
These guidelines should be considered in conjunction with Rule 10: Degree of Doctor by Research and Rule 11: Degree of Master by Research. These documents are available on the Curtin Compliance, Legislation and Policy website at http://policies.curtin.edu.au/legislation/internallegislation/statutes_rules.cfm.

Creative Practice Higher Degree by Research (HDR)

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your important involvement in examining a creative practice HDR submission at Curtin University. Your expert assessment of this work is highly valued.

A creative practice higher degree by research (HDR) is the product of a research program, and therefore meets Curtin University's requirements in that it forms a substantial original contribution to the knowledge or understanding of a field of study and demonstrates the ability to design and carry out independent research.

A creative practice HDR submission for examination comprises two fundamental elements: *creative practice* and *critical investigation*.

The *creative practice* and *critical investigation* elements most often consist of a *creative work* (such as a novella, a series of paintings, a film, exhibition, etc.) and an *exegesis* (an accompanying discursive scholarly text). An example of a *creative work* and *exegesis* submitted for examination may include an exhibition of a body of original art works as well as a critical written work that contextualises, investigates and synthesizes new knowledge in relation to the creative work.

The *creative practice* and *critical investigation* elements may take the form of a single piece of writing in which critical investigation and/or reflection is an integral part of a single creative work. An example of a single piece of creative writing may include memoir, biography, or ficto-criticism, auto-ethnography or auto-theory, all of which integrate critical investigation and/or reflection.

Forms of creative work may include animation, architectural design, choreography, construction design, creative writing, design, film-making, fine art, game design, industrial design, interior design, landscape design, media art, multimedia, music composition, music performance, photography, sound art, theatrical performance, urban design, urban planning, and other commonly accepted forms of creative practice, or a combination of these creative practice forms.

The two elements of the creative practice HDR submission—creative practice and critical investigation—must address the same central research question and aims. The overarching thesis does not necessarily provide a direct 'answer' to that question; rather, the thesis must make a significant contribution to knowledge in its field by addressing and responding to the central research question through systematic research investigation.

Examining a Creative Practice HDR submission

A creative practice HDR submission usually consists of a separate *creative work* and an accompanying written *exegesis*.

Creative work:

- The creative work must represent an original and significant contribution to knowledge in its specific area in its field of creative practice. The creative work may consist of a single major work, a body of work, or a series of works.
- The creative work must be timely and significant in relation to its field of creative practice.
- Creative work must demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of and engagement with its specific area in its field of creative practice.
- Creative work must coherently combine with the conceptual aims of the exegesis to significantly contribute to existing knowledge; it must advance existing discourse in its field of creative practice.
- Creative work must meet professional standards of presentation, which demonstrate a high level of competence in the execution of the Candidate's stated conceptual aims within the chosen form(s) of creative work.

Exegesis:

- The exegesis must demonstrate the level of scholarly research expected of a written HDR thesis.
- The exegesis must meet scholarly standards of research, argument and presentation expected of a traditional written HDR thesis submission. The exegesis must be formatted coherently and presented in a form that is clearly legible to examiners.
- The exegesis must be adequately and clearly referenced using a consistent referencing style. Please note that there is no preferred referencing style.
- Examiners are kindly requested to comment on the level of publishability of the content of the exegesis.
- *Curtin's Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Thesis Examination Procedures* limit a creative practice exegesis to 40,000 words for a Doctoral HDR course or 20,000 words for a Masters HDR Course.
- These word limits exclude all footnotes, appendices, tables and illustrative matter and the reference list.
- Examiners should note that the exegesis should not provide a direct commentary on the creative work, nor does the creative work simply illustrate the exegesis—rather both components should maintain the integrity their discourse and “speak to” each other through their common purpose of elucidating a response to the research question.

A creative practice HDR submission may take the form of a single piece of creative writing. In this case, the work must integrate significant critical investigation creating a substantial original contribution to the knowledge or understanding of its field of study. A single written piece of creative work may include an introductory essay of reasonable length providing a rationale and conceptual framing of the work, which is included in the overall word count. The whole work, excluding all footnotes, appendices, tables and illustrative matter and the reference list) must not exceed 100,000 words for a Doctoral HDR or 60,000 words for a Masters HDR.

General Information on the Submission

For all creative practice HDRs, the examinable work should be understood in its entirety, addressing both *creative practice* and *critical investigation* within the whole work.

In the case of many creative writing HDRs, examiners will receive the entire work at the same time. That is, in the case where a creative work is a novel and it is accompanied by an exegesis, a single piece of creative writing, examiners will receive the entire written submission at the same time.

In the case of other non-written creative forms, such as exhibitions of art works, architectural presentations, film screenings, music or theatrical performances, that are accompanied by an exegesis, that written component will arrive normally within four weeks (and no less than two weeks) before any performance/exhibition.

The Thesis Chair for the Candidate will work with the examiners to agree on a date and time to attend the performance, exhibition, etc. Some forms of creative work (film, digital art, artist books, performance documentation) may be made available to examiners by mail, file transfer or other digital means. Examiners will report on the overall thesis of the research, on both the creative practice and critical investigation, using Curtin's Examiners Report template.

Further Reading

Barrett, Estelle and Bolt, Barbara, eds. *Practice As Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. London: Taurus, 2007.

Biggs, Michael. "The Role of 'the Work' in Research." *Practice as Research in Performance National Conference*. 11-14 September 2003. <http://www.bris.ac.uk/parip/biggs.htm>

Bolt, Barbara. *Art Beyond Representation: The Performative Power of the Image*. London; New York: Tauris, 2004.

Bourke, Nike and Philip Neilsen. "The Problem of the Exegesis in Creative Writing Higher Degrees." *Text 3* (April 2004). Special Issue. *Illuminating the Exegesis*. Ed. Julie Fletcher and Allan Mann. <http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue3/bourke.htm>

Carter, Paul. *Material Thinking: The Theory and Practice of Creative Research*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004.

Kroll, Jeri. "The Role of the Examiner: Scholar, Reviewer, Critic, Judge, Mentor." *Text 8.2* (October 2004). <http://www.textjournal.com.au/oct04/kroll.htm>

Martin, Elaine and Booth, Judith, eds. *Art Based Research: A Proper Thesis?* Altona, Vic.: Common Ground, with Victoria University, 2006.

Milech, Barbara and Schilo, Ann. "'Exit Jesus' Relating the exegesis and the Creative/Production Components of a Research Thesis." *Text 3* (April 2004). Special Issue. *Illuminating the Exegesis*. Ed. Julie Fletcher and Allan Mann. <http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue3/milechschilo.htm>

Owen, Christine. "Academic Research and Creative Writing: Redrawing the Map and Finding One's Allies." *Text 10.2* (October 2006). <http://www.textjournal.com.au/oct06/owen.htm>

Sullivan, G. *Art practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005.