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## SUMMARY of THESIS GUIDELINES

### INTRODUCTION

QUT offers three presentation options for the PhD thesis:

- Traditional Monograph
- Thesis by Published Papers
- Thesis by Creative Works

Policy requirements around the above are provided in the [MOPP \(Section D/5.3\)](#) and [PhD Course Regulations](#). The 'Requirements for Presentation of Thesis' document details the format required for the thesis at lodgement and submission. The purpose of this document is to summarise for PhD students and their supervisors some basic characteristics of the three PhD thesis types.

All theses, regardless of format, have a common goal: to demonstrate to examiners that the thesis work makes an appropriate contribution to knowledge within the PhD candidate's chosen field of study and to provide evidence of the quality of the student's understanding and research work. The alternatives to the Traditional Thesis acknowledge the relevance of the thesis for enhancement of skills in writing published papers and developing creative works.

### GENERAL GUIDE

Regardless which of the formats are used to present the thesis, the following general guidelines apply.

Theses must be:

- Less than 100,000 words.
- In English unless granted permission by the Research Degrees Committee.
- An individual contribution (if part of a research team individual contribution must be indicated).
- Original work. Work for which another degree or diploma has been awarded cannot be presented. However, extracts of such work can be included if they do not constitute more than 10% of the thesis.
- An original contribution to knowledge or an original application of existing knowledge.
- Able to demonstrate a familiarity with the relevant literature and have reviewed it critically.
- Able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of theoretical content of the work undertaken.
- Presented logically and concisely.

### THESIS BY PUBLISHED PAPER

#### **Time to Publication**

The PhD Course Regulations state:

*8.10 A PhD may be awarded on the basis of the submission of published papers, normally indicated in the Stage 2 submission. QUT permits the presentation of theses where such papers have been published, accepted or submitted during the period of candidature; and where the quality of such papers is approved by the faculty and Research Degrees Committee to be appropriate to PhD-level research. [Guidelines](#) have been approved by the Research Degrees Committee which governs the format and presentation requirements of PhD theses by Published Papers.*

Faculty approval of the publication or conference as the location for the publication is required. Advice from faculty on approved publications should be sought by the student. Be aware that the review process for some journals/conferences may be 6 months or more. (Note: students can determine this for journals of interest by comparing the date of first submittal with the date of acceptance, which frequently appear as a footnote on the published paper.) This lag time, coupled with the known timeframes for the research study, may make it difficult for students to have papers accepted for publication by the completion of candidature. Establishing a realistic timeline for submission of publications accounting for (a) likely review time and (b) anticipated lodgement of examination is critical in confirming that the Thesis by Published Paper option is viable for individual candidatures based on research design and disciplinary constraints.

The decision regarding thesis format must be made in consultation with the Principal Supervisor, as there are a number of issues that potentially impact on the feasibility of the different approaches. Students are therefore encouraged to consider thesis format relatively early (probably by Confirmation) in order to ensure that timing implications are taken into account. The Faculty and the Schools as well as the Eprints repository will hold examples of different types of theses, including variations on the Traditional Thesis as available, and students are encouraged to review these, and to discuss with peers and other academic staff who have had experience with the various formats.

#### **Authorship**

Where the papers have multiple authorship, the candidate must be principal author on at least two of the three papers and have written permission of the co-authors.

It is vital that early in candidature a dissemination plan is set in place which details likely authors as well as likely publications and timelines for submission. Each co-author must sign a 'Statement of Co-authorship' which simultaneously details the contribution made by each author and their agreement that the publication appear as part of a Thesis by Published Paper. Detailing other authors' contributions is vital to ensuring the examiner is able to clearly identify the contribution of the candidate. The agreement of co-authors for the publication to appear as part of the thesis is also vital as the thesis cannot progress to finalisation without this agreement. Early sign off on this document is recommended to avoid any potential confusion or conflict.

#### **Cumulative Effect**

The conclusion for a thesis by published papers establishes the cumulative effect of the papers, the significance of the findings and the knowledge claim in the thesis.

It is important to appreciate that Thesis by Published Paper is more than a minimum of three publications bound together as a single document. While it is anticipated examiners will be reassured by the quality of publications and related refereeing processes, the examiner assessment of the

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thesis involves deliberations that will differ from those of reviewers of the individual published papers. The Candidate must, through the incorporation as required of the abstract, literature review, linking sections and conclusion, argue for the cumulative effect of the papers in demonstrating their significant and original contribution to knowledge.

