

Higher Degree Research Thesis Preparation Advice

DEFINITION AND CONTENT OF A “HIGHER DEGREE THESIS”

A higher degree thesis embodies the results of original research and investigations by a candidate for a higher degree which satisfies the requirements of a specific higher degree award. For example, a Doctor of Philosophy thesis must “form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of coherence and of originality shown either by the discovery of new facts or by the exercise of independent critical power” (Doctoral Degree Rule 3.(5)).

That “distinct contribution” must be made during candidature for the degree. While relevant background material completed before the current enrolment may be included in the thesis (e.g. relevant material from a preceding Honours or other thesis or previous publications), this material is background to the “distinct contribution” which the substantive part of the thesis makes, which is the focus of the examination. This material must be clearly identified for the examiners as background material completed before candidature.

Further, the doctoral degree rules specify that in the “thesis embodying the results of the candidate’s work...at least half shall have been completed whilst a candidate for a research degree in Macquarie University.” (3.(4)) This work must also not have “formed part of another degree successfully completed at this university or elsewhere” (7.(3)).

The University recognises that theses or parts of theses may be presented in a variety of formats and media, but would normally incorporate a written component. Non-written thesis formats and media must be approved by the Dean of the Division as part of the project proposal process in the Divisional Commencement Program and in Annual Progress Reports.

Theses may include relevant papers (including conference presentations) published or accepted for publication during the period of candidature, together with a comprehensive and critical introduction and an integrative conclusion. A candidate may only include published work which is part of the distinct contribution to knowledge of the thesis if the research and publication of the work occurred during the candidature for the degree. These papers should form a coherent and integrated body of work, which should be focused on a single project or set of related questions or propositions; however, it is not necessary to reformat published works in the thesis. These papers may be single authored or co-authored – in the case of co-authored papers the candidate must specify his/her specific contribution.

In some cases joint papers are based on joint research and joint drafts to which the authors have contributed in a collaborative way which doesn’t enable specific differentiation of respective contributions, though the candidate will have made a substantive contribution to the paper(s) which the co-author(s) acknowledge. Generally the contribution of others to the preparation of the thesis or to individual parts of the thesis should be specified in the thesis Acknowledgments and/or in relevant footnotes/endnotes. (Additional advice to candidates on the preparation of a research thesis by publications is contained in Part A, 7.1.)

Where there is a creative component in a thesis, the size of the creative component should be specified in relation to the critical component, and will vary according to the candidate’s academic area and medium. Examples of creative components are: in music - a written score; a compositional folio containing a number of pieces which might be in different forms; software; video; audio recordings; in writing - a novel, a collection of shorter creative pieces, a volume of poems. Creative components must be submitted in a form which enables further examination or re-examination to be undertaken (e.g. a DVD/CD-ROM of an exhibition or performance), and allows for deposit in the Library. Candidates may also choose to integrate creative and critical components, as e.g. in ficto-critical writing or essay films; but explicit critical analysis in written form will also be required (with a normal minimum of 25,000 words for an MPhil thesis and 50,000 words for a doctoral thesis depending on Divisional expectations).

When writing a thesis within what a candidate claims to be a paradigm appropriate to the topic and his or her treatment of it, the onus lies with the author to establish to the satisfaction of the examiners that the paradigm is indeed appropriate. This must include demonstration that it is properly constructed, used in a way which is self-consistent and meets any further conditions required by the examiners as necessary in their professional judgements. In other words, the candidate may not, of his or her own volition and immune from challenge, set a framework within which the thesis is to be read and require the examiners to conduct their examination within that framework. Paradigm and text are integral, and the examiners’ competent academic judgement must be applied to both either implicitly or explicitly.

The Postgraduate Rules of the University state that the thesis must be written in English and reach a satisfactory standard of literary presentation; but a candidate in the Departments of Asian Languages and European Languages may

be required to submit a thesis in a language other than English, and a Co-tutelle PhD student may request approval to submit a thesis in a language other than English.

GENERAL PRESENTATION

- The written component of a thesis should be printed in double or one and a half spacing on medium-weight A4 paper. Double-sided printing is recommended. A higher quality printer, e.g. laser, should be used. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Head of the Department other forms of presentation may be permitted.
- Margins should be not less than 3.5cm on the binding edge, 1.5cm on the opposite edge and 2cm at the top and bottom to allow for binding and trimming.
- Pages should be numbered consecutively.

BINDING FOR EXAMINATION

- The written component of the thesis must be bound in a stitched/glued soft cover form for examination – Perfect binding. (*Spiral binding or a loose-leaf binder of the spring-type or screw-type is **not** acceptable*).
- During binding the edges should be trimmed.
- When published papers are submitted as additional evidence, they should be bound in the back of the thesis as an appendix.

