

Preparing and Presenting a Research Thesis for Examination

Higher Degree by Research Students

These guidelines should be considered in conjunction with Rule 10: Degree of Doctor by Research and Rule 11: Degree of Master by Research. These documents are available on the Curtin Compliance, Legislation and Policy website at http://policies.curtin.edu.au/legislation/internallegislation/statutes_rules.cfm.

1.0 Expectations of the Thesis for Examination

- 1.1 For the award of the Doctoral research degree, the thesis must, in the opinion of the Examiners, be a substantial, original¹ contribution to the knowledge or understanding of a field of study, and must demonstrate the capacity of the candidate to conceive, design and carry to completion independent research. The Doctoral candidate should uncover new knowledge either by the discovery of new facts, the formulation of theories or the innovative re-interpretation of known data and established ideas.
- 1.2 The thesis should be examined principally in terms of:
 - (i) the candidate's understanding of the field of study;
 - (ii) the candidate's demonstrated capacity to conceive, plan and conduct a program of research;
 - (iii) the significance of the thesis as a contribution to knowledge or understanding of knowledge in the field of study; and
 - (iv) the originality of the work embodied in the thesis.²
- 1.3 In particular, the thesis should demonstrate that the candidate has:
 - (a) adequately surveyed literature relevant to the thesis;
 - (b) adequate skills in the gathering and critical analysis of information and report presentation;
 - (c) demonstrated the capacity to conceive, design and carry to completion independent research; and
 - (d) made a substantial, original and significant³ contribution to the knowledge or understanding in the field of study.

2.0 Preparation of Thesis

- 2.1 In preparing the thesis for presentation to examiners, candidates should (with the guidance of their supervisors) ensure that a very high standard of scholarly presentation has been achieved. This includes ensuring that the thesis
 - (i) has a title that gives an appropriately clear description of its content;
 - (ii) includes an abstract or summary that gives a clear and accurate account of its main arguments, methodology, and scope;
 - (iii) uses academic language appropriate to journal publication in the discipline;
 - (iv) is free of typographical and grammatical errors.

In addition, ensure that

- (v) the presentation of all illustrative, graphic and other non-textual material is of high quality to enable examiners to assess all aspects of the work; and
 - (vi) extraneous material does not detract from the presentation of the findings and the scholarly argument presented in the thesis.
- 2.2 Conciseness is an important element of good scholarly communication. Over-length theses seldom find favour with examiners, who are likely to recommend substantial revisions. Material that is supportive of, but not central to, the main findings of the thesis may be placed in appendices. If lengthy, such supportive material may be presented in an appropriate medium, such as a CD-ROM.

¹ The contribution of a Masters Degree by Research is not required to be original.

² Item (iv) does not apply to a Masters Degree by Research.

³ The phrase 'original and significant' is replaced by 'substantial' for a Masters Degree by Research.

3.0 Presentation of Thesis

3.1 Section 11(d) of both Rule 10: Degree of Doctor by Research and Rule 11: Degree of Master by Research provides several conditions regarding presentation:

- (i) The maximum length of a doctoral thesis submitted in the form of a typescript is 100,000 words (60,000 for a masters thesis), excluding appendices, tables and illustrative matter.
- (ii) The maximum length of an exegesis forming part of a doctoral thesis and accompanying a creative or literary work or series of works is 40,000 words (20,000 for a masters thesis) excluding appendices, tables and illustrative matter.
- (iii) A thesis must be presented a A4 size.
- (iv) The margins must be not less than 4 centimetres on the spine side of the page, and 2.50 centimetres on the opposite side, top and bottom of the page. If a theses is printed, it may be printed on both sides of the page.
- (v) One-and-a-half line spacing should be used between lines of text.
- (vi) Text pages must be numbered sequentially. Candidates are responsible for the correct numbering and collating of the pages.
- (vii) The title page of the thesis or exegesis must show your full name, the name of your School, the title of the thesis, the title of the degree, and the year of submission or re-submission for re-examined theses, as appropriate.
- (viii) The page immediately following the title page must contain a declaration page. Your signature and the date of signing should follow this declaration. If the thesis is resubmitted, this Declaration shall be signed and dated with the date of resubmission.
- (ix) The thesis or exegesis must include a summary or abstract of at least 200 words.
- (x) Selection of a presentation format and referencing system should be made in consultation with the candidate's Supervisor.
- (xi) All substantive contributions by others to the work presented in the thesis (including jointly-authored publications) must be clearly acknowledged in the thesis.

4.0 Creative Works

4.1 Where a thesis is to be submitted in the form of a creative work or series of works in any approved

medium accompanied by an exegesis in accordance with Section 11(b)(ii) and 11(c), the format of the thesis must be determined by the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee, usually at the time of candidacy. More information about the presentation of creative works is contained in the *Guidelines for Creative Production Theses*. An examiner may not be able to see the original work in situ, therefore a record of the work must be available for access by examiners. Further, an enduring record of the creative work or works using appropriate technology must be included in the final version of the thesis.

5.0 Thesis by Publication

5.1 A thesis may be submitted in the form of a published book or a series of published papers, as described in Rule 11(b)(iii) and 11(e). The Guidelines for Thesis by Publication is designed to assist candidates in determining whether or not this is an appropriate format for their work and to help in the preparation of a thesis by publication.

