

MINOR THESIS POLICY



Current version in effect from: 1 Apr 2024
Approved by Academic Board: 9 Nov 2018
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6 Nov 2020, 19 Nov 2021

Related documents

Appeals Policy

Assessment Policy

Australian Qualifications Framework

Regulation 11 Awards, Courses and Units

Higher Degree by Research Policy

1. Rationale and Objectives

1.1 The Minor Thesis provides training for students in development of research skills and tests their capacity to undertake research. It may serve as a pathway into higher degrees by research.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to applicants for the Minor Thesis, to students admitted to a Minor Thesis and to their supervisors and examiners.

3. Principles

3.1 The University is committed to ensuring that its students have opportunity to develop and test their capacity for research.

3.2 The University ensures that students undertaking an initial piece of research in the form of a Minor Thesis receive effective support through supervision arrangements.

3.3 The University promotes quality in research and experience of peer review processes through a robust examination process for the Minor Thesis.

4. Definitions

4.1 **Minor Thesis:** A Minor Thesis is a substantial piece of work that provides a student with the opportunity to develop and test the capacity for research.

- a) The Minor Thesis demonstrates knowledge of the existing body of literature and capacity with the fundamental tools and skills appropriate to the subject area (for example, biblical languages, methods, terminology, archival research, etc.)
- b) The Minor Thesis evidences the capacity for critical analysis, including the accurate representation of the range of appropriate positions and an evaluation or interpretation of these positions in relation to the research question
- c) The Minor Thesis is a Postgraduate Elective unit of study worth 48 points

- d) The Minor Thesis is 16,000 words in length, inclusive of all elements except the bibliography. Students wishing to submit appendices which are not included in the word count must apply to the Dean of the School of Graduate Research for approval at least two weeks prior to submission.
- e) The Minor Thesis may be presented in a format other than a written essay but equivalent to it, provided that permission for an alternative form of presentation is sought and granted when the topic of the Minor Thesis is approved
- f) The Minor Thesis is recorded on the student's academic record as "Minor Thesis 16,000 words".

5. Enrolment

- 5.1 A person may enrol in the Minor Thesis only if they have completed a unit in Research Methodologies (DP9034S or RQ9021C) or the equivalent.
- 5.2 The Minor Thesis may be completed in a single semester or in two consecutive semesters, except when Human Research Ethics Committee approval is required, in which case the Minor Thesis may only be completed over two semesters.
- 5.3 The Minor Thesis may be taken as a single unit or as part of a postgraduate award.
- 5.4 A person may apply to a College of the University to enrol in the Minor Thesis if that person is eligible to undertake postgraduate study at the University of Divinity.
- 5.5 Permission to enrol in the Minor Thesis may be granted by a College of the University.

6. Supervisor

- 6.1 To be eligible for appointment as a supervisor of a Minor Thesis a person must:
 - a) hold a masters by research or doctoral degree or have equivalent research experience; and
 - b) be active in research and publishing in, or otherwise make original contributions to, a relevant field or discipline; and
 - c) attend a research supervisors' training event at least once every three years.
- 6.2 The supervisor is responsible for:
 - a) establishing that the proposed research is appropriate in scope and is feasible in terms of time and resource requirements;
 - b) supporting the student in completing the Minor Thesis Approval Form prior to census date;
 - c) providing academic guidance concerning the nature and practice of research;
 - d) assisting the student in the planning of the research;
 - e) making the student aware of any compulsory ethics clearance;
 - f) making the student aware of facilities and resources available to students, in particular the services offered by the library;

- g) assisting the student to develop oral and written communication skills;
- h) reading written work prior to supervisory meetings where reasonably possible and providing regular written feedback on draft material;
- i) ensuring that the student is making satisfactory progress towards the completing of the Minor Thesis;
- j) advising the Research Coordinator of the student's home College immediately if there is any reason to believe the student is at risk of unsatisfactory progress;
- k) advising the candidate on:
 - i) the standard of their written work;
 - ii) the format and preparation of the thesis, including ensuring that scholarly apparatus is being used correctly;
 - iii) where relevant, the principles and practice of ethical research;
 - iv) the logical consistency of the candidate's argument.

