



Guidelines for the Examination of Doctor of Philosophy

Research & Graduate Studies Office

Regulation 5.1 PART B – The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy states that the degree will be awarded on the basis of a candidate:

- Having made a substantial 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).

The following questions relate to sections that most commonly occur in theses. While not intended to be constraining, these questions, can assist in determining if a candidate has met the above criteria and also provide a framework for a written report on the thesis.

Introduction

- Has the candidate established a research question of significance?
- 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 the nature and extent of their supposed original and significant contributions to the body of 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?

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Page 1 of 2

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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 discuss the extent to which their findings constitute a significant contribution to knowledge?
- What new opportunities for further research do the findings reveal?

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?

Publication

- Does the thesis contain material of publishable quality?

Practical work(s) accompanied by an exegesis

In some instances an approved Doctor of Philosophy 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 questions relating to a thesis:

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

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Page 2 of 2