



MNU Doctor of Philosophy Rule

1. Interpretation

- 1.1 In these Rules “the Committee” shall mean “the Higher Degrees Committee”.
- 1.2 “PhD Course” refers to the three to four-year full-time equivalent program of guided reading and research that comprises of 100% thesis research with no preparatory year. The part-time equivalent of the PhD course is six to eight years.
- 1.3 “Concrete Research Outputs” covers published journal articles and/or books or substantive research reports where the applicant has clearly specified his or her contribution to any jointly authored product, and which have been sighted by the Head of Faculty/School and principal supervisor.
- 1.4 “Faculty” is intended to mean an academic department of MNU to which students may enrol to study in a major division of knowledge; such a department may alternatively be known as a School or Centre.

2. Admission and General Requirements

2.1 Admission Requirements

Admission to candidature in a PhD course may be approved by the Committee only when the relevant Dean of the Faculty has:

- 2.1.1 Certified in writing that the necessary facilities and appropriate support for the applicant undertaking his or her proposed PhD study and/or research are available; *and* nominated in writing an appropriate principal supervisor and co-supervisor(s). In the event that the nominated principal supervisor becomes unavailable due to transfers, resignation, etc., the Dean of the Faculty/School should have an alternate supervisor available.

In cases where the candidate is expected to write the thesis in a language other than the medium of his or her bachelor's degree, the student is expected to prove by certificates or by other means that he or she possesses an advanced command of that language.

2.2 The PhD Course

Any applicant for admission to candidature for the PhD course shall be a graduate or shall have fulfilled all the requirements for admission to a degree of the University or of any other institution recognised by the Committee for this purpose and shall satisfy the following requirement.

2.2.1 The Committee may on the recommendation of the Dean of the Faculty concerned, admit to candidature for the PhD course an applicant who holds or has fulfilled all the requirements for:

- a) the degree of Masters, provided that the applicant has shown potential for research demonstrated by a research project or resulting dissertation/thesis comprising typically 1 year of the master's course.

In special circumstances, an applicant who does not meet the normal academic entry requirement may be considered where the applicant demonstrates substantial research experience and research outputs equivalent to the preparation normally provided by research Master's degree. Such admission shall require documented academic justification, independent assessment of research preparedness, and approval by the Higher Degrees Committee. Such a candidate will be required to complete a probationary period of candidature.

2.2.2 Every applicant for admission to candidature for the PhD course shall:

- a) produce documented evidence of capacity to undertake work at the PhD level. and
- b) submit to the Committee a proposal of research to be undertaken in a nominated Faculty of the University and approved by the Dean of the Faculty; and satisfy the language requirements stipulated for admission to Higher Degrees.

On admission to candidature, the candidate shall pursue a program of advanced study and research on the approved topic for a period of a minimum three years (six to eight years for part-time candidates).

2.3 Probationary Period

The Committee will normally accept a candidate directly into the PhD course on a probationary basis for a period not exceeding 12 months full-time equivalent. Before completion of the probationary period, the Committee shall seek a Confirmation of Candidature report from the Dean of the Faculty as to how the candidature should proceed.

Where a candidate has been accepted on probationary candidature, the candidature shall, upon confirmation of acceptance, be deemed to have commenced from the date of the probationary admission.

2.4 Alternative Admissions Pathways

2.4.1 Transfer from another institution

An applicant who has been a candidate for a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in another institution may be admitted to candidature for the PhD course in this University. The Committee shall decide, on recommendation of the Dean of the Faculty, what period of the candidature completed in the other institution shall be counted as part of the period of candidature in the University, provided that not more than half of the maximum period of candidature specified shall be so allowed.

2.4.2 Upgrade from MNU Research Masters

Students whose qualifications do not satisfy the admission requirements of Rule 2.1 and who are currently enrolled in a Masters degree that would satisfy Rule 2.2.1(a) (and have been so enrolled for at least 12 months full-time equivalent) and are undertaking research which in the view of the principal supervisor, is approaching PhD standards, may apply to be upgraded to a PhD course. In such cases, the principal supervisor shall forward to the Committee through the relevant Dean of Faculty a request for an advancement along with any supporting evidence.

An MRes or other research Master's candidate may apply for an upgrade to PhD where the research demonstrates clear potential to meet doctoral standards. The application shall be supported by the supervisory team and Dean and must include either explicit evidence of refereed research publications by the candidate or independent reviews of at least two thesis chapters. The assessment shall be undertaken by two appropriately qualified reviewers, at least one of whom must be external to MNU. Each reviewer shall hold a doctoral degree or equivalent qualification in the relevant field.

Any application for an upgrade must be endorsed by the Principal Supervisor and Dean of the Faculty and forwarded to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise). The application should support one-year equivalent full-time candidature, not exceeding 24 months full-time candidature, to ensure enough candidature is left to continue on into the PhD. The Committee will determine, in consultation with the principal supervisor, the appropriate period of PhD candidature, should the upgrade be approved. In the case of approval being granted, not more than 1 to 2 years (depending on the course duration) of candidature shall be allowed, and even under these circumstances the candidate should satisfy the requirement of completion of the Master's Degree before confirmation of candidature.

2.5 Conditions of Candidature

- 2.5.1 At week 13 of each term, the candidate and principal supervisor shall submit to the Committee a report (in the form of a progress report), setting out details of the course of study and research and the candidate's progress over the previous term, as well as the plan for the next term.
- 2.5.2 The candidate will be required to formally undergo a confirmation of candidature in the form of a proposal defence at the end of the first year or equivalent. This process is outlined in Section 4: Confirmation of Candidature.
- 2.5.3 In special cases, the Committee, on the advice of the principal supervisor, may grant leave of absence from the course of study and research and the period of such leave shall not be counted as part of the prescribed term of candidature.
- 2.5.4 The candidate shall pursue the course wholly under the control of the University.
- 2.5.5 On the recommendation of the Dean of the enrolled Faculty, the Committee may permit a candidate to pursue the course away from the University if the Committee is satisfied that:

- a) the candidate will have access to the required facilities; and
 - b) a local supervisor(s) resident or working in the same locality as the candidate can be appointed by the Committee, unless the Dean of the supervising Faculty recommends otherwise.
- 2.5.6 Each PhD candidate shall be required to consult regularly with their supervisor for a minimum of 4 times per semester. The nature and extent of such consultation will be determined by the supervisors and the Dean of the Faculty after consultation with the candidate prior to the commencement of each semester of candidature.
- 2.5.7 A candidate may be required to attend lectures and seminars and perform practical work to a satisfactory standard in subjects prescribed by the Committee. No candidate may enrol in any subject or subjects without the consent of the principal supervisor and the approval of the faculty.