6.3 If the supervisor is not a member of academic staff of the University of Divinity, the Research Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the supervisor understands the requirements of this Policy and is accountable to the University for its implementation.

6.4 The supervisor must meet with the candidate to discuss the candidate's research project for a minimum of six hours, at regular intervals throughout the candidate's enrolment in the unit. This would usually be once every fortnight for students completing the thesis over one semester and at least once a month for students completing over two semesters.

7. Approval

7.1 The student or applicant for the Minor Thesis is assisted by the Research Coordinator of a College in preparation of a topic and identification of a suitable supervisor who meets the requirements of this Policy.

7.2 The student or applicant must be provided with a copy of Schedule A: Minor Thesis Grading Criteria which may be modified by the School of Graduate Research Committee.

7.3 The student must complete a Minor Thesis Approval Form in conjunction with the supervisor.

7.4 The Minor Thesis Approval Form must be lodged with the School of Graduate Research no later than the census date of the semester in which the essay is to be commenced. If the Minor Thesis Approval Form is not received by the census date, the student's enrolment in the Minor Thesis may be cancelled by the Dean of the School of Graduate Research and any fees refunded.

7.5 On receipt of the Minor Thesis Approval Form, the Dean of the School of Graduate Research:

- a) confirms the form is complete

- b) confirms the proposed supervisor meets the requirements of this Policy
- c) confirms that the nominated examiners meet the requirements of this policy
- d) assigns the Minor Thesis Approval Form to a Deputy Chair of Examiners
- e) forwards the form to that Deputy Chair of Examiners for approval or amendment.

7.6 Where the Dean of the School of Graduate Research or the Deputy Chair of Examiners proposes amendment of the Minor Thesis Approval Form, the School of Graduate Research liaises with the College Research Coordinator or Academic Dean until the Dean of the School of Graduate Research and Deputy Chair of Examiners approve the proposed supervisor and topic.

7.7 The School of Graduate Research notifies the student, supervisor and College Registrar when the Minor Thesis has been approved, and notifies the School of Graduate Research Committee of the approved topic and the name of the student and approved supervisor.

8. Ethics Clearance

8.1 Where the Minor Thesis requires research involving human subjects, or material not in the public domain, the student must submit an application to the Human Research Ethics Committee prior to commencing research.

8.2 The Human Research Ethics Committee reviews the proposal through an expedited process conducted in accordance with the Human Research Ethics Policy.

8.3 The outcome of an expedited process must be reported to the next meeting of the Human Research Ethics Committee.

9. Submission and Extensions

9.1 The Minor Thesis must be submitted to the School of Graduate Research no later than the last day of the examination period of the semester in which it is due.

9.2 The Minor Thesis must be submitted electronically as either a Word document or a PDF through the Minor Thesis unit in the Learning Management System (ARK).

9.3 A student who, through unforeseen circumstances (as defined in the Assessment Policy), is unable to submit the Minor Thesis by the due date may apply for a Dean's Extension.

9.4 A Dean's Extension for a Minor Thesis:

- a) may be for a period of up to four weeks
- b) may only be granted by the Academic Dean of the student's home College
- c) must be applied for in writing on the form approved as Schedule D to the Assessment Policy
- d) must include any evidence required to support the claim
- e) may only be granted so as not to advantage or disadvantage a student

- f) an extension longer than four weeks may only be granted by the Dean of the School of Graduate Research

9.5 The outcome of an application for a Dean's Extension for a Minor Thesis must be reported to the student, the supervisor, the Research Coordinator and Registrar of the student's home College, and the Dean of the School of Graduate Research and, where applicable, be recorded on the student record system.

