



Guidelines for the Examination of Professional Doctorates

Research & Graduate Studies Office

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, while not intended to be constraining, can be asked in relation to sections of a single research report to assist in determining if a candidate has met the above criteria and to provide a framework for a written report on the research component of the portfolio.

Introduction

- Has the candidate established a field-based research question of significance (i.e. a question set in an appropriate professional or clinical setting in the field or workplace)?
- 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?

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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 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 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?

Practical work(s) accompanied by an exegesis

- 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?

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