

College HDR Examinations Advisory Committee (CHEAC) Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The College HDR Examinations Advisory Committee (CHEAC) has been established by the Graduate Research Committee (the Committee) to make recommendations on particular examination outcomes for the Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Training & Development (ADVC RT&D).

The purpose of this document is to set out the terms of reference, composition and operating arrangements for a CHEAC.

2. Responsibilities

The CHEAC is convened to provide recommendations to the ADVC RT&D concerning:

- the classification of disparate examiners' reports in accordance with the Examination Classification Schedule;
- the amount and type of amendments or revisions to the research that may need to be made by a candidate;
- the need for any additional support to be provided to the candidate in the case of a classification of Revise and resubmit;
- the appointment of an adjudicator in cases where the examiner's reports are unable to be reconciled; or
- whether, in rare cases, an examiner should be disqualified in the event that there is evidence of bias, or conflict of interest on the examiner's part, which was not disclosed at the time of appointment.

3. Roles in the committee

3.1. Formal members

College HDR Examinations Advisory Committees shall strive for gender balance

Position	Type of appointment	Term of office
Chair - Director, HDR (or equivalent) in the College office or their nominee in their absence	Ex officio	Ongoing
One senior RMIT academic who is independent of the supervisory team, and has knowledge of the discipline and experience in HDR examinations	Nominated by the relevant Dean/HoS	Nominated on a case by case basis

3.2. Chair responsibilities

The Chair of the CHEAC holds a formal position and takes overall responsibility for ensuring that University procedures with regard to classification of examination outcomes are carried out.

The roles and responsibilities of the Chair are to:

- a) convene the CHEAC in accordance with these terms of reference;
- b) facilitate discussion with representatives of the candidate's supervisory team present to inform the recommendation for the ADVC RT&D.

3.3. Advisory roles

All of the candidate's supervisors are invited to attend the CHEAC meeting in advisory roles. Any supervisors who attend the meeting are expected to contribute to the discussion but are not members of the committee and cannot be involved in the determination of the classification recommendation.

3.4. Secretary

The Director, HDR (or equivalent), appoints a Secretary to prepare the agenda and record the minutes of the meeting.

4. Committee processes

4.1. Meetings

- a) The ADVC RT&D will request the Chair of the CHEAC to convene a meeting in the cases where the examiner's reports cannot be reconciled and classified by the ADVC RT&D according to the Examination Classification Schedule.
- b) The Chair and the independent academic member of the CHEAC will meet to consider matters which are covered by item 2) of these terms of reference.
- c) In convening a meeting, the Chair will invite all members from the candidate's supervisory team. In order to proceed, at least one member of the supervisory team must attend the meeting.
- d) In the event that the academic available to attend the meeting is an Associate supervisor, the Senior/Joint senior supervisor will provide a written response to the examiners' reports, and any briefing necessary, to the Associate supervisor so they can contribute fully to the discussion.
- e) The examiners reports are provided to the supervisor/s but information within the reports must be kept confidential.
- f) No less than two working days' notice in writing will be given of a forthcoming meeting to enable preparation for items prior to meetings. Such notice will include the time, place, the full examiner's reports and any additional background papers for the meeting.
- g) Accurate minutes will be kept of each meeting of the CHEAC. The minutes are to be submitted to the ADVC RT&D for consideration within 5 working days of the meeting.

4.2. Recommendations of the CHEAC

The CHEAC can recommend to the ADVC RT&D:

- a) that the thesis/project should be given a particular classification in accordance with the range described in the Examination Classification Schedule; or
- b) that the recommendations of the examiners are unable to be reconciled by the CHEAC and that an appropriately qualified person should be nominated by the enrolling School to undertake adjudication of the examination.

In the event of a C3 recommendation being made, the CHEAC must specify the number and type of amendments or revisions required to be made by the candidate.

The ADVC RT&D has final approval of the CHEAC recommendation.

4.3. Contact with examiners

Should a CHEAC wish to obtain clarification on any aspect of an examiner's report the Chair will notify the Coordinator, Examinations in the School of Graduate Research of the query and it will be relayed to the relevant examiner/s.

Direct contact with examiners must not be made by members of a CHEAC.

Document history

Version	Effective date	Authority	Author	Register reference
1.0	1 May 2019	Higher Degrees by Research Policy	ADVC RT&D	POL/2019/00076