

# Guidelines for Practice as Research PhD and MPhil Examination Submissions that Include an Artefact

## Section A: General Requirements

This document outlines the specific requirements for examination submissions for the PhD and MPhil programs at Griffith University where the submission includes:

- an artefact (this may be referred to in different disciplines as the 'creative' or 'practice-related component') and
- a critical research component (which may be referred to by different disciplines as the 'exegesis' or 'thesis'), either as separate components or in hybrid form.

Refer to the individual disciplinary guidance sections that follow in this document for the terms used to describe each of these components within that particular discipline.

For the purpose of these guidelines, this format is termed a 'practice as research' examination submission that includes an artefact. A practice as research submission may be the major examinable output of practice-based or practice-led HDR research<sup>1</sup> where contribution to knowledge (and for doctoral submissions, claims of originality) 'may be demonstrated through creative outcomes which may include artefacts such as images, music, designs, models, digital media or other outcomes such as performances and exhibitions. While the significance and context of the claims are described in words, a full understanding can only be obtained with direct reference to those outcomes'.<sup>2</sup>

While this approach to research can be undertaken in any discipline, the majority of practice as research examination submissions at Griffith that include an artefact are produced in the creative disciplines, as well as humanities, architecture and built environment.

In preparing the submission for examination, all HDR candidates are bound by the provisions in the [Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Examination Procedure](#) and associated guidelines.

### 1. What is involved in developing a practice as research PhD or MPhil examination submission?

Practice as research examinable outputs differ from a conventional PhD and MPhil theses because 'creative outcomes from the research process may be included in the submission for examination'.<sup>2</sup> The application of, or contribution to, knowledge in the field is demonstrated through the artefact alongside the exegesis or thesis.

As per conventional PhDs and MPhils, a practice as research examinable output must enable the candidate to demonstrate that they meet the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) learning outcomes for that degree, including:

- For a masters (research) degree, the application of an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research and scholarship; and
- For a doctoral degree, the application of a substantial body of knowledge in order to research, investigate and develop new knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Other terms used to describe this kind of research include creative research, artistic research, practice research and practice-related research.

<sup>2</sup> Candy, Linda. (2006). [Practice based research: A guide](#). Creativity and Cognition Studios Report. 1. p.3

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aqf.edu.au/>

Candidates who are considering undertaking a practice as research PhD or MPhil examination submission that includes an artefact should, where possible, flag that their research will include a creative praxis component as part of their admission application research proposal so that the supervisor may assess whether the approach can be accommodated. This is particularly important where it is likely that examination may include an artefact involving an installation, exhibition or live performance. At the point of HDR application assessment, the host School must indicate if they have the resources to support the project proposed by the applicant – in this context, it is beneficial that potential resource implications for the research project (such as the cost of bringing examiners to an exhibition in Queensland) are understood and accepted by the School.

Candidates who are supported by their supervisory team to undertake a research as practice PhD or MPhil will submit a proposal early in candidature that:

- articulates the research questions,
- includes a description of the project
- and addresses the theoretical and practice-based methodology/ies that will be used.

For PhD candidates, the proposal must demonstrate how the research will contribute to new knowledge in the broader theoretical and artistic context in which they are placing their work.

Please see the individual disciplinary sections that follow for more further guidance.

## 2. The examination submission

In the examination submission, the artefact and the exegesis or thesis:

- represent complementary outcomes of a single research project and, as such, will be examined in relation to each other;
- are normally physically presented as separate components, however in some disciplines, such as creative writing, these components may be integrated as one piece of work; and
- may be viewed together at the same point in time by the examiner or at different points in time, depending on discipline norms: e.g. for live performances and exhibitions, the examiners will normally be provided with the exegesis in advance before attending the performance/exhibition.

The artefactual and exegetical/thesis components are often in a symbiotic relationship, in so far as the theory informs practice and vice versa.

In planning the HDR project, the relative emphasis given to these two components is negotiated on an individual basis between the supervisory team and the candidate and may change as the project develops.

## 3. The artefact

Types of artefacts may include, but are not limited to:

- a single piece of work, such as a documentary, musical score, major performance, film or play script, novel, website, installation, architectural model, or a software program; or
- a combination of multiple works, such as an exhibition of artworks, a series of audio productions, poetry collection or a collection of design plans/prototypes.

In conjunction with the expectation that the examination submission meets the degree standards for a piece of academic research, It is expected that the artefact should satisfy a professional standard of technique and realisation within the discipline in which the work is situated, and, for doctoral examinations submissions, the artefact should be of a publishable standard.

