

THESIS BY CREATIVE WORKS GUIDELINES

1. Introduction

A thesis by creative works means 'original work' which may include one or more of the following: a multimedia or digital work, a film, an exhibition, a performance, a musical composition, a novel, a play, a series of poems, creative art work or other works considered acceptable by the relevant faculty.

QUT's [Doctor of Philosophy Course Regulations](#) (Section 8.11) states:

Creative Works

8.11 A PhD may be awarded on the basis of the submission by Creative Works which has been indicated in the Stage 2 submission. In the case of a thesis submitted in the area of artistic practice, presentation may be in one of two forms: a theoretical thesis or artwork and exegesis. Guidelines have been approved by the Research Degrees Committee which governs the format and presentation requirements of the PhD by Creative Works.

Candidates considering preparing a Thesis by Creative Work should refer to the PhD Course Regulations and these associated guidelines. This provides details of requirements relating to the presentation of a Thesis by Creative Works.

QUT permits theses by creative works which can be presented as a theoretical thesis or as a creative work and exegesis. The option of presenting a Thesis by Creative Works is intended to accommodate the range of work that may be presented in the area of artistic practice.

2. The Creative Work

The creative work may be in the form of exhibition, performance, literary work, film, CD Rom or other approved format. The creative work and exegesis will be examined as an integrated whole. The creative work should provide a coherent demonstration that the candidate has reached an appropriate doctoral standard in the research and has made a significant and original contribution to knowledge in the area. The exegesis should describe the research process and elaborate, elucidate and place in context the creative practice undertaken. In the case of visual or performing arts, the examiners will attend the exhibition/performance, at which time they will be given a copy of the draft exegesis in temporary binding.

Early in candidature, prior to Stage 2 milestone, the supervisory team and faculty as required, must engage with the candidate to discuss and agree upon the creative and exegetical components of the thesis, ensuring the exegesis is sufficient to argue for an original and substantial contribution to knowledge, the creative work is doctoral in nature and the overall size* and scope of the thesis is acceptable for examination. These determinations should inform the Stage 2 and subsequent milestones.

Candidates should signal in their Stage 2 submission if they are intending to present a thesis by creative work in order to receive Research Degrees Committee approval.

3. The Exegesis

The role of the exegesis is to present the research framework: the key questions, the theories, the disciplinary and wider contexts of the project. These things may not necessarily be evident to the

examiner or viewer in the creative work itself. The exegesis serves to flesh these out, and to make them explicit. In the exegesis, the candidate critically examines their creative product in the light of contemporary theory and practice.

Key points regarding the exegesis are:

- The examiners will attend the exhibition/performance, at which time they will be given a copy of the draft exegesis in temporary binding. A final copy of the exegesis will usually be provided to the examiners within three to four months of their viewing the artwork.
- The exegesis is required to describe the research process and elaborate, elucidate and place in context the artistic practice undertaken.
- The exegesis can be up to 50,000 words*.

Structure:

In consultation with their supervisory team, candidates need to determine the depth and breadth of the theory sections of their exegesis. As an example, your exegesis may contain:

- a) Introduction – outline of the work you are writing about why it is important to you and/or audiences and how it provides an original and substantial contribution to knowledge;
- b) Section on the relationship of the form, content and material to the purpose and function of the work. The relationship between ideas and practical considerations should be included. Theoretical concepts will inform this section.
- c) Section on the context of the creative work, including physical, artistic, historical, social and theoretical contexts.
- d) Extensive section which discusses the project or creative work in detail, closely analysing each aspect of the work in relation to the ideas and theories express in sections b) and c);
- e) Literature review (if it has not been provided within the contextual section);
- f) Conclusion.

Note that the theoretical background should explain and examine the practice rather than driving it.

4. Examination

The creative work and the exegesis will not be examined separately but as an integrated whole constituting the original and substantial contribution to knowledge required from doctoral candidates.

In order to pass the examination, and thus qualify as part of the basis for the award of the PhD degree, the creative work must have the following attributes:

- it demonstrates a professional level of familiarity with and understanding of contemporary work in the field;
- it demonstrates a comprehensive investigation of the artistic form and creative content;
- the methods and techniques applied in the execution of the work are appropriate to the subject matter and are original and/or aesthetically effective;
- the creative work is presented in a professional manner;
- the creative work demonstrates a high standard of literary, visual, digital, musical or performance literacy and quality;
- the research question/s has/have been identified and tested through the creative work;
- the documentation of the work (including catalogue/program material where appropriate) is sufficiently thorough and is of a standard that will ensure the work provides a reference for subsequent researchers;

- the creative work and the exegesis together constitute a substantive original contribution to knowledge in the subject area with which it deals;
- there is an appropriate and substantiated interface between the creative work and the exegesis.

Examiners are advised that they may ask for creative works to be represented or re-documented if they do not meet the above criteria.

5. Role of the Supervisory team and Postgraduate Coordinator

The supervisory team is asked to engage in discussion with the candidate to identify their suitability to undertake a Thesis by Creative Works in light of the criteria raised above, including the fit of:

- the candidate's longer term goals and research skills;
- thesis by creative works with the expectations of potential examiners in the discipline;
- the overall contribution of the candidate in light of their contribution to the artistic practice and in line with Code of Conduct requirements.

They are asked to support the candidate in:

- establishing a reasonable timeline in light of timelines and deadlines;
- preparing a dissemination plan and other documentation to ensure co-authorship arrangements are in place (if relevant) and are consistent with Thesis by Creative Works requirements and QUT's Code of Conduct for Research;
- having clarity about their proposed contribution to knowledge and how their role as an author of creative works will support them arguing for this contribution in their thesis.

The Postgraduate Coordinator may advise the student and/or supervisory team on the requirements for creative works and support them in finding suitable resources to assist them in preparing a reasonable research plan incorporating these requirements. This should be done prior to approving a candidate to undertake a Thesis by Creative Works through the Stage 2 process. The progress of the creative work may need to be monitored and perhaps considered further at Confirmation or at other milestones. The Postgraduate Coordinator may also assist in identifying creative works that are of a high quality standard, appropriate to PhD-level research and in determining the level of contribution by the candidate to the individual work and the appropriate authorship in line with the Code of Conduct for Research.

6. Faculty Approved Guidelines

Students are required to submit documents for milestone events, consistent with other PhD candidates.

QUT faculties have the capacity to vary the university level requirements for Thesis by Creative Works. Variations are usually due to discipline expectations. However, they must be in accordance with the overarching policy (MOPP D/5.3, D/2.6) and the guidelines above and are registered with the Research Degrees Committee.

Candidates are encouraged to contact the respective faculty research office to obtain a copy of the faculty guidelines.

7. Useful Resources

- [QUT PhD Course Regulations](#)
- QUT Copyright Guide - <https://www.student.qut.edu.au/research/policies-and-procedures>
- QUT's Code of Conduct for Research - http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/D/D_02_06.jsp
- Good Practice guidelines for Higher Degree Research Studies and Supervision - <https://www.student.qut.edu.au/research/policies-and-procedures>
- QUT ePrints - <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/>

Approval & modification history

DATE	AUTHORITY	DETAILS
06 June 2016	QUT Research Degrees Committee	Reviewed. Deletion of reference to the Creative Industries Faculty published Guidelines on the Preparation of Milestone Documents for Thesis by Creative Works and updated links
3 November 2014	QUT Research Degrees Committee	Regular review. Guidelines to provide information and guidance to all faculties. Addition of Supervisory role & structure of exegesis.

Responsible Officer: Secretary, Research Degrees Committee