9.6 A Minor Thesis submitted after the due date must have a reduced grade recorded in accordance with the provisions for late penalties in the Assessment Policy.

10. Examinations

10.1 The Dean of the School of Graduate Research appoints two persons as examiners of the Minor Thesis after consultation with the supervisor and a Deputy Chair of Examiners, provided that:

- a) a student or supervisor may request in writing that a particular person not be appointed as an examiner
- b) the supervisor of a Minor Thesis may not be appointed as an examiner of that Minor Thesis
- c) at least one examiner must be a member of a College of the University that is not a College with which the student or supervisor is associated.

10.2 No examiner is permitted to communicate with the student or supervisor in relation to the examination during the examination process. If such communication occurs, the Dean of the School of Graduate Research may remove the examiner and appoint a new examiner.

10.3 One copy of the Minor Thesis is provided in confidence to each examiner together with Schedule A: Minor Thesis Grading Criteria, the approved copy of Schedule B: Minor Thesis Approval Form, and Schedule C: Minor Thesis Examination Report Form. Each examiner must return the completed Minor Thesis Examination Report Form to the School of Graduate Research within three weeks of receipt of the Minor Thesis.

10.4 If an examiner does not return a signed, completed Minor Thesis Examination Report to the School of Graduate Research within three weeks, then the Dean of the School of Graduate Research may dismiss the examiner and appoint a new examiner.

10.5 The School of Graduate Research forwards the completed Minor Thesis Examination Reports for each Minor Thesis to a Deputy Chair of Examiners who is responsible for determination of the final grade, provided that:

- a) No essay may be failed unless failed by two examiners
- b) If the Deputy Chair of Examiners is unable to make a clear determination the Deputy Chair may ask the examiners to consult or ask the Dean of the School of Graduate Research to appoint an additional examiner
- c) If the two examiners' grades are two grade bands or more apart, the Dean of the School of Graduate Research must appoint a third examiner who is external to the

College of the University with which the student, supervisor, and both previous examiners are associated.

- 10.6 Where an additional or third examiner is appointed, that examiner's report is forwarded to the Deputy Chair of Examiners who then determines the final grade of the Minor Thesis. The Deputy Chair of Examiners has discretion in such cases to determine which of the examiners' reports are to be released to the student.
- 10.7 The Chair of Examiners must convene a meeting of the Deputy Chairs of Examiners once in each examination period for the purpose of comparison and moderation of results of the Minor Thesis. The meeting may amend the result of a Minor Thesis to ensure consistency of examination and grading of assessment, provided that the requirements of section 10.5 of this Policy are met.
- 10.8 On completion of the examination, the School of Graduate Research forwards the final grade and approved examiners' reports (ensuring these reports do not include a grade other than the final grade) to the student, supervisor, Research Coordinator and Registrar of the student's College (ensuring that the anonymity of an examiner is preserved if this has been requested by the examiner). Unless exceptional circumstances apply, this is to occur no later than the date on the University Calendar on which results are released to students for that semester.
- 10.9 On completion of the moderation, copies of the examiners and the Deputy Chair of Examiners' reports are de-identified and circulated by the School of Graduate Research to the examiners to enhance the consistency of examination grades and comments.
- 10.10 A student who has successfully completed a Minor Thesis may lodge an electronic copy of the Minor Thesis in the University's Research Repository.

11. Review and Appeal

- 11.1 A student may apply for a review of the final grade recorded for a Minor Thesis by lodging a completed Review Request Form with the Dean of the School of Graduate Research within three weeks of receipt of notice of the final grade.
- 11.2 If the Dean of the School of Graduate Research is an examiner or a supervisor of the Minor Thesis then the Dean of the School of Graduate Research must delegate the review to another member of academic staff at the University who is not an examiner or supervisor of the Minor Thesis.
- 11.3 The Dean of the School of Graduate Research must acknowledge receipt of the review request in writing to the student within five working days.
- 11.4 The Dean of the School of Graduate Research must provide a report and decision on the review in writing to the student, the Chair of Examiners, and the University Secretary within ten working days of receipt of the review request. If the final grade has been amended the Dean of the School of Graduate Research must ensure the new grade is recorded on the student's record.
- 11.5 A student may have recourse to the Appeals Policy to dispute the outcome of the review of the final grade if the student is able to provide evidence of failure to comply with this Policy.