2.6 Supervision

- 2.6.1 The degree of Doctor of Philosophy is a supervised degree and the research and preparation of the thesis must be carried out under the guidance of at least two Supervisors appointed by the Committee on the recommendation of the Dean of the Faculty. Supervisors must be listed on the Register of Research Higher Degree Supervisors. The supervisors shall be provisionally appointed at the time the Committee decides that the applicant can be admitted to candidature.
- 2.6.2 Under exceptional circumstances, the Dean of the Faculty may appoint additional supervisors, stating in detail the circumstances of such a nomination. The committee shall decide on the validity of such a nomination.
- 2.6.3 Except under exceptional circumstances, the Dean of the Faculty shall nominate a minimum of two supervisors for each applicant, one supervisor as the principal supervisor and the other as co-supervisor(s). Principal supervisors must normally be members of the University's academic staff and possess a doctoral degree.
- a) Co-supervisors should have appropriate expertise and experience in the required field as determined by the Faculty and the Committee.
 - b) For external candidates, a suitable on-site supervisor who has agreed to act as such should be nominated, where appropriate, as the co-supervisor.
 - c) The nomination of supervisors will include an estimate of the expected percentage input from each supervisor.
 - d) Where a supervisor is not available from the university to undertake the principal supervisor's role, the Dean of the Faculty may seek approval from the Committee to appoint a suitably qualified individual who possesses a doctorate degree, or an adjunct appointment as the principal supervisor. A principal supervisor so appointed will be

required to enter into a contract with the University to undertake all of the duties and obligations specified for principal supervisors.

- 2.6.4 Under exceptional circumstances where an applicant's principal supervisor departs the University or withdraws from supervision, and no other staff member is suitably qualified or possesses the appropriate expertise to take on the role of principal supervisor, the Chair of the Committee will immediately consider a recommendation from the Dean of the Faculty for the appointment of a suitably qualified individual externally to fulfil the role of principal supervisor. A principal supervisor so appointed will be required to complete and sign a contract with the University.
- 2.6.5 The principal supervisor shall present to the Committee the required reports on the candidate's work. If the Committee receives a report that the candidate's work is unsatisfactory, it may resolve that the candidate be invited to "show cause" why the candidature should not be terminated. In cases of dispute between a supervisor and a candidate, due consideration will be given to the views of both parties. The following specific instances must be noted:
- a) Where a supervisor has made every effort to get a PhD candidate's work up to expected standards, and these efforts have not yielded the desired effect due to insufficient student commitment and/or effort, the supervisor has the right to withdraw from the supervisory role. A report detailing the grounds for this decision, signed by the Dean of the Faculty, must be sent to the candidate and to the Committee. The candidate shall also have the right to submit a report detailing his or her perspective to the Committee. The Dean of the Faculty would then be expected to make a recommendation as to how to proceed from this point. If the supervisor involved is also the Dean of the Faculty, then the Deputy Vice- Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) shall sign the report to the candidate and to the Committee and shall make the recommendation regarding how to proceed from this point.
 - b) Where a candidate has made every effort to reconcile his or her work to meet expectations of their principal supervisor or co-supervisor, but this effort has not yielded the desired effect because of an unsatisfactory supervisor-candidate relationship, the candidate has the right to request a change of principal supervisor (or any co-supervisor if required). The candidate should submit a request, detailing the grounds for making it, to the Dean of the Faculty who will consult on the request and forward it to the Committee, accompanied by a nomination of an alternative supervisor. If the supervisor involved is also the Dean of the Faculty, then the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) shall consult on the request and forward it to the Committee. The affected supervisor shall also have the right to submit a report detailing his or her perspective to the Committee.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Role of the Student

3.1.1 Induction and contact with supervisors

Once a student has formally accepted the offer of candidature and registered, the student must contact the nominated principal supervisor and arrange a suitable time to discuss the formal induction process offered in their faculty. Supervisors will be required to sign off when the student has undergone the induction process. Students need to agree on contact arrangements and maintain regular communication with their supervisor for the duration of candidature.

3.1.2 Confirmation of Candidature

The University requires all doctoral candidates to undertake a formal confirmation of candidature in the form of a thesis proposal defence at the end of the first year of enrolment, or the full-time equivalent for part-time candidates. Candidate progress shall be formally assessed at the end of each semester. Both full-time and part-time candidates are required to demonstrate completion of at least 50% of the thesis proposal by the end of the first six months of enrolment, or the full-time equivalent for part-time candidates.

3.1.3 Progress reports and re-registration

Students must ensure that all administrative requirements of the University, such as re-registering each term, providing progress reports, and conforming to procedures for variations of conditions of candidature, are met.

Students are required to report on their progress every term of candidature to the Dean of the Faculty. This report shall be submitted by the student on the 13th week of the term and provides an opportunity to formally record progress and any issues or concerns that arise during candidature.

Where inadequate progress has occurred, the supervisor and Dean of the Faculty may recommend to the Committee that a student be requested to “show cause” why their candidature should not be terminated. The main reasons for a “show cause” letter being issued are the lack of response from a student in relation to the submission of progress and re-registration forms to their supervisors, or lack of evidence of adequate progress.

3.1.4 Fieldwork and research overseas

There are certain requirements that must be met for a student to be able to study overseas or engage in off-campus fieldwork. Appropriate forms must be filled in and submitted. Arrangements for travel are dealt with through the faculties and students should seek assistance from their principal supervisor in ensuring that the correct procedures are followed. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure all the necessary approvals are finalized before commencing with the research.

3.1.5 Notifying leave of absence from campus

The student shall inform the principal supervisor in writing if the student needs to travel off-campus for any research-related or other purposes.

3.1.6 Research Integrity and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence

The candidate shall maintain the highest standards of research and academic integrity throughout candidature. Candidates must comply with MNU requirements relating to plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, authorship, research data and the responsible and transparent use of generative artificial intelligence and other digital research tools. Where required by University policy, the use of such tools in conducting the research or preparing the thesis must be appropriately disclosed.

3.1.7 Intellectual Property and Confidentiality

Candidates must comply with MNU policies and applicable legal, ethical and contractual requirements relating to intellectual property, confidentiality, data protection, culturally sensitive knowledge, and the use, storage and disclosure of research materials.

