

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



Graduate Research School



Master of Research

GUIDELINES FOR EXAMINERS

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GUIDELINES FOR EXAMINERS

THE MASTER OF RESEARCH THESIS IN CONTEXT

Thank you for agreeing to act as an examiner for our Master of Research (MRes) candidates.

The Graduate Research School provides these guidelines to assist examiners to understand both what is expected and to place the Master of Research thesis in context.

The Master of Research involves two years:

1. The first year is devoted to coursework; and
2. The second year is a 20-25,000-word thesis.

The Master of Research thesis should not be assessed as a PhD or an Honours project: the thesis has its own unique requirements and as such, we request you read these guidelines carefully.

Should you have any further questions, contact the Graduate Research School via email at grs.exams@westernsydney.edu.au

Once again, thank you for the generosity in examining the work of our candidates.

Best regards,

Dean – Graduate Research School



UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY
FOR COMMITMENT TO UNITED NATIONS
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024



MASTER OF RESEARCH

AIM OF THE DEGREE

The Master of Research degree is aimed at the research skills development of the candidate, with particular emphasis on research methodology appropriate to the field of study.

It is intended to provide candidates with the opportunity to develop their potential for research, enhance their skills in problem identification and specification, and their ability to develop and present solutions.

The Master of Research requires the student complete the following:

- A year of coursework in Year 1; and
- A dissertation of approximately 20-25,000 words in Year 2.

BASIS OF EXAMINATION

In assessing the work, you are asked to determine if:

- the thesis as a whole makes a contribution to the knowledge of the subject with which it deals at research masters level. It is not expected that originality will be at level of a doctorate
- the thesis provides a sufficiently comprehensive study of the topic appropriate to the degree in the discipline area, or in related interdisciplinary areas
- the methods adopted are appropriate to the subject matter and are appropriately applied
- the research findings are suitably set out, accompanied by adequate exposition and are discussed critically in the context of the discipline
- the quality of English and general presentation is satisfactory.

EXAMINER'S REPORT

You are required to return an Examiner Outcome online form that includes two components:

1. A recommendation of an overall mark; and,
2. A written report of a minimum of two (2) pages (template provided).

WRITTEN REPORT

Your examination report must be sufficiently detailed and comprehensive to:

- Provide an explanation of your overall recommendation on the outcome of the examination; and
- Assist the candidate in their pursuit of future research, publications, and career.

A report shorter than two pages is unlikely to serve these purposes. The report should discuss both the strengths and the weaknesses of the thesis.

Your summary recommendations provide guidance on what needs to be done for future study rather than a grade or rating for the thesis.

If you feel it is warranted, you may submit a confidential addendum to Western Sydney University.

The final outcome for the candidate will be determined by an assessment of the examiners reports, with comments by the supervisory panel. All examiners recommendations are given critical consideration.

Note: Master of Research candidates are not required to make thesis amendments, so be aware that any revisions you recommend will not be enforced as a condition of the candidate receiving their final grade..

RECOMMENDATION

You are required to recommend a mark on the Examiner Outcome form. Your mark will fall into one of the following categories:

85-100%: A thesis at this level:

- Clearly and fully outlines its research topic and objectives, explaining and justifying the project in relation to key developments in the field and recent literature;
- Clearly and fully outlines and explains the research undertaken, in terms of the methodology chosen and why it was chosen in preference to alternatives;
- Draws clear and fully-supported conclusions from the research that allows for critical reflection on the research questions, the current status of related research and possible future directions for research; and,
- Is clearly and cogently structured and well-written, and conforms to disciplinary conventions in terms of its presentation.

A candidature producing work of this quality is capable of going on to original and innovative research and is strongly suited for enrolment in PhD.

75-84%: A thesis at this level:

- Provides a good account of the research objectives in relation to developments in the field and recent literature;
- Explains the research undertaken and why a certain methodology was chosen as appropriate;
- Draws conclusions that are broadly supported by the research, and that respond clearly to the research question; and,



- Is clearly structured and written, and conforms to disciplinary conventions in terms of its presentation.

A candidate producing work of this quality is capable of undertaking a PhD.

65-74%: A thesis at this level:

- Has a clear research objective informed by developments in the field and recent literature;
- Explains its methodology clearly;
- Relates its conclusions clearly to the research undertaken; and,
- Is adequately written, structured and presented.

A candidate working at this level is capable of higher degree research, but not yet at a doctoral level.

50-64%: A thesis at this level:

- Identifies its research objective;
- Has a clear methodology;

- Draws conclusions based on the research undertaken;
- Is written and presented adequately.

A student working at this level is not capable of further higher degree research at this stage of their research career.

Below 50%

The thesis does not meet the standard for the award of the degree.

Please note: Unlike a PhD, the students will not be given the opportunity to re-draft and re-submit. As such, the original mark will stand.

The only exception that exists is where a student receives below 50%. In this situation, they will be offered the opportunity to re-submit but can only receive a maximum mark of 50%.

EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

TIME FRAME OF EXAMINATION

We are always mindful that the candidate is eagerly awaiting their result so we encourage examiners to respond as soon as possible.

As such, we request that you please read the thesis and return your full examiner's report to the Graduate Research School within four (4) weeks of accepting the examination. If you are unable to complete the report by the due date, please contact the Graduate Research School as soon as possible at grs.exams@westernsydney.edu.au. It may be possible to grant you with an extension of time.

If you are unable to complete the report, an alternative examiner will be appointed. Please notify the Graduate Research School as soon as possible to minimise disruption to the candidate.

