



General Regulations Governing the Award: Master's (Coursework)

1. Admission to Candidature

On application to the ACD Academic Standards Committee (ASC) the committee may permit a candidate to enrol in a Master's program offered by the College if:

- They have been accepted into the ACD Fellowship Training program or,
- Satisfy any of the criteria set out in 1.1 and 1.2

1.1 The prospective candidate must:

- hold or has fulfilled all the requirements for:
 - a bachelor degree in Medicine and/or ;
 - Fellowship of the ACD or;
- hold, from another recognised institution, qualifications which in the opinion of the ASC are equivalent to those prescribed above.

1.2. Submit a research proposal to the ACD Academic Standards Committee (ASC) which is considered by the ASC to:

- in the opinion of the ARC, make a worthwhile contribution to the field of dermatology
- be achievable in the prescribed timeframe
- met the requirements for the conduct of research involving human subjects as laid down in the Conduct of Human Research Policy if appropriate.

2. Successful Completion and the awarding of a Master's program

To achieve recognition of having successfully completed the Master's program, candidates must:

- Pass all prescribed subjects by:
 - Passing all examination components where appropriate
 - Submitting and obtaining a passing grade in all prescribed written assignment work
 - Successfully completing all prescribed work-place based assessments
 - Maintaining an attendance rate at teaching sessions of 95% minimum
- Submitted to and obtained from the nominated supervisor(s) a satisfactory assessment of their thesis reporting on their approved minor research project.

3. Supervision of the Minor Research Project Component

3.1. The degree of Master's by coursework is a composite degree comprised of course work and an approved supervised minor research project. The course is aligned with an approved curriculum. Such programs will provide candidates with the opportunity to extend and deepen their knowledge and skills in targeted areas of the curriculum as well as investigate more highly specialised and advanced areas of the nominated field of study.

3.2. Except under exceptional circumstances, the ASC will nominate two supervisors for each applicant. One supervisor shall be nominated as principal supervisor and the remaining as co-supervisor(s).

3.3. Principal supervisors must normally be Fellows of the College and be core academic staff of the College and would normally possess recognised expertise in research in the area noted in the research proposal.

3.4. For off-shore candidates, a suitable on-site supervisor, who has agreed to act as such, should be nominated as the co-supervisor.

3.5. The nomination of supervisors will include an estimate of the expected degree of involvement for each supervisor.

3.6. In exceptional circumstances where multiple supervisors are thought to be impractical, the Dean of Education as a member of the ASC will prepare a report for the committee and candidate detailing the reasons why co-supervision is not practical and indicating what procedures will be put in place to handle supervisory duties where the nominated supervisor becomes unavailable for any reason. However, in cases where the exceptional circumstances have arisen due to lack of sufficient core staff expertise, serious consideration must be given to appointing a co-supervisor from outside the College with expertise in the candidate's proposed research area.

3.7. Where an appropriate 'in house' supervisor is not available to undertake the principal supervisor's role, the ASC may seek to appoint an appropriately qualified Emeritus Professor, or an adjunct appointment as principal supervisor. A principal supervisor so appointed will be required to enter into a contract with the College and the student to undertake all of the duties and obligations specified for principal supervisors by completing and signing a Supervisor – Student Research Supervision Agreement.

3.8. The ASC in consultation with the candidate and his/her supervisor(s), may recommend termination of candidature if it is satisfied that the College can no longer provide appropriate supervision for the candidate*. In such circumstances, the College will provide any necessary administrative assistance to the candidate to facilitate his or her transfer to another institution. The action described in this rule shall not be used as a disciplinary measure in cases of lack of candidate progress or as a solution for problems arising from unsatisfactory relationships between supervisor(s) and the candidate.

* Normally, such a decision would only be taken where the principal supervisor cannot continue to provide supervision and a suitably qualified replacement cannot be sourced, or where access to facilities and/or resources critical to the successful completion of a meaningful outcome cannot be guaranteed.

3.9. The principal supervisor shall present to the ASC 6 monthly reports on the candidate's progress. If the ASC receives a report that the candidate's progress 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 any supervisor and a candidate, due consideration will be given to the views of both parties. The following specific instances must be noted:

3.9.1. Where a supervisor has made every effort to get a candidate's progress meets requirements and these efforts have not yielded the desired effect due to insufficient candidate commitment and/or effort, the supervisor has the right to withdraw from the supervisory role. A report detailing the grounds for the decision, signed by the Chair of the ASC, must be provided to the candidate and the ASC. The candidate shall also have the right to submit a report, detailing his or her perspective, to the committee. The ASC would then be expected to make a recommendation as to how to proceed from this point;

3.9.2. Notwithstanding the conditions stated in paragraph 3.8, where a candidate has made every effort to reconcile his/her work to meet expectations of his/her 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 ASC. The decision and appointment of a new supervisor will be in the hands of the ASC. The affected supervisor shall also have the right to submit a report, detailing his or her perspective, to the committee.

4. Period of Candidature

4.1. Under normal circumstance, the period of candidature for Master's programs (Coursework) shall be no less than 1.5 years for a full time candidate nor more than 2.5 years for a part-time candidate.