### COMMON TO THESIS BY PUBLISHED PAPER & TRADITIONAL THESIS

The three thesis types differ with respect to their treatment of the Methods and Results sections of the thesis, but there are also some modifications within other sections as well. The common sections, including relevant modifications, are outlined below.

#### Title Page

The front page should include the full title of the thesis, year, name and degrees of the candidate, the Centre where the thesis was submitted and the academic qualifications for which the thesis is submitted.

#### Abstract and key words

The abstract summarises the main findings and demonstrates a significant contribution to knowledge. For the Thesis by Published Papers or Manuscript models, the main findings of each paper/manuscript are outlined and the significance of the combined works should be indicated. Key words are used for cataloguing purposes; appropriate options and phrasing can be obtained by consulting relevant literature databases (e.g., MEDLINE, *Index Medicus*, etc.).

#### Table of contents

This should include the titles of the chapters and their sub-headings, lists of figures and tables.

#### Statement of original authorship

An example is provided in the Requirements for Presenting Theses at the first web-site above.

#### Introduction

The introduction should outline the research problem, overall study objectives and the specific aims of the study. For Thesis by Published Papers, there should be an account of how the papers or manuscripts are inter-related in order to provide the reader with a sense of continuity or cohesiveness for the entire thesis.

#### Literature review

The literature review is designed to be comprehensive and to discuss the significance of the project aims, provide a critical review of the relevant literature, identify knowledge gaps and address the relationship of the literature to the research program. In order to satisfy these criteria, this chapter in the Thesis by Published Papers will replicate some of the literature that subsequently gets cited in the individual papers/manuscripts.

#### Methods and Results chapters are discussed under specific requirements for each type of thesis. Discussion

This section of the Traditional Thesis discusses the significance of the research findings, critical issues, problems encountered and future directions of research and/or health policy. For the Thesis by Published Papers, the discussion deals with the synthesis of ideas and main features linking the various papers/manuscripts. It should be an overarching discussion which extends beyond the discussion sections that are found in individual papers/manuscripts.

#### Appendices

Appendices include materials such as tools, consent and data collection forms, and/or additional detailed results that are referred to in the main body of the thesis but are not necessary for the examiner to read to understand the content of the thesis.

#### References

References should be cited following the publication practice that is usual to a specific discipline if approved by the Principal Supervisor.

### SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VARIOUS MODELS OF THESIS

#### Traditional Thesis

- The examiners will be sent information explaining how the thesis should be marked.
- Subject matter must be closely related and form a cohesive narrative.
- Scope of work must be sufficient for the award of a PhD degree; this is guided by advice of the supervisor(s) and review by relevant Faculty and University Committees.

#### **Methodology/Methods chapter(s)**

This chapter discusses the methodological issues underpinning the research project and the specific methods undertaken for the various parts of the research project. If original methodological work is done, e.g., development of specific questionnaire(s) or particular measurement protocols, description of this work may require its own chapter, particularly if extensive validation activities need to be documented.

#### **Results chapter(s)**

This section may take the form of one or more chapters detailing the results of analyses undertaken as part of the research and should include relevant tables and figures for best presentation of the data.

#### **Thesis by Published paper**

- The examiners will be sent information explaining this format and how the thesis should be marked.
- Subject matter must be closely related and form a cohesive narrative; it is not acceptable to combine manuscripts on unrelated or loosely related topics.
- Must contain a minimum of three papers and at least one paper must be published, accepted or undergoing revision following refereeing (see <http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/Appendix/appendix09.jsp#14%20Presentation%20of%20PhD%20Theses> for more detail).
- The PhD candidate must be the principal author on at least two papers and have written permission from the co- authors to include the paper in the thesis (See Statement of Contribution from Co-Authors form for more information).

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### Methodology/Methods chapter

This is optional in this thesis model, as it is assumed that methods are adequately described in papers. However, if this is not the case, an additional chapter can be added.

### Published papers and manuscript chapters (in lieu of Results chapters)

Each paper accepted for publication and/or submitted or prepared manuscripts must be presented as an individual chapter. This chapter should commence with a clear statement of the contribution made by each author. The format of the chapter should follow relevant guidelines, depending on the nature of the paper (i.e., data paper, case study, literature review, report of methodological development, etc). The most common format will be a data paper and generally will contain sections entitled: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion. There may be some variation on these, depending on the topic and/or the journal. Literature reviews and other formats intended for publication may be included in the thesis if they are strategically justifiable and after gaining the approval of the Principal Supervisor. It is unlikely that more than one of the three papers will take this format.