At the conclusion of the examination and when all conditions have been met and the degree awarded, a copy of the thesis will be lodged with Western Sydney University Library for the use of the wider research community.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is essential to preserve the confidentiality of the examiners and examiner's reports during the examination process.

Do not make public your role on the examination panel for this candidate.

It is the policy of Western Sydney University that at the conclusion of the examination process the candidate will be given a copy of each examiner's report.

If you wish that your identity remain confidential, you should indicate this at the bottom of the Examiner's Report Coversheet. If you request to be confidential, while the report will be given to the candidate, your name will be withheld.

HONORARIUM

You will be awarded an honorarium for the examination of the thesis. The amount will be that currently recommended by Universities Australia.

→ Master of Research: AUD\$309.00

The honorarium will be remitted following the completion of the examination process. If you are an Australian taxpayer, please also provide the following:

1. An invoice or claim for payment if you do not hold an ABN. If this applies to you, please complete and return the attached claim for payment
2. A tax invoice if you are registered to collect GST and can quote an ABN. In these circumstances you would need to add 10% GST to the agreed fee and include bank details on the invoice
3. An invoice if you are not registered to collect GST and can quote an ABN

Inability to quote an ABN will result in deduction of PAYG tax at the rate of 49% or as presently prescribed by law.

Overseas examiners are asked to complete the enclosed 'Statement by a Supplier' to comply with present requirements of the Australian Taxation Office and return it with the attached invoice or claim for payment.

Alternatively, you can choose to waive your fee and Western Sydney University will direct it instead to our Student Welfare Fund to support the journey of future HDR candidates.

MASTER OF RESEARCH IN CREATIVE ARTS

The Master of Research also provides extended and advanced training in the creative arts, where projects and investigative practice provide a contribution to professional and scholarly knowledge.

Creative arts candidates should generate knowledge through practice, undertaking the development of a body of original creative work within the chosen discipline. Candidates should also develop theorisation that demonstrably influences their creative practice and output, including methodologies.

Candidates working in the creative arts should demonstrate several or more of the following attributes:

1. Technical and conceptual innovation in their discipline;
2. Commitment to research and development as a means of solving problems;
3. Familiarity with new technology and its applications;
4. Knowledge in theoretical foundations and highly developed skills in the application of theory to practice and creative reflection;
5. Effective and advanced communication at all levels;
6. Ability to articulate a broad vision of practice and practice-led research and its relationship to social, cultural and community needs;
7. Ability to contribute to the advancement of policy and practice in the creative arts.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

MRes candidates are required to produce an examinable thesis accomplished during the period of enrolment in the MRes.

The thesis comprises:

- a body of creative work; and
- an exegesis of approximately 8,000 to 10,000 words.

The exegesis demonstrates the development and application of theory within a creative process and the production of the creative work. It includes a survey of recent representative literature in the chosen discipline(s). It is also a reflexive analysis of creative process and is an engaging piece of writing constructed as a scholarly essay.

The relative weighting of the exegesis as a component of the thesis submission for examination should be at least 30% of the total, with the creative practice constituting no more than 70%. The requirements and relative weightings for examinable creative practice and exegesis are discussed and developed between candidate and supervisory panel on commencement and again during the confirmation of candidature process.

The following examples reflect some of the different disciplines supported by the University. These examples are intended to be indicative and not exhaustive, and should be accompanied by an exegesis of approximately 8,000 to 10,000 words

- 1. Communication/Media Arts:** A body of creative work in the disciplines of communication and media arts should be equivalent to a program for television, radio, a selection of multimedia presentations, or one program of substantial length. For example, a one-off film of 10-20 minutes in length. Other formats for communication dissertations could be developed on HDV, DV, DVD, DAT, CD, photo-media and on-line digital media. The work must be broadcast to a public audience.
- 2. Electronic Arts:** A solo exhibition in a gallery or festival, or presentations in performative modalities. These may include telepresencing, online interactivity, sensor driven interactivity, as well as the use of archival and recording technologies;
- 3. Music Composition:** a folio of compositions including works that employ resources or performance media demonstrating a variety of 'architecture', colours, textures for example, a musical, opera or symphonic score, or 2-3 compositions for smaller resources or other media;
- 4. Music Performance:** the staging of a live performance or concert and recital, each of 20 minutes duration, demonstrating high level artistry encompassing performance practice, production values and spatial considerations.
- 5. Writing:** an original poetry collection (20-30 pages), a play script or film script (30 minutes production), or a novella or short story (20,000 words);
- 6. Design:** A portfolio of design documentation relating to a coherent creative project with well-articulated

outcomes in community or industry settings. The forms of presentation may utilise the full range of computer-based applications that best serve the communicational needs of the project. These may be stand-alone formats for distribution (e.g. MP3, MP4, DVD), exhibited works as installations, or on-line interface projects.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

A candidate presenting a body of creative work is required to present the exegesis concurrently. However, where the body of creative work involves a public performance or exhibition the candidate is required to submit the exegesis no later than three months after the final event.

It is expected that a high level of intellectual and research acumen will be demonstrated throughout candidature.

The submitted thesis should show evidence of significant conceptual development, as demonstrated in exhibition, performance, writing, screening or publication during the period of candidature.

Performances, presentations and exhibitions should occur at the University or associated venues. Consultation with the supervisory panel in conjunction with the HDR Director may lead to external or professional engagements being considered as part of the submission.

Examination will incorporate the creative component and the exegesis.

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