panel consist,

- The Dean or his/her nominee as Chair
- Two experts in the subject area (internal or external)
- One representative from another College.

The two experts must have a minimum of a PhD in the subject area.

6.23.2 Master Programme

Candidature confirmation for the Master programme will entail a presentation by the student to a panel. The panel consist,

- The Dean or his/her nominee as Chair
- Two experts in the subject area (internal or external)
- One representative from another College.

The two experts must have a minimum of a PhD in the subject area.

All panel members will be independent of the supervisory team and will be approved by the respective College Dean.

The candidature confirmation presentation will be for a minimum of 20 minutes, with additional time for questions from the review panel members.

The review panel will provide feedback to the candidate on the research proposal both verbally and in writing on the future direction of the candidate's research. This will be recorded on the *Candidature Confirmation Assessment Form*.

The panel members and supervisors will familiarise themselves with the Candidature Confirmation Procedure and requirements.

Candidature Confirmation Assessment Process:

- a. Candidate loads his/her PowerPoint slides (2 minutes).
- b. Panel Members and the audience take their positions.
- c. The candidate presents his/her proposal to the panel (20 minutes).
- d. Panel members take notes using the Candidature Confirmation Assessment Form.
- e. Panel asks questions to the candidate (20 to 25 minutes).
- f. Audience questions will not be taken.
- g. The candidate and audience leave the room for the panel members to discuss (10 minutes).

- h. The panel members invite the candidate back and provide feedback to the candidate [This is a critical stage of candidature; therefore, the panel must help the candidate improve the proposal to ensure their literature analysis, citations, research questions, the significance of the research, theories used to underpin the research, research process, research design, amount of data required to generate new knowledge in the discipline, and time table are all correct].
- i. The candidate leaves.
- j. The College Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research collects assessment forms from the panel members to write a report to the candidate. The Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research submits the Report and the Candidature Confirmation Assessment letter to the Academic Office via CGS for recording in the Student Management System and issuance of the Candidature Confirmation Assessment letter to the candidate. The CGS will record the outcome in the Graduate Studies Register held at the CGS.

6.24 Completion Seminar with Oral Presentation

1. The Dean of the CGS in consultation with the Dean of the College will appoint a Chair.
2. The Completion Seminar form is to be used by the panel of three members, two members will be from the candidate's research area, and one member from another discipline (College) at FNU who all will be independent of the supervisory team. The panel members will be approved by the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee.
3. Supervisors and College ADGSR will nominate panel members with CVs to the Centre for Graduate Studies for Graduation Examination Sub-Committee approval for the panel membership.
4. Invitations will be sent to other members of the College to attend.
5. Comments and suggestions from the panel members will be taken into consideration and the supervisor and the candidate will work out the comments into thesis finalization.

A candidate is required to submit their evidence of work completed to date including completion of all data collection and analysis, draft chapters, and publications (if any) to the principal supervisor within 30 months for full-time PhD and 18 months for full-time Master by Research candidates from the date of enrolment.

The Principal Supervisor will ensure that the Completion Seminar, with oral presentation panel is appointed within 30 months for full-time PhD candidates and 18 months for full-time Master by Research programme from the date of enrolment.

The Chair of the review panel will be an experienced, research-active senior academic from Fiji National University. while the other two members will be academics with knowledge in the area of the candidate's research or methodology. All panel members will be independent of the supervisory team.



The completion seminar with oral presentation will be for a minimum of 60 minutes, with additional time for questions from the panel members.

The panel will evaluate the progress achieved by the candidate, which should demonstrate achievement commensurate with the period of enrolment with the criteria for the award.

The panel will recommend one of the following:

- a. That the candidate progresses to the next stage of finalising their thesis.
- b. The candidate may upgrade and progress to a PhD and forego the Masters (for Master by Research candidates only)
- c. That the candidate progresses to the next stage of their research programme subject to completing amendments suggested by the panel members within 2 months of the date of the presentation. Comments and suggestions for improvements to be used by the ADGSR to provide a written report to Centre for Graduate Studies.
- d. The work demonstrated by the candidate is not satisfactory. One more chance will be given for presentation after the candidate upgrades the work based on panel comments and suggestions.

Note: The Master by Research candidate at this stage may request the panel to upgrade to PhD with full justification of the next stage of research that will extend the current work to the level of a PhD.

The review panel will provide feedback at the end of the presentation and discussion to the candidate on the research work both verbally and in writing on the future direction of the candidate's research. This will be recorded on the Completion seminar with oral presentation Form.

