Raising the Quality of Submitted Theses

Professor Felicity Roddick
Associate Dean (R&I)
Feedback from Examiners

- Poor English/poorly written
- Needed editing
- Seemed like an early draft
- Typographical errors
- Poor expression
- Lack of abbreviation list
- Lack of equation numbers
- Inconsistency re abbreviations, terminology
- Referencing: cited/listed, consistent style
Examiners Guidelines

Extract from guidelines sent to examiners:

“- presenting information in a manner consistent with publication in the relevant discipline

The thesis should communicate the purpose and results of the research in a concise, logical and effective manner, by presenting them in a manner and at a level appropriate for publication in the field of the research. The thesis must be written clearly, accurately and cogently, and all sources must be documented fully. The quality of English and general presentation should be of a scholarly standard, suitable for publication. The thesis should be free of typographical and grammatical errors.”
13.2. Examiner's Recommendations…..

13.2.1. **Passed**: with no requirement for correction or amendment and the candidate be awarded the degree for which they are enrolled.

13.2.2. **Passed subject** to minor amendments: being made to the satisfaction of the School, with notification to the HDU, without further examination. The candidate must make minor amendments and/or address the recommendations of the examiner/s as appropriate.

13.2.3. **Passed subject** to specific amendments: being made to the satisfaction of the School, with notification to the HDU, without further examination. The candidate must rewrite/rework specific sections of the thesis/project and/or address the recommendations of the examiner/s as appropriate.

13.2.4. **Deferred for major revision**: to be resubmitted for completion of the examination following revision and/or extra work as recommended by the examiner/s.
Examiners
Guidelines/Recommendations

Extract from an Examiner Report Form.....

Additional Information:
Please tick those that apply:

☑️ The thesis as a whole is a substantial and/or original contribution to knowledge of the subject with which it deals.
☑️ The candidate shows familiarity with, and understanding of, the relevant literature.
☑️ The thesis provides a sufficiently comprehensive study of the topic.
☑️ The techniques adopted are appropriate to the subject matter and are properly applied.
☑️ The results are suitably set out, and accompanied by adequate exposition.
☑️ The quality of general presentation, language and/or expression are of a standard for publication.

Commendation:
If you believe it is merited, please tick ONE box only:

☐ The thesis is of the highest merit and at the forefront internationally in its field.
☑️ The thesis is strongly competitive at international levels.

The candidate’s thesis will be considered as an example of outstanding work when either box is checked.
Responsibility of Supervisors

HDR Policy and Procedures
APPENDIX 1, section 4.8

“Comment critically and constructively and in reasonable time on the content and the drafts of the thesis/project and, at the time of submission, certify that the work is of an appropriate standard, is properly presented, conforms to the Policy and Procedures for Higher Degrees by Research and is, therefore worthy of examination;”
Responsibilities of Supervisor

- Familiar with Regulations, Policies and Procedures for Higher Degrees by Research
- Advice re use of time, milestone completion
- Meetings
- Encourage student to submit work regularly for review
- Monitor performance and advise
Responsibilities of Supervisor

• Comply with School progress reporting policies
• Select examiners 2 months before submission
• Arrange for student to make presentations within RMIT, and to attend/present at conferences
• Assist in network development
• Encourage and support publication during candidature
• Comment critically and constructively and in reasonable time on the thesis content and drafts ….and so is worthy of examination
Editing

HDR Policy and Procedures, Section 16. Thesis should be

- Well structured and clearly argued, own thoughts/ideas
- If needed, supervisors must provide editorial advice or direction for same
- Adhere to DDoGS/CASE Guidelines
- Professional editor: limited purposes
- Supervisor must ensure no content change
Editing

Limited to:

• Language and illustrations
• Completeness and consistency

**NOT:** matters of substance or structure

• Must acknowledge professional editorial advice: name, service rendered, expertise

• See Appendix IV of HDR P&P
DDoGS/CASE Australian Standards for Editing Practice

Language and Illustrations

• Clarity
• Voice and tone
• Grammar and usage
• Spelling and punctuation
• Specialised and foreign material
• Illustrations and tables
DDoS/CASE Australian Standards for Editing Practice

Completeness and Consistency

• Integrity (completeness and coherence)
• Tools and procedures (conventions)
• Text
• Illustrations and tables
• Format, layout and reproduction
“copy editing” as referred to on new thesis submission form

**Copy editing** (also **copy-editing** and **copyediting**) is the editorial work that an editor does to make formatting changes and improvements to a manuscript; *copy* (as a noun) refers to written or typewritten text for *typesetting*, *printing*, or publication.

(Wikipedia, accessed 19/10/08)
GRO Website

- GRO/HDR Resources/Editors
- Society of Editors (Victoria) Freelance Register 2007-2008
- ~120 entries
- Suggestions re job definition, contracts/agreements re extent of work
- Index has been colour highlighted re relevant expertise areas: SET, DSC, Business, general writing skills
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