3.1.8 Publication Requirement

Candidates shall be encouraged and supported to disseminate their research through appropriate scholarly or professional channels, which may include peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, research reports, policy briefs, creative outputs or other discipline-appropriate forms of dissemination. The Higher Degrees Committee may prescribe programme-specific dissemination requirements where these form part of an MQA-accredited programme.

3.2 Role of the Principal Supervisor

The principal supervisor is, in large measure, responsible for ensuring that the high standard of the degree is maintained. It is expected that the principal supervisor will maintain close consultation with all co-supervisors and with the student throughout the period of candidature. The supervisor shall carry out the responsibilities in accordance with the following rules:

- 3.2.1 The principal supervisor shall ensure that the research topic chosen by the candidate is at an appropriate academic level and is likely, if successfully completed, to be worthy of publication.
- 3.2.2 The principal supervisor shall make recommendations to the Committee for any additional coursework that may be required.
- 3.2.3 The principal supervisor shall advise the candidate on the quality of early drafts of the thesis, but the thesis finally presented shall be substantially the independent work of the candidate.
- 3.2.4 The principal supervisor in consultation with any co-supervisors must complete the required report forms for each candidate in each year of candidature and discuss these reports with the candidate and Dean of the Faculty.

- 3.2.5 The periodic reports submitted should provide enough detail to enable the Committee to assess the progress of the candidate and the likelihood of completion of candidature within the prescribed time.
- 3.2.6 If, after provision of feedback and guidance and subsequent allowance of a suitable period for the candidate to improve their work, the principal supervisor becomes firmly of the opinion that the candidate is not making satisfactory progress the principal supervisor, after consultation with co-supervisor(s) and the Dean of the Faculty, shall recommend to the Committee that the candidate be invited to "show cause" as to why the candidature should not be terminated. This recommendation may incorporate the suggestion that the candidate be admitted to candidature in an appropriate master's degree.
- 3.2.7 The principal supervisor shall inform the student via email of any leave of absence.

3.3 Role of the Research Development Office

- 3.3.1 The Research Development Office (RDO) shall maintain the University's central record of all PhD candidates from the commencement of their enrolment and their details, including relevant candidate details, the Faculty/Centre of enrolment, supervisor(s), mode of study, candidature status, progress reports, confirmation outcomes and other relevant milestones.
- 3.3.2 Once the candidate provides the Candidate Readiness Form along with the final written proposal for the proposal defence, with the approval of the Principal Supervisor and the Dean of the relevant Faculty/Centre, the Research Development Office shall coordinate the scheduling of the proposal defence. In consultation with the candidate and the Chair appointed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), as necessary, the RDO shall arrange a date, time and venue for the defence within three weeks of receipt of the complete documentation.
- 3.3.3 The final written proposal must be submitted to the RDO at least ten working days prior to the proposal defence, whereupon the RDO shall distribute the proposal and relevant documentation to all members of the proposal examination panel at least seven working days prior to the scheduled defence.
- 3.3.4 If the Principal Supervisor requests a hybrid proposal defence due to justifiable exceptional circumstances, the RDO may approve and coordinate the necessary arrangements.
- 3.3.5 The Faculty/Centre shall be responsible for monitoring the academic progress of its PhD candidates through the supervisory process and the prescribed PhD Progress Report. The Research Development Office shall maintain the University's central record of candidate progress, updated on a biannual basis upon receipt of the approved PhD Progress Reports.
- 3.3.6 The PhD Progress Report shall be reviewed and approved by the Supervisor(s) and the Dean of the relevant Faculty/Centre before being submitted to the RDO.

- 3.3.7 Once the PhD Progress Report is received by the RDO, after it is approved by the Supervisor(s) and the Dean of the relevant Faculty/Centre, the RDO shall submit the report to the Higher Degrees Committee for consideration and decision, where required under these Regulations.
- 3.3.8 The decision of the Higher Degrees Committee shall be recorded by the RDO in the PhD candidate monitoring system and communicated to the relevant Faculty/Centre, Supervisor(s) and candidate, as appropriate.

4. Confirmation of Candidature

All PhD candidates at MNU are required to undergo a formal confirmation of candidature, undertaken through a formal proposal defence.

4.1 The Defence

The thesis proposal represents a formal understanding between the Supervisory Committee and the doctoral Candidate. This agreement outlines the work to be done and the intellectual rigor the Committee expects from the Candidate. The proposal functions as a map guiding the Candidate towards the effective completion of the thesis project.

The Candidate should submit to the Research Development Office, the intention of submitting the proposal by completing the candidate readiness form, for proposal defence with the principal supervisors' and the Faculty Dean's approval. It should contain proposed details regarding the proposal defence, including the proposal defence title and an abstract, and typically comprises of the first three chapters of the PhD Thesis.

4.2 The proposal defence examination panel, and submission

The proposal will be examined by a panel consisting of THREE members at least one of whom shall be an expert in the relevant field

4.2.1 The Dean or a Dean-appointed member from the faculty

4.2.2 A member from outside the faculty appointed by DVC Research and Enterprise

4.2.3 A member from the Higher Degrees Committee appointed by DVC Research -Enterprise, from whom the DVC Research and Enterprise will appoint a chair.

The Research Development Office in consultation with the Candidate and Chair, schedules a date, a time, and a room for the defence. For students who wish to conduct the proposal defence in a term, the final proposal and the intention of submitting the proposal by completing the candidate readiness form, should be submitted to the RDO by week 7 of that term.

The defence can be scheduled and announced as a public event for the university community as well as faculty invitees. However, the deliberations of the panel are private.

4.3 The Proposal Defence Process

- 4.3.1 The candidate shall normally be physically present for the proposal defence or oral examination and shall report to the designated venue at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled commencement. In exceptional circumstances, the University may approve the conduct of the proposal defence or oral examination online or in hybrid mode, provided that academic integrity, candidate identity, confidentiality, reliable communication, and procedural fairness can be maintained.
- 4.3.2 If the Chair is not physically present, then the exam must be rescheduled.
- 4.3.3 If the Faculty member selected for the exam is not physically present at the time of the exam, a substitute member from the faculty may be secured subject to the Doctor of Philosophy Rules. If no member can be found, then the exam must be rescheduled.
- 4.3.4 The Examination panel may meet initially in private, with or without the Candidate present.
- 4.3.5 The Chair announces when the Candidate and/or the public may join the Panel for the defence.
- 4.3.6 The Candidate presents the key elements of the thesis proposal. (aprox.30 mins)
- 4.3.7 The Examination panel questions the Candidate. (aprox.45 minutes)
- 4.3.8 Finally, the Examination panel reconvenes in private for deliberations. (approx.30-45mins)
The panel vote for one of the following:
 - a) **Accept**
 - b) **Accept with minor revisions**—the Committee/panel requests minor revisions, which are approved by a process that is established by the Chair.
 - c) **Accept with major revisions**—revisions require approval by the Chair and selected members or the supervisory Committee/panel.
 - d) **Reject**—the Examination panel may recommend either
 - I. that a second defence is permitted after a period of additional preparation, or
 - II. that the student is dropped from the Ph.D. program.