Completion Seminar with Oral Presentation Process:

- a. Candidate loads his/her PowerPoint slides (2 minutes).
- b. Panel Members and the audience take their positions.
- c. The candidate presents his/her progress report to the panel (60 minutes).
- d. Panel members take notes using the Completion Seminar with Oral Presentation Form.
- e. Panel members ask questions to the candidate (45 to 60 minutes).
- f. The candidate leaves the room for the panel members to discuss (40 to 45 minutes).
- g. The panel members invite the candidate and provide positive yet constructive feedback to the candidate on the progress made. The review should specifically focus on the completion of a full set of data collected, analysed and related to the aim and objectives of the study, data analysed and presented using figures, graphs, and other illustrative techniques to augment text data, demonstrate skills in

interpreting the findings and relating to the hypothesis/ research questions, addresses the findings by critical and logical discussion/ arguments with the support of literature/ previous research, provides the summary of the research findings, addresses the strengths and limitations of the study, justifies the similarities and differences of the findings in relation to previous research and literature, addresses the contribution of the study to the discipline of a study highlighting findings that are new and unique; and provides the whole list of citations. The panel members will also take into account publications from the research project to date.

- h. The candidate leaves.
- i. The College Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research collects the assessment forms from the panel members to write a report to the candidate submitted to the CGS and to inform the candidate of the outcome through Academic office. The CGS will record the outcome in the Graduate Studies Register held at the CGS.

6.25 Thesis

The thesis must conform to the requirements of the FNU Thesis Structure Guideline.

Be the student's own work and include work done by the candidate during the candidature period.

Clearly demonstrate the contribution of knowledge in the disciplinary area of the research study.

Demonstrate evidence of originality by the:

- a. discovery of new knowledge; and
- b. exercise of independent critical ability.

Form a cohesive and unified whole.

Be of publishable quality with original work.

The structure and standard of the thesis are of international standard and acceptable to the discipline.

The thesis must document, generally in the appendix:

- a. The animal and/or human ethics approval letter (if required by the nature of the research)
- b. Summaries of data sets/analysis.
- c. The nature of collaborations, or assistance, with the work described in the thesis, including:
 - any assistance provided during the research phase; and
 - any editorial assistance in finalising the thesis.

The thesis must contain a written component generally in the form of one or more critical

hypotheses/propositions that investigated the subject of the thesis in the relevant body of knowledge.

The thesis may contain:

- a. artistic or creative works, software, computer code, or models which must be documented or recorded in a way sufficient for assessment;
- b. material that has been published during candidature with clearly stated references of the publications; and
- c. appendices.

An appendix section provides relevant supplementary materials that are related to the study but not evident in part or full in the main thesis. The material in appendices is assessable except were written entirely by authors other than the candidate. Appendices may include:

- a. data sets.
- b. software code.
- c. survey or interview tools used to gather research data.
- d. publications arising from the research but not directly.
- e. other material as deemed necessary by the student and the supervisor.

The length of the thesis at FNU are as follows:

- a. **For Master degree by Research**
 - 30,000 to 40,000 words.
 - the word limit does not include appendices.
- b. **Master by Coursework with Mini Thesis**
 - 10,000 to 20,000 words
 - the word limit does not include appendices.
- c. **For doctoral degrees**
 - 50,000 to 100,000 words.
 - the word limit does not include appendices

6.26 Language of the Thesis

English is the medium of instruction at FNU, and all theses must be written in English. Candidates intending to write a thesis in another language shall attain a formal approval from the UGSC prior to the admission phase.

6.27 Editing of Thesis by Third Parties

The candidate's supervisors are to critique the draft thesis prior to approving its submission.

Students may use an editor to edit their written work, in consultation with their supervisors and notify the College and the CGS of the editor details.

An editor may only be used for copy-editing and proofreading and providing advice on:

- a. language, structure, style, syntax and grammar;
- b. presenting arguments, flow, the connection of sentences, paragraphs, and sections;
- c. text accuracy and layout consistency;
- d. voice and tone, clarity of expression;
- e. avoiding excessive information, repetition, ambiguity;
- f. checking of citations (intext/parenthetical) references sections, referencing style and quality; and
- g. completeness and consistency

6.28 Notice of Intention to Submit

A candidate shall formally make an application to submit a thesis for examination prior to the final submission date using the *Notification of Intention to Submit Form*.

The notice should be given at least three months prior to the intended submission date to allow sufficient time for:

- a. the appointment of examiners for the thesis.
- b. the organisation of other examination requirements such as exhibitions or performances.

The notice of intention to submit must include a declaration by the student that they have complied with:

- a. Attainment of Ethics approvals (where required).
- b. Their research data management plan according to *the FNU Research Data Management Policy and Procedure for Staff, Adjuncts, Graduate Studies Candidates, and Visitors* and any relevant College discipline requirements.
- c. An agreement by the supervisors that the thesis is ready for examination.

The notice of intention to submit is sent by the principal supervisor through the Dean's office, to the CGS for Graduate Examination Sub-Committee approval.

6.29 Submission Checks

Graduate Studies Supervisors take the responsibility to:

- a. review the format of the thesis according to *FNU Thesis Structure Guidelines*;
- b. apply similarity detection software (Turnitin at FNU); and
- c. conduct a data integrity check.

If for any reason, the thesis is not ready for examination, other than the research misconduct, the thesis shall be reviewed by the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee.

