

## Advice for Examiners

### Doctoral Higher Degree by Research Students

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Doctoral Degrees:	<b>Doctor of Philosophy<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>Doctor of Public Health<sup>(3)</sup></b>
	<b>Doctor of Science Education<sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>Doctor of Education<sup>(4)</sup></b>
	<b>Doctor of Mathematics Education<sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>Doctor of Business Administration<sup>(5)</sup></b>
	<b>Doctor of International Health<sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>Doctor of Creative Arts<sup>(6)</sup></b>
	<b>Doctor of Petroleum Engineering<sup>(2)</sup></b>	

The purpose of the doctoral degree by research program at Curtin is to provide the candidate with the opportunity to undertake a substantial piece of original research and to develop the skills of independent research in an environment which includes proper academic supervision. The doctoral thesis will present, using one or more media, a substantial and intellectually coherent product or product(s), such as a thesis, or an exegesis and body of creative work, for submission to external examination against international standards. The thesis should demonstrate authority in the candidate's field and show evidence of command of knowledge in relevant fields.

The doctoral thesis is normally presented as a typescript, or a series of published papers with a full and scholarly explanatory overview to link the separate papers and to place them in the context of an established body of knowledge. In some disciplines, such as the creative arts, the thesis may instead take the form of a literary work (or works), or exhibition or performance accompanied by an exegesis which addresses and elucidates the research question that motivates the thesis as a whole. The creative work(s) and exegesis will be examined as an integrated whole.

For the award of a doctoral degree by research, the thesis must, in the opinion of the Examiners, be a substantial, original contribution to the knowledge or understanding of a field of study, and must demonstrate the capacity of the candidate to conceive, design and carry to completion independent research. The doctoral candidate should uncover new knowledge either by the discovery of new facts, the formulation of theories or the innovative re-interpretation of known data and established ideas.

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The thesis should be examined principally in terms of:

- (i) the candidate's understanding of the field of study;
- (ii) the candidate's demonstrated capacity to conceive, plan and conduct a program of research;
- (iii) the significance of the thesis as a contribution to knowledge or understanding of knowledge in the field of study; and
- (iv) the originality of the work embodied in the thesis.

In particular, the thesis should demonstrate that the candidate has:

- a) adequately surveyed literature relevant to the thesis;
- b) adequate skills in the gathering and critical analysis of information and report presentation;
- c) demonstrated the capacity to conceive, design and carry to completion independent research; and
- d) made a substantial, original and significant contribution to the knowledge or understanding in the field of study.

In assessing the thesis, the examiners should prepare a report on the prescribed form, indicating whether the criteria in (a) – (d) above have been satisfied and, if not, what modifications are necessary to reach this standard.

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- (1) Doctor of Philosophy means an award granted on successful completion of an approved program which normally requires a minimum of two years and a maximum of four years of equivalent full-time study, beyond a Bachelor's Degree with Honours or a Master's Degree. It is a degree by research and thesis, together with any additional coursework as prescribed by the Head of School.
- (2)-(6) All professional doctorate theses are subject to the same criteria as those applied to the PhD thesis. The Doctor of Science Education (ScEdD), the Doctor of Mathematics Education (MathEdD), the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH), the Doctor of International Health (DIntlHlth) and the Doctor of Petroleum Engineering (DPetEng) comprise not more than one third coursework and a minimum of two thirds thesis. The Doctor of Education (EdD) will consist of 30% coursework and 70% research oriented work including a dissertation. The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) comprises not more than one third coursework/research preparation and a minimum of two thirds research program and dissertation. The Doctor of Creative Arts (DCA) comprises 25% coursework and 75% research and production.

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After examination of the thesis, the examiner shall make one of the following recommendations:

Recommendation	Explanatory Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>No amendments.</b> <i>The thesis be passed with no requirement for correction or amendments other than minor typographical or editorial matters;</i> or	The candidate has fulfilled the requirements of the doctoral degree. Minor typographical or editorial matters may require correction before the thesis is ready for permanent binding and placement in the University Library.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Minor amendments.</b> <i>The thesis be passed after the candidate has made the minor textual and/or structural amendments, identified by the Examiner, to the satisfaction of the Chairperson of the Thesis Committee;</i> or	The candidate will have fulfilled the requirements for the doctoral degree when the Chairperson of the Thesis Committee certifies that the specified minor textual and/or structural amendments, identified by the Examiner, have been made. The candidate will be given up to 3 months to make these changes. The thesis will then be ready for permanent binding and placement in the University Library.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Substantive amendments.</b> <i>The thesis be passed provided the candidate has revised specific sections of the thesis, identified by the Examiner, to the satisfaction of the Chairperson of the Thesis Committee;</i> or	The candidate will have fulfilled the requirements for the doctoral degree when the Chairperson of the Thesis Committee certifies that the specified substantive revisions (which may include some data analysis), identified by the Examiner, have been made. These revisions will not change the substantive conclusions of the thesis. The candidate will be given up to 6 months to make these changes. The thesis will then be ready for permanent binding and placement in the University Library.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Revise and resubmit.</b> <i>The thesis is not yet of a doctoral standard but has the potential to be of this standard. After further research, rewriting, reorganisation, and/or reconceptualisation that the Examiner has specified, the candidate should resubmit the thesis so that the examination process may continue;</i> or	The candidate should not be admitted to the doctoral degree on the basis of this thesis, which contains flaws that have the potential to affect its substantive conclusions. However, if the additional work is done as specified, the thesis is likely to fulfil the requirements of the doctoral degree. The candidate will be given up to 12 months to make these changes, and the thesis should be resubmitted, normally to the original examiner.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Fail.</b> <i>The thesis does not meet the criteria for the degree as specified by the University and a significant amount of additional research work and/or major substantive revision will not raise the thesis to an acceptable standard.</i>	The candidate should not be admitted to the doctoral degree on the basis of this thesis. The flaws in this thesis are substantial and irredeemable and make it inappropriate to award a doctoral degree for this work, even after further revision.

Examiners are requested to provide in their report the grounds for their recommendation by detailing, as fully as possible, the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis. This feedback will be used by the Thesis Committee to advise the candidate on revisions needed to improve the thesis. At Curtin the length of period for amendment and/or submission for re-examination of a thesis shall not exceed twelve months from the date of notification to the candidate.

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Names of Examiners are not released to the candidate unless the Examiner specifically approves the release of his/her identity, subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (refer Question 1 on the *Examination Report* form). Only the Dean, Graduate Studies (or nominee), the Chairperson of the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee and the Chairperson of the Thesis Committee may communicate with the Examiners regarding the examination process while the thesis is under examination.

The University requests that the thesis be examined independently, and that your report will be made available to the University in confidence. The thesis remains a confidential document throughout the examination process.

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An examiner may recommend an oral examination of the candidate to clarify aspects of the thesis. In this instance, the examiner shall clearly specify the purpose of the oral examination and the nature of the questions to be put to the candidate (refer Question 3 on the *Examination Report* form). The final decision to conduct an oral examination will be made by the University Graduate Studies Committee.

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A candidate who submits an outstanding thesis which, in the opinion of the examiners, makes a significant contribution to the field beyond that normally expected for a thesis at this level, may be given a commendation by the Chancellor of the University. *Question 4* on the *Examination Report* form asks whether, in your opinion as an expert in the field, the thesis, in the form submitted to you, makes such a contribution. As a guide, it is expected that about 10% of theses would receive a commendation and only theses that are rated an 'A' pass (No amendments) are eligible for consideration.

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