A simple majority vote is required. In the event that a simple majority vote does not occur, the deliberations of the Examination panel are continued, and a decision is made within five working days of the proposal defence date.

4.3.9 Process for 'Accept with Revisions'

The revision process proceeds as follows:

- a) The committee/panel informs the candidate verbally of the revisions required and the date by which revisions are to be completed.

- b) The chair, in consultation with the panel prepares a written description of the required revisions within a week of the defence. A copy of the letter is provided to the Research Development Office, within 3 days to place in the student's permanent academic file.
- c) The chair and the candidate determine the date by which the revisions must be completed, normally within a maximum of 3 months.
- d) The chair distributes the written description to the candidate and the committee/panel.
- e) 2 weeks after the revisions are submitted by the candidate, the committee/panel informs the candidate whether the revisions are accepted or rejected. (The Research Development Office will inform the Candidate on behalf of the panel.)
- f) If rejected, the panel recommends, as outlined above, either to permit a second defence or to drop the student from the program.
- g) If the revisions are not completed successfully within the specified time period, the Chair may extend the time for revision to up to 6 months from the date of the proposal defence, upon request of the student. After 6 months, the Chair may petition the HDC committee for an extension on justifiable grounds.

If the revisions are not completed successfully in the time frame designated, and if the examination panel and the HDC committee concur, the proposal is rejected, and the student is dropped from the PhD Ph.D. program at MNU.

5. Final Examination (Viva Voce)

5.1 Submission Requirements

- 5.1.1 On completion of the course of advanced study and research, the candidate shall present for examination a thesis in a form approved by the Committee embodying the results of the candidate's work, which shall be substantially an original contribution to the subject concerned.
- 5.1.2 The thesis, exclusive of any appendices, shall in no case exceed 100,000 words in total or 60,000 words in total when accompanied by a corpus of creative work. There may be special instances where with the permission of the Committee on recommendation of the principal supervisor, the thesis may exceed these limits. In special cases, with the permission of the Committee on the recommendation of the principal supervisor, the thesis may be written or presented, at least in part, in a multi-media format.
- 5.1.3 The candidate shall state in the preface of the thesis, where appropriate, the sources from which information has been derived, the extent to which the work of others has been used, and the portion of the thesis that is claimed as the candidate's original work.
- 5.1.4 The candidate shall, upon submission of the thesis, make arrangements for all original data to be retained in an area of safe storage for a period of not less than five years from the date

of submission. The data stored must be in a form that would, at a minimum, permit replication of all analyses reported in the thesis.

- 5.1.5 The candidate shall submit to the Secretariat of the Higher Degrees Committee a copy of the thesis in a digital format approved by the Committee. If the thesis has multi-media or creative practice components, four copies of such components must also be submitted along with clear instructions as to their usage as well as a listing of computer hardware, software and other requirements needed by examiners and other readers of the work. All multi-media or creative practice components must be accessible by examiners.
- 5.1.6 Exemption from submitting the thesis in digital format, in whole or in part, may be granted by the Committee in special cases.
- 5.1.7 At the time the thesis is submitted, the principal supervisor shall inform the Committee stating:
 - a) that the principal supervisor and co-supervisor(s) have discussed with the candidate and amongst themselves the academic content of the thesis in the form submitted and that, while neither expressing nor implying a judgement about the merit of the work, in the principal supervisor's opinion, all are agreed that it is ready for submission for examination for the degree;
 - b) that all requirements of the faculty, in regard to the deposition of museum/archive material or any other supporting material have been met; and
 - c) that the physical form and presentation of the thesis are appropriate to the discipline.
- 5.1.8 Should the principal supervisor be unwilling to provide a certificate in these terms, the principal supervisor shall so advise the candidate and shall send to the candidate and the Committee a written statement setting out the grounds on which the certificate is withheld. This statement will not be forwarded to any examiners.
- 5.1.9 The principal supervisor shall forward to the Committee the certificate referred to in paragraph 5.1(vi) before a thesis is accepted for examination. When, for any reason, the certificate is withheld, the Committee may decline to accept the thesis for examination or may accept it following such consultation or under such additional conditions as the Committee may deem to be appropriate for specific cases.

5.2 Thesis Examination Process

- 5.2.1 The student shall inform the principal supervisor and the respective Faculty the intention of initial submission of the final thesis three months in advance.
- 5.2.2 Once the intention of the initial submission of the final thesis is informed by the Dean of Faculty to the RDO, RDO shall arrange the Committee to identify a pool of at least five potential examiners in consultation with the principal supervisor and the DVC (Research and Enterprise), three months before the submission of the thesis. The Committee shall

appoint three examiners from this pool at least two of whom shall be external, (whereby at least one of them shall be international unless otherwise the thesis is written in Dhivehi), to the University. The research development office will be expected to obtain written or emailed consent from each examiner to examine the thesis within two months of its receipt. The Committee is to be advised as to whether each examiner has had experience supervising and examining higher degree research students. In cases where a thesis has been permitted to exceed the normal 100,000-word limit, examiners shall be informed of this fact so they may consider it when making their decision to examine.

- 5.2.3 If an additional examiner/adjudicator is required during the examination process, the choice will be made from the original pool of examiners, unless otherwise instructed by the Committee.
- 5.2.4 No person who has been a principal supervisor or co-supervisor of the candidate shall be appointed as an examiner, and no person who is currently or has ever been in a personal relationship with the candidate or any current supervisor will be approved as an examiner.
- 5.2.5 Each examiner shall make a separate written report on the merits of the thesis and may be required to consult with the other examiners and report to the Committee. Each examiner will be reminded to provide his or her report within two months of receipt of the thesis. However, if an examiner fails to provide his or her report, after appropriate reminders, within a maximum of three months, the Committee, after consultation with the relevant Dean of the Faculty, may notify the examiner that his or her services are no longer required and the reserve examiner may then be activated as a replacement.