4.2. Where the ASC needs to adjust the period of candidature for any reason, the period will be adjusted on a pro rata basis.

4.3. In special cases, the ASC may approve variation of the minimum/maximum period of candidature. A written submission by the candidate, supported by the principal supervisor detailing the reason for a request to vary the period of candidature must be made to the ASC whose decision shall be final.

5. Conditions of Candidature

5.1. Every six calendar months, from the commencement of the research component of the degree, the candidate and principal supervisor shall submit to the ASC a report setting out details of the course of study and research and the candidate's progress over the previous 6 month period. The report will elaborate upon the broad outline of the proposal submitted prior to admission as

required under Rule 1.2 and shall give reasons for any departures from the original proposal which may have become necessary.

5.2. In special cases, the ASC, on the advice of the principal supervisor, may grant leave of absence from the course of study and research and the period of leave shall not be counted as part of the period of candidature.

5.3. The candidate shall pursue the course wholly under the control of the College.

5.4. Each candidate is required to consult regularly with his/her supervisor. This may be either in person or using ICT, including video. The nature and extent of such consultation will be determined by the supervisors and /or candidate.

5.5. If a candidate's principal supervisor submits a report of unsatisfactory progress to the ASC, or if the candidate fails to satisfactorily complete prescribed coursework, the ASC shall invite the candidate to 'show cause' why their candidature in the degree program should not be terminated. If the candidate does not respond to the invitation by the stated date or the candidate's response is deemed unsatisfactory, the ASC with approval of the College Board of Directors shall terminate the candidature.

5.6. If a candidate receives a fail (N) or failed incomplete (NI) grade on any coursework subject more than once they will be asked to show cause.

6. Role of the Candidate

6.1. Induction and Contact with Supervisor/s. Once candidates have formally accepted the offer of candidature and enrolled, they must contact their nominated principal supervisor and arrange a suitable time to discuss the formal induction process offered in their School. Supervisors will be required to sign off when the candidate has undergone the induction process. Candidates need to agree on contact arrangements and maintain regular communication with their supervisor for the duration of candidature.

6.2. Confirmation of Candidature. The College requires all Masters candidates to undertake a formal Confirmation of Candidature process.

6.3. Progress Reports and Re-enrolment

6.3.1. Candidate progress will be assessed at 6 months after enrolment.

6.3.2 Candidates will not be required to re-enrol each year for the duration of the course.

6.3.3. Candidates must ensure that all administrative requirements of the College, such providing progress reports, and conforming to procedures for variations of conditions of candidature, are met.

6.3.4. Candidates are required to report on their progress every 6 months of candidature. The progress reports provide an opportunity to formally record progress and any issues or concerns that arise during candidature.

7. 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 candidate throughout the period of candidature. The supervisor shall carry out the responsibilities in accordance with the following rules:

- (a) the principal supervisor shall ensure that the work done on the research topic chosen by the candidate is at an appropriate academic level and is likely, if successfully completed, to be worthy of publication.
- (b) 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.
- (c) 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 report with the candidate.
- (d) The periodic reports shall provide enough detail to enable the ASC to assess the progress of the candidate and the likelihood of completion of candidature within the prescribed time.
- (e) 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), the ASC request that the candidate be invited to 'show cause' why their candidature should not be terminated.

8. Quality in Research Higher Degrees

All candidates as well as all individuals undertaking a supervisory role for research candidates will be familiar with the responsibilities associated with research supervisors and candidates, the research examination procedures and procedures for handling any difficulties that might arise during supervision, and the consequences of failing in their obligations. Candidate and supervisors are expected to be familiar with any College policies pertaining to their participation in a Master's program of study, such as the Academic Awards Framework, Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct and abide by them.

9. Advanced Standing/RPL

9.1. Advanced standing/RPL may be granted, by the ASC on the recommendation of the supervisor or any other appropriate person or persons, for subjects passed in other College or external programs, provided that those subjects:

- are deemed of equivalent standard to subjects available for the Master's program;
- are deemed appropriate to the candidate's Master's program;
- have not counted to a completed qualification elsewhere.

9.2. The amount of advanced standing/RPL which can be granted on the basis of subjects completed prior to admission to candidature will not exceed 50%.

9.3. Where advanced standing/RPL is granted, the candidate's period of candidature shall be reduced proportionately.

10. Course Requirements

A candidate for the award of a Master's degree from the ACD, shall pursue a course consisting of advanced course work and the thesis approved by the ASC.

11. Course Work Program

11.1. A candidate may be required to complete a program of formal coursework study as outlined in the particular Master's Course Outline. This will be dependent upon the entry status of the candidate.

11.2. To commence and proceed with the research component of the degree a candidate must achieve a distinction average in all appropriate coursework subjects they are required to complete prior to or concurrent with the research program.

11.3. The assessment grade of each course work subject shall be recorded on the candidate's official transcript of academic record.

