



## University of Ballarat

### Guidelines for the Examination of Masters Theses

Regulation 5.1 PART C – Masters Degree by Research states the degree will be awarded on the basis of a candidate:

- Having demonstrated command of the knowledge and skills pertinent to the area of investigation and
- Having demonstrated a critical appreciation and understanding of the relationship of his or own work to that of others

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

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 demonstrated the ability to clearly conceptualise and articulate the research objectives and associated hypotheses?
- Has the candidate demonstrated a detailed, critical and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the literature pertinent to the area of investigation?
- 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?

#### **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?
- Does the candidate adequately demonstrate a critical appreciation and understanding of the relationship of their work to that of others?

### **Presentation**

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

### **Practical work(s) accompanied by an exegesis**

In some instances an approved Masters program will comprise practical works and an exegesis.

The practical work(s) might comprise a major work or collection of works such as, but not limited to, a visual presentation, a literary production or a computer software development.

### Practical work(s)

- Is there a systematic line of enquiry?
- Is there a demonstrable and essential link with the exegesis?
- Does the candidate demonstrate appropriate technical capabilities?
- Is the work sufficiently complex?
- Has the work(s) been presented in a form suitable for examination?

### Exegesis

In addition to the above, has the candidate:

- Developed a demonstrable and essential link with the practical work(s)?
- Elaborated on the line of enquiry and investigation pursued in preparation of the practical work(s)?
- Offered a commentary on individual practical works and their overall relationship?