For a PhD in creative practice to pass, both the exegesis and the creative work must be deemed by examiners to be of a pass standard.

5.3 Oral Defence of Thesis

The oral defence is an integral part of the examination process. The performance of the candidate in the oral defence will have a bearing on the overall recommendation submitted by the examiners.

- 5.3.1 The day, date, time and the place for the oral defence of thesis shall be notified by the RDO and the Dean of the Faculty to the student at least eight days in advance. Normally the oral defence of the thesis shall be arranged at the University.
- 5.3.2 In exceptional cases, the Vice-Chancellor may allow the oral defence to be conducted at a place outside of the University. The oral defence must take place in-person with at least one examiner. The other examiners may interact with the candidate using multi-media channels of communication.
- 5.3.3 The candidate may ask for a small number of people to be allowed to attend the oral defence for moral support, and the faculty may request to have observers present. The candidate may also request to have the oral defence audio recorded. The candidate and the chairperson of the oral defence must consent to all arrangements.

5.3.4 The oral defence will be chaired by a senior and independent academic from the University. The examination panel shall consist of 3 examiners and an academic staff from the relevant faculty. The internal examiner and the in-country examiner (external to the university but resident in the Maldives) will be present in the room. The overseas examiner may be linked by telephone or video or have their questions put by one of the other examiners.

The primary supervisor and co-supervisors may also attend based on the student's choice. However, the supervisors will not take part in the discussion during the oral, though they may make a statement to the examiners at the end of the defence.

5.4 Thesis Examination Outcomes

5.4.1 Taking into account the recommendations of the examiners, the Committee may:

- a) recommend that the degree be awarded;
- b) recommend that the degree be awarded conditional upon the making of such amendments as the Committee deems appropriate;
- c) request the examiners to consult and report to the Committee;
- d) appoint an additional examiner or examiners;
- e) appoint an external adjudicator who shall consider and report to the Committee upon the thesis and any supporting papers invited or requested by the Committee and the reports of the examiners;
- f) require the candidate to sit for such written, oral or practical examinations as the Committee may prescribe;
- g) permit a candidate to revise the thesis for re-examination if, in the opinion of the Committee, the work is of sufficient merit to warrant this concession;
- h) recommend that the degree be not awarded.

5.4.2 A candidate awarded the degree in terms of Rule 5.4.1(b) shall complete the amendments within three months for minor amendments and six months for major amendments. These will be made to the satisfaction of the principal supervisor, the relevant Dean of the Faculty, or both. Minor corrections may be certified by the examiner nominated by the examination panel or, where expressly authorised by the panel, by the Principal Supervisor. Major corrections shall normally be reviewed and approved by one or more of the original examiners as determined by the examination panel/Higher Degrees Committee.

5.4.3 A candidate permitted to revise a thesis for re-examination in terms of Rule 5.4.1 (g) shall complete the revision within 9 months under the supervision of a principal supervisor or supervisors endorsed by the Committee.

5.4.4 A candidate who has revised a thesis in terms of Rule 5.4.1 (g) and who fails the re-examination shall not be eligible for any further examination.

- 5.4.5 An external adjudicator will only be appointed by the Committee if the three examiners are unable to come to a consensus recommendation. If the adjudicator recommends that the candidate's thesis be revised and resubmitted, then the adjudicator will serve as the sole examiner for the resubmitted thesis.

5.5 Process Upon Recommendation of “Degree not be Awarded”

Where any examination, adjudication or consultation report is received by the Committee, on which basis the Committee is considering recommending that the candidate not be awarded, the candidate and their principal supervisor shall be notified in writing of the content of that report and may, within eight weeks, lodge a response limited to the academic and substantive matters raised therein.

The Committee shall consider the submissions of the principal supervisor and/or student in determining whether the degree should be awarded.

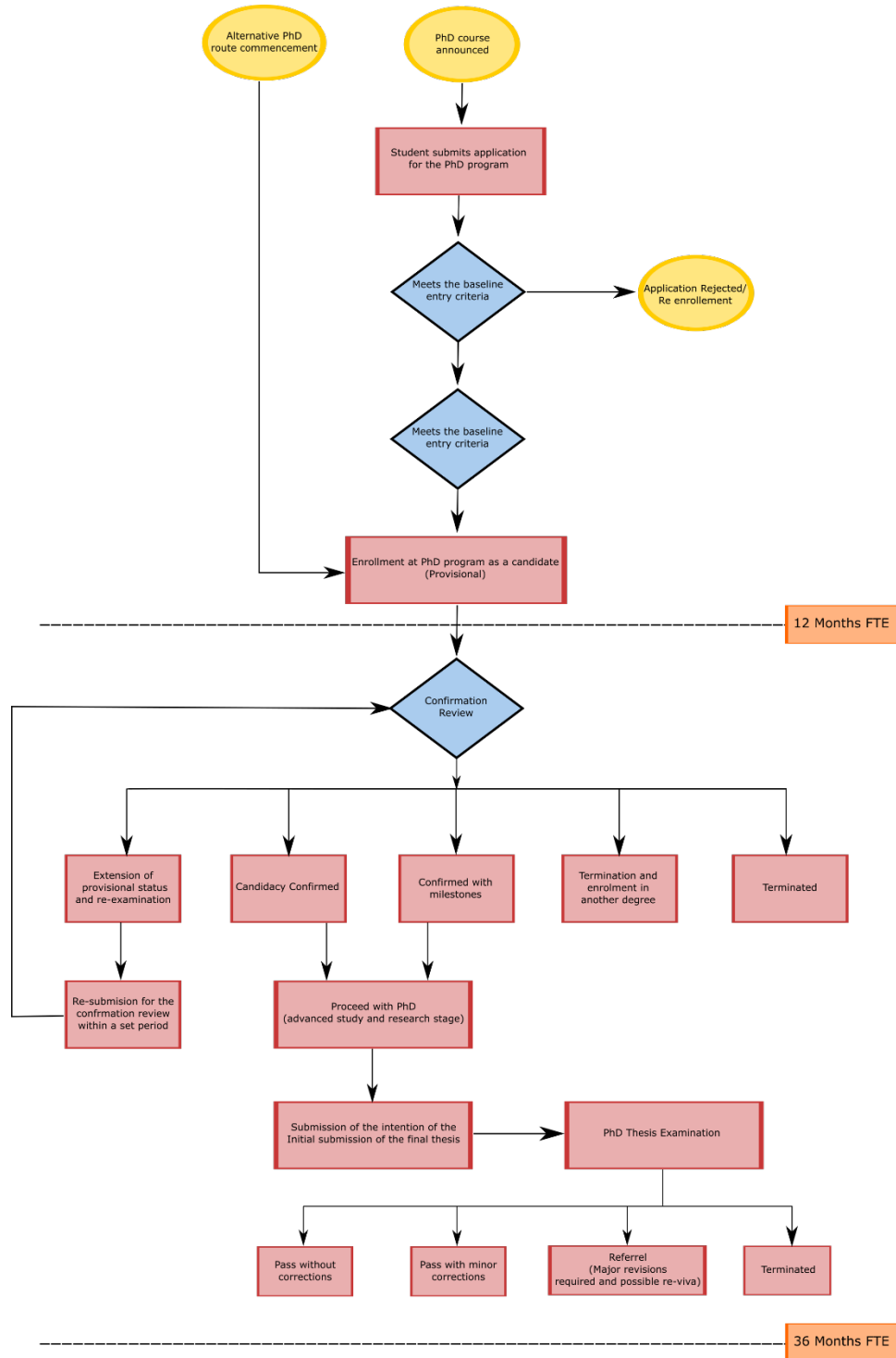
5.6 Appeals Against a Recommendation of “Degree Not Be Awarded”

- 5.6.1 Candidates have the right of appeal against an unfavourable examination outcome described in Rule 5.4.1 (h) and will be invited to submit a report to the Academic Senate detailing any concerns they may have about the examination process. The formal appeal must be made in writing to the Chair of the Academic Senate within four weeks of receiving the advice of the unfavourable outcome. The formal appeal, recommendation, all examiners' reports, candidate responses, and any other relevant material shall then be referred to a committee for review and final decision.
- 5.6.2 Appeals will be permitted on procedural grounds only. Procedural grounds for appeal may include:
- a) procedural irregularities in the conduct of the examination;
 - b) documentary evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of one or more examiners.
- 5.6.3 Academic Senate will not consider any appeal where the candidate simply rejects the academic assessments of his or her work or where the candidate complains about inadequacy of supervision or other problems arising during the course of the candidate's PhD programme (problems encountered during candidature should be handled by grievance procedures at the appropriate time).
- 5.6.4 Any member of the Academic Senate involved in making the recommendations in Rule 5.4.1 (h) from the Higher Degrees Committee will absent themselves from all discussions of the appeal. If the review committee sends a formal recommendation of fail, thereby upholding the procedural fairness of the Higher Degrees Committee's recommendation to the Academic Senate, these same individuals shall absent themselves from the Senate meeting during discussion of the recommendation. There shall be no appeal against the final decision of the Academic Senate.

Date Approved by Higher Degrees Committee	5 th October 2011
1st Revision	1 st March 2022
Most recent revision	15 th September 2026
Approved by	Higher Degrees Committee
Indicative time for Review	2 years from the date of approval
Responsibility for Review	Higher Degrees Committee

Appendix

The PhD Road Map



Important Deadlines

Y E A R 1	T E R M 1	WK 1-2	Registration for the term.
		WK 13	Submission of the Progress Report for Semester 1.
	T E R M 2	WK 7	Submit the intention to submit the proposal defence.
		WK 13	Submission of the Progress Report for Semester 2.
		WK 16	Complete the confirmation review (proposal defence).
		WK 16	Complete and clear ethics clearance from the relevant authorities.

Y E A R 2	T E R M 3	WK 1-2	Registration for the term.
		WK 13	Submission of the Progress Report for Semester 3.
	T E R M 4	WK 1-2	Registration for the term.
		WK 15	Submission of the Progress Report for Semester 4.

Y E A R 3	T E R M 5	WK 1-2	Registration for the term.
		WK 13	Submission of the Progress Report for Semester 5.
		WK 16	Submission of the intention of the initial submission of the final thesis.
	T E R M 6	WK 1-2	Registration for the term.
		WK 3	Submission of Final thesis.
		WK 7	PhD Thesis Examination.
		WK 15	Submission of Final thesis with corrections.



Candidate Readiness Form for Thesis Proposal Defence

Instructions:

Complete all sections of this form.

Incomplete forms will be returned to the Faculty Dean for completion.

Submit the completed form to the Research Development Office at research.prssd@mnu.edu.mv.

Ensure that all sections are completed before submission. Incomplete forms might delay the scheduling of your defence.

Section 1: Candidate Information

Full Name (First Name, Sir Name):	
Student ID:	
Program of Study:	
Faculty:	

Section 2: Proposal Information

Title of the Proposal:

Abstract (Maximum 300 words):

(Summarize the research purpose, objectives, methodology, and expected outcomes.)

Section 3: Approvals

Primary Supervisor Approval:

I confirm that the candidate is ready to defend the PhD research proposal and has met the proposal requirements outlined in the MNU Guidelines.

Supervisors Name:

Signature:

Date:

Faculty Dean Approval:

I confirm that the candidate has fulfilled the necessary requirements to proceed with the proposal defence.

Dean's Name:

Signature:

Date:

Section 4: Supporting Documents

(Please ensure the following are attached to this form upon submission)

☐ Final thesis proposal (20–30 pages or max 10,000 words)	
☐ Signed approvals from Supervisor and Faculty Dean	
Submission Date:	
Candidate's Signature:	



Thesis Proposal Assessment Recommendation

Confidential to Thesis Proposal Examination Panel

Name of Candidate:	
Name of Examiner (Chair):	
Depending on the recommendation by the examiner the candidate is required to re-submit the thesis proposal to the Research Development Office via research.prssd@mnu.edu.mv	

<i>Recommend the following (please tick one box).</i>	
☐	Accept The thesis proposal meets the required standard for the award of the Doctoral degree. <i>The thesis is of acceptable with very minor amendments of a presentational nature that can be completed within 1-2 weeks and approved by the supervisor.</i>
☐	Accept with Minor Revisions That the thesis proposal meets the required standard for the thesis approval on satisfactory completion of the recommended amendments. <i>These may include the rewriting of a section/sections, reorganizing material, improving or clarifying an argument or adding or omitting material that has been overlooked or deemed unnecessary. This should take up to 1 months for a full-time student and 2 months for a part-time student.</i>
☐	Accept with Major Revisions The thesis proposal will meet the required standard for the award of the thesis approval on satisfactory completion of major amendments. This should take up to 2 months for a full-time student and 3 months for a part-time student.
	Fail The thesis proposal does not meet the required standard for a Doctoral degree. Recommend for: a second defence is permitted after a period of additional preparation, or that the student is dropped from the Ph.D. program.