6.30 Eligibility to Submit for Examination

Candidates are only eligible to submit their thesis and or creative equivalent for examination if they have been enrolled in the programme for the minimum period as



follows:

1. Master Degree 18 months full-time equivalent; by Coursework and mini thesis) – internal/external examination.
2. Doctor of Philosophy Degree - 30 months full-time equivalent; and
3. have satisfied all the following requirements:
 - had their candidature confirmed;
 - satisfactorily met the requirements of completion seminar which will include an oral presentation; and
 - is enrolled and has approval from the supervisors, CGS and Graduate Examination Sub-Committee to be placed under the examination.

Candidates intending to submit their thesis before the minimum allowable time shall seek formal approval from the UGSC through the Dean of the College. This provision is only applicable in exceptional circumstances.

Candidates are required to make declarations as per FNU Thesis Structure Guidelines before submission of thesis for examination.

A thesis or compilation may not be submitted for examination if:

- a. it is substantially similar to a thesis or work previously examined or assessed and rejected.
- b. it is substantially similar to a thesis or work upon which the candidate has qualified in whole or in part for any other qualification obtained at a tertiary educational institution anywhere in Fiji or any other part of the world.
- c. The candidate's candidature has been terminated at FNU or any other institution.

6.31 Thesis Submission

Candidates must submit their thesis or compilation following the FNU Thesis Structure Guideline. A candidate shall submit the thesis for examination in soft copy as an electronic document via Moodle, via a similarity detecting software (Turnitin at FNU), and into the relevant Thesis Submission Portal Dropbox.

Additionally:

- a. A hard copy of the thesis may be accepted together with the soft copy if the examiners request a hard copy. In such cases, the research candidate is responsible for producing the hard copy to the CGS for submission to the examiner/s.
- b. The Supervisors are responsible for conducting the submission check, including applying similarity detecting software and making other appropriate checks to all theses before they are submitted for examination.
- c. Candidates will be required to submit an abstract of the study for the examiners to decide if they are prepared to examine the thesis.
- d. Candidates are required to submit a statement with the thesis through Thesis



Consent Form, certifying their understanding that if their candidature is successful, an electronic copy of their thesis will be lodged with the University Library for external access unless embargoed by commercial in confidence restrictions.

All thesis submitted for examination will follow the *FNU Thesis Structure Guidelines*.

The Graduate Examination Sub-Committee may decline to allow a thesis to be submitted for examination if:

- a. The candidate has not satisfactorily completed the two milestones (candidature confirmation and Completion Seminar with Oral Presentation).
- b. The supervisor does not certify that it is ready for examination.
- c. The thesis does not meet the requirements of the standard of the award.
- d. The thesis exceeds the prescribed word limits without prior approval to do so.
- e. The student requests withdrawal from the examination and the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee determines there is good reason to do so.
- f. There is a finding of inappropriate academic practice, research misconduct or a breach of the:

- *FNU Research Data Management Policy and Procedure for Staff, Adjuncts, Graduate Studies Candidates, and Visitors.*
- *FNU Research Ethics Policy.*
- *FNU Plagiarizing Policy*

When supervisors decline to sign on a thesis for examination, they must:

- a. report the circumstances and reasons for the decision to Graduate Examination Sub-Committee through the Dean's Office
- b. document in writing:
 - the reasons for declining to allow the thesis to be examined;
 - any changes necessary to make the thesis acceptable for examination; and
 - any other actions required to be completed before the examination.

The Graduate Examination Sub-Committee will decide whether the student is permitted to submit the thesis for examination without the supervisor's approval.

6.32 Graduate Examination Sub-Committee

The Dean of CGS will nominate the members for the Graduate Examination sub-committee. The committee will be made up of:

1. Dean of the CGS (Chair)
2. Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching or nominee
3. Pro-Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation or nominee
4. Director of the CGS
5. 1 co-opted member of professorial rank based on thesis nominated by the Vice

Chancellor

6. 1 College Dean nominated by the Dean CGS

Graduate Examination sub-committee to endorse the following:

- the Curriculum Vitae for Nomination of Examiners
- the Curriculum Vitae for the panel for completion seminar which will includes an oral presentation
- The thesis examination result

6.33 Qualification of Examiners

Nominated examiners must be approved by the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee based on the FNU Nomination of Examiners Guideline and Forms.

The Graduate Examination Sub-Committee should take all reasonable steps to ensure that examiners are:

- a. free from bias for or against the student or the supervisor; and
- b. free from actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

A person must not be an examiner if they:

- a. have been involved in the student's research;
- b. are a co-author on any part of the work;
- c. have a past or current close personal relationship with the student or supervisor;
- d. have had substantial contact with the student or supervisor in any other circumstances which might jeopardise the independence, or the perceived independence, of the examination;
- e. have been a research student of the supervisor within the last five years;
- f. have published with any of the supervisors in the last five years; or
- g. have supervised the student at any time.

