

## VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

### ASSESSMENT OF THESIS QUALITY AND GENERIC ATTRIBUTES

In addition to providing an examination report, examiners assessing a research doctorate are also asked to assess the quality of the thesis and the generic attributes of VU doctoral students. The information gathered is used for guidance on subsequent development of our doctoral students. The specific information provided by each examiner is restricted to the candidate, the candidate's supervisor, the Chair of Examiners and the University Postgraduate Research Committee.

#### PART ONE: THESIS QUALITY

Examiners are asked to use the following guidelines to evaluate the quality of the thesis against each aspect in Table 1.

#### Guidelines for Assessment of Thesis Quality

Score	Quality	Description
1	Exceptional	Such a contribution will be of the highest merit, and in the examiner's opinion indicate that the doctoral work is at the forefront of investigative endeavour in the field. We consider that it is likely that only 10% of doctoral theses would contain material that would merit this score.
2	Excellent	Such a contribution would be considered to be a meritorious effort in the field, and be the basis for a significant publication. Somewhere between 10% and 30% of doctorates would contain material that would merit this score.
3	Very Good	A 'Very Good' level would imply an interesting, sound and compelling treatment of the particular aspect of the thesis. Elements of the issue would be well presented and logically argued. A large number of theses, perhaps between 30% and 60% of those submitted would contain material that would merit this score.
4	Good	A 'Good' contribution of a particular aspect to a thesis is one that is sound overall, but is not compelling in some respects. Such contributions would not be expected to have the impact of similar work that has been assessed at a higher level. Perhaps between 10% and 30% of theses would contain material that would merit this score.
5	Adequate	This level would represent an area of work that might conform to the usual conventions of doctoral research but whose contributions are of limited value. A small number of doctorates, perhaps only 10% would contain sections that merit this score.
6	Poor	A 'Poor' assessment of aspects of work appearing in a thesis will represent, in the examiner's opinion, contributions to the study that only just meet the requirements for inclusion in a doctoral thesis. Whilst the formal conventions of a doctoral thesis should clearly be present for the thesis to be graded as 'Passed', it might at times be evident that minimal scholarship has been involved in aspects of its construction. It is considered that a very small number of theses, perhaps less than 2%, will contain material that will merit this score.

Scoring System:

1 = Exceptional  
3 = Very Good  
5 = Adequate

2 = Excellent  
4 = Good  
6 = Poor

Table 1

Aspects of the thesis	Score (1 – 6)
The <i>intellectual concept</i> behind the thesis, which traditionally represents a substantial and original contribution to knowledge to the subject area with which it deals;	
The <i>Literature Review</i> , which contains an indication of the candidate's familiarity with the field, their ability to understand and synthesise complex ideas, and demonstrates an appropriate application of the literature to the candidate's study;	
The <i>breadth of the study</i> , which for a doctoral thesis should be sufficiently comprehensive to develop an original contribution to the area, but be focused enough to provide significant depth of treatment of relevant concepts;	
The <i>methods and methodology</i> , which should be appropriate to the subject matter and applied in a scholarly and effective manner;	
The <i>presentation of the results</i> , which should be clear, concise and accompanied by expository text accessible to the reader;	
The <i>presentation</i> of the entire thesis, which should be written in English of an appropriate academic register and of a format and standard of presentation acceptable to the area of study;	
Please rate the overall quality of this thesis.	

## PART TWO: GENERIC ATTRIBUTES

Examiners are asked to estimate how well the candidate demonstrates the listed attributes by placing a tick in the appropriate column.

Table 2

This thesis shows evidence that the candidate has:	Agree	Disagree	N/A
An advanced ability to evaluate and synthesize research-based and scholarly literature;			
An advanced ability to formulate viable research questions;			
A demonstrated capacity to design, conduct, analyse and report sustained and original research in an ethical manner;			
Highly developed problem-solving abilities and flexibility of approach;			
The ability to effectively communicate research findings;			
The capacity to contextualise research within an international corpus of specialist knowledge;			
An understanding of the relevance and value of the study to national and international communities or scholars and collaborators.			

For further information, please contact the Office for Postgraduate Research on (03) 9919 5014.