

# Higher Degree by Research Policy Schedule 3 - Requirements for Thesis

## Overview of a Higher Degree by Research Thesis

- (1) The major output of a Higher Degree by Research program is the examinable work which will be in the form of a thesis. The exact nature and format of the examinable work may vary with research discipline and the specific Higher Degree by Research program requirements. The production of an appropriate examinable work is the culmination of a Higher Degree by Research candidature and provides documentation of the research undertaken. The thesis is the complete body of examinable work submitted by a student for examination for a Higher Degree by Research. The examinable work must be the candidate's own account of the work undertaken.
- (2) The thesis must constitute an accurate account of original and significant research on an approved topic and must relate to the associated research proposal. Through presentation of this work in a thesis, the candidate must demonstrate advanced theoretical and methodological knowledge and that the research makes an original and significant contribution to knowledge or understanding.

## Thesis Format

### Doctor of Philosophy or Master by Research

- (3) A thesis may consist wholly of written works or be a combination of written and non-written works. Regardless of the nature of the examinable work, the thesis must contain a written component generally in the form of one or more critical hypotheses that investigate the subject of the thesis in the relevant body of knowledge.
- (4) Where the written component constitutes the whole thesis, the thesis can be either a written report presented as typescript or a series of publications or a combination of the two.
- (5) Where a series of publications is presented constituting the main body of the thesis, the thesis is termed a "Thesis by Publication" and should follow the guidelines 9 - 21.
- (6) Candidates who are considering including published work in their thesis need to ensure publisher's agreements do not preclude the inclusion of the published work in their thesis.
- (7) A thesis may also contain:
  - a. Artistic or creative works (such as an exhibition, performance, novel, film, video);
  - b. Software;
  - c. Computer code;
  - d. Models which must be documented or recorded in a way sufficient for the purpose of assessment;
  - e. Appendices.
- (8) Where a thesis contains non-written components such as those above, the work(s) presented should be supported by a written component in the form of a piece of critical writing or exegesis. This written component should detail the development of the non-written component over the duration of the course of study and how the work addresses the objectives of the

approved research project. It should also provide the broad context for the ideas and precedents which inform the development of the research program.

(9) A 'Thesis by Publication' will contain a series of the candidate's manuscripts that have been published, have been submitted for publication and/or have been prepared in order to be submitted for publication, or a combination of any of the above. These will constitute the core body of the thesis incorporating the original research created during the higher degree studies.

(10) In addition to the published papers there must be a comprehensive explanatory introduction and a final review to link the papers and to establish the broader academic context. Each paper also needs a brief introduction to place the work in the context of the whole thesis.

(11) Regardless of the nature of the publications included in a Thesis by Publication, the thesis should constitute an integrated account that incorporates:

- a. an introduction to the field of study and the hypothesis or research questions, how these are addressed through the ensuing chapters, and a general account of the theory and methodological components of the research where these components may be distributed across separate papers/chapters;
- b. linking text to establish the relationship between one chapter and the next, such as through a foreword or introduction to each chapter;
- c. a conclusion drawing together the published papers or works in a cohesive manner, and addresses how the individual publications link to the theory and methodology adopted and evaluate the contribution that the research in the submitted publications makes to the advancement of the research area;
- d. further discussions if necessary where journal restrictions have limited the opportunity to fully expound on the findings and their significance/shortcomings.

(12) Papers included in the thesis should be presented as individual chapters, or in cases where publications are closely linked papers may be combined into a single chapter. Papers in the categories below may be included in the thesis:

- a. Published papers;
- b. Manuscripts accepted for publication;
- c. Manuscripts submitted and under review by referees;
- d. Manuscripts under revision following referees' reports;
- e. Manuscripts in preparation for submission.

(13) Unless otherwise approved by the Research Committee, a thesis by publication consists primarily of published papers and manuscripts accepted for publication, and not primarily of manuscripts in preparation, submitted and under review by referees or manuscripts under revision following referees' reports.

(14) A Thesis by Publication may also include video recordings, film or other works of visual or sonic arts, computer software, digital material or other non-written material for which approval has been given for submission in alternative format.

(15) The papers must have been researched and written during the course of the candidature.

(16) The scope and quality of a Thesis by Publication is commensurate with the contribution to knowledge expected of a candidate for the relevant degree. The numbers of papers that constitute this requirement may vary between a single long monograph to four to five peer-reviewed papers.

(17) Following submission of the thesis the standard CSU examination procedures will apply.