Former research students of the supervisor must not be appointed as examiners for at least five years after graduation, except with the specific approval of the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee and in exceptional circumstances.

6.34 Nomination of Examiners

The Principal supervisor, in consultation with the Dean of the College and Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research, shall nominate three external examiners who meet the eligibility requirements to examine the thesis.

The CGS will select two out of the three as examiners.

The examiners must:

- a. agree, in writing, formally, to examine the thesis or compilation within 6 weeks of its receipt;
- b. declare, in writing, that they have no real or perceived conflict of interest with the

- student, or the supervisors, or the institution, of a personal, professional, or commercial nature;
- c. agree to maintain confidentiality throughout the examination process; and
 - d. where required, agree to sign a confidentiality agreement.

The nominations must:

- a. be submitted from the Dean's office to the Chair of Graduate Examination Sub-Committee for Graduate Examination Sub-Committee approval;
- b. include the name, field of expertise and full contact details of the examiners;
- c. include the curriculum vitae of the proposed examiners;
- d. be endorsed by Graduate Examination Sub-Committee; and
- e. not be disclosed to the candidate or any other person not involved in the examination.

The Chair of Graduate Examination Sub-Committee may reject nominations that do not meet the requirements for examiners or require further evidence of the suitability of the nominees.

6.35 Approving Examiners

The Principal supervisor in consultation with the Dean of the College will nominate three examiners to Graduate Examination Sub - Committee via CGS at least two months prior to the intended submission date of the thesis using the *FNU Nomination of Examiners Form*.

The supervisor should consult potential examiners prior to their nomination to ensure that they are willing and able to act as examiners within the expected timeframe, by submitting to them an executive summary of the thesis written by the candidate.

The supervisor must:

- a. nominate examiners using the FNU Nomination of Examiners Form; and
- b. submit the nomination form to CGS for Graduate Examination Sub-Committee approval after endorsement by the Dean of the College.

While nominating the examiners supervisors shall consider the following:

- a. whether they are currently research active and affiliated to a university; their previous experience as an examiner;
- b. their relevant expertise;
- c. whether they have agreed to act as an examiner;
- d. whether they are willing to examine the thesis in electronic form; that they will submit their report in English; and a conflict-of-interest declaration signed by the supervisor.

If the student does not submit the thesis for examination within three months following the approval of examiners, the CGS must:

- a. request a revised submission date from the student and the supervisor; and

- b. write to each examiner:
 - to inform them of the delay; and
 - ask if they are still willing to conduct the examination of the thesis at a future date.

6.36 Commissioning Examiners

The CGS will commission approved examiners by sending each examiner:

- a. a copy of the thesis in the requested format;
- b. a copy of the examiner's report form and examination guidelines;
- c. the resolutions relating to the degree;
- d. proposed arrangements for the examination of the creative or artistic component, if applicable;
- e. any specific conditions relating to the examination process; and
- f. the name and contact details of the relevant CGS staff member for communication regarding the process.

At least two examiners approved by the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee will be commissioned.

Approved examiners who are not initially commissioned may be used at a later stage as a replacement or additional examiners.

At the time of commissioning, the CGS must ensure that examiners are informed that:

- a. the contents of the thesis, including any intellectual property rights contained in the thesis, remain strictly confidential;
- b. the thesis can only be used for the purposes of performing the examination;
- c. their names may be released to the student after the examination; and
- d. their reports will be released to the student after the examination if they allow it.

6.37 Approving and Commissioning of Additional Examiners

Additional approved examiners may be commissioned to examine a thesis if:

- a. an original examiner is unable to examine subsequent to appointment; or
- b. an original examiner does not complete their examination within the required time frame; or as required by the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee.
- c. in the case of two conflicting examination reports.

6.38 Graduate Thesis Examiners

Examiners must:

- a. have at least PhD examination experience;
- b. be of good international standing in the research area;
- c. be qualified to at least the same level as the award they are examining or have equivalent research experience; and
- d. be from external institutions.

A person is ineligible to serve as an examiner if they:

- a. have a pending appointment with, are currently employed, or have been employed by FNU in any capacity within the last five years;
- b. have a pending appointment with, currently hold, or have within the past five years held an honorary position with the FNU;
- c. are a supervisor or advisory committee member of the candidate under examination;
- d. have had direct involvement with the thesis through reading drafts or discussing the research;
- e. have been a collaborator or co-author with the supervisor/s or candidate within the last five years; or
- f. have a real or perceived conflict of interest with the candidate, the supervisors or the institution which is of a personal, professional, or commercial nature.

Failure by the supervisors or College Dean/Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research to disclose a conflict of interest or cases where a conflict of interest might reasonably be perceived to exist may be considered grounds for research misconduct, as outlined in the [FNU HR Policy](#).

6.39 Replacement of Examiners

The Chair of the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee may excuse any examiner and/or annul their report if:

- a. the examiner does not fulfil the requirements of the thesis examination.
- b. fails to conduct the examination and submit an examination report in a timely manner.
- c. makes contact with the candidate or their supervisors during the examination period.
- d. a conflict of interest is discovered during or after the examination; and/or
- e. they have reason to believe that the examination has not been properly conducted.

