Faculty of Law


In the absence of any specific Faculty of Law requirement, you should be guided by the forms and policies promulgated by the University's Graduate Research School and Scholarships Office.

Governing rules

Content and format of a thesis

1.3.1.31: A thesis must be in English unless the Board has approved otherwise.

1.3.1.32: (1) Material that has been presented for a degree in this or another university must not be submitted as a candidate's thesis but, if clearly indicated, may be incorporated in it.

(2) The sources from which a candidate's information is derived, the extent to which the work of others has been used and to which the assistance of individuals, associations or institutions has been obtained, must be acknowledged generally in a preface or introduction, specifically in notes, a bibliography or appendices, and must be, throughout the thesis, shown clearly and fully by appropriate references.

(3) The portion of material presented for examination claimed as original must be indicated in the thesis.

1.3.1.33: (1) A thesis may be presented in the form of a typescript, a published book or a paper or series of papers which have been published in refereed journals.

(2) If any of the items submitted in terms of (1) have been jointly authored (a) the work done by the candidate must be clearly indicated and certified as such by the co-authors; and (b) the co-authors must certify that they agree to the inclusion in the thesis of work of which they are joint authors.

(3) A publication of which the candidate is sole or joint author may be submitted as an appendix in support of the thesis, but, in the case of joint authorship, the work done by the candidate must be clearly indicated.

(4) If a series of papers is presented, there must be a full explanatory introduction and a review article at the end to link the separate papers and to place them in the context of the established body of knowledge.
If detailed data and descriptions of methods are not otherwise given, they must be included as appendices.

If, with the approval of the Board, the thesis has been presented as a typescript in the form of a piece of creative writing and exegesis, then the two parts must be strongly connected and the connection must be demonstrated clearly in the exegesis.

**Anonymity**

1.3.1.51: (1) The names of examiners will not be withheld from candidates.
(2) Candidates, supervisors and heads of school must not discuss any aspect of an examination with examiners during the examination process.

**Communication**

1.3.1.52: (1) Except as set out in (2) and in the rules for specific master's degrees, examiners must not, before submitting their independent reports, consult or otherwise communicate with each other or anyone connected with the preparation of the thesis.
(2) The Board may ask examiners to consult or otherwise communicate with each other before, or after, receipt of their individual reports.

**Classification of theses**

1.3.1.55: (1) Subject to (4), the Board will, after considering all reports on a thesis submitted for examination classify the thesis as Passed with no requirement for correction or amendment, Passed subject to revision, Resubmit or Failed.
(2) A thesis classified as Passed subject to revision, will, once the required revisions have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Board, be classified as Passed or Passed with Distinction.

**Word Limit - SJD**

Faculty of Law rule 7.7.2.9: The thesis must be 50,000 to 60,000 words in length excluding tables, footnotes, endnotes and appendices.

**SJD Rules**

Applicability of the Student Rules, policies and procedures

1.(1) The Student Rules apply to students in this course.

(2) The policy, policy statements and guidance documents and student procedures apply, except as otherwise indicated in the rules for this course.

Thesis length
12. The thesis must be 50,000 to 60,000 words in length excluding tables, footnotes, endnotes and appendices.

**University Policy on: Professional Doctorates**

Policy No.

UP07/105

**Function**

[Student Administration](#)

**Authoring Organisational Unit**

[Academic Policy Services - Student Services](#)

**Date Approved**

07/09/1996 Revised 03/08/2011

**Next Review Date**

01/08/2014

**Approving Body**

Academic Council

**Purpose of the policy and summary of issues it addresses**

This policy deals with professional doctorates including admission requirements, course requirements, leave, thesis requirements, and the submission, examination and classification of theses.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure -

- that professional doctorate courses provided by the University reflect international best practice;
- that admission requirements for professional doctorates are consistent across the University;
- that student workload requirements for professional doctorate courses are standardised;
- that the structure of professional doctorate courses is uniform across the University;
- that the requirements for theses, and the examination and classification of theses for professional doctorates are uniform across the University;
that any coursework undertaken is at an appropriate level;
that the difference between the Doctor of Philosophy and a professional doctorate is clarified;
and
that nomenclature of Cycle 3 degrees is standardised,

within the context of maintaining the University's reputation as a university of the highest international standing.