(18) Students submitting by publication will normally obtain endorsement from their supervisory panel about the format of their thesis more than 12 months prior to submission, and no later than six months prior to submission. In considering the request the supervisory panel provides the student with discipline-specific guidance on the appropriate quantity and quality of papers for submission as a thesis, as well as practical guidance about realistic peer-review and publication timeframes in their discipline.

## **Thesis by Publication Format**

- (19) A thesis by publication must include a signed declaration that specifies:
- a. title, authorship and publication outlet of each paper;
  - b. the current status of each paper (In press, Accepted, Under Review, In preparation);
  - c. the extent of the contribution of the candidate to the research and the authorship of each paper. For each paper where the candidate is not the sole author, either:
    - i. The collaborating authors sign the declaration; or
    - ii. A senior author signs the declaration on behalf of the collaborating authors.
- (20) The thesis may also include relevant appendices containing additional papers that are not related to the main thrust of the thesis, raw data, programs, questionnaires and other material as deemed appropriate for each discipline.
- (21) The thesis is otherwise formatted as described in this schedule, although journal formatting can be preserved for appropriate sections.

## **Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication**

- (22) Where a series of prior publications or works together with a significant integrating essay is presented in the thesis, the thesis is termed a "Thesis by Prior Publication". A thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication should:
- a. incorporate an approved collection of prior publications and an integrating essay of a substantive nature which may involve additional introductory and concluding chapters;
  - b. contain published works which must have been accessible within the public domain and have undergone a refereed or substantive review process;
  - c. include an integrating essay that:
    - i. sets out the way the works submitted represent an original and significant contribution to knowledge in the candidate's discipline or field;
    - ii. contains a substantial theoretical component relevant to the candidate's discipline or field.

## **Language and Presentation**

- (23) The language of expression and analysis must be English and reach a satisfactory standard of literary presentation. In exceptional circumstances, on the recommendation of the Faculty, the Research Committee may approve a thesis to be written in another language.

## **Previous Work**

- (24) A candidate may not submit as the main content of the thesis any work or material which has been previously submitted for any degree, but may incorporate such work or material in the thesis if the candidate specifies the work or material which has been so incorporated and if it does not form part of the main content of the thesis.

## Thesis Length

- (25) The stated maximum length for a thesis is exclusive of appendices and references.
- (26) The maximum length for a Doctor of Philosophy thesis shall be 100,000 words.
- (27) The maximum length for a Research Professional Doctoral thesis shall be 60,000 words.
- (28) The maximum length for a Master by Research thesis shall be 50,000 words.
- (29) The maximum length of the written documentation that is presented to support the body of work(s) for a Higher Degree by Research program shall be:
  - a. 50,000 words for a Doctor of Philosophy;
  - b. 30,000 words for a Research Professional Doctorate;
  - c. 30,000 words for a Master by Research.
  
- (30) For a Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication thesis the maximum length for the integrating essay or additional chapters shall be 20,000 words.
- (31) The stated maximum lengths for a thesis may only be altered with the approval of the Research Committee.

## Thesis Requirements for Examination

### Text

- (32) The print thesis or any examinable written component of a thesis shall be a word processed or typescript electronic document submitted in an electronic format such as PDF. The text shall be in a clear and legible font throughout (12 point), with any footnotes being in a smaller font.
- (33) Pages are to be numbered consecutively throughout the thesis. The following minimum margins are to be observed:
  - a. gutter margin (i.e. spine-side margin) should be 4cm;
  - b. all other margins are to be 2cm;
  - c. text is to be spaced one-and-a-half lines with the exception of quotations, footnotes, references and table and figure captions, which are to be single-line spaced.

### Content and Style

- (34) **Title Page** - The title page (first) page of the thesis, is to identify it as a thesis work submitted to Charles Sturt University for the [name of degree]. The candidate's name, qualifications held, the full title of the thesis or other examinable work, and the month and year of submission are to be recorded on the title page.
- (35) **Table of Contents** - The thesis is to include a table of contents after the title page.
- (36) **Certificate of Authorship** - On the first page after the table of contents the following certificate of authorship signed by the candidate certifying the original authorship of the thesis or other examinable work is to appear:
  - a. "I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Charles Sturt University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the thesis [or dissertation, as appropriate].

Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Charles Sturt University or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged."

- b. I agree that this thesis be accessible for the purpose of study and research in accordance with the normal conditions established by the Executive Director, Division of Library Services or nominee, for the care, loan and reproduction of theses."