If an examiner is to be replaced, the Chair of Graduate Examination Sub Committee must:

- a. inform the existing examiner of the perceived changes with the justification that why his/her services are no longer required; and
- b. approve a new examiner and inform them of the examination processes.

Upon commissioning of the new examiner, the previous examiner whose services have been terminated and any report on thesis examination shall be made null and void and shall not be used to determine the award.

6.40 Thesis Examination

The examination is an assessment of the total thesis presented.

The examination process proceeds on the basis that the thesis meets the academic requirements and makes an original contribution to knowledge.

1. Master Degree

- a. Master by Research will have external examination
- b. Master by Coursework plus mini thesis will have internal or external examination.

2. Doctor of Philosophy

PhD thesis will only be examined externally.

The outcome of the examination is an academic decision by the Examination Sub-Committee based on a body of evidence that includes mandatory items:

- a. the thesis.
- b. examiners' reports.

6.41 Examination Process

The CGS is responsible for administering the examination of all Master by Research (full thesis) and Doctoral Degrees under the direction of the Chair of Graduate Examination Sub Committee.

6.42 Examination Criteria

Examiners must consider the thesis or compilation solely on its merits and must consider whether it meets the following criteria:

- a. the candidate has demonstrated sufficient familiarity with, and understanding, and critical appraisal of, the relevant literature;
- b. it is a sufficiently comprehensive investigation of the topic;
- c. methods and techniques adopted are appropriate, properly justified and applied;
- d. results are suitably set out and accompanied by adequate exposition and interpretation.
- e. conclusions and implications are appropriately developed and clearly linked to the nature and content of the research framework and findings;
- f. research questions have been tested or explored according to disciplinary norms;
- g. the literary quality and general presentation of the thesis is of an appropriately high standard; and
- h. the thesis or compilation as a whole constitutes an original contribution to knowledge in its subject area.

For a thesis containing creative works or compilations containing creative works, the examiners must also consider whether they meet the following criteria:

- a. demonstration of a professional level of familiarity with and understanding of contemporary work in the field;
- b. demonstration of a sufficiently comprehensive investigation of the art form and creative content;

- c. the methods and techniques applied in the execution of the work are appropriate to the subject matter and are original and/or aesthetically effective;
- d. it is presented in a sufficiently professional manner;
- e. demonstration of a sufficiently high standard of literary, visual, digital, musical or performance literacy and quality;
- f. the research questions have been identified and tested through creative work;
- g. documentation of the work, (including catalogue/programme material where appropriate) is sufficiently thorough and is of a standard that ensures the work provides a reference for subsequent researchers;

- h. the creative work and the dissertation together constitute an original substantive contribution to knowledge in the subject area; and,
- i. the interface between the creative work and the dissertation is appropriate and substantiated.

6.43 Thesis Examination Confidentiality

Potential examiners are only given the name of the candidate, the programme type, the title, and an executive summary of the thesis or compilation.

Candidates must not be told the identity of any examiners nominated or appointed until the Thesis examination.

The nominations of examiners are to follow the *FNU Nomination of Examiners Guidelines*.

A candidate and their supervisors may request that a thesis be examined under a confidentiality agreement if the thesis contains material that is commercial-in-confidence, may give rise to a patent, or maybe legally or culturally sensitive.

If the Chair of Graduate Examination Sub-Committee agrees that the thesis or compilation should be examined under a confidentiality agreement, the thesis or compilation must not be sent to an examiner until they have signed a confidentiality agreement.

6.44 Examination of the Thesis or Compilation

Each examiner independently examines the thesis or its creative equivalent against the criteria and makes a report in writing, using the *Doctor of Philosophy/Master by Research Thesis Examination Form*.

If an examiner fails to return a completed report within 10 weeks of dispatch of the thesis/materials for examination, they may be replaced, and a new examiner appointed.

Where a replacement examiner has been appointed, any report subsequently received

from the examiner who has been replaced is not considered.

6.45 Examination of a Thesis Containing Creative or Artistic Components

All thesis that has a creative component shall be examined together with the written component as an integrated whole.

The creative work may be presented in the context of an exhibition, installation, performance, or any other context.

Where the creative component is an exhibition or installation, the documentary record may take the form of a catalogue with images of sufficient quality for examination.

The student is responsible for creating the documentary record of the creative work.

The CGS and the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee will decide whether the examination of creative work should include a performance, installation, or exhibition; and

Where the examination of a creative work component includes performance, installation or exhibition, the written component of the thesis should be provided to the examiners prior to the examination of the creative component.

Where there is no performance, installation, or exhibition, or where an examiner cannot attend in person, the examiner(s) shall conduct their examination using the documentary record of the creative work.

Except as otherwise stated in faculty resolutions, the examination of a thesis with a creative component must comply with procedures.