12. Fees and payments

- 12.1 The student tuition fee for the Minor Thesis is collected by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor.
- 12.2 Payments to Colleges, libraries, and examiners are distributed by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor from the student tuition fee according to the formula and schedule used for higher degrees by research.
- 12.3 Colleges are responsible for arranging payment, where appropriate, of supervisors of the Minor Thesis.

13. Schedules

- 13.1 Schedule A to this Policy is the Minor Thesis Grading Criteria which may be approved or amended by the School of Graduate Research Committee.
- 13.2 Schedule B to this Policy is the Minor Thesis Approval Form which may be approved or amended by the Dean of the School of Graduate Research.
- 13.3 Schedule C to this Policy is the Minor Thesis Examination Report Form which may be approved or amended by the Dean of the School of Graduate Research.

14. Transitional Provisions

Deleted on 15 November 2019.

15. Date of next review

- 15.1 This policy must be reviewed no later than 31 December 2026.

SCHEDULE A: Minor Thesis Grading Criteria

Approved by the Research Committee, June 2020



The University of Divinity Minor Thesis may serve as a pathway into higher degrees by research. Minor Thesis work is not expected to make an original contribution, but the work should do more than summarise the opinions of others.

Skills and Capacity

1. The Minor Thesis demonstrates knowledge of the existing body of literature and capacity with the fundamental tools and skills appropriate to the subject area (for example, biblical languages, methods, terminology, archival research, etc.).
2. The Minor Thesis evidences the capacity for critical analysis, including the accurate representation of the range of appropriate positions and an evaluation or interpretation of these positions in relation to the research question.

Content and Structure

3. The Minor Thesis establishes a clear and discernible research question appropriate to the word limit and a finding or set of findings.
4. The Minor Thesis has a clear and discernible structure (including appropriate section headings), demonstrating mastery over the material by organising it in relation to the research question.
5. The methodology employed is appropriate to the research question, well described, and demonstrated through the Minor Thesis.
6. The bibliography demonstrates appropriateness to the research question, including its use of primary and secondary materials.
7. The Minor Thesis communicates well, with evidence of good writing such as topic sentences and headings indicative of the content, is free from obvious grammatical and stylistic errors, and is consistent in following the chosen referencing and bibliographical style.

SCHEDULE B: MINOR THESIS APPROVAL FORM

Approved by the Dean, School of Graduate Research, 20 March 2020



*This form must be submitted to the Dean of the School of Graduate Research **no later than the census date** of the semester in which the student will begin the thesis. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain signatures from all relevant authorities prior to submission of the form.*

Student information

Student details				
Name of student		College	UD ID	
Name of UD course				
Minor Thesis enrolment				
Duration	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 semester	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 semesters
Supervisor				
Name		Supervisor's college		

Minor Thesis

Assessment: One 16,000-word **Minor Thesis**

Topic/title <i>(to appear on your transcript)</i>	
Description of the topic	
Description of Methodology	
Outline of Thesis chapters/sections	
Agreed due date	<i>(No later than the end of the examination week of the relevant semester)</i> / / <i>(dd/mm/yyyy)</i>
Resources <i>(classes to audit, special requirements etc)</i>	
Indicative reading list <i>(if necessary, attach a separate sheet)</i>	

Human research

If your research involves human subjects, or use of records not in the public domain, then you will also need to complete a draft HREC application, and include it with this application so that your project's research methodology can be considered for endorsement. A specialist in the discipline of your research will be asked by the Research Coordinator at your College to advise if the proposed methodology is appropriate. It may be that your supervisor is the appropriate specialist. (After this approval, your project will then need to be submitted to HREC.)