Please see the individual disciplinary sections for further guidance on formats and standard of presentation of artefacts.

#### 4. The exegesis or thesis

The exegesis or thesis addresses the research aims employed when creating the artefact. Depending on the discipline, it may include documenting, contextualising, reflecting on and evaluating the artefact. In some disciplines, the candidate may also include in the exegesis or thesis an extended reflection on the creative process.

The same scholarly standards for research, argument and presentation of findings in a traditional HDR thesis apply to the exegesis or thesis component of a practice-based PhD or MPhil submission.

The word count for the exegesis or thesis should normally be in the range:

- Master of Philosophy: 15,000 to 25,000 words
- Doctor of Philosophy: 30,000 – 60,000 words

however, this may depend on disciplinary conventions. Please see the individual disciplinary sections that follow for additional guidance.

Refer also to the [Preparing your Thesis](#) website for requirements for the presentation and formatting of the exegesis or thesis.

#### 5. The abstract

The exegesis (or consolidated thesis where the artefact and critical component have been integrated into one piece of work) should include an abstract tying the whole work together and clarifying how the separate elements form different aspects of the PhD or MPhil project.

#### 6. Notice of intention to submit the thesis

The [HDR Examination Procedure](#) sets out the timeframe for candidates to complete and lodge an *Notice of Intention to Submit the HDR Thesis* form. Candidates who are submitting a practice-based thesis that includes multiple components for examination will provide a record of all components on the form. Upon approval of the notice of intention to submit, the process to nominate and appoint examiners will be initiated.

#### 7. Submission of components for examination

All components included in the examination of a practice-based PhD or MPhil thesis must be provided to the Griffith Graduate Research School as part of the thesis submission approval process set out on the [Steps to submitting a thesis webpage](#). Artefacts submitted digitally must have been prepared in an accessible format. Where such artefacts are best accessed via a platform (e.g. YouTube or Vimeo) they must be made private by a password link. The presentation of artefacts (or components of the artefact) in a digital format that is not accessible via standard software or password protected on an online platform is discouraged. If use of more specialist software is required, the candidate must specify this on the Notice of Intention to Submit form (see section 6), seeking supervisory support for the proposed medium. When supervisors are approaching prospective examiners, they will need to advise that the artefact will be presented in a non-standard format so that examiners can confirm their willingness/ability to accommodate this.

Please see individual disciplinary sections for more information on submission requirements for different types of artefacts.

## 8. Access to the practice-based PhD or MPhil submission following approval of award of degree

Following successful examination, the candidate is required to provide the final electronic submission of all components of the thesis for inclusion in the Griffith Research Online repository. If required for copyright, publication, screening or viewing purposes, at the point of completing the Thesis Submission Approval form prior to examination, a candidate can request that the work be embargoed in the GRO repository for a specific period of time (see the [HDR Examination Procedure](#) for the process and requirements for thesis embargo).

## 9. Discipline-specific information

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## Section B: Discipline-specific Information

### 1. Cinematic Arts

#### 1.1 Admission

Applicants should provide evidence of previous creative practice in relation to the proposed research project. Where this evidence includes cinematic arts artefacts, applicants should provide links to hosting platforms rather than media files.

#### 1.2 The artefact

Artefacts within the cinematic arts may take diverse forms across the spectrum of screen-based storytelling and screen-related practices—including fiction film; nonfiction/documentary film; television and streaming media; experimental film; animation (2D, 3D and stop motion); games and interactive media; virtual and extended reality storytelling; and sound-based works such as cinematic soundscapes or audio narratives. Artefacts may also take the form of pre-production materials (e.g. screenplays, previsualisation and prototyping artefacts) or production/post-production workflows.

The artefact may engage with a range of research concerns—artistic, technical, cultural, philosophical, social or industrial—and should contribute new knowledge through creative practice.

The complexity and format of the creative artefact (including size/length, platform, etc.) is to be negotiated with the supervision team, and must be achievable within the timeframe of the relevant research degree. This will usually be agreed at the Confirmation of Candidature milestone.

#### 1.3 The exegesis

The exegesis or thesis should clearly articulate the research problem or opportunity, key research question, a literature and contextual review, and the chosen methodology. It should also provide a critical discussion of how the creative practice/artefact engages with the research inquiry and contributes new knowledge. In most cases, this will include analysis or reflection on the production process and/or artefact.

