Guidelines for examiners – PhD (Creative Writing)

1. Governance
All matters pertaining to doctoral degrees are the responsibility of the Graduate Research Committee under the general direction of the University's Academic Board.

2. The submitted thesis
2.1. In the context of the PhD (Creative Writing), “thesis” refers to creative work and accompanying critical component.
2.2. The PhD (Creative Writing) is undertaken by 100% research. