

Guidance for Convening a Master's Thesis (90+ points) Examination – Division of Humanities

1. Resources

Graduate Research School – The Examination Process

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/researchmaster/programme/otago471601.html>

Division of Humanities Research Master's Degree Regulations

[https://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/ma\(thesis\).html#regulations](https://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/ma(thesis).html#regulations)

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/minds.html#regulations>

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/mmus.html#regulations>

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/mplan.html#regulations>

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/llm.html>

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/mtheol.html>

2. Summary of the Masters Examination Process from Graduate Research School

Examination Procedures

Details of the examination process for specific degrees are set out in the relevant degree regulations and in Divisionally-approved policies but general examination procedures at Master's level are as follows:

- Each thesis is assessed independently by two examiners – normally an internal examiner and an examiner who is external to the University.
- Written reports are required from the internal and external examiners.
- Once the reports of both the external and internal examiners have been received and considered, the Convener of Examiners, shall forward a final recommendation on the grade for the thesis and the level of award of the degree to the appropriate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or their nominee) for approval, and transmission to Student Administration.
- Where examiners cannot agree on a result, the Convener of Examiners should so report to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or their nominee), who shall arrive at a decision after consulting a referee who should normally be external to the University.
- If a referee is required, the Convener of Examiners should nominate an appropriate referee external to the University. The referee will be provided with the thesis, a letter from the Convener and the anonymised examiners' reports to assist in recommending a final grade and mark.

- If a thesis is assessed as not meeting the criteria for the award of the degree, the examiners may recommend to the Convener of Examiners that it be revised and resubmitted by a specified date (normally not later than six months after notification of the result), or rejected.
- A candidate shall be permitted to revise and resubmit a thesis for examination once only.
- If a revised and resubmitted thesis is finally accepted, the result shall be either 'Pass' or 'Fail' (i.e. ungraded) and without eligibility for the award of the degree with Credit or Distinction.
- Once the final result has been approved, Student Administration (not the Programme or School) will inform the student.
- If the award of the degree has been approved, candidates must submit an electronic copy of their finalised thesis to the University Library via the Otago University Research Archive (OUR Archive). This must be an exact replica of the corrected thesis that was accepted for their degree - this is the version that was bound. Either PDF or Word versions are acceptable. At the time of submission, candidates must select the level of access to the thesis. Normally "full text available for download" would be chosen so that the thesis is available to the public. However, in some cases it may be appropriate to select "abstract only (for six months from date of deposit)" or "abstract only and no inter-loan (permanent)". Alternatively, a thesis may be embargoed with no access for a set period.

3. The Convener and Nomination

The Convener is independent of the thesis and will not have been involved in supervision or the research project undertaken by the student. The Convener is not an examiner of the thesis but is a person who coordinates the examiners' reports and submits the result based on the recommendation of the examiners. The Convener is tasked with administering the resolution of a final grade with the examiners when there is a significant difference in grades. The Convener must not influence the outcome by suggesting or encouraging examiners to arrive at a particular grade.

A Convener is nominated at the same time as examiners within eVision by the host Programme. Any academic staff member can be a convener of a 90+ point thesis.

The programme's Client Service Administrator (CSA) will enter in eVision that a thesis has been submitted and distribute forms and an electronic copy of thesis to examiners.

4. Determination of the Final Result

The Convener will be notified by eVision when examiners' reports and results have been returned. The Convener is then required to determine the final grade.

Where there is no significant difference (10% or less) in marks between examiners, the final mark for the thesis is the average of the two marks recommended by the examiners.

Differences are significant when the marks differ by more than 10% or fall either side of an award boundary (Distinction (80%+), Credit (<79%)). For example, 77 and 83 would require mediation.

Where there is a significant difference in marks between examiners, the Convener consults both examiners, who may arrive at an (agreed) final mark. In this process adjusted grades cannot be averaged if they are close to within 10%, both examiners must agree on the final grade.

Consultation with examiners is a formal process and must be recorded, either as an email chain or with minutes if using zoom or phone. The record has to be uploaded to eVision as a document to serve as the record of mediation.

Consultation should be undertaken by sending each examiner an anonymised report of the other examiner. If both examiners are comfortable having their identity revealed to the other examiner, then an open exchange is acceptable (by email, zoom or teleconferencing can be used). However, the Convenor must be involved during the examiners' deliberations. Do not allow the examiners to discuss the grade without you being present or included in email correspondence.

Examiners should be reminded at the start of mediation that they are entitled to hold to their original grade if they consider that the appropriate. They should also be informed that their deliberation is formally recorded and stored in eVision.

