

# What happens after you have submitted your PHD Thesis: The examination process explained

## 1. After Thesis Submission:

- You will receive an acknowledgement from the Postgraduate (PG) Office to say that your thesis has been received (usually to your Postgraduate email account). You should hear within two working days. If you have not, then please contact the office by email at [postgraduate-office@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:postgraduate-office@canterbury.ac.nz)
- You may receive follow up emails and so please ensure that you check your Postgraduate email account regularly.
- The PG Office will contact your Senior Supervisor to request submission of the Examiner Nomination Form and the Supervisor's Certificate (if these have not already been received). Your thesis cannot be sent for examination until these forms have been received. The PG Office will send reminders to the department until these have been received.
- You will be asked to complete a "Notification of Nominated Examiners" Form either by your Department/School or by the PG Office once examiners are identified. This form lists your nominated examiners and provides you with the opportunity to indicate that you agree to have these examiners or to raise any concerns that you may have about the examiners with the Dean of Postgraduate Research. If you do raise concerns about your examiners the Dean will contact you to discuss these further. Your thesis **cannot** be sent out for examination until this form has been completed and returned.
- If you wish to graduate in one of the graduation ceremonies and have not already applied, then it is your responsibility to check the Graduation website <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/graduation/> for information on when to apply. You must make an application in advance. You can do this before the completion of the examination process.

## 2. Initial Thesis Examination:

- A PDF of the thesis will be sent to both examiners for examination along with the Supervisors Certificate and any submitted appendices.
- The examiners are given eight weeks to examine the thesis and are asked to acknowledge receipt of the thesis and to inform the Postgraduate Office if there will be any expected difficulties in completing the examination in the given timeframe. Examiners will also be informed of the intended oral examination date if one has already been proposed.
- Once both examiners have acknowledged receipt you will be notified by the Postgraduate Office that your thesis is being examined. You will also be informed of the expected oral examination date and who the Oral Chair will be. Please note that this notification could take a couple of weeks.
- You will *not* hear from the PG Office during the examination process except in the unlikely event that a problem has occurred with the examination process. If a change needs to be made to the oral

examination date, the Oral Chair will be in touch with you about this and to discuss possible new dates.

- Your examiners receive an email reminder from the Postgraduate Office a week before the report is due and examiners are then sent overdue reminders if the report has not been sent by then.
- You *must not* contact your examiners while they are examining your thesis. If you have any questions during this period please direct them the Postgraduate Office in the first instance.

### 3. Pre-Oral Exam:

- Approximately one week before your oral examination you (and your Senior Supervisor) will receive a copy of your reports from the Oral Chair. Make sure that your Oral Chair has your most up-to-date email address.
- Once you have received your examiners' reports, discuss them with your supervisor in order to prepare for the oral examination. The examiners probably will have specified questions/issues that will be raised in the oral, so make sure that you think about these issues. Note, however, that examiners can raise additional issues in the examination too.

### 4. Post-Oral Exam:

- The Oral Chair will complete the Oral Exam Report, which will include any recommendations discussed, and this will be sent to the Postgraduate Office.
- The most common outcome is that the candidate is asked to make amendments to their thesis. In these cases, the PG Office will send you the Oral Exam Report (including the list of required amendments) and the date by which these are required to be completed.
  - If you have not heard from the PG Office within a week of your oral examination please contact them at [postgraduate-office@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:postgraduate-office@canterbury.ac.nz).
  - Once you have received details of the amendments that are required please discuss these with your supervisory team.
- Once you have completed the required amendments you will need to submit your amended thesis (in PDF format) to the PG Office ([postgraduate-office@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:postgraduate-office@canterbury.ac.nz)) along with a cover letter of changes made. The PG Office will then forward this to your Supervisor (or sometimes the Examiner is nominated) for their approval.
- Supervisors (or Examiners) are given three weeks to send their approval of the amendments to the PG Office. If, during the approval process, further changes are made to the final version of the thesis, then this needs to also be sent to the PG Office.
- If the outcome from the oral examination is that no amendments are required, then the Postgraduate Office will move directly to processing the final completion of your PhD degree.

### 5. Awarding of the PhD:

- Once the Postgraduate Office has received either approval of amendments or confirmation that no amendments are required, they will submit the final version of your thesis to the library. Once any requested embargo period has ended your thesis will become available in the UC Research Repository.
- The Postgraduate Office will send you an email confirming the results of your examination and advising that you are now eligible to graduate.
- There are graduation ceremonies in April and December each year. If you wish to graduate at one of these ceremonies you need to apply in advance. Please take a look at the Graduation website <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/graduation/>

- If you do not wish to graduate in person you are able to graduate *in absentia*. This occurs at the monthly meetings of the University Council. Again further information is available at <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/graduation/>

Throughout the period of the examination and grade determination you should regularly check your University of Canterbury Postgraduate email. Notification of any problems or changes of process will be sent to you at this email address. If you will not be able to check this email address during the examination process please discuss an alternative means of communication with the PG Office.