

Guidance for examiners of Higher Degree by Research theses incorporating creative production or creative works

Where a thesis that incorporates a creative production or creative works (installation, exhibition, performance) is produced, the candidate will also provide an exegetical component of at least 10,000 words for Masters by Research or 30,000 words for PhD that operates in a symbiotic relationship with the creative work. The academic rigour of the exegesis is critical to determining whether the thesis meets the requirements of the research degree.

The creative thesis is expected to show evidence that the candidate is fluent in creative practice and in the theoretical discourse of the area. The creative component should demonstrate a sophisticated and innovative approach to the medium, as well as strong technical and professional qualities. The exegesis should provide a theoretical foundation which complements and grounds the creative work, and should analyse, critically annotate and/or reflect on the creative component.

The examiners are asked to complete their examination of the thesis as a whole, including the written work, creative component and other supporting documentation, and prepare their examination reports based on the following criteria.

A thesis submitted for examination for a **Doctor of Philosophy** degree, incorporating creative production or creative work should:

- a. make a distinct and significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the area with which it deals and/or to the application of knowledge to the analysis of problems in the study area;
- b. afford evidence of originality shown either by the discovery of new knowledge or by the exercise of independent critical and creative thinking;
- c. contain a substantial amount of material suitable for publication and/or exhibition;
- d. demonstrate that the creative and exegetical components are in a symbiotic relationship, in so far as the theory informs practice and vice versa; and
- e. is well ordered and satisfactory in its presentation.

A thesis submitted for examination for a **Master by Research** degree, incorporating creative production or creative work should:

- a. display a sound knowledge of the field of the thesis including recent developments in that field;
- b. demonstrate analytical, technical and creative skills of a high order;
- c. interpret and transmit knowledge, skills and ideas in the field of study;
- d. contain material suitable for publication and/or exhibition either in its own right or in part;
- e. demonstrate that the creative and exegetical components are in a symbiotic relationship, in so far as the theory informs practice and vice versa; and
- f. is well ordered and satisfactory in its presentation.

Examination checklist

Examiners of theses incorporating creative production or creative works may like to consider the following:

- Does it offer an original contribution to knowledge in the field?
- Does the thesis satisfy external needs as well as personal outcomes (that is, advances knowledge and not just practice)?
- Is the work scholarly, coherent and rigorous?
- Is there a thorough contextual review that accounts for key works in the same art form and topic area?
- Does the artwork show innovation, a line of argument, technical expertise?
- Is there a synthesis between the artwork and the essay?
- Does the essay use a vocabulary appropriate to the art form?
- Is the written work free of typographical and grammatical errors?¹

¹ Webb, Brien & Burr (2012). *Examining Doctorates in the Creative Arts: A Guide*, AAWP Publishing, Canberra.