The word count for the exegesis or thesis should be discussed and agreed with supervisors, and consider the complexity of the creative artefact, it should normally be in the range:

- Master of Philosophy: 15,000 to 30,000 words
- Doctor of Philosophy: 40,000 to 60,000 words

## 2. HLSS: Creative Writing; Drama & Theatre; Journalism

### 2.1 Admission

The expectations of applicants wishing to undertake 'practice as research' (PAR) higher degrees in the School of Humanities, Languages and Social Science are:

- i. that they have formal or professional training in the artform in which the PAR is to be conducted.
- ii. that they have experience in the artform in which the PAR is to be conducted.
- iii. that they have a track record of professional or near-professional ("pro-am") achievement in the artform in which the PAR is to be conducted.

'Training' in an artform means tertiary qualification, private lessons, formal courses, and/or professional experience that includes feedback on and review of creative work, with the aim of equipping the practitioner with professional skills and preparing them for professional practice.

'Experience' in an artform means practicing it professionally or near-professionally for 4 years or longer. 'Professional practice' refers to the development and production or publication of industry-standard work, rather the income generated by such work.

'Track record' means the achievement of industry standard or near-professional outcomes, bearing in mind again that this does not imply commercial outcomes. Industry standard outcomes may include publication in print or online in esteemed journals or literary magazines, live or recorded performances, or broadcast-quality productions.

In sum, applicants for PAR should demonstrate a well-developed skills-set and record of engagement with their artform to a level where they can be said to have *already* made a serious contribution to it before undertaking their degree.

### 2.2 The examination submission

The artefact and exegesis of a Creative Writing submission are usually submitted together as two parts of a single, written document, however some variation is possible. For example, the artefact might include electronic and/or interactive media.

Drama & Theatre artefacts may include various types of live performance events (see below). It is the nature of these events that their timing and location cannot always be controlled by the candidate, in which cases the candidate should submit the exegesis before the live performance.

Journalism submissions can involve a diverse array of artefacts in conjunction with a written exegesis.

For all disciplines in HLSS, the artefact and the exegesis should be submitted at the same time (or as one work in the case of the hybrid/blended model), or the exegesis should be submitted prior to the artefact if required (in the case of a live performance or exhibition).

## 2.3 The artefact

Examples of Creative Writing artefacts include: a collection of short stories or poetry; a novel; a book-length memoir or work of creative nonfiction; an electronic and/or interactive work or works. Shorter works are also possible (eg. a novella), however in such cases the exegesis would need to be correspondingly longer.

Examples of Drama and Theatre artefacts include: original play scripts; adapted play scripts with a significant level of creative originality; technical designs and drawings (e.g. lighting, sound, set and costume/props) for theatre and drama; various types of live performance or technical production events (e.g. workshop performances; play readings; theatrical demonstrations including technical theatre demonstrations; and industry standard or near-professional productions).

Journalism artefacts include works of film, photography and sound/audio works.

Size/length (PhD): for the PhD, artefacts should fulfill the norms and expectations of a substantive professional artwork. In the case of Creative Writing, prose artefacts should be 60-70,000 words, and poetry collections should be 80-110 pages. In the case of a play text and design plans and drawings, these should be for a full-length work (or shorter works to the equivalent of a full-length work). In the case of a live performance event, this should be a full-length production (or shorter productions to the equivalent of a full-length production). Current professional expectations indicate a “full length work” as being between 50 minutes and 150 minutes in duration.

Size/length (MPhil): MPhil artefacts should be roughly one third to one half the size of a PhD-level artefact. For example, prose artefacts should be 20-30,000 words, and plays will be less than 50 minutes. Although the MPhil artefact is smaller than it is for the PhD, it should be of a similarly professional and/or publishable standard.

Choice of platform: playscripts, as well as book-length works like novels, memoirs, and poetry collections, are literary artefacts. Design plans and drawings are portfolios of documents. Live performance events are *in situ* presentations. Performance events may also be presented digitally, however, either streamed live or prerecorded. Photographs can be portfolios and/or exhibited *in situ* or online. Video and audio works are submitted digitally but may also include live or exhibited elements.

## 2.4 The exegesis

The term used for the traditional research component of a PAR degree is “exegesis”, indicating that the document is linked to the creation of the artefact, and not separate from it. The norms and expectations applying to the exegesis are academic ones – i.e. that it will include research questions, a literature review, methodology equivalent chapter etc. – and where these do not apply, because the exegesis takes a novel form, this will be credibly explained.