(37) **Acknowledgment of Assistance** - Where appropriate, a brief acknowledgment of any substantial assistance received shall be included on a separate page inserted in sequence. The acknowledgment should list the names of all those persons who have provided substantial assistance with the research and the nature of that assistance which may relate. If any of the assistance was provided for a fee, this fact should also be recorded. Examples of such assistance might include:

- a. sponsorship of the research including Industry, government or internal CSU funding:
  - i. If the candidate was supported by the Australian Commonwealth Government Research training program then the following text should be included in this section to acknowledge this support:

"This research was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship"
- b. collection of data;
- c. processing of the data including the selection and use of particular statistical techniques;
- d. interpretation of the results of the statistical analysis;
- e. use of graphics in the thesis;
- f. word processing of the thesis;
- g. editing of the thesis:

(38) The candidate must obtain written permission from the Principal Supervisor before obtaining paid editorial assistance with the examinable work. If permission is granted to obtain paid editorial assistance, the name of the editor and a brief description of the services provided must be specified in the thesis under the heading "Professional Editorial Assistance" on a separate page inserted in sequence. If the professional editor's current or former area of academic specialisation is similar to that of the candidate, this too should be stated.

(39) Professional editing of a candidate's thesis is limited to formatting, grammar and style (Australian Standard for Editing Practice (ASEP) Standard D - Language and Illustrations, ASEP Standard E - Completeness and Consistency) and must not alter or improve the substantive content or conceptual organisation of the thesis. Where a professional editor provides advice to a candidate on matters of structure (ASEP Standard C - Substance and Structure) exemplars only should be given.

(40) **Publications resulting from the research** - If any publications have resulted from the research then the citation list of these publications should appear on a separate page. If any publications are co-authored then a statement making clear the candidate's contribution to these jointly authored works must be provided. If a co-authored publication is to be included in the thesis the co-author(s) must certify that they agree to the inclusion of the paper in the thesis.

(41) **Abstract** - Next in sequence, there is to be an abstract of the work not exceeding 500 words in length for doctoral theses and professional doctoral portfolios or 350 words in length for masters theses.

(42) **Body of thesis** - Next in sequence is the body of the thesis.

(43) **References** - The thesis is to include a list of references at the end which shall list all of the sources acknowledged in the body of the thesis. A single referencing style that is appropriate to the discipline should be used. Advice regarding bibliographic standards should be obtained from the Principal Supervisor.

(44) **Appendices** - The role of an appendix is to provide a place for the inclusion of supplementary material that is related to the research but not directly relevant to the argument of

the thesis. Material in appendices is examinable except where written entirely by authors other than the candidate.

Appendices may include:

- a. data sets
- b. software code
- c. examples of surveys or instruments used to gather research data
- d. handbooks and manuals
- e. publications arising from the research but not directly relevant to the arguments included in the thesis
- f. documentary recordings of exhibitions or installations mounted during the candidature but not part of the thesis
- g. archival and primary texts
- h. other material as deemed necessary by the student and supervisor

### **Intellectual Property/Commercial implications/Ethics Approvals**

(45) If there is material in the thesis which could or does have implications for the intellectual property rights of the candidate, the University, a sponsor of the research, or some other person or body, those implications shall be stated under the heading "Intellectual Property Rights" either on the same page as the acknowledgments or on the next page in sequence.

(46) If the thesis reports on research involving humans or human biological materials or involving animals, a page containing the name(s) of the relevant University and/or other ethics committee and the approval number(s) shall be inserted in sequence in the thesis.

(47) If there is material in the thesis which is confidential for commercial or other reasons either for a specified period or indefinitely, the confidential material, the period of its confidentiality and the reasons for its confidentiality shall be specified under the heading "Confidential Material" on a separate page inserted in sequence. In addition, the following statement shall appear on the cover of the soft-bound copies of the thesis.

"This thesis contains confidential material as described on page [insert page number]. The thesis shall not be given to anyone who is not directly involved in the examination of the thesis."

### **Printed work for examination**

(48) Any examinable written works that are required to be provided in printed form are to be presented using International Standard Organisation (ISO) A4 size white bond paper double sided. If diagrams, maps, tables and similar presentations do not fit readily on this sheet size, ISO B4 size may be used. B4 size pages are to be folded and bound so as to open out at the top and the right.

### **Materials for examination**

(49) Materials shall be presented in a format as a durable record, suitable for storage and retrieval and must be appropriately packaged. Materials may be presented in formats which include photographic, sound, interactive and visual material recorded on digital media.