The outcomes of the examination for a thesis submitted with a creative or artistic component must relate to the whole thesis examination, including the artistic or creative work.

6.46 Examination of a Performance or Exhibition of Creative Works

A Graduate Examination Sub Committee member and at least two further examiners with expertise in the field must attend either a private or public performance or exhibition of the creative work.

If the performance or exhibition is held prior to the submission of the thesis, the candidate must submit an extended abstract of the thesis no less than one week before the performance or exhibition. The extended abstract should be between 1000 – 3000 words for a Doctoral Degree (Research), and 500 - 1500 words for a Master Degree by Research (full thesis).

The Graduate Examination Sub-Committee will schedule and select the venue of a private performance or exhibition, to maintain the confidentiality of the examination.

The Graduate Examination Sub-Committee may recommend that the examiners attend a public performance or exhibition at different times to maintain confidentiality.

6.47 Examiner-As-Assessor

An examiner-as-assessor must complete an initial independent examination of the thesis based on the same criteria as all examiners. If a thesis contains a creative or artistic component, this will be provided as either a documentary recording or as an exhibition, installation, or performance.

The examiner-as-assessor must provide a written report containing an examiner's report, including a recommendation about the outcome of the examination; and

The Graduate Examination Sub-Committee will consider the report of the examiner-as-assessor and provide a further report, including a recommendation regarding the outcome of the examination for additional work or re-examination.

The Chair of the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee will then approve the award of the degree to the candidate.

6.48 Communication During the Examination Process

6.48.1 Between Examiners

- a. Examiner information and details shall not be disclosed to other examiners.
- b. Examiners shall not identify and communicate with other examiners who are examining the same thesis for a particular candidate.

6.48.2 Between Examiners and Students

- a. The names of examiners may be disclosed to students after the examination reports have been received. No person including the supervisor(s) shall contact the examiner on their own or on behalf of the student regarding the thesis or examination during the examination process (i.e., from submission to award of degree).
 - If a student or any person on behalf of the student is found to be communicating with the examiner during the process of examination, the examination must be discontinued; and
 - a new examination process must commence with newly commissioned examiners.

Note: Breaches of the above may result in disciplinary action.

6.48.3 Between the University and Examiners

- a. The CGS staff will contact examiners:
 - to arrange the examination of the thesis;
 - for the examination of a creative or artistic component of a thesis; and
 - to remind examiners if the progress of the report is delayed.
- b. The CGS will inform the examiners of the outcome of the examination at the conclusion of the examination.
- c. The students are provided with the names of the examiners at the conclusion of the examination process if the examiners allow their names to be disclosed.

The CGS may provide the student with notice of the completion of each of the following stages of the examination process:

- a. thesis submitted for examination;
- b. thesis sent to examiners and reports pending;
- c. all examiners have submitted reports;
- d. the relevant committee is considering recommendations from examiners;
- e. notification of the result of the examination;
- f. awaiting comment from the student regarding the result of the examination;
- g. student to fulfil the conditions of the award, including thesis repository in the University library;
- h. student to re-enroll if required for a revise and resubmit outcome;
- i. conditions of award fulfilled, and degree may be awarded.

6.49 Examiners Report

Within six weeks of the receipt of the thesis, each examiner must:

- a. submit a report to the CGS for Graduate Examination Sub Committee approval.

Each examiner must submit an independent report, which will remain confidential until all reports have been received.

Examiners' reports

1. Examiners report must be written in English.
2. If the thesis is written in vernacular as accepted by the Centre, then the report must be in English and also in the vernacular if the examiner so chooses
3. Examiners must use the *Doctor of Philosophy & Master Thesis Examination Form*.

Examiners' reports must state whether, in the opinion of the examiner, the thesis fulfils the requirements of a thesis based on its level specified in the *Doctor of Philosophy & Master Thesis Examination Form*.

6.50 Monitoring Examiners' Reports

When an examiner submits a report, the CGS will:

- a. acknowledge receipt of the report; and

- b. arrange for payment of the appropriate honorarium to the external examiners.
- c. Inform the Dean of the College/ Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research of receipt of the report.

CGS reserves the right to;

- a. contact and inform the examiner on the conditions of examination and request for the examination report giving an additional two weeks for submission;
- b. contact the examiner at the end of the eighth week requesting for the report and giving additional two weeks to comply with the submission requirements; and
- c. contact and inform the examiner at the end of 10th week, notifying the examiner that he/she has failed to meet the deadlines, and the Graduate Examination Sub Committee has terminated the examination contract, the examiner will not be eligible for any payment, and a replacement examiner will be appointed.