The relationship between the artefact and the exegesis can take a variety of forms. More traditional approaches include a) an exegesis that critically evaluates the artistic process undertaken to make the artefact, and b) an exegesis that does not speak directly to the artefact necessarily, and is closer in form to a minor dissertation about the texts, ideas or preoccupations that informed the making of the artefact. However, it is also possible to adopt a hybrid or blended model, wherein the artefact blends creative and critical methodologies into a single creative work that reflects critically on its own production. Examples of this blended model are relatively common in Creative Writing, and

draw on practices from fictocriticism, autofiction and experimental memoir. At any rate, the relationship between the artefact and the exegesis should not be prescriptive.

The creation of an artefact aims to be a singular artistic object or experience, while the aim of an exegesis is the demonstration of substantial and (in the case of the PhD) new knowledge. The artefact must link in some significant way to the exegesis, and either the artefact or the set of texts, ideas and/or preoccupations that informed it must be referenced and discussed in the exegesis substantively. The exegesis should be broader than just a critical reflection on the artefact, and must seek to address a problem that the artefact in some way embodies or represents (for further discussion of this see Meyrick, J. "Reflections on the Applicability of Case Study Methodology to Performance-as-Research". *TEXT*, 8/2 Oct 2014).

For the PhD, the expected word count for an exegesis in HLSS is no less than 30,000 words and no more than 50,000 words. Where the artefact is shorter, the exegesis should be longer, and vice versa, so that the overall size and scope of the dissertation remains equivalent to 80-100,000 words. For a blended or hybrid model, the total thesis length would be 80-100,000 words.

For the MPhil, the expected word count for an exegesis is 10-15,000 words. As for the PhD, the size of the exegesis can be larger if the artefact is smaller, and vice versa. Blended or hybrid models are also possible. However, while the creative artefact of the MPhil should be of a professional/publishable standard, the exegesis does not need to meet the same requirements as those of the PhD. For the MPhil, the exegesis should consist of a substantial piece of research but does not need to offer an original contribution to knowledge.

## 2.5 Presentation/submission requirements

A literary artefact such as a novel, playscript or poetry collection (see 1.3) should be submitted along with its exegesis according to the requirements of traditional dissertation submission.

As discussed above, if an artefact is a live performance event and is incorporated in a professional season of work, then the time and place of its appearance will not be entirely within the applicant's control. It may occur either before or after the completion of the exegesis. This will also apply to other artforms (e.g. live music events, gallery exhibitions, etc). The design of the PAR should allow for this flexibility and not be compromised by it.

As discussed above, digital recordings are acceptable as artefacts, but if a live performance event is the artefact, then it should be assessed as such whenever possible.

In all cases, in HLSS the artefact and the exegesis be submitted at the same time (or as one work in the case of the hybrid/blended model), or the exegesis should be submitted prior to the artefact if required (in the case of a live performance or exhibition).



## 3. Music and the Performing Arts

### 3.1 Admission

- Applicants should evidence a professional standard of practice within their respective field or specialisation, as articulated in their CV and/or supplementary admission materials e.g., audio recordings, videos, scores, writings, reviews. Note: It is the responsibility of the prospective supervisor, in consultation with the HDR Convenor, to ensure that the proposed approach and output are appropriate for the discipline and will result in a submission suitable for a PhD or MPhil examination.

### 3.2 The examination submission

- The exegesis or thesis and all submitted artefacts for PhD and MPhil research should together form an integrated and coherent whole, with each component contributing to and enriching the other. The scope and scale of each element of the examination submission should be determined in consultation with the supervisor to best suit the specific research project. These elements and their scope should be agreed upon as part of the confirmation milestone.

### 3.3 Artefacts

- Creative or practice-related artefacts included in the PhD or MPhil submission should constitute a substantial contribution to knowledge and be proportionate in scale to the accompanying exegesis or thesis. That is, a smaller body of submitted creative work may necessitate a proportionally larger exegesis or thesis to meet the expectations of the degree, and vice versa.
- Artefacts included in a PhD or MPhil submission may include musical works (e.g., performance recordings, composition folio, curated events, installations, instrument design) as well as outputs in other relevant forms such as film, podcasts, websites, teaching resources, or community-based activities.

