

Guidelines for Thesis Preparation and Submission

Higher Degree by Research Students

These Guidelines should be considered in conjunction with Higher Degree by Research Policies and Procedures. These documents are available on the [Compliance, Legislation and Policy website](#).

1. RESEARCH THESIS FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

- 1.1. All students need to prepare their thesis as per the requirements set out in the [Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Thesis Examination Procedures](#).
- 1.2 A thesis will be based on research conducted during the period of enrolment and will be submitted in one of the following forms:
 - (a) a standard thesis;
 - (b) a thesis by creative works accompanied by an exegesis; or
 - (c) a thesis by compilation.
- 1.3 **Title Page:** A thesis must include a title page that shows the student's full name, [ORCID iD](#), name of the Enrolling School, and title of the thesis, title of the degree, month and year of submission (or re-examination), as per the [template](#).
- 1.4 **Declaration Page:** the page immediately following the title page will contain a [Declaration](#).

This declaration will be signed and dated by the student (and for re-examination, signed and dated with the date of the re-submission).

- 1.5 **Abstract:** An abstract of at least 200 words that gives a clear and accurate account of its main arguments, methodology, scope and findings.
- 1.6 **Acknowledgements:** A thesis, irrespective of form, must include appropriate acknowledgement for any co-authored work included as part of the thesis. Where students use the services of an editor, research assistant, web designer, video editor, camera operator, photographer or other technical support, full acknowledgement of the role of any person or people providing such support needs to be attributed in the thesis.

Students should refer to the requirements for the Attribution of Research Outputs in the HDR Thesis as set out in Section 4.

- 1.7 **Copyright statement:** If a thesis includes third party copyright material, including any published research output(s) in the main body of the thesis or as an appendix, a statement must be included in the front matter of the thesis to indicate that permission regarding copyright has been obtained from publishers, where necessary. For example, the statement may say:

I have obtained permission from the copyright owners to use any third-party copyright material reproduced in the thesis (e.g. questionnaires, artwork, unpublished letters), or to use any of my own published work (e.g. journal articles) in which the copyright is held by another party (e.g. publisher, co-author).

- 1.8 Students may wish to include an Acknowledgement of Country. This should be inserted as an independent page between the declaration and Table of Contents.

We acknowledge that Curtin University works across hundreds of traditional lands and custodial groups in Australia, and with First Nations people around the globe. We wish to pay our deepest respects to their ancestors and members of their communities, past, present, and to their emerging leaders. Our passion and commitment to work with all Australians and peoples from across the world, including our First Nations peoples are at the core of the work we do, reflective of our institutions' values and commitment to our role as leaders in the Reconciliation space in Australia.

- 1.9 Historically a standard thesis incorporated a set series of chapters. For example, following the table of contents, lists of tables and figures, declarations, dedications, attributions and abstract, the thesis may include an Introduction and literature review, Methods chapter, Results chapter, Discussion and Conclusions chapter(s). These are followed by the references and then a series of appendices. Examples of theses from your area of research or domain of investigation are available from the Library's [espace](#). It is important to follow the standard practice of theses from your area of research, as the formats vary according to the different expectations of examiners. The student should ensure that the thesis as a whole forms a coherent narrative, and the structure may vary by the nature of the research process unique to that thesis.
- 1.10 In more recent times, HDR students are often generating research outputs related to the conduct of the research from which the thesis is derived. This highlights two aspects, firstly the critical importance of the attribution statements, and secondly the inclusion of research outputs within the thesis. As opposed to a standard format, a thesis by compilation sits at the other end of the format spectrum. Currently, most research theses are a mix of the standard (chapters) and the compilation models. These are varied and are a 'hybrid' thesis. Curtin does not define the hybrid thesis as it is becoming the usual practice in many domains of research. Again, examples are available in your area from the Library and the critical nature of attribution comes to the forefront in any hybrid thesis submission.

2. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A THESIS BY CREATIVE WORKS ACCOMPANIED BY AN EXEGESIS

- 2.1 A creative production thesis consists of two components:
- a. A creative production (such as a novella, a series of paintings, a film, architectural works etc.), and;
 - b. A discursive text, called the exegesis.
- 2.2 The two components of the thesis form two complementary outcomes of a singular research program. Both components must address the same central research question through articulating, in differing modes or languages, ideas or meanings which address that question.
- 2.3 The exegesis should not provide a direct commentary on the creative production. The creative production should not simply illustrate the exegesis. The creative production and exegesis must maintain the integrity of the specific discourse in which they are created, and "speak to" each other through their common purpose of elucidating a response to the research question. The exegesis, however, may refer to the creative production and/or contain commentary on the production as an appendix or a subsidiary portfolio. In some creative genres (such as creative non-fiction) the creative production component and the exegesis may be integrated into a single piece of writing, in which they still "speak to" each other through their common purpose of elucidating a response to the research question.
- 2.4 A creative production thesis is an option for those who work in fields where ideas are explored and meanings are made not only through expository writing but also through the media of the visual arts, creative writing, film, television, design, architecture, jewellery, theatrical performance, curatorial studies, among others.
- 2.5 Students should consider carefully that a creative production thesis requires functioning in at least two roles (maker and writer), and sometimes in three (maker, writer and performer/director/exhibiter). Students should take care to devise a research project that can be achieved within the provided timeframe, including appropriate time for making, writing and, in some cases, performing/exhibiting.
- 2.6 Any published creative work or research output of which the student is a joint author may only be included in the thesis provided the work done by the student is clearly identified in an attribution statement.
- 2.7 A creative production is examined as a whole (as a thesis comprised by both exegesis and creative production). Both components must be submitted for examination at the same time.

- 2.8 Where the production component of the thesis is in print format (e.g. a collection of poetry, a novella, a collection of professional writings) the thesis should be submitted for examination as a single bound document.
- 2.9 Where the production component of the thesis is in an electronic medium (e.g. filmic, televisual, web-based) the thesis should be submitted for examination in two formats - the exegesis in print format and the electronic production in digital format.
- 2.10 Where the production component of the thesis is a performance or exhibition, the thesis should be submitted for examination in two formats - the exegesis in print format and the creative production in live performance or exhibition. In these instances, students should ensure that the print exegesis is submitted to the Graduate Research School at least four weeks before any performance or exhibition.
- 2.11 The permanent record of creative-production theses should use technologies appropriate to the field of study. Such material must be presented in a stable and commonly accepted format. Students should discuss the options with their supervisors and with the Faculty Librarian, so as to ensure archival quality.

3. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PREPARATION OF A THESIS BY COMPILATION

- 3.1 A thesis by compilation (otherwise known as a thesis by publication) consists of a series of peer reviewed published or in-press journal papers or peer reviewed book chapters. It will include at least:
- a) introductory chapter(s) which makes clear the overall contribution of the thesis,
 - b) one substantive chapter that explains the contribution of each paper and summarises the methodology and methods,
 - c) a substantive thematic discussion and/ or conclusion chapter that clearly explains the major contributions to scholarship made by the study and also sets out the limitations of the study and scope for future research, and
 - d) a reference list.
- 3.2 A thesis by compilation should not normally include a conference paper in the main body of the thesis. However, it is recognised that some specific research areas support the inclusion of high-level, peer-reviewed, published conference papers in the thesis.
- 3.3 Students should note that a delay in publication of HDR outputs is not a satisfactory reason for extension of enrolment in the HDR program.
- 3.4 Co-authored research outputs with other academics (not other HDR students) are permitted to be included in a thesis but the student must indicate their contribution and provide an attribution statement.
- 3.5 Copyright: A thesis that is being submitted for examination may have third party copyright material within the thesis. These third party works must be appropriately referenced and authorship attributed in the copy submitted for examination. The student is responsible for clearing permission from the copyright holder to re-use the third party works in the thesis copy submitted for examination. The student is also responsible for clearing any additional required permissions from copyright holders to re-use third party works in the thesis copy deposited in Curtin's institutional repository space. For further guidance on copyright requirements for HDR students, refer to [Copyright for HDR students](#).

4. ATTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH OUTPUTS IN THE HDR THESIS

- 4.1 The acknowledgment of the contributions of various people who made the HDR completion possible is important to include at the beginning of a thesis or exegesis. In addition, it is important to attribute appropriate any contributions to the genesis, thematic development and synthesis of data or concepts that advanced the development of a research output.
- 4.2 During the writing of a HDR thesis, students are encouraged to publish their work during their enrolment. The publications are often with multiple authors. If the work is co-authored, and is included as part of the thesis, either as a publication or it is used to form, or inform, one or more parts of the thesis text, it is essential for the student to declare that the work was co-authored. Within the thesis this is called attribution.