Convenors should not suggest a compromise grade or ask one examiner to move their score to come within the 10%. Recall averaging two grades is not permissible in the mediation process (see relevant degree regulations). It is necessary for the examiners to arrive at agreed grade.

If a significant difference in marks cannot be resolved by consultation, the thesis and anonymised copies of the examiners' reports will be sent to a referee. If refereeing is required, the convenor should notify the Associate Dean Graduate Studies who will oversee the process (e.g. clause 5(i) MA(Thesis) Regulations). Convenors are asked to nominate a referee and secure their agreement to act in the role. The convenor can then nominate the referee in eVision. A nomination form is produced and signed as necessary and uploaded to eVision (in the same way as the nomination of examiners is completed). Referees are paid an honorarium.

Once a grade has been determined, either by averaging or mediation then the results are entered into eVision (Graduate Research, Research Examination, Examination Management). This is done by CSA personnel after the convenor notifies them and forwarded the record of mediation (if one has been necessary).

In cases where minor corrections are required (clause 5(e)(ii) MA(Thesis) Regulations), these are checked by the Convenor to ensure they are satisfactory. The Convenor must also set the time frame for corrections or revision if required (clause 5(f) MA(Thesis) Regulations).

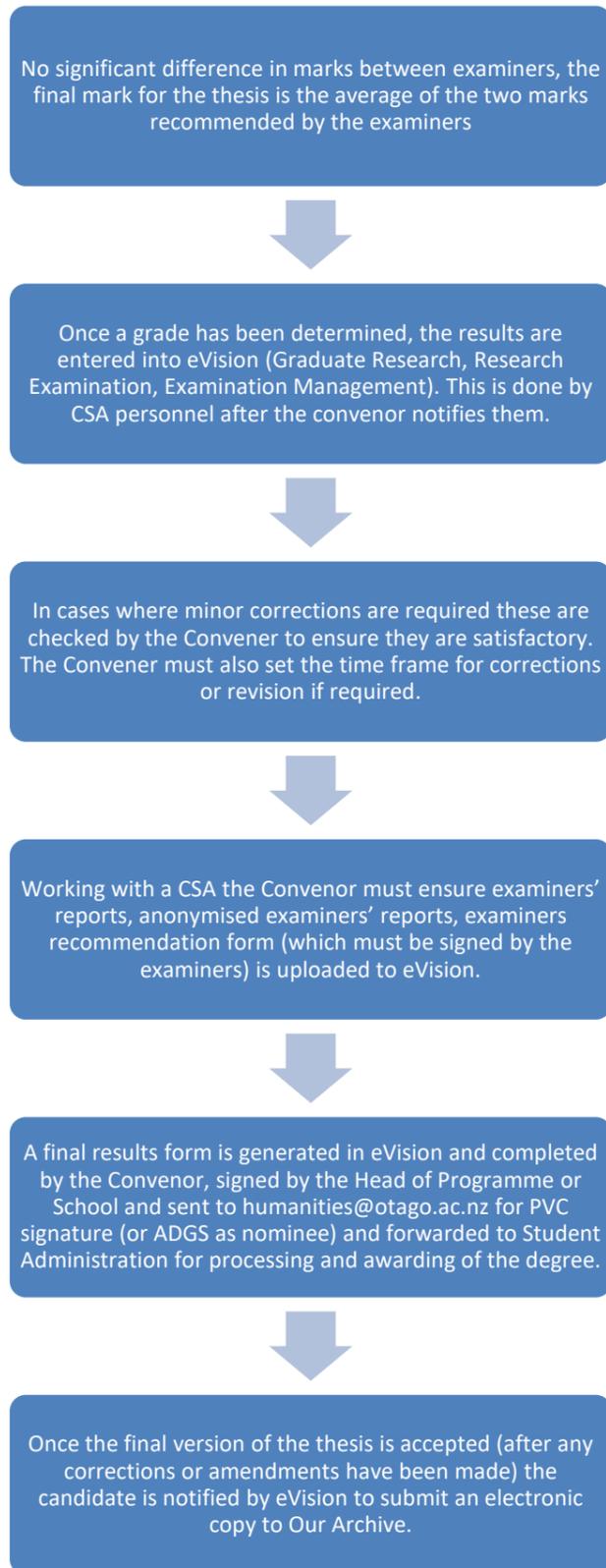
Working with a CSA the Convenor must ensure examiners' reports, anonymised examiners' reports, examiners recommendation form (which must be signed by the examiners) and a record of any mediation is uploaded to eVision. Both the Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Student Administration need to see these have been uploaded before signing the final results sheet or awarding the degree.

