

Structure of a research degree

Overview

UTS research degrees (Masters and PhD) are based on the [UTS Framework for Doctoral Education](#). This framework has been developed to ensure that you build the skills, knowledge and practice required to become an effective researcher.

Early in your research degree, you'll create a Doctoral Study Plan (DSP) in partnership with your supervisor. The DSP is a key component of the Framework: it will help you achieve your research goals by providing a structure and timeline for your research activities.

FASS research degrees

In line with the UTS Framework, a FASS research degree comprises three stages. Your progress through each stage should align with the activities and outputs detailed on your Doctoral Study Plan. You'll also undertake assessments at the end of each stage.

Stage 1: Confirmation of candidature

In stage 1, you'll confirm your research candidature by undertaking an oral and written assessment.

Assessment criteria

In this assessment, you should be able to demonstrate:

- an ability to select, analyse, synthesise and critically evaluate relevant material and literature pertaining to the field of study
- substantiation of the choice of research topic/questions and its significance as an original contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field of study
- a detailed plan of proposed research design and methods demonstrating alignment with research focus/questions
- understanding of resource implications
- understanding of ethical implications
- adoption of a suitable theoretical or conceptual framework for the proposed study
- evidence of capacity and feasible plan to complete the proposed research project within the prescribed time for the degree.

DCA/MCA candidates

If you're a DCA/MCA candidate, you may be assessed against additional criteria, demonstrating:

- evidence of understanding of the key themes and concepts of the creative work in process
- demonstration of a feasible research plan for the creative work and exegesis and capacity to implement this within the prescribed time for the degree
- demonstration of an awareness of the context in which the creative work is placed, including a context in academic literature and scholarly debate as well as creative practice
- a clear rationale for the choice of topic and its significance as an original contribution to the creative field

- adoption of a suitable theoretical or conceptual framework for the creative work and capacity for critical appraisal of relevant previous research
- understanding of resource implications where applicable
- demonstration of sufficient progress to confirm candidature.

Procedures

Your Principal Supervisor should complete the Nomination of Assessment Panel Members form and forward it for approval of the Research Degrees Committee. The panel should include your principal supervisor and two others, at least one of whom has expertise in your research area. An ECR should be invited to be a fourth member of the panel.

You'll present at an assessment seminars normally with other candidates from your relevant research strength. Each presentation will take up to 60 minutes, including time for feedback and discussion.

Shortly after the seminar and no longer than four weeks after the date of your presentation you must provide the Principal Supervisor with three copies of a paper for the Doctoral/Masters Assessment Panel. Your paper should be 5,000 – 10,000 words in length. You'll be assessed on the basis of this paper, rather than performance in the seminar.

The provision of the assessment report and feedback are the responsibility of your principal supervisor.

Stage 2: Confirmation of advanced progress

Stage 2 should confirm that you have made significant progress in your research degree. You'll take another oral and written assessment at the end of this stage to demonstrate your progress;

Assessment criteria

In this assessment, you should be able to demonstrate:

- an outline of outcomes of research commensurate with the scope and significance of doctoral contribution to knowledge
- a feasible plan to complete the proposed research project within the prescribed time for the degree
- demonstration of sufficient progress to date, relative to the stage of enrolment and degree
- an ability to present emerging findings in a written form appropriate to the discipline
- an ability to critically analyse emerging findings in the research
- an in-depth justification of the developing thesis including the capacity to receive and respond to critical feedback

If you're a DCA/MCA candidate, you may be assessed against additional criteria, demonstrating:

- an outline /exhibition of advanced stage of creative work plus brief analysis of the link to the forthcoming exegesis;
- evidence that the creative work is of a professional standard which makes an original and substantial contribution to the field
- the proposed form of final submission is appropriate and adequate

- the creative work contains material suitable for publication, exhibition, performance or other form of dissemination.

Procedures

For the oral component of your assessment, you'll give a presentation as part of a research seminar in your research strength.

For the written component of your assessment, you'll submit a paper to a refereed journal, or two draft chapters of your thesis to your principal supervisor. DCA/MCA students may provide an outline/exhibition of an advanced stage of the creative work.

Your work will be reviewed by the assessment panel convened at Stage 1 of your candidature.

Stage 3: Confirmation of readiness to submit

This stage confirms that you're ready to submit your thesis. You will be required to submit an oral and written assessment at the end of this stage.

Assessment criteria

In this assessment, you should be able to demonstrate:

- a capacity to provide a well-argued description and defence of the doctoral/masters work
- an original contribution to knowledge.

Procedures

You and your supervisor/s will agree on the parameters of your final assessment item. Your supervisor must also confirm that your masters/doctoral work is ready to be submitted for examination.

Note: All assessment presentations must be conducted in English. However, if you have made a special case to be examined in LOTE under the terms of UTS rule 11.15.3 and this has been approved by the Faculty and by the Graduate Research School, can submit your assessment papers for stages 1 and 2 in LOTE. An English language synopsis of the paper/s must be attached. The Panelist Feedback Form must be available in English, as well as the Final Recommendation Form by the principal supervisor.

Outcomes

The outcome of each stage assessment will be one of the following options:

1. Satisfactory confirm stage
2. Unsatisfactory reassessment required
3. Unsatisfactory discontinue with exit qualifications/course transfer
4. Unsatisfactory discontinue candidature.