PRELIMINARY PAGES

A thesis should incorporate in the following order:

1. Title page

- the title of the thesis in full
- the names and degrees of the candidate,
- the name of the organisation, institute or laboratory in which the research was carried out (if applicable),
- the name of the Department and Division of the University associated with the work and the date when submitted or re-submitted for the degree;
- a statement of presentation in the form “*This thesis is presented for the degree of [insert name of degree]*”. A candidate enrolled in a degree which has examinable components other than a thesis should state “*This thesis is presented as a partial fulfilment to the requirements for the [insert name of degree]*”

2. Table of Contents

3. A synopsis / abstract of the thesis summarising the appropriate headings, aims, scope and conclusion of the thesis in approximately 200 words for a Master degree or 300 words for a Doctorate

4. Statement of Candidate - a statement signed by the candidate to the effect that the work has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution. The candidate shall also indicate in the thesis the sources of information used and the extent to which the work of others has been utilised, and specify if Ethics committee approval has been obtained (and the protocol number). A template of this statement has been included in appendix 1.

5. Acknowledgments (if applicable)

LENGTH

The Master Degree by Research Rules and the Doctoral Rules require that a thesis should conform to the requirements regarding length prescribed by the Dean of the Division in which the candidate is registered. (Where a candidate is planning to present part of the thesis in non-written format, this should first be discussed with the supervisor). The Deans of Divisions have prescribed that a thesis should be written as concisely as possible. The maximum word length is 100,000 words for a doctoral thesis, and 50,000 words for an MPhil thesis, except in exceptional circumstances as approved by the Dean of Division. Footnotes and references are excluded from this maximum count.

	Master	MA(Hons)	MPhil	Doctorate	Notes
Australian Centre for Educational Studies					
School of Education	25,000	50,000	50,000	100,000	
				75,000	(EdD)
Institute of Early Childhood	30,000	50,000	50,000	100,000	
				75,000	(EdD)
Macquarie University Special Education Centre	25,000	50,000	50,000	100,000	
Division of Economic and Financial Studies					
Statistics	40,000	50,000	50,000	80,000	
Other disciplines	50,000	80,000	50,000	100,000	
Division of Environmental and Life Sciences					
Department of Biological Sciences	50,000	50,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Chemistry	50,000	50,000	50,000	80,000	
Department of Health and Chiropractic	75,000	75,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences	50,000	50,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Human Geography		60,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Physical Geography	60,000	60,000	50,000	80,000	
Graduate School of the Environment	40,000	40,000	50,000	60,000	
Division of Humanities					
Department of English	50,000	60,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Ancient History	50,000	80,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Modern History	50,000	75,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Asian Languages	50,000	80,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of European Languages	50,000	75,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Politics	50,000	75,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Contemporary Music	50,000	75,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Public Law	50,000	80,000	50,000	100,000	
Division of Information and Communication Sciences					
Department of Computing	50,000	50,000	50,000	75,000	
Department of Electronics	50,000	50,000	50,000	75,000	
Department of Mathematics	50,000	50,000	50,000	75,000	
Department of Physics	50,000	50,000	50,000	75,000	
Division of Law					
Business Law	70,000	80,000	50,000	100,000	
Law and Justice	70,000	80,000	50,000	100,000	
Legal Theory	70,000	80,000	50,000	100,000	
Environmental Law	70,000	80,000	50,000	100,000	
Division of Linguistics and Psychology					
Department of Linguistics	60,000	80,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Psychology		40,000	50,000	100,000	(Qualitative)
				75,000	(Quantitative)
				40,000	(DPsy)
				80,000	(DAppLing/Prof.Comm)
Macquarie Graduate School of Management					
Macquarie Graduate School of Management	50,000	80,000	50,000	100,000	
				80,000	(DBA)
Division of Society, Culture, Media and Philosophy					
Department of Anthropology	75,000	75,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Cultural Studies		75,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Media and Communication	40,000	75,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Philosophy		50,000	50,000	80,000	
Department of Sociology	75,000	75,000	50,000	100,000	
Department of Indigenous Studies	60,000	75,000	50,000	100,000	
Centre for International Communication	50,000	75,000	50,000	100,000	

DIAGRAMS, FIGURES AND TABLES

The following are general suggestions for normal practice but they may be varied in special cases with the approval of the Head of the Department.

1. diagrams and figures etc. should preferably be drawn or photographed on A4 paper (rather than being affixed to A4 paper) and bound in the appropriate place in the text;
2. all figures should preferably be set out on a right-hand page with the legend either at the bottom or, if necessary, on the page facing the figures;
3. tables should be inserted in the appropriate place in the text, except that lengthy or bulky tables should appear as an appendix;
4. diagrams, maps, tables, etc., exceeding A4 size, should be folded so as to read as a right-hand page when open.