Definitions

In this policy and any associated procedures,

the University means The University of Western Australia

the Board means the Board of the Graduate Research School

professional doctorate means a course that normally requires a minimum of three years of full-time study (or part-time equivalent) and that is RTS compliant. It can include up to one third of coursework offered at master's level or beyond and provides an opportunity for those with a first professional qualification and professional experience to undertake advanced studies and research in their professional fields. The thesis is concerned primarily with deducing implications for practice and policy, while not neglecting the possibility of testing theory, extending existing theory, or developing new theory.

thesis means the output of research in the form of a dissertation or the equivalent, such as a composition, performance, exhibition or creative or other approved work

Cycle 3 courses include the Doctor of Philosophy, more specialised professional doctorates and clinical doctorates.

Policy statement

1 General Overview

1.1 Professional doctorates consist of

(a) a thesis component that comprises at least 66.6 per cent of the course requirements; and

(b) a coursework component that must not exceed 33.3 per cent of the course requirements

1.2 Progression from the coursework stage to the thesis stage of a professional doctorate course is on the basis of successful completion of the coursework stage at the required standard.
1.3 Professional doctorates embody an original contribution to knowledge by way of a research thesis in the form of a dissertation, composition, performance, exhibition or creative or other approved work.

1.4 Professional doctorates are concerned primarily with professional practice and applications to that practice.

1.5 The coursework component of a professional doctorate must be specific to the field of study and involve advanced practical training of a nature clearly distinguishable from the coursework components of masters' courses.

1.6 While professional doctorates may test theory, extend existing theory or develop new theory, the primary emphasis is on deducing implications of theory for policy and practice.

1.7 While a professional doctorate student must demonstrate an understanding of theories relevant to the thesis, it is not necessary for the thesis to be concerned with developing theory.

1.8 Professional doctorates must be clearly distinguished by name and content from the Doctor of Philosophy and from higher doctorates.

1.9 Professional doctorates must be individually titled, (for example Doctor of Education).

1.10 Professional doctorates are governed by faculties through governing boards, by whatever name.

1.11 In terms of its constitution the Board of the Graduate Research School monitors standards in, and relativities between, professional doctorates offered by the University and recommends to the Academic Council necessary action to ensure that appropriate standards and relativities are maintained.

2 Admission

2.1 To be considered for admission to a professional doctorate course an applicant must have

(a) a bachelor's degree of this University or a qualification recognised by the faculty as equivalent;

(b) substantial and appropriate professional experience as determined by the faculty, which must be of no less than two years' duration; and

(c) adequate research preparation as described in the University Policy on Adequate Research Preparation.
3 Examination prior to admission

3.1 Before admitting an applicant to candidature, the faculty may require the applicant to pass an examination recommended by the head of the appropriate school and approved by the faculty.

4 Completion of all or part of requirements at an offshore institution

4.1 The faculty, in appropriate circumstances, may permit a student in the course for a professional doctorate to complete the course, or part of it, at an offshore institution, under arrangements approved by the Academic Board.

5 Concurrent enrolment

5.1 A student in the course for a professional doctorate must not enrol simultaneously either at this institution or elsewhere in a course leading to a formal higher degree qualification or in any course for which the University receives Commonwealth Government funding.

6 Recognition of work completed towards a higher degree

6.1 If a student demonstrates adequate research preparation by way of work completed towards a research higher degree, the faculty may

(a) recognise the work done towards the research higher degree as part of the work required for the professional doctorate; and

(b) permit an appropriate reduction in the normal period of supervised study.

7 Course requirements

7.1 A student enrolled in the course for a professional doctorate degree must

(a) undertake in this University a course of supervised research, advanced study and advanced practical training over a period of not less than three years on a subject or subjects approved by the faculty;

(b) attend lectures, and complete seminars and other work as the supervisor or head of the school concerned directs and as are specific to the student's field of study; and

(c) present a thesis after the completion of the course which represents at least 66.6 per cent of the course requirements and which must be an original contribution to scholarship as, for example, through the discovery of new knowledge, the formulation of theories or the innovative re-interpretation of known data and established ideas.

7.2 Coursework units in a professional doctorate course must be at Levels 5 and 6 with no more than 50 per cent at Level 5.
8 Approved leave (suspension of candidature)

8.1 The faculty may grant a period of approved leave called a suspension of candidature in accordance with the University Policy on Approved Leave.

