

Background Information for Proposed Oral Component in UWA Doctoral Examination

The [ACOLA Review of Research Training](#) stresses the need to develop PhD candidates through wider [skills training](#) and discusses the difficulties of [evaluating the candidate](#) using the current examination system.

Given that wider skills development is now seen as being an integral part of research training, there is a need to examine the extent to which programs are successful in delivering this training and evaluating candidates.

An increasing number of Australian universities are considering introducing an oral component into thesis examination. In a first for Australia, the University of South Australia made this a mandatory requirement for all HDR students.

The primary drivers for addition of an oral component to PhD examination include:

- increasing the rigour of the examination process by testing if the PhD candidate has carried out and understood the research presented in their thesis
- providing an opportunity for the PhD candidate to defend their thesis and to clarify where the written materials are not clear, potentially leading to more positive outcomes in terms of required revisions
- improving the PhD candidate experience by providing a clean and timely end to the examination process, giving the candidate a clear sense of achievement with communication of the final examination result on the day after the oral component
- building the reputation of UWA as a research intensive university committed to best practice in research training by bringing highly regarded experts to the main campus.