



## **NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF CHAIRPERSON OF EXAMINERS OF MASTER OF DESIGN RESEARCH**

### **STANDARD FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE**

The degree of Master of Design Research (MDesResearch) is an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 9 program. The MDesResearch is awarded for an integrated program of structured learning and independent supervised study that produces a substantial piece for independent examination by at least two external expert examiners of international standing.

### **PURPOSE AND NATURE OF THE MASTER OF DESIGN RESEARCH**

This program gives candidates the opportunity to extend their studio expertise by identifying challenges, exploring innovative solutions and advancing their understanding of the concepts underlying their work and the context in which it is produced. Graduates demonstrate high performance levels in their studio practice, having developed a strong theoretical understanding of that practice.

### **THE EXAMINATION BOARD**

At least two external expert examiners of international standing are appointed to assess the thesis (combined design outcome/s and exegesis). A member of staff of the University is appointed as Chairperson of Examiners, whose task is to consider the reports of the examiners and make a recommendation to the University on the outcome of the examination.

The thesis examination process is conducted online through the Examiner's Evaluation Workcentre located in the Griffith University home page: [www.griffith.edu.au](http://www.griffith.edu.au)>Griffith Portal>Research>Academic Resources>Evaluation Workcentre:

- Examiners are asked to provide their recommendation on results of examination.
- Examiners are asked to provide a justification for their recommendation and an evaluation of the thesis in line with AQF Level 9 program criteria (<https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-levels>)
- Please note that in the case of competing recommendations, a recommendation may need to be set aside if not supported by a report detailing the justification for the recommendation.

Examiners must make an independent report and recommendation and are asked not to communicate directly with the candidate, the candidate's supervisor/s or each other.

Candidates are provided with copies of reports of the examiners and Chairperson of Examiners with their identity expunged. The identity of the examiners and Chairperson of Examiners will be revealed to the candidate when the examination is concluded. If this policy causes you concern, you are asked not to accept the task of Examiner or Chairperson of Examiners.

### **THE EXAMINATION**

Candidates will produce a thesis **which consists of**

- a written document no longer than 40,000 words; or a combined creative research outcome with exegesis of no longer than 20,000 words;
- documentation of the designed outcome submitted in an appropriate form of publication (video, film, CD, USB, internet site, site specific installation, exhibition, web publications etc);

Examiners are asked to assess the submission according to the following AQF Level 9 criteria:

### **Knowledge**

Graduates at this level will have advanced and integrated understanding of a complex body of knowledge in one or more disciplines or areas of practice.

## Skills

Graduates at this level will have expert, specialised cognitive and technical skills in a body of knowledge or practice to independently:

- analyse critically, reflect on and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories
- research and apply established theories to a body of knowledge or practice
- interpret and transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to specialist and non-specialist audiences

## Application of knowledge and skills

Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, expert judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner.

In summary, the University's Higher Degree Research Policy enables an examiner to recommend that:

- The submission meets the requirements and the candidate should be awarded the degree;
- The degree should be awarded subject to approved revisions or amendments;
- The submission should be revised and resubmitted; or
- The submission does not meet the standard expected for the degree.

For the purposes of future scholarship application at Griffith University **ONLY**, examiners are also asked to recommend a percentage grade for the thesis:

7	(High Distinction)	=	80% - 100%
6	(Distinction)	=	70% - 79%
5	(Credit)	=	60% - 69%
4	(Pass)	=	50% - 59%
3	(Fail)	=	below 50%

Where there is substantial disagreement between the examiners, the University may appoint a third examiner or an adjudicator examiner to consider and report on the thesis and on the reports of the examiners.

## ROLE OF CHAIRPERSON OF EXAMINERS

The task of the Chairperson of Examiners is to consider the reports of the examiners and make a recommendation to the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School on the outcome of the examination. The Chairperson of Examiners does not undertake an independent examination of the thesis, although they may need to consult the thesis in order to make judgements about the comments of the examiners. The Chairperson's report to the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School should include a number of sections:

1. **A brief summary/overview of the examination reports.**
2. **A collation of the examination reports.** The collation may be provided under the headings in the examiners summary form (ie significance of substantial contribution to the knowledge of the topic, standard of literacy presentation; methodology; survey of literature and documentation of statements; suitability for publication).
3. **Recommendation on the outcome of the examination**, including:
  - description of the extent and nature of any new work/revisions/corrections that **must** be completed in order for the degree to be awarded;
  - description of what new work/revisions/corrections are optional or desirable;
  - a recommendation on who should oversee and assess any new work/revisions/corrections. In most circumstances, it is expected that the Chairperson of Examiners will verify minor revisions and corrections; and
  - a timeframe for completion of any new work/revisions/corrections.

When the reports of the examiners cannot be sufficiently reconciled, a recommendation should be made on whether:

- a third examiner should be appointed;
- an adjudicator examiner should be appointed to consider and report on the thesis and on the reports of the examiners.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

A copy of an example report or further advice on the role of the Chairperson or the examination procedure may be obtained from:

Thesis Examinations Office  
Griffith Graduate Research School  
Griffith University  
Bray Centre (N54) 0.21  
Nathan QLD 4111  
Australia

Email: [thesisexams@griffith.edu.au](mailto:thesisexams@griffith.edu.au)  
Phone: +61 7 373 53817

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