6.51 Appeals of Examination Decisions

Candidates cannot challenge the academic judgment of the examiners or Graduate Examination Sub-Committee. Following the completion of the examination process, candidates have the right to request a review of the decisions taken by the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee upon the recommendations made by the examiners. A request for a review of a particular decision may be based on one or a combination of any of the following grounds:

- a. That there are exceptional circumstances affecting the candidate's performance which could not for a valid reason be brought to the attention of examiners or the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee at or before Thesis examination or were not known to the candidate prior to making his or her submission for examination.
- b. That there is evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the examination (including administrative error) of such nature as to cause doubt as to whether the result might have been different had there not been such irregularity.
- c. That there is evidence of unfair or improper conduct or assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners or unfair or improper conduct on the part of any chair at the completion and oral presentation.

6.52 Thesis Examination Result

A result cannot be confirmed until two valid examiners' reports have been received and approved by the Graduate Examination Sub-committee.

For minor corrections, if a candidate does not return their corrected thesis or compilation within three months of the required date following the result, they are awarded a fail result.

For major corrections, a candidate must submit the revised thesis for the second examination within 12 months for a Doctor of Philosophy Degree and within 6 months for a Master by Research (full thesis) Degree.



In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of Graduate Examination Sub-Committee may grant a further extension.

If a candidate is required to revise and resubmit their thesis, they have one opportunity to ensure the thesis meets the requirements for the award of the degree on the second examination.

If a candidate does not submit their revised thesis by the expiration of the final deadline detailed, they are awarded a fail result.

The result of the second examination of any thesis is final.

6.53 The Outcome of the Thesis Examination

The outcome of the examination will be decided for Master by Research (full thesis) and PhD as determined by the Graduate Examination sub-committee on completion of thesis examination.

The outcome of the examination must be one of the following:

- a. A clear pass: the candidate proceeds to the award of the degree.
- b. pass with minor changes: the candidate proceeds to the award of the degree after satisfactorily completing the minor changes.
- c. A pass with substantial change: the option is provided for the student to revise and resubmit the thesis. It will be decided by the Graduate Examination Sub Committee based on examiners' reports for a second examination or for supervisor and Graduate Examination Sub Committee approval. Once the candidate satisfactorily completes the changes approved by Graduate Examination Sub-Committee, the candidate can proceed to the award of the degree.
- d. A pass with a major rewrite and resubmit for examination: the option is provided for the student to revise and resubmit the thesis for a new examination.
- e. A failed thesis: does not merit any qualification.

6.54 Thesis Modification

No part of the thesis or compilation may be modified once a 'pass' result has been awarded.

If serious errors are discovered subsequent to the award of the degree, the student or person discovering the error should advise the CGS.

The CGS, in consultation with the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee, must determine whether a full retraction, partial redaction or corrigendum is required and advise the University Library accordingly.

6.55 Restricted Access to a Thesis

The CGS, in consultation with Graduate Examination Sub-Committee, may direct that any thesis or work be withheld from access, or placed on restricted access for a specified time.

6.56 Re-Enrolment for Re-Examination

If the examination outcome is “A pass with a major rewrite and resubmit for examination,” the candidate must re-enroll as a research student at the Fiji National University during any resubmission period and pay the appropriate fee.

6.57 The Outcome of Thesis Examination: Award with a Qualification or with Corrections

If the outcome of an examination is that the degree be awarded (with the qualification of the programme), then, the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee must:

- a. set the date by which the final version of the thesis must be lodged with the CGS. The latest date will normally be three months from the date of notification of the outcome of examination;
- b. notifies the student in writing.

If the outcome of an examination is that the degree is awarded subject to corrections, Graduate Examination Sub-Committee will

- a. set the latest date by which the final version of the thesis, including the corrections, must be lodged to CGS for Graduate Examination Sub-Committee approval. The latest date will normally be three months from the date of notification of the outcome of examination.
- b. notify the student in writing.

Where the student does not lodge the final version of the thesis by the set date, the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee must either:

- a. set a new date by which the final version must be lodged and notify the student in writing; or
- b. determine the result to be 'not awarded'.

6.58 The Outcome of Thesis Examination: Award with Revision and Re-Examination

If the outcome of an examination is that the degree is awarded after revision and re-submission for examination the student is permitted to undertake the revision and resubmit the thesis for re-examination, the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee must:

- a. prescribe a maximum period of further candidature, normally one or two terms;
- b. set the latest date for the student to resubmit their thesis for examination;
- c. set the date by which the student must re-enroll or apply for suspension of candidature consistently with the procedures;
- d. detail the additional work or changes required;
- e. prescribe any other conditions that must be met by the student; and

- f. notify the student in writing within one week of the decision being made.

The candidate must re-enroll for the degree whilst the thesis is being revised.

If the candidate does not do so, the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee must determine the result to be 'not awarded'.

The original examiners should be invited to re-examine the thesis if they are available and willing to do so.

The examination of a revised and resubmitted thesis is a new examination of the whole thesis, which must be carried out in accordance with the FNU Graduate Studies Thesis Examination Policy.

No further opportunity to revise and resubmit the thesis is permitted as an outcome of the new examination.