REFERENCING, COPYRIGHT AND LEGAL LIABILITY

REFERENCING

In providing references (notes, bibliographies etc.) candidates should employ an acceptable convention for acknowledgement of sources and the works of others, after consultation with the Head of the Department and the supervisor on what is appropriate for their discipline, and should use it consistently throughout the thesis.

COPYRIGHT AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that where material is copyright, permission for its use in the thesis and in the specific context within the thesis is obtained from the copyright owner. (See also legal liability, below).

LEGAL LIABILITY

Macquarie University accepts no responsibility whatsoever for the contents of candidates' theses. Each candidate must agree that:

1. prior to submission of his/her thesis to the University all necessary rights and consents for any and all material which can be the subject matter of copyright have been obtained; and
2. all legally utilised source material will be duly acknowledged; and
3. his/her thesis will not contain any material which is defamatory of any person, firm or corporation or is in breach of copyright or is in breach of other rights which shall give rise to any action at Common Law or under Statute. If a candidate is in any doubt as to whether the material is defamatory, he or she should seek independent legal advice. The publication of defamatory material is allowed provided that the defamation is defensible.

It is advisable to discuss both the issue of whether the material is defamatory and if so, whether it is also defensible, with independent legal practitioners. Confidential information should be treated with care. It is information knowingly obtained in confidence and a breach of such confidence can give rise to action for breach of contract or if the information has a commercial implication, to action for breach of confidential information. Theses should not be substantially based on confidential material. Where appropriate, a confidential appendix for examiners should be incorporated. Illegally obtained information can also give rise to actions for breach of the law which has been breached and therefore should not be used.

Information obtained on which restrictions apply should not be used unless those restrictions can be observed both in the submission of the thesis and in the normal operations of the University in dealing with the thesis.

SUBMISSION FOR EXAMINATION

Four copies of the thesis (for Doctoral candidates) or three copies of the thesis (for Master candidates) are to be submitted to the Higher Degree Research Office, accompanied by the following forms:

- "Author's Consent Form"
- "Submission of Higher Degree Research Thesis for Examination Form"

The submission form includes a certificate signed by the Supervisor that:

1. The thesis conforms to the requirements of the Master Degree by Research Rules or the Doctoral Degree Rules;
2. The length of the thesis conforms to the requirements prescribed by the Dean of the Division;
3. Any instances of inadequate presentation were pointed out to the candidate for correction before the thesis was bound;
4. The candidate has completed the approved program of advanced study and research.

The form is countersigned by the Dean of the Division.

It is the candidate's responsibility to complete details of the program and to obtain the appropriate signatures. In cases where a supervisor is unable or unwilling to sign the certificate, the thesis should still be submitted. A report of the circumstances should be made by the supervisor to the Higher Degree Research Committee, which will determine an appropriate course of action. Candidates are advised to produce additional copies for their own use. The examiners are not required to return the thesis submitted for examination.

PROCEDURES FOR EXAMINATION OF A THESIS

Approximately three months before the expected date of submission of the thesis, the supervisor(s) and the candidate, together with the Dean of Division (or nominee), should prepare a list of potential examiners and reasons for their suitability. The candidate should sign the declaration in part iii of the Appointment of Examiners form, certifying that he/she has been consulted on the nomination of examiners, is satisfied that the list of potential examiners can go forward and agrees not to contact the potential examiners until the whole examination process is complete. If there are any areas of disagreement, they should be noted in the declaration.

When the appointment of examiners has been finalised, the thesis is despatched promptly with instructions to the examiner, including any approved non-written thesis formats and media, a copy of the relevant degree rules and an examiners' report form.

Examiners are instructed that the examination should be completed within six weeks of receipt of the thesis; in many instances, time must also be allowed for despatch and return by overseas mail.

Staff in the Higher Degree Research Office regularly monitor the return dates for all thesis examination reports. Reminder emails/letters are despatched after six weeks from thesis receipt, and then at fortnightly intervals.

OUTCOMES

- When all examiners' reports have been received, and the supervisor has reviewed them and provided his/her comments, they are included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Higher Degree Research Committee for consideration.
- The Higher Degree Research Committee considers the matter and may recommend to the next meeting of Academic Senate that the degree be awarded, or may determine that correction or revision is required. The Committee may also recommend to Academic Senate that the degree be not awarded. Candidates

are notified of Academic Senate's decision to award or not award the degree following the meeting of Academic Senate.