Anonymised versions of the examiners' reports are required so they can be provided to the student (if requested). Care should be taken to ensure that file information (MSWord) or properties (Adobe pdf format) does not contain the names of the examiners. A final results form will be generated in eVision and this is completed by the Convenor and signed by the Head of Programme or Head of School before sending to humanities@otago.ac.nz for PVC signature – this is signed by the Associate Dean Graduate Studies as delegate and passed onto Student Administration for processing and awarding of the degree.

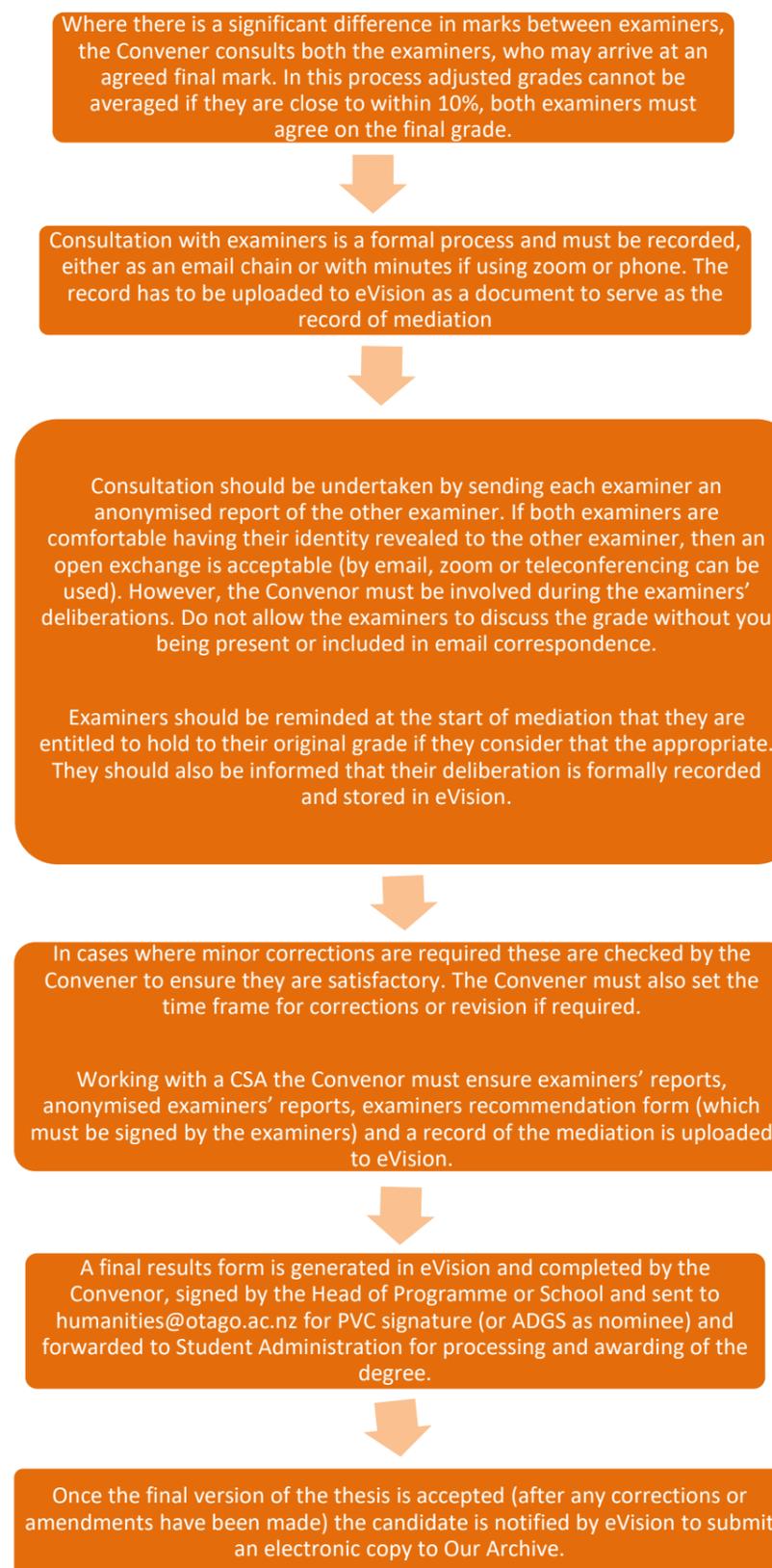
Once Student Administration are satisfied all administration has been completed the candidate is notified by eVision to submit an electronic copy to Our Archive (<https://otago.libguides.com/thesisinformation/submitting>). A student cannot graduate until this has been completed.

DETERMINATION OF THE FINAL RESULT

No Significant Difference



Examiner Mediation Required



Referee Required