12. Thesis

12.1. On completion of the course, the candidate shall present for examination in the first instance, a thesis of not less than 10,000 words nor more than 15,000 words. A candidate may otherwise present and defend the results of the period research in any format as approved by the ASC as set out in the program requirements listed earlier. The over-arching requirement that 'the candidate's research work which shall be substantially an original and significant contribution to the field of study' must always however be satisfied.

12.2. The thesis exclusive of any appendices, shall in no case exceed 15,000 words.

12.3. There may be special instances where, with the permission of the ASC 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 in a language other than English or presented, at least in part, in a multi-media format.

12.4.

(a) A candidate shall state generally in the preface of the thesis and specifically in footnotes where appropriate, the sources from which the information is derived, the extent to which the candidate has made use of the work of others and the portion of work which is claimed as original.

(b) A candidate may not present as the thesis any work which has been the basis of the award of a degree at this or another university, but will not be precluded from incorporating such in the thesis, provided that, in presenting the thesis for examination, the candidate clearly indicates the part of the work which has been so incorporated.

12.5. 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 or portfolio.

12.6. The candidate shall submit to the Chair of the ASC a copy of the thesis in a digital format approved by the ASC. If the thesis has an approved multi-media component, 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 components must be accessible by examiners.

12.7. Exemption from submitting the thesis in digital format, in whole or in part, may be granted by the ASC in special cases.

12.8. (a) At the time the thesis is submitted, the supervisor shall send to the ASC a certificate stating:

(i) 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;

(ii) that all requirements of the College in regard to the deposition of museum material or any other supporting material have been met; and

(iii) that the physical form and presentation of the thesis are appropriate to the discipline.

(b) 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 ASC a written statement setting out the grounds on which the certificate is withheld. This statement will not be forwarded to any examiners.

12.9. The principal supervisor shall forward to the ARC the certificate acknowledging that the thesis is acceptable 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.

13. Examination

13.1. On receiving a thesis, the ASC, on the recommendation of the principal supervisor, shall appoint two examiners at least one of whom shall be external to the College and deemed to be an expert in the domain associated with the principal thrust of the research plus one additional reserve examiner.

13.2. Thesis or Portfolio Examination Process

Master's Programs: General Regulations

13.2.1. No person who has been a principal supervisor or co-supervisor of the candidate shall be appointed as an examiner. 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.

13.2.2. A pool of at least three potential examiners from which the two plus reserve are selected must have been assembled through consultation between the principal supervisor, the candidate and all current co-supervisors. The candidate will not be given any indication of the final set of examiners that have been appointed. The ASC, will be expected to obtain written or emailed consent, from each examiner excepting the reserve, to examine the thesis within two months of its receipt. The ASC is to be advised as to whether each examiner has had experience supervising and examining higher degree research candidates.

13.3. Each examiner shall make a separate written report on the merits of the thesis but thereafter may be required to consult with the other examiners and report to the ASC.

13.4. The identity of examiners shall not be revealed to a candidate until the conclusion of the examination process at which time the committee shall either reveal or withhold their names in accordance with their instructions.

13.5. Taking into account the recommendations of the examiners, the ASC may:

- (a) recommend that the degree be awarded;
- (b) recommended that the degree be awarded conditional upon the making of such amendments as the ARC deems appropriate;
- (c) request the examiners to consult and report to the ASC;
- (d) permit the candidate to revise the thesis for re-examination if, in the opinion of the ASC, the work is of sufficient merit to warrant this concession;
- (e) recommend that the degree not be awarded.

13.6. A candidate awarded the degree in terms of Rule 12.5(b) shall complete the amendments within two months for minor amendments and three months for major amendments. These will be made to the satisfaction of the principal supervisor, the Dean, or both.

13.7. A candidate permitted to revise a thesis for re-examination in terms of Rule 12.5(d) shall complete the revision within 2 months under the supervision of a principal supervisor or supervisors endorsed by the ASC.

13.8. Where the ASC in consultation with the supervisors and after consideration of all pertinent matters is considering recommending that the candidate not be awarded the degree Rule 12.5(e), the candidate and his/her 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 in the report. The ASC shall take into account the submissions of the principal supervisor and/or candidate in determining whether the degree be awarded.

14. Appeals Against a Recommendation of Degree Not Be Awarded

14.1. Candidates have the right of appeal against an unfavourable examination outcome described in Rule 12.5(e) and will be invited to submit a report to the to the College Appeals Committee

14.2. Appeals will be permitted on procedural grounds only. Procedural grounds for appeal may include:

(a) procedural irregularities in the conduct of the examination; and/or

(b) documentary evidence of prejudice or bias by one or more examiners.

14.3. The College Appeals Committee will not consider any appeal where the candidate simply rejects the academic assessments of his/her work or where the candidate complains about inadequacy of supervision or other problems arising during the course of the candidate's research program (problems encountered during candidature should be handled by grievance procedures at the appropriate time).

14.4. The final appeal to the College Appeals Committee does not affect the right of a candidate to seek a review (but not a further appeal) of the examination process by the Board of Directors or the NSW Ombudsman.

15. Relaxing Clause

In exceptional circumstances, the ASC, in concert with the Board of Directors, may relax any rule.