[illegible]

Panel	Name	Signature	Date
Chair			
Faculty Member			
External Faculty Member			



Examination Outcome Report

Confidential to the PhD Examination Panel

Name of Candidate:	
Name of Examiner (Chair):	
Depending on the recommendation by the examiner the candidate is required to re-submit the thesis proposal to the Research Development Office via research.prssd@mnu.edu.mv	

<i>Recommend the following (please tick one box).</i>	
☐	Accept The thesis proposal meets the required standard for the award of the Doctoral degree. <i>The thesis is of acceptable with very minor amendments of a presentational nature that can be completed within 1-2 weeks and approved by the supervisor.</i>
☐	Accept with Minor Revisions That the thesis proposal meets the required standard for the thesis approval on satisfactory completion of the recommended amendments. <i>These may include the rewriting of a section/sections, reorganizing material, improving or clarifying an argument or adding or omitting material that has been overlooked or deemed unnecessary. This should take up to 1 months for a full-time student and 2 months for a part-time student.</i>
☐	Accept with Major Revisions The thesis proposal will meet the required standard for the award of the thesis approval on satisfactory completion of major amendments. This should take up to 2 months for a full-time student and 3 months for a part-time student.
☐	Fail The thesis proposal does not meet the required standard for a Doctoral degree. Recommend for: a second defence is permitted after a period of additional preparation, or that the student is dropped from the Ph.D. program.

Revision comments (Shared with the student)

Examiner	Name	Signature	Date



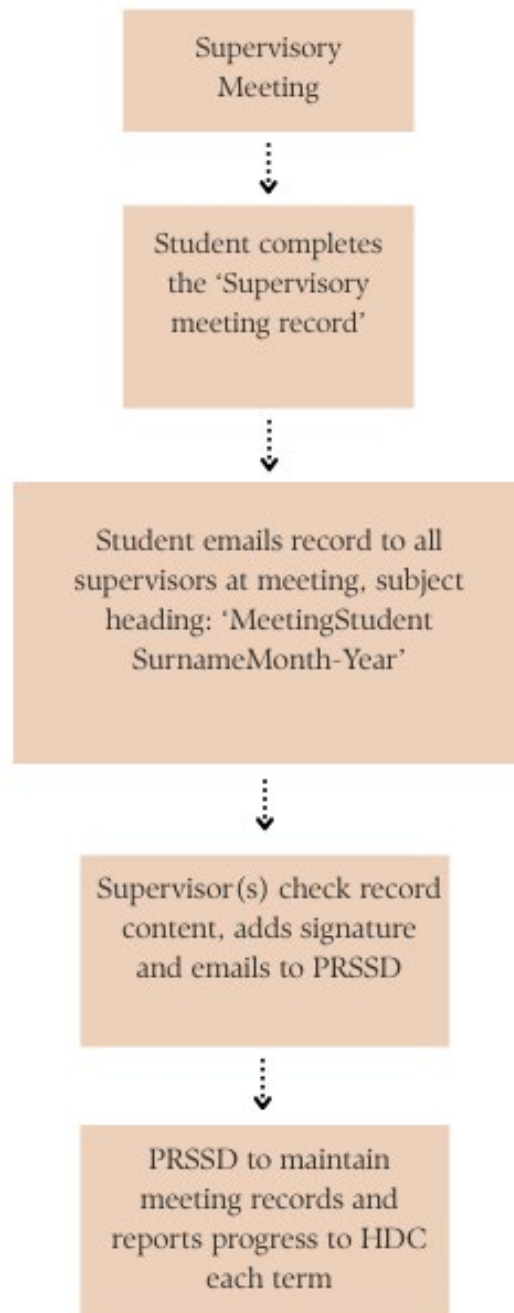
Supervisory Meeting Record

Meeting 2026/--
Term 1, 2026

Full Name (ID):	
Program of Study:	
Faculty:	

Date of meeting:		
Supervisors Present:		
Review of actions from the last meeting:		
Topics Discussed:		
Identification of any issues:		
Date and actions set for the next meeting:		
Students Signature:		Date:
Supervisor's Signature:		Date:

Process for the Electronic Submission of Student-Supervisory Meeting Records



Supervisory meetings can be conducted electronically or by phone, and agreement by email is accepted in lieu of signatures. Students are required to complete a minimum of 8 records per year.



Doctoral Research Supervision Agreement

This Agreement is made on ____ / ____ / ____ between:

The Maldives National University (MNU)

and

External Supervisor

Name: _____

Position: _____

Institution: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Doctoral Candidate

Name: _____

Student ID: _____

Programme: Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Faculty/Centre: _____

Research Title: _____

Principal Supervisor (MNU)

Name: _____

Position: _____

Faculty/Centre: _____

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Agreement is to appoint the External Supervisor as a member of the doctoral supervisory team to provide academic guidance and specialist expertise in support of the candidate's research.

The Principal Supervisor appointed by MNU shall retain overall responsibility for supervision and compliance with MNU regulations.

2. Term of Appointment

This appointment shall commence on ____ / ____ / ____ and continue until completion of the candidate's PhD programme, withdrawal of the candidate, resignation of the External Supervisor, or termination by MNU.

3. Responsibilities of the External Supervisor

1. Provide expert academic advice and guidance in the relevant field of research.
2. Participate in supervisory meetings as agreed by the supervisory team.
3. Review research work and provide constructive feedback within a reasonable timeframe.
4. Support the candidate's academic and professional development.
5. Promote high standards of research integrity and ethical conduct.
6. Inform the Principal Supervisor of any significant concerns regarding the candidate's progress.

4. Responsibilities of MNU

1. Appoint a Principal Supervisor responsible for overall supervision.
2. Provide relevant regulations, policies, and programme requirements.
3. Facilitate communication between the candidate and supervisory team.
4. Monitor the candidate's progress in accordance with MNU regulations.

5. Responsibilities of the Candidate

1. Maintain regular communication with the supervisory team.
2. Submit work according to agreed timelines.
3. Consider and respond to supervisory feedback.
4. Comply with MNU regulations, policies, and ethical requirements.

6. Confidentiality and Intellectual Property

The External Supervisor shall maintain the confidentiality of all research materials and information relating to the candidate and the University. Intellectual property arising from the research shall be governed by MNU policies and any applicable agreements.

7. Conflict of Interest

The External Supervisor shall disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest that may affect the supervision of the candidate.

