

GUIDELINES FOR EXAMINERS THESIS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Doctor of Philosophy involving creative works

DEGREES

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is a research degree which comprises a thesis to the value of 360 credits.

In the case of a doctoral thesis involving creative works, 'the thesis' comprises the creative work (which will normally be presented in an exhibition, performance, installation, literary manuscript or interactive event, for example), and a written analytical component (sometimes termed the 'exegesis'). The word length of the written analytical component will normally be 15,000 to 40,000 words including a review of the literature and the creative field, as applicable.

EXAMINATION PROCESS

Three examiners are normally involved in the examination process – an internal and two externals. Examiners are requested to (i) attend an exhibition/installation/performance of the candidate's work where appropriate; (ii) write a thesis assessment report, (iii) make their examination recommendation on Thesis Assessment Recommendation form (DRC 6.2), and (iv) attend an oral defence of the candidate's work and written exegesis. International examiners may be required to video conference into the oral examination. A convenor, not associated with the thesis discipline, is appointed by the Doctoral Research Committee (DRC) to oversee and facilitate the thesis examination.

Examiners are required to submit their recommendation and report (below) within 6-8 weeks to ensure the oral examination can take place in a reasonable timeframe and to allow the student 10 working days to review the reports and prepare for the oral exam. Please advise us if you have difficulties meeting this deadline. Specifically, examiners are asked to provide the following:

- An overall recommendation (pass, major emendations, minor emendations, re-exam, fail) which is kept confidential to the Examination Committee
- A written report which addresses the examination criteria, summarises strengths and weaknesses, and lists possible emendations (if required). This is made available to the candidate and supervisor prior to the oral examination.
- Any confidential comments that you wish to accompany your report but which you do NOT wish made available to the candidate or supervisor.

You may be asked to consider whether the thesis reaches the standard of 'Dean's List of Exceptional Thesis'. If this is the case you will be sent the appropriate form with the criteria noted on it.

Over the coming weeks the Graduate Research School (GRS) will be in contact to schedule the date for the oral examination.

Please note:

- It is important that the first stage of the examination process is strictly confidential. We ask you not to discuss the thesis or the report with anyone prior to the oral examination. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Graduate Research School.
- We ask examiners to keep the thesis until the examination process has been completed. You will receive a letter from the Graduate Research School to notify you of the final result following the oral examination and also when it is appropriate to dispose of the thesis.

THESIS ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATION

Please complete the attached Thesis Assessment Recommendation form (DRC 6.2) and email it with your written report to Doctoral.Exams@massey.ac.nz.

EXAMINER'S WRITTEN REPORT

There is no prescribed weighting between the creative work and the written component, however the written component is considered to support the creative work and they must be presented as a synthesised and coherent whole. Candidates are required to meet doctoral standards in both components in order to pass the examination.

Thesis assessment reports may vary in length from a few pages to a more lengthy document but typically they are 3-5 pages. The content and nature of reports will vary according to the nature of the thesis. Examiners are asked to make comments on matters common to all theses including general comments on whether:

- The candidate shows familiarity with, and understanding of, the relevant intellectual and creative context.
- The thesis provides a sufficiently comprehensive study of the topic.
- The research findings are suitably articulated and accompanied by adequate exposition.
- The quality of English and general presentation are satisfactory.
- The thesis as a whole makes an original contribution to the knowledge of the subject with which it deals, and the candidate understands the relationship of the thesis to the wider context of knowledge in which it belongs.

More specifically for the creative arts disciplines, examiners should also include comment on whether:

- The methods and techniques applied in the execution of the work are appropriate to the subject matter and are aesthetically effective, and properly applied.
- The creative work demonstrates a sufficiently high standard of literary, visual, digital, design, musical, or performance quality, and is presented in a professional manner.
- The research questions have been identified and explored through the creative work, as appropriate.
- There is an appropriate and substantive synthesis between the creative work and the written exegesis.
- The work demonstrates originality of conception and execution.

In the cases where examiners consider changes are necessary, as part of the report they should clearly specify the mandatory or recommended changes that should be made to the thesis before it is regarded as of an acceptable standard for the award of the degree.

Examiners may also wish to list the questions they intend to ask the candidate at the oral examination in their written report. The internal or New Zealand examiner will address the questions on behalf of the overseas examiner who normally does not attend the examination in person. This is entirely the examiners' choice, but in doing so, the candidate and supervisor will have access to those questions when receiving the written reports before the oral examination.