- 4.3 If a co-authored paper, or material or original concepts from that co-authored work are used in the thesis, it is essential that an attribution statement is included in the thesis.
- 4.4 An attribution statement is usually presented in a thesis or exegesis as an attribution table, where co-authors sign that they agree with the attribution statement. A simple percentage statement of contribution is not sufficient. The domains of attribution may vary according to the area of research but must always meet the criteria for authorship.
- 4.5 When the student has a thesis chapter that is an extended text version of a published paper, the chapter work and the published paper needs to be declared and any co-authorship also clearly attributed.
- 4.6 When the student has published papers relevant to the thesis, but these do not need to appear as a full text chapter in the thesis, the student may include these as appendices and refer to these in the thesis body. These papers still require appropriate attribution statements to be included.
- 4.7 Concurrent authorship by HDR students is often a valid output from a HDR project, but only one student (the first named author) should claim this as a co-authored output. It is important that the appropriate signed attribution statement is included in the thesis.
- 4.8 For a thesis by compilation, the main body can only include publications that are published or classified as 'in-press'. If the paper has not progressed to that point then the thesis can be submitted as a hybrid model. This is a common outcome for PhD theses that were originally intended to be completed "by publication". A paper goes through a series of iterations in the pipeline from draft to publication. Papers that are published or "in press" are easily included in the thesis by compilation. However, papers that submitted or are under review may also be included in the body of the thesis. This is the hybrid model. It is not up to the examiners to act as a detailed reviewer of the "paper", so in many cases it may be appropriate to have an extended chapter with all the sub-elements of a paper in the thesis. The attribution of this in front of the chapter could indicate that 'the work in this chapter is being developed for a publication entitled "TITLE..." with co-authors.' No journal name should be mentioned. The attribution to the chapter is then also completed in the appendices.
- 4.9 In some cases, the thesis may be read more easily or flow with clearer thematic narrative if the papers published are referenced in the text and the published version placed in the appendices. Again, this is not a thesis by compilation but a hybrid model. An extended methods chapter in the body of the thesis could be used to expand on the methods described in subsequent paper chapters. The cover page for the "paper chapter" could highlight this additional information about the methods, etc. This is often valuable for the student to include additional details (and images, etc.) in the thesis which due to space limitations in journal publications may be omitted. Further expanded methodological details could be placed in the appendices and referred to in the cover page of a "paper chapter".

4.10 Example of An Attribution Statement:

Any multiple author research output that is being placed within a thesis needs to have the authorship attributions acknowledged. Most areas within the university use a tick box, however some prefer to allocate a percentage contribution* to each field of activity. Please check with your area for the best practice.

*Percentage contribution by field of activity: Indicate the percentage time for each co-author.

	Conception and Design	Acquisition of Data and Method	Data Conditioning and Manipulation	Analysis and Statistical Method	Interpretation and Discussion
Co-Author 1 (name)					
Co-Author 1 Acknowledgment: I acknowledge that these represent my contribution to the above research output and I have approved the final version.					
Signed:					
Co-Author 2 (name)					
Co-Author 2 Acknowledgment: I acknowledge that these represent my contribution to the above research output and I have approved the final version.					

5. PROFESSIONAL EDITING

- 5.1 HDR students may use a professional editor to proof-read or edit their thesis or HDR research outputs in line with the [Guidelines for Editing Research Theses](#).
- 5.2 When a thesis has had the benefit of professional editorial advice, of any form, the name of the editor and a brief description of the service rendered, should be included as part of the acknowledgements of the thesis or research output.
- 5.3 If the professional editor's current or former area of academic specialisation is similar to that of the student, this must be stated in the acknowledgements section of the thesis or research output.
- 5.4 If a student is seeking to claim reimbursement of editing costs from the Graduate ResearchSchool, the editor must:
- (a) Have a valid ABN
 - (b) Not be a current member of the Curtin staff or member of the student's supervisory team
 - (c) Not be a HDR student enrolled at Curtin or any other institution
 - (d) Not be a family member of the student
- 5.5 If a student engages an editor, it is the student's obligation to maintain the security of their data.

6. FUNDING SOURCE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- 6.1 Students supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) are required to acknowledge this support in all research publications, including the research thesis, that come from the HDR research. An example acknowledgement statement would be:
- This research is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship.*
- 6.2 Note that all domestic students receive RTP funding support for their tuition costs or fees. All domestic students need to acknowledge the Australian Government, even if they are not receiving a RTP living stipend.

7. RESEARCH THESIS SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1 The Graduate Research School (GRS) manages the HDR thesis examination process and all students. All Curtin HDR students must submit their thesis for examination to the GRS.
- 7.2 It is the student's obligation to ensure that they submit to the GRS a copy of their thesis for examination which has been prepared in accordance with Section 1-4 of these *Guidelines*.
- 7.3 A thesis cannot be dispatched for examination until the Supervisor's Nomination of Examiners has been approved by the Enrolling School's Director of Graduate Research. It is expected that the Nomination of Examiners is completed around the time of the final Milestone.
- 7.4 The GRS will confirm a thesis has been dispatched by emailing the supervisors and Thesis Chair.

RELATED DOCUMENTS/LINKS/FORMS

INTERNAL

[Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Thesis Examination Policy](#)
[Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Thesis Examination Procedures](#)

EXTERNAL

[TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework](#)
[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#)
[The Institute of Professional Editors Limited Guidelines for Editing Research Theses](#)