8. Remuneration

☐ This appointment is honorary and without remuneration.

☐ The External Supervisor shall receive remuneration for supervision services at a rate of **MVR 600 per hour**.

For a full-time PhD programme, the maximum payable supervision time shall be limited to either:

- **Twenty-four (24) supervisory meetings of one (1) hour each per academic year;** or
- **Twelve (12) supervisory meetings of two (2) hours each per academic year.**

The maximum remuneration payable to the External Supervisor shall not exceed **MVR 14,400 per academic year**.

Any additional meetings or supervision hours beyond the approved limit shall require prior written approval from MNU finance committee.

9. Termination

Either party may terminate this Agreement by providing thirty (30) days written notice. MNU may terminate the appointment immediately in cases of misconduct, breach of confidentiality, conflict of interest, or failure to perform supervisory responsibilities.

10. Acceptance

By signing below, the Parties agree to the terms of this Agreement and to comply with the relevant regulations and policies of The Maldives National University.

External Supervisor

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Principal Supervisor (MNU)

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PhD Candidate

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Dean/Director

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



Endorsement of Minor Corrections

Name of Candidate:	
Student ID:	

Please Tick Below:

- | |
|--|
| ☐ The principal supervisor and co-supervisor(s) have been informed of the corrections, and the academic content of the corrections has been discussed with the candidate. |
| ☐ All recommendations from the Thesis Examination Committee, for minor corrections, have been addressed to our satisfaction. |

Comments

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Principal Supervisor	Name	Signature	Date
Dean	Name	Signature	Date



Faculty of Education | substitute as necessary

SUBMISSION OF FINAL VERSION OF THESIS

Please lodge this form with two permanently bound copies of the thesis to the faculty/centre office. Place the electronic copy of your thesis in a single file on a CD/DVD in a pocket pasted inside back cover.

1. STUDENT DETAILS

Student ID:	Student contact phone:	Student email:
Student Name:		
Address:		

2. THESIS DETAILS

This thesis is for master degree (tick if true) ☐ doctorate ☐
Thesis title:
Number of permanently bound submitted copies:
Format of electronic file (MS Word, pdf, etc.)
Abstract of the thesis in 100 or less words. This abstract may be printed in the graduation booklet so please write the abstract carefully
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Write the main key words (less than 10) of the thesis. These words may be used by searching engines for indexing purposes.

.....

3. CONFIRMATION OF SUPERVISION

Please list below the names of your supervisors. These may be published in the graduation booklet.

<i>Supervisor name with titles</i>	<i>Supervision % (not for publication)</i>

4. DECLARATION

We, the undersigned, agree and certify that all required corrections to the above thesis have been made:

Student:	Date:
Chief Supervisor:	Date:
Assisting Supervisor:	Date:
Assisting Supervisor:	Date:
Assisting Supervisor:	Date:
Faculty/Centre Head:	Date:



Faculty of Education | substitute as necessary

THESIS FORM FOR EXAMINATION

Please lodge this form with the copies of your theses to the Faculty/centre office. Masters students need to submit 3 temporarily bound copies and one electronic copy on a CD/DVD for examination purposes. Doctorate students must submit an additional hard copy in addition to what is submitted by a masters student.

1. STUDENT DETAILS

Student ID:	Student Phone:	Student email:
Student Name:		
Address:		

2. THESIS DETAILS

This thesis is for master degree (tick if true) ☐ doctorate ☐
Thesis title:
Principal supervisor:
Approximate word count:

3. APPROVAL OF FROMAT AND CONTENT OF THESIS FOR SUBMISSION

The Higher Degrees Committee seeks confirmation that the thesis has undergone at least one process of critical review within the Faculty/Centre before submission to the Committee. Please tick which processes have been undertaken:

Oral presentation/defence at Faculty Seminar	Yes ☐	No ☐
--	------------------------------	-----------------------------

Assessment by the student's Advisory Panel	Yes ☐	No ☐
Assessment by Head of Faculty	Yes ☐	No ☐
Adequate discussion and review by the supervisor	Yes ☐	No ☐
Other (please elaborate):		
Chief Supervisor's signature:	Date:	
Other Supervisor's signature:	Date:	
Other Supervisor's signature:	Date:	
Signature of Faculty/Centre Head:	Date:	

4. STUDENT DECLARATION

Having completed my course of study and research towards the degree of Masters or doctorate, I hereby submit my thesis for examination in accordance with the regulations and declare that (please tick each box as appropriate) ↓

The thesis is my own composition, all sources have been acknowledged and my contribution is clearly identified in the thesis. For any work in the thesis that has been co-published with other authors, I have the permission of all co-authors to include this work in my thesis, and there is a declaration to this effect in the front of the thesis, signed by me and also by my supervisor/s.	☐
The thesis has been substantially completed during the course of enrolment in this degree at MNU and has not previously been accepted for a degree at this or another institution.	☐
I have read the rules relating to content and format of a thesis, words limits, and submission of a thesis for examination	☐
There has been adequate discussion and review by the supervisor of my thesis	☐
The thesis is within the set word limit for my degree program	
The thesis meets the following specifications: A4 size paper; writing direction margin 3.5 cm or more, other margins at least 2 cm; temporary binding in thermal, clamp or spiral style; each volume no more than 6 cm in spine width and 2.5kg in weight.	☐
I understand and agree that examiners <u>are not</u> required to return their copy of my thesis.	☐
I understand that if the thesis passed, I have to submit two amended copy of the thesis as fully bound volumes and an electronic copy as a single file on CD/DVD to the library.	
Signature of Student:	Date:



Request To Change Research Topic

Instructions:

- Complete all sections of this form.
- Submit the completed form to the Research Development Office at research.prssd@mnu.edu.mv.
- All requests to change research topics must be communicated to the Higher Degrees Committee (HDC) through the Dean of the Faculty.

Section 1: Candidate Information

Full Name (First Name, Sir Name):	
Student ID:	
Program of Study:	
Faculty:	

Section 2: Proposal Information

Current Research Topic:

New Research Topic:

Section 3: Justification

Reason of the request : <i>Provide justification of why your topic needs to change.</i>

Section 4: Approvals

Primary Supervisor Approval: I confirm that I have reviewed the candidate's request to change the research topic and that the proposed new topic remains within my academic field and supervisory expertise. I support this topic change and verify that it does not necessitate a change of supervisor.	
Supervisors Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	
Faculty Dean Approval:	
Dean's Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Submission Date:	
Candidate's Signature:	