6.59 The Outcome of Thesis Examination: Non-Award with an Option to Award Another Degree

Graduate Examination Sub-Committee will:

- a. outline the reasons for non-award;
- b. specify the other degree for which the student is eligible which may be awarded instead;
- c. detail any corrections required to be made to the final version of the thesis to the satisfaction of the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee.
- d. set the latest date by which the final version of the thesis, including the corrections, must be lodged with the University. The latest date will normally be three months from the date of notification of the outcome of examination; and
- e. notify the student in writing within one week of the decision being made.

6.60 The Outcome of the Thesis Examination: Non-Award

If the outcome of an examination is that the degree will not be awarded, the relevant committee must:

- a. outline the reasons for non-award; and
- b. notify the student in writing within one week of the decision being made.

6.61 Examination Result (Grades and Results)

The examiners' reports are reviewed by Dean CGS and Director CGS and sent to examination subcommittee for approval. The results will be sent to the College Examination Board (CEB) for noting.

For each annual course enrolment and progress report submission by candidate, the college will prepare manual result and present it to college examination board for approval and submission to exam office for updating the grade. Students demonstrating

progress to be awarded X grade (continuous course) and fail grade for non-progress (for fail grade approval will be required from UGSC).

After thesis examination report assessment by respective committee, CGS will notify the college on the outcome. For the pass or fail grade, college will prepare manual result for CEB noting and submission to exam office to update the grade.

6.62 Award

When the decision to award the degree has been made, the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee may certify that the student is eligible to graduate subject to the student:

- a. fulfilling all conditions of award to the satisfaction of Graduate Examination Sub Committee; and
- b. lodging a final digital copy of the final thesis with the University Library via CGS.

6.63 Posthumous Award

A research degree may be granted posthumously based on a submission which is ready for examination.

6.64 Cotutelle Award

A single course of study arranged and delivered jointly by two providers leads to the award of one single PhD qualification only. This course is based on MoU or Cotutelle agreements.

6.65 Lodgment of Thesis in the University Library

The final copy of the thesis lodged in the University library must be in electronic format except as permitted by the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee.

The copy must be complete, including:

- a. any appendices submitted for examination;
- b. any published material included in the thesis;
- c. documentary recording of any artistic or creative works; and
- d. any corrections required by the University addressed to the satisfaction of the Chair of the Graduate Examination Sub-Committee.
- e. Thesis will be only embargoed for a period of 3 years maximum from the date of award on the request of student.

The student must provide the title and an abstract of the thesis at the time of lodgment to be included in the library catalogue meta-data.

The student may specify at the time of lodgment any confidentiality requirements for their thesis not to be made available for open access. Generally, all thesis will be lodged in the library for open access.

Where a student has been permitted to include an appendix of material that is not to be

made available for public inspection, the appendix must be lodged separately to the remainder of the thesis in a form prescribed by the University Librarian.

The Library catalogue meta-data, including the student's name, thesis title, and abstract, will be publicly available.

A student may also opt to publish sections of their thesis as part of an open research collection.

For example, this may be used:

- where copyright restrictions on published material prevent the open access publication of the whole thesis; or
- where the student opts to publish the written component of the thesis but not creative work.

The final copy of the thesis lodged in the library cannot be altered.

The CGS and Graduate Examination Sub Committee may approve that an errata notice is appended to a lodged thesis. The errata notice must:

- a. be clearly distinguishable from the thesis as originally lodged;
- b. be labeled as "errata notice"
- c. identify the author of the notice;
- d. clearly state the date of the notice; and
- e. list each erratum separately with a page reference and in page reference order.

6.66 Compliance with University Regulations Regarding the Examination Process

Any action that a candidate may take in order to gain an unfair advantage in the examination process (including plagiarism) will constitute a breach of regulations.

In any instance where Graduate Examination Sub Committees is made aware of a failure to comply with the regulations regarding the examination process, it may, exceptionally, declare the appointment of the examiners, the submission, or the examination null and void.

In the case of any breach of regulations, the Graduate Examination Sub Committee may refuse to award a degree or, if it has already been awarded, may withdraw the degree.

6.67 Grievance

Academic Disciplinary Matters – fall under University Academic Student Regulation (UASR) regulations such as Academic disciplinary issues such as plagiarism etc.

Supervisory/Graduate Studies Matters – specialized committee under CGS to handle matters such as failure to abide to supervisor instructions, grant misuse etc.

- Amendment to the Decision Matrix to include Graduate Student fines/penalties etc.
- CGS to handle grievance



7.0 Approval Agency
FNU Senate

8.0 Revision Log

This table will be used to insert the dates of the different versions made on the policy/procedure.

Version	Date of Approval	Comment
1.0	11 December 2019	Approved by the FNU Senate
2.0	2 March 2021	Approved by the FNU Senate
3.0	5 August 2022	Approved by the FNU Senate
4.0	5 December 2024	Approved by the FNU Senate

9.0 Policy Sponsor
Centre for Graduate Studies

10.0 Contact Person

The following person may be contacted in relation to this policy:
 Director - Centre for Graduate Studies
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