9 Parental leave

9.1 In addition to any extensions of time approved under the University Policy on time limits for courses, or periods of suspension of candidature granted under 8.1, a faculty may permit periods of leave for pregnancy, childbirth and immediate postnatal parenting.

10 Progress reports

10.1 A student must provide particulars of the progress and results of their research to their supervisor(s) from time to time and whenever requested.

11 Thesis requirements

11.1 The thesis

(a) may be concerned with the application and development of theory but not necessarily its generation;

(b) relates to the relevant industry or profession; and

(c) need not involve the same level of abstraction and conceptualisation as the Doctor of Philosophy thesis.

11.2 The thesis must

(a) make a sound, rigorous and original contribution to research;

(b) demonstrate the student's comprehensive understanding of the relevant literature;

(c) demonstrate the student's ability to use appropriate methodologies and techniques;

(d) demonstrate the student's ability to communicate the research and findings in a professional manner; and

(e) question, analyse, critique and develop the profession and its practices.

11.3 A student must not submit as their thesis material that has been presented for a degree in this University or another tertiary institution but may incorporate such material in the thesis if it is clearly indicated.
11.4 The sources from which a student's information is derived, the extent to which the work of others has been used and to which the assistance of individuals, associations or institutions has been obtained must be acknowledged generally in a preface or introduction, specifically in notes, a bibliography or appendices, and must be, throughout the thesis, shown clearly and fully by appropriate references.

11.5 The portion of material presented for examination that is claimed as original must be indicated in the thesis.

12 Format of the thesis

12.1 A thesis must be presented in the form specified in the rules for the relevant course.

12.2 If the thesis is in the form of a dissertation, it must consist of up to 70000 words (including footnotes, references and appendices).

12.3 Written work for a thesis must be in English unless the faculty has approved otherwise.

12.4 A thesis, whatever its form, must be recorded in a way that is permanently available to other scholars.

13 Jointly authored work

13.1 If any of the items submitted as the student's thesis have been jointly authored,

(a) the work done by the student must be clearly indicated and certified as such by the co-authors; and

(b) the co-authors must certify that they agree to the inclusion in the thesis of work of which they are joint authors.

13.2 A publication of which the student is sole or joint author may be submitted as an appendix in support of the thesis, but, in the case of joint authorship, the work done by the student must be clearly indicated.

14 Number of copies of the thesis required

14.1 A student is normally required to submit four copies of the thesis.

15 Withdrawal of thesis

15.1 A student is not permitted to withdraw a thesis after it has been submitted in a form suitable for examination.
16 Examination and classification of the thesis

16.1 Following submission of a thesis for a professional doctorate, the faculty, board or committee concerned must appoint three examiners for the thesis, at least two of whom must be external to the State of Western Australia.

16.2 A student's supervisor must not be an examiner for the thesis.

16.3 The advice to professional doctorate thesis examiners and the assessment criteria set out in Appendix 1 to this policy must be provided to all examiners.

16.4 The examiners each examine the thesis and report on it independently.

16.5 Unless requested to do so under 16.6, the examiners must not consult or otherwise communicate with each other or anyone connected with the preparation of the thesis before submitting their independent reports.

16.6 The faculty, board or committee concerned may request examiners to consult or otherwise communicate with each other before, or after, receipt of their individual reports.

17 Examination of a thesis prepared during the course of enrolment for a professional doctorate as a master's degree by research thesis

17.1 After having regard to the recommendation of the faculty, board or committee concerned, the Board of the Graduate Research School (the Board) may permit a student who has completed a thesis during the course of enrolment for a professional doctorate to submit that thesis for examination for the award of the degree of master by research (by thesis), although the student has at no time been enrolled for that degree.

17.2 If, after due consideration, the Board determines that a thesis produced as part of the course for a professional doctorate but recommended for submission for examination for the award of the degree of master by research (by thesis) is not suitable for that examination, it must so advise the student immediately.

17.3 If the Board is satisfied that the thesis is suitable for submission for examination for the award of the degree of master by research (by thesis), it must arrange the examination immediately.