### 3.4 The exegesis or thesis

- The exegesis or thesis component of a practice as research PhD or MPhil should work in tandem with other submitted artefacts. Together, they should articulate and address the research question/s, contextualise the project within the relevant field, outline the methodological approach of the research, present the analysis, and demonstrate the overall contribution to knowledge.
- The suggested word count for an MPhil exegesis or thesis is 15,000–25,000 words, and for a PhD exegesis or thesis, 30,000–60,000 words, to be determined in consultation with supervisors and in relation to the scope and scale of the submitted artefacts.

### 3.5 Submission requirements

- While elements of the research project may be shared live (e.g., through performances, events, or community activities), documentation of all artefacts should be submitted in digital format alongside the thesis or exegesis to ensure that the entire body of work can be examined as an integrated whole.

- Additional supporting materials, such as recorded interviews, reviews, audience feedback or relevant correspondence, may also be included in the appendices of the examination submission.

## 4. Visual Arts and Design

### 4.1 Admission

- The candidate must meet the eligibility requirements for entry to the degree:  
**PhD:** <https://www.griffith.edu.au/study/degrees/doctor-of-philosophy-6001?location=dom&level=nsp#entry-requirements>  
**MPhil:** <https://www.griffith.edu.au/study/degrees/master-of-philosophy-5001?location=dom&level=nsp#entry-requirements>
- Applicants should provide evidence of creative practice as research in relation to proposed research project, such as gallery installation documentation.
- When an applicant's qualifications do not meet the equivalent qualifying degree requirements, a case for admission may be made by demonstrating evidence of obtaining the equivalence of <https://www.griffith.edu.au/research-study/equivalent-qualifications>
  - Evidence of equivalency includes:
  - Exhibition, presentation or gallery showings in a venue recognised nationally or internationally by peers in the discipline, such as a major festival or gallery location
  - Commissioning or funding by a distinguished public or private body
  - Inclusion of work in school or university curriculum
  - Recognition through exhibition catalogue from a reputable international or local academic/commercial publisher
  - Invitation to repeat exhibitions or performances
  - Awards, short-listing, prizes, honours, etc. judged by a panel of peers
  - Acquisition by a private or public collection
  - Discussion and dissemination by esteemed organisations e.g. broadcast or televised
  - Substantial reviews of the work written by peers in the field and published (in print and/or online) in academic journals, by commercial publishers in the national or international press, and/or by not-for-profit bodies of national and international reputation
- **Intellectual Property:** the Griffith Graduate Research School website includes guidance on Intellectual Property specifically for HDR candidates:  
<https://intranet.secure.griffith.edu.au/research/griffith-graduate-research-school/candidature/research-material>

### 4.2 The artefact

The creative output may take a variety of forms including:

- a performance
- an exhibition
- design
- film
- video
- e-portfolio or website
- multimedia
- other new media technologies and modes of presentation.

## 4.3 The exegesis

The preferred term in creative arts research is exegesis and drawn from foundational research in this field:

Barrett, Estelle, and Barbara Bolt. *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2007.

Smith, Hazel, Keith Armstrong, Sharon Bell, Simon Biggs, Anne Brewster, Andrew R. Brown, Roger T. Dean, et al. *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748636303>.

The exegesis must:

- present a research question
- contextualise the research as new knowledge within the field of its production.

The exegesis may:

- include information on the materials and methodology used
- elucidate the creative output
- place the creative output in an artistic, intellectual or cultural context.

In line with GGRS formatting <https://intranet.secure.griffith.edu.au/research/griffith-graduate-research-school/preparing-my-thesis/formatting>

The combined volume including the creative output and exegesis is approximately:

- PhD 40,000 words
- DVA 20,000 words
- MPhil 10,000 words

## 4.4 Presentation/submission

- The creative work and the written exegesis will be examined as an integrated whole.
- The creative work may be presented in the context of an exhibition, installation, performance or other in-person context.
- The exegesis should be provided to the examiners prior to the examination of the creative component.
- The outcomes of the examination for a thesis submitted with a creative or artistic component must relate to the whole thesis, including the artistic or creative work.
- Where the creative component is an exhibition or installation, the documentary record may take the form of a catalogue with high-resolution documentation of sufficient quality for examination.
- The student is responsible for creating the documentary record of the creative work.

### **Examination of a live exhibition or performance**

- Attending an exhibition or live performance enables the examiners to view the creative component of the exegesis that is intended to be experienced by an audience.
- The chair of examiners will arrange for the examiners to attend this event.

- If the event involves audience participation, the chair of examiners must ensure the candidate cannot inappropriately influence the examiners' assessment of the creative output.