- ☑ Candidates who are required to undertake minor corrections or major corrections to their thesis will be given 1 month or 2 months respectively to complete the requirements. Copies of the revised thesis and the corrections report must then be presented to the Higher Degree Research Committee for further review and consideration.
- ☑ Candidates who are required to resubmit their thesis for re-examination are required to be enrolled while undertaking such revision and to pay the necessary fees. The enrolment period will begin three weeks after the decision of the Higher Degree Research Committee. One copy of the original thesis is retained by the Higher Degree Research Office. The candidate is required to re-submit three copies of the revised thesis in accordance with the submission requirements. Re-submission is required within one year from the date of the decision of the Higher Degree Research Committee. Candidates who choose not to proceed with the re-submission in the determined time-frame should notify the Higher Degree Research Office and will be deemed to have failed to satisfy requirements for the award of the degree.

GRADUATION

Graduation ceremonies are held in April/May and September each year. The April/May ceremonies will include decisions of Academic Senate up to and including the February meeting. The September ceremonies will include decisions of Academic Senate up to and including the August meeting. Further information about graduation can be obtained from the Graduation Unit, Office of the Registrar and Vice-Principal: <http://www.graduation.mq.edu.au/>

FINAL BINDING & SUBMISSION OF DIGITAL THESIS

- (i) On conclusion of the thesis examination process, three copies of the thesis must be submitted to the Higher Degree Research Office for distribution to the Library, Dean of Division and Supervisor.
- (ii) A “Certification of Completion of Final Version of a Higher Degree Research Thesis” form must be completed and submitted with the copies of the thesis. A report completed on a corrections report template detailing amendments made to the thesis must accompany this form. [Note: this is a requirement of the Higher Degree Research Committee for all candidate's whose thesis have either minor/major corrections]
- (iii) The thesis must be sewn and bound in hard back. One copy of the thesis component should be printed on non-recycled paper for retention in the Library.
- (iv) On the spine of the thesis should appear, in gold lettering of suitable size and in following order, the title of the thesis, the initial and the family name of the candidate, abbreviated degree name and year of submission or re-submission.
- (v) It is recommended that a digital copy of the thesis be submitted to the Higher Degree Research Office following confirmation that the thesis has been passed by Academic Senate. Acceptable formats are Word and PDF. Information regarding submission of a digital thesis can be found at http://www.research.mq.edu.au/students/thesis_examination/research_candidates

AVAILABILITY OF LIBRARY COPY OF A THESIS

The Act of Incorporation of the University includes as one of the University's functions “the dissemination of knowledge and the promotion of scholarship”. In the light of this objective it is regarded as important that there should be ready access through the University Library to higher degree theses.

Theses are stored in a locked area within the Library. Requests for access to theses are made to the Library Information Desk, a register is kept of those accessing theses and the thesis may only be viewed under supervision. Requests for photocopying of theses must be made on a form to the Library's photocopy service room and copies are made by the Library staff. Individuals may not make copies outside this service. Inside the front cover of every thesis held by the Library is a "Use of Thesis" form which every person accessing the thesis must sign. The University does, however, recognise in special cases the need to protect the right of higher degree candidates to take advantage of their own research work and to restrict access to any material which may have been made available on the confidential basis for use in the conduct of the research work or the preparation of the thesis. With the support of the Dean of the Division, a candidate may apply to the Higher Degree Research Committee for a moratorium on the use of the thesis for consultation, loan and photocopying until after the expiry of an agreed period (ordinarily no longer than one year).

Information on the Library Thesis Collection is available from: <http://www.lib.mq.edu.au/collections/thesis.html>

PROCEDURES FOR A RE-SUBMISSION & RE-EXAMINATION OF A THESIS

- An invitation to re-examine the thesis will be sent to all initial examiners.
- No direct contact is to take place between the candidate and the examiner. Any contact must be approved by the Higher Degree Research Committee.
- Access to the unrevised thesis is to be made available to the re-examiner, on request.
- Access to all reports, including those of the University and the initial examiners, is to be available on request to the re-examiners subject to privacy requirements.
- The candidate will submit along with the thesis and through the Higher Degree Research Committee, such documentation that addresses and responds to matters raised in the initial examination. Such documentation must be general, not examiner-specific.
- Approval to submit a revised thesis for re-examination must first be sought from the Dean of the Division of registration. The thesis, plus accompanying documentation outlining the revisions to the thesis will require the approval of the Higher Degree Research Committee before proceeding to re-examination.

Reviewed May 2008
Higher Degree Research Committee

Appendix 1: Statement of Candidate Template

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled "**Thesis Title**" has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, reference number: **<Ethics approval number>** on **<date of approval>**

<Signature>

<Full Name > (<Student ID>)

<Date>