17.4 If, following examination, the Board classifies a thesis submitted for examination in terms of 17.3 as Passed,

(a) the student is qualified for the award of the degree of master by research (by thesis) although they have at no time been enrolled for that degree; and

(b) the Board arranges for details of the student's qualification for the degree to be entered on the academic record as a course result of 'Master by Research (by thesis) Awarded'.
17.5 If, after considering the examiners' reports on a thesis submitted for examination in terms of 17.3, the Board determines that the thesis is not suitable for the award of the degree of master by research (by thesis) the Board must-

(a) so advise the student;

(b) arrange for the academic record to be annotated to indicate that the thesis was examined, but found unsuitable, for the award of the degree of master by research (by thesis); and

(c) inform the the faculty, board or committee concerned of the outcome.

17.6 The faculty, board or committee concerned, after it has been informed of the outcome under 17.5(c) may proceed to examine the thesis as a thesis for a professional doctorate.

18 Examination of a thesis prepared during the course of enrolment for a professional doctorate as a PhD thesis

18.1 After having regard to the recommendation of the faculty, board or committee concerned, the Board of the Graduate Research School (the Board) may permit a student who has completed a thesis during the course of enrolment for a professional doctorate to submit that thesis for examination for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy, although the student has at no time been enrolled for that degree.

18.2 If, after due consideration, the Board determines that a thesis produced as part of the course for a professional doctorate but recommended for submission for examination for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy is not suitable for that examination, it must so advise the student immediately.

18.3 If the Board is satisfied that the thesis is suitable for submission for examination for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy it must arrange the examination immediately.

18.4 If, following examination, the Board classifies a thesis submitted for examination in terms of 18.1 as Passed-

(a) the student is qualified for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy although the student has at no time been enrolled for that degree; and

(b) the Board arranges for details of the student's qualification for the degree to be entered on the academic record as a course result of 'PhD Awarded'.

18.5 If, after considering the examiners' reports on a thesis submitted for examination in terms of 18.1, the Board determines that the thesis is not suitable for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy the Board must-

(a) so advise the student;
(b) arrange for the academic record to be annotated to indicate that the thesis was examined, but found unsuitable, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy; and

(c) inform the appropriate faculty, board or committee concerned of the outcome.

18.6 The faculty, board or committee concerned, after it has been informed of the outcome under 18.5(c), may proceed to examine the thesis as a thesis for a professional doctorate.

19 Intellectual property, confidentiality

19.1 If a student's thesis or other work contains material of the kind described in 19.4, or if the student has obligations to a third party as outlined in that clause, a student must notify the faculty in writing, allowing sufficient time for the faculty to comply with 19.2.

19.2 Upon written application by a student or by an interested party prior to the lodgement of a thesis or other work, the faculty, after consultation with the student, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and others where appropriate, may restrict access to the thesis for a period of time not normally exceeding two years from the date that it is classified as Passed.

19.3 The faculty may grant a student permission to include in an appendix to the thesis material that is essential to the thesis but which is not available for general inspection for a period not normally exceeding two years from the date that the thesis is classified as Passed.

19.4 The restriction on access referred to in 19.2 and 19.3 normally applies only if the thesis contains confidential material, or if it was a condition imposed by the owner of private records and material used by the student, or if the student was in an employment or other contract relationship with a third party that made the restriction a condition of the contract.

19.5 In exceptional circumstances and after consultation with the student, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and others where appropriate, the faculty, board or committee concerned may, for reasons other than those outlined in 19.4 restrict access to the thesis or other work for a period not normally exceeding two years from the date that the thesis or work is passed.

19.6 Subject to 19.7, during a period of restricted access approved by the faculty the written consent of the student and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) is required for access to the thesis or the appendix.

19.7 The examiners of a thesis or other work and the faculty body concerned with its examination must have access to the thesis and any appendix to it for the purposes of any examination, re-examination or classification.

19.8 A person authorised to examine or consult a thesis or an appendix to a thesis in terms of 19.6 or 19.7 is required to sign a prior undertaking of confidentiality.

Appendix 1
1 Advice to professional doctorate thesis examiners and assessment criteria

1.1 Information about the professional doctorate

1.1.1 Professional doctorates offered by The University of Western Australia differ from the PhD course in a number of ways:

1.1.1.1 The degree program consists of both coursework (33.3%) and thesis (66.6%). Students must pass both components.

1.1.1.2 The doctorate is concerned primarily with professional practice and applications to that practice.

1.1.1.3 Students undertaking the doctorate are practitioners with at least two years of professional experience. They normally undertake doctoral studies on a part-time basis.

