

Schedule 2: Graduate Research Thesis Examination Criteria

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Schedule is to specify the criteria that examiners must use in the examination of graduate research thesis components.

Section 2 - Schedule

(2) Examiners are required to address the following criteria in their assessment of a Doctoral thesis, that it:

- a. forms a 'distinct' contribution to the knowledge of the subject area;
- b. affords evidence of originality through the discovery of new facts or by the exercise of independent critical thought;
- c. is satisfactory as regards its literary presentation; and
- d. contains a substantial amount of material suitable for publication.

(3) In the case of a creative Doctoral thesis, examiners are required to address that:

- a. the dissertation and creative components are appropriately linked;
- b. the creative component is proficient in its handling of the chosen medium and/or genre, and affords evidence of substantial originality in conception and/or execution; and
- c. both components are satisfactory as regards its literary presentation.

(4) Examiners are required to address the following criteria in the assessment of a research Master of Philosophy thesis, that it:

- a. makes a contribution to the knowledge of the subject area by the presentation of new facts;
- b. demonstrates independent critical ability to evaluate existing material in a new light; and
- c. is satisfactory as regards its literary presentation.

(5) In the case of a creative Master of Philosophy thesis, examiners are required to address that:

- a. the dissertation and creative components are appropriately linked;
- b. the creative component is proficient in its handling of the chosen medium and/or genre, and affords evidence of substantial originality in conception and/or execution; and

c. both components are satisfactory as regards its literary presentation.

(6) Examiners are required to address the following criteria in the assessment of a Master of Research thesis, that:

- a. it has adequately delineated the topic of concern by critically reflecting on current research in the relevant field;
- b. the research undertaken produces empirical outcomes or analytical evaluations that are clearly justified and that respond to or reflect on the relevant literature;
- c. in the case of creative theses, the creative component is able to sustain critical scrutiny; and
- d. it is satisfactory as regards its literary presentation.

(7) Additionally Master of Research thesis examiners are asked to provide a percentage score for each thesis, using the following bands and criteria:

85-100%

(8) A thesis at this level:

- a. clearly and fully outlines its research topic and objectives, explaining and justifying the project in relation to key developments in the field and recent literature;
- b. is clearly and cogently structured and well-written, and conforms to disciplinary conventions in terms of its presentation;
- c. draws clear and fully-supported conclusions from the research that allow for critical reflection on the research question, the current status of related research and possible future directions for research; and
- d. clearly and fully outlines and explains the research undertaken, in terms of the methodology chosen and why it was chosen in preference to alternatives.

(9) A student producing work of this quality is capable of going on to original and innovative research and is strongly suited for enrolment in a PhD.

75-84%

(10) A thesis at this level:

- a. provides a good account of the research objectives in relation to developments in the field and recent literature;
- b. explains the research undertaken and why a certain methodology was chosen as appropriate;
- c. draws conclusions that are broadly supported by the research, and that respond clearly to the research question; and
- d. is clearly structured and written, and conforms to disciplinary conventions in terms of its presentation.

(11) A student producing work of this quality is capable of undertaking a PhD.

65-74%

(12) A thesis at this level:

- a. has a clear research objective informed by developments in the field and recent literature;
- b. explains its methodology clearly;
- c. relates its conclusions clearly to the research undertaken; and
- d. is adequately written, structured and presented.

(13) A student working at this level is capable of graduate research, but not yet at doctoral level.

50-64%

(14) A thesis at this level:

- a. identifies its research objective;
- b. has a clear methodology;
- c. draws conclusions based on the research undertaken; and
- d. is written and presented adequately.

(15) A student working at this level is not capable of further graduate research.

Below 50%

(16) The thesis does not meet the standard for the award of the degree.

(17) Examiners undertaking the examination of a revised MRes thesis will not be required to provide a percentage score for the thesis.

Status and Details

Enquiries Contact	Pro Vice-Chancellor, Graduate Research
Responsible Officer	Pro Vice-Chancellor, Graduate Research
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Documents Superseded by this Schedule	GR Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy approved 21 November 2023
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