Does your research involve human subjects, or use of records not in the public domain?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
If YES, draft HREC application submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes		

Processing flow from student:

- > Supervisor
- > Research Coordinator
- > Dean of the School of Graduate Research
- > Deputy Chair of Examiners
- > Dean of the School of Graduate Research

Suggested examiners

To be completed by the supervisor – please provide email contact for examiners.

The Minor Thesis is to be marked independently by two examiners, neither of whom shall be the supervisor. Both examiners may be internal to the university. However, the second examiner must be external to any college of the university with which the supervisor or candidate are associated.

Proposed first examiner			
Full name			
Academic qualifications			
College		Position held	
Day phone			
Email			
Proposed second examiner			
Full name			
Academic qualifications			
College		Position held	
Day phone			
Email			
Proposed third examiner			
Full name			
Academic qualifications			
College		Position held	
Day phone			
Email			

Approvals

Supervisor			
Supervisor (Name)			
Supervisor (Signature)		Date	/ /
College Research Co-ordinator			
College Research Co-ordinator (Name)			
College Research Co-ordinator (Signature)		Date	/ /
UD Dean of the School of Graduate Research			
UD Dean of SGR (Name)	Dr Liz Boase		
UD Dean of SGR (Signature)		Date	/ /
Deputy Chair of Examiners			
Deputy Chair of Examiners (Name)			
Deputy Chair of Examiners (Signature)		Date	/ /

Submission: Please send the completed form to:

The Dean of the School of Graduate Research, University of Divinity, 21 Highbury Grove, KEW Vic 3101. Email: lboase@divinity.edu.au

SCHEDULE C: MINOR THESIS EXAMINATION REPORT FORM

Approved by the Dean, School of Graduate Research, 29 May 2020



The University of Divinity Minor Thesis may serve as a pathway into higher degrees by research. Minor Thesis work is not expected to make an original contribution, but the work should do more than summarise the opinions of others.

Please note that students undertaking minor thesis are not required to make any typographical, spelling or other corrections which may be identified by an examiner, prior to the awarding of the grade, nor do they have an option of revising their thesis for re-examination.

Student's Name	
Examiner's Name	
Recommended Grade and Marks	Marks% (Please recommend a single percentage only) Grade (Please select one out of following); High Distinction 85-100% Distinction 75-84% Credit 65-74% Pass 50-64% Fail Below 50%
Date	

Grading Criteria	Comments
To what extent does the Minor Thesis demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the existing body of literature and capacity with the fundamental tools/skills appropriate to the subject area (e.g., biblical languages, methods, terminology, archival research, etc.)?	
To what extent does the Minor Thesis evidence the capacity for critical analysis, including the accurate representation of the positions argued by the selected positions and an evaluation or interpretation of these positions in relation to the research question?	

To what extent does the Minor Thesis establish a clear and discernible research question appropriate to the word limit, and a finding or set of findings?	
To what extent does the Minor Thesis have a clear and discernible structure (including appropriate section headings), demonstrating mastery over the material by organising it in relation to the research question?	
To what extent is the methodology employed appropriate to the research question, well described, and demonstrated through the Minor Thesis?	
To what extent is the bibliography appropriate to the research question, including its use of primary and secondary materials?	
To what extent does the Minor Thesis communicate well, with evidence of good writing such as topic sentences and headings indicative of the content, is free from obvious grammatical and stylistic errors, and is consistent in following the chosen referencing and bibliographical style?	
Any Further Comments	

Disclosure to Candidate

In line with Freedom of Information legislation, the names of examiners **will** be revealed to the candidate, ***unless an examiner specifies otherwise***. Please tick below if you wish your identity to remain confidential:

I am not willing for my name to be revealed to the candidate