

Higher Degrees by Research Independent Academic Reviews - Guidelines



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Introduction

University of the Sunshine Coast ensures that candidates receive a range of quality feedback throughout candidature. To this end, the Principal Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that at least one Independent Academic Reviewer provides feedback to the candidate and their supervision panel following a formal review of:

- the research proposal as part of the confirmation of candidature milestone; and
- the draft thesis prior to submission for external examination.

1. Nomination of the Independent Academic Reviewer(s)

1.1 The criteria for Independent Academic Reviewers are the same as for thesis examiners as described in the Thesis Submission and Examination – Procedures except the reviewer may hold an academic appointment at USC (i.e. may be internal or external to USC).

1.2 The Independent Academic Reviewer is nominated by the Principal Supervisor and approved by the Enrolling Unit's HDR Coordinator, prior to the Confirmation of Candidature milestone.

1.3 For consistency and quality of feedback, the Independent Academic Reviewer nominated for confirmation of candidature will, wherever possible, also be called upon for the review of the final thesis. If the same reviewer is not available, an alternative nomination should be sought (e.g. reserve reviewer).

1.4 Independent Academic Reviewers cannot be nominated as final thesis examiners.

2. Review of the Research Proposal

Independent Academic Reviewers are asked to provide feedback on elements of the Research Proposal including, but not limited to the following:

- General comments
- Originality
- Feasibility
- Theoretical foundation
- Literature review
- Methods
- Critical thought
- Contribution to knowledge
- Edits and referencing
- Overall recommendation

Where possible, the Independent Academic Reviewer will provide written feedback on the research proposal and will attend the candidate's research seminar to also provide further verbal feedback.

3. Review of the draft thesis

The Principal Supervisor plays the major role in working with the candidate in preparation of the final thesis, including the application of university sanctioned plagiarism detection software. The Principal Supervisor will call upon the co-supervisors and whenever possible, the Independent Academic Reviewer(s) who conducted the review of the confirmation of candidature research proposal for collective input into the final thesis, considering the HDR Theses Examiners- Guidelines

Supervisors should work collegially to ensure that any conflicts in opinion between the supervision panel members and the Independent Academic Reviewer are resolved and that consensus is achieved in feedback provided to the candidate.

END