1.1.1.4 While professional doctorates may test theory, extend existing theory or develop new theory, the primary emphasis is on deducing implications of theory for policy and practice. Thus, while students must demonstrate an understanding of theories relevant to the thesis, it is not necessary for the thesis to be concerned with developing theory.

1.2 Examination Criteria

1.2.1 In order for students to pass the research component the thesis must:

(a) make a sound, rigorous and original contribution to research;
(b) demonstrate the student’s comprehensive understanding of the relevant literature;
(c) demonstrate the student’s ability to use appropriate methodologies and techniques;
(d) demonstrate the student’s ability to communicate the research and findings in a professional manner;
(e) question, analyse, critique and develop the profession and its practices.
1.3 Thesis Classification Categories

1.3.1 Examiners are asked to use the Examiners’ Recommendation Form. (TBA) The following may assist in using the form:

- Passed with no requirement for correction or amendment.
  
  The student needs make no amendment to the thesis, but may be given the opportunity by the Governing Board to correct small typographical or grammatical errors noted by the examiners.

- Passed subject to minor revision
  
  Minor revisions usually involving minor corrections to the argument or small alterations to the text, such as correction of typographical or grammatical and/or formatting errors. They may also include improving and/or correcting referencing. Minor corrections may take only a few weeks to complete. The thesis is not re-examined.

- Passed Subject to Revision
  
  Revisions involve more extensive corrections than the above category, do not require a candidate to re-enrol and complete further experimental work, or carry out more research. Examples of major revisions may include re-organisation of chapters, major re-editing of chapters and further explanation of results or conclusions. Major revisions may take three to six months to complete. The thesis is not re-examined.

- Resubmit
  
  A thesis which must be resubmitted requires alterations of such scale, complexity and/or conceptual significance that their adequacy should be reappraised again by an external examination. Thus, the thesis is sent for re-examination. In most cases, the thesis is sent only to the examiner/s who recommended the resubmit classification. In cases where the classification is a ‘re-submit’, we ask examiners to indicate their willingness to re-examine the thesis. Re-submission requires candidates to re-enrol and complete another 6-12 months’ work.

- Fail
A recommendation for a classification of FAILED should be made if, in the view of the examiner, the thesis is so fundamentally flawed that no amount of correction could rectify the deficiencies.

Printing and temporary binding

Some costs associated with printing and temporarily binding your work are paid by your school.

Temporary binding must be either thermal, spiral or clamp binding with a cover of cardboard, light card, heavy paper or plastic.

Ring or comb binding is recommended.

Binding can be carried out by:

- the Guild printing service
- Uniprint.

If you choose these services, you should obtain a T-Form from your school specifically for the cost of the temporary binding. You can also choose an external company to bind your work.

Do not combine the cost of temporary and permanent binding on one form.

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Binding and printing costs

Your school is responsible for the following costs:

- all paper costs
- printing costs
- labour and plastic materials for temporary binding
- special items like colour plates or inserts.

You are responsible for:

- all costs associated with draft copies.

Graduate Research School (Substitute Director Law School HDR)

Submitting your thesis for examination
Submit nomination of examiners form

At least three weeks before your intended thesis submission date, submit a completed nomination of examiners form and a copy of the thesis abstract to the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office.

Nomination of Examiners Form [RTF, 281.9 KB]
Updated 15 Jul 2014

Temporarily bind copies

Arrange for the appropriate number of copies of your thesis (three for PhD, two for master's) to be temporarily bound. With each copy, include a signed thesis declaration form, which is part of the thesis submission form below. Your declaration should be inserted directly after the thesis' cover page.

You must also provide an electronic copy of your thesis on a CD or flash drive in PDF format only.

Thesis Submission Form [RTF, 458.8 KB]
Updated 13 Feb 2015

Complete submission details

Complete the submission of thesis form (above) and arrange for your coordinating supervisor and graduate research coordinator to sign it. If you are enrolled in more than one school, you must have the signatures of your coordinating supervisor and graduate research coordinator from each school.

Make sure that you refer to your School/Centre's website or handbook for any requirements that you must meet prior to submission.
Submit all components

Submit all items to the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office. You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your thesis within a few days. The email is sent to your student email. If you do not currently have access to your student email please contact pgexam-grso@uwa.edu.au when you submit your thesis for examination.