Journals recognised for the DEEWR publication collection and/or the ERA process are likely to be considered by the faculty as acceptable as national or international peer-reviewed journals for the purposes of Thesis by Published Paper. It is recommended that the candidate discuss with the Supervisor Team and seek approval of publications from the School or Faculty Postgraduate Studies Coordinator and/or the Chair of the Faculty Research Committee. Details of the journal to be discussed include the targeted audience, information for contributors, statement of the refereed status of the paper, membership of the editorial board, average time from submission to publication and the impact factor.

Manuscripts that have been rejected by a journal must not be included unless they have been substantially rewritten to address the comments of the referees unless this rejection occurs after the thesis has been submitted and the candidate has graduated. The thesis must be accompanied by a certificate endorsed by the Principal Supervisor that original correspondence from the editors has been sighted and that the editorial advice has been followed.

## THESIS BY CREATIVE WORKS (Creative Industries faculty)

Students from the Creative Industries faculty may in consultation with their supervisory team identify that they wish to complete a Thesis by Creative Works. This involves production of a defined creative work (i.e., art exhibition, book, film, musical composition) as well as an exegesis. In consultation with the Creative Industries faculty, students may negotiate the percentage component of their thesis which will be creative work and exegesis. The process of presenting the creative work to examiners will also be negotiated based on the nature of the work to be produced and any timing or resourcing constraints.

### As noted in the PhD Course Regulations:

*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.*

### Examination of a Creative Work Other Than a Printed Thesis

Where other materials are to be examined, such as in the areas of visual, performing, literary or media arts, the candidate must seek approval from Research Degrees Committee for the form and presentation of the thesis at the time of the Stage 2 application for entry to the PhD program.

Artistic practice may be examined by a theoretical thesis or by artwork and exegesis. The artwork 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.

A theoretical thesis is a written document which would conform in all respects to the remainder of this policy.

Studio-based inquiry may result in a thesis presented by artwork and exegesis. The artwork should be the research outcome, while the exegesis should describe the research process and elaborate, elucidate and place in context the artistic practice undertaken.

The exegesis would normally not exceed 50,000 words and would conform in all respects to the remainder of this policy. It should also contain a description of the form and presentation of the artistic practice which constitutes the remainder of the thesis.

The exegesis is the tool employed by the Practice led researcher for elaborating upon their creative work, to set their work in context and reflect on their practice. The examiner of a practice-led exegesis will be looking to be informed about:

- what was the motivation behind the topic or the project;
- the research process used to develop or inform practice;
- scholarly and artistic works that has informed practice presented as part of the literature review;
- a clear indication of how the research process informed and influenced the creative practice and work, and
- as with other theses it is a requirement that any written work be clear, coherent, well structured and well edited and referenced using the Harvard system.

For further advice please consult with the Creative Industries Faculty Research Office.

### COPYRIGHT ISSUES

Please see the following links for information relating to copyright, intellectual property, data management and authorship of publications:

QUT Copyright guide: <http://www.tils.qut.edu.au/copyrightguide/>

Code of Conduct for Research: [http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/D/D\\_02\\_06.jsp](http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/D/D_02_06.jsp)

Statement of Contribution from Co Authors: [http://www.qut.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/36033/statement-of-co-author-contribution.pdf](http://www.qut.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0015/36033/statement-of-co-author-contribution.pdf)

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**SUMMARY**

Early in the candidature, students should discuss with the Supervisory Team the most appropriate model for presenting their PhD thesis. The Thesis by Published Paper model may be more suitable for students who have previous publication success, have several smaller components to the overall research study and can publish as they go. For students with one main study and an extended data collection period, the Traditional Monograph may be more appropriate. It is recommended that students review examples of the two different models of thesis presentation and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each with their supervisor team prior to making a decision.

**COMPARISON OF MODELS FOR PRESENTING THESES**

| <b>COMMON TO ALL MODELS</b>  |                                  |  |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Title page<br>Abstract and key words<br>Table of contents<br>Statement of original authorship<br>Introduction<br>Literature review |                                  |  |
| <b>THESIS BY PUBLICATION</b>   | <b>TRADITIONAL THESIS</b>        | <b>CREATIVE WORKS</b>  |
| Optional methods chapter/s<br>Published papers and submitted manuscripts<br>General discussion                                     | Methods<br>Results<br>Discussion | The Creative Work  |
|  |                                  | The exegesis to explain:<br>(1) the significance of the work<br>(2) the research process; and<br>(3) the impact of the research process on the creative work and practitioner. |
| Appendices<br>References   |                                  |  |