



University of Ballarat

Guidelines for the Examination of Professional Doctorate Portfolios

Regulation 5.1 PART D – Professional Doctorates states that the degree will be awarded on the basis of a candidate:

- Having made a significant contribution to knowledge and
- Having demonstrated an understanding of the relationship of the investigations undertaken to a wider field of knowledge

These outcomes should be assessed in the context of what might reasonably be expected within the timeframe of three to four years of full-time study (or part-time equivalent).

A professional doctorate program involves the preparation and presentation of a portfolio which will include advanced study reports for units of coursework undertaken by the candidate (including a statement of results) and a research component which may take the form of a single research report or a bound series of research reports accompanied by an exegesis.

The following questions have been developed to assist examiners in determining if a candidate has met the above criteria and also to provide points of reference for their written report. The questions are grouped under sections common to many theses, but should be interpreted, and used, flexibly to cater for any differences between areas of study and to allow for appropriately novel approaches.

Introduction

- Has the candidate established a research question of significance? (Has the question been set in an appropriate professional/clinical setting?)
- Has the candidate demonstrated the ability to clearly conceptualise and articulate the research objectives and associated hypotheses?
- Has the candidate demonstrated a detailed, critical and comprehensive knowledge/understanding of the literature and the theoretical constructs pertinent to the stated research objectives?
- Is the literature analysed within an overall conceptual framework and is it made clear where and how the stated research objectives reside within the wider field(s) of study?
- Has the candidate clearly enunciated how their research will make a significant contribution to knowledge?

Methodology

- Are the methodologies used appropriate to the research topic and is their use properly justified?
- Is there sufficient evidence of the candidate's mastery of the techniques that the methodologies require and utilize?

Results

- Are the results connected in a direct and obvious way to the stated research objectives/questions?
- Are the results presented clearly and logically and with appropriate illustration?
- Were the results critically analysed in the context of any limitation that might characterise the methodologies used?
- Did surprising results receive adequate explanation?
- Were justifiable conclusions drawn?

Discussion

- Does the candidate make clear what new findings have been made?
- Are new findings placed in the context of previous research with an indication of the extent to which that research is supported or contradicted?
- Has the candidate made a significant contribution to knowledge?
- Has the candidate demonstrated an understanding of the relationship of their research to a wider field of knowledge?
- What new opportunities for further research do the findings reveal?

Presentation

- Is the research report coherent and well structured?
- Does the research report exhibit appropriate standards of grammar, spelling, punctuation, clarity and presentation?
- Are citations and references adequate and accurate?

Publication

- Does the research report contain material of publishable quality?

Series of research reports accompanied by an exegesis

In some instances an approved Professional Doctorate program will comprise a series of research reports and an exegesis. The research reports and exegesis will satisfy the assessment criteria for a single report, outlined above, and in addition be subject to the following questions.

Series of research reports

- Is there a systematic line of enquiry and investigation?
- Is there a demonstrable and essential link with the exegesis?

Exegesis

- Is there a demonstrable and essential link with the series of research reports?
- Is there an elaboration of the line of enquiry and investigation pursued in preparation of the series of research reports?
- Is there a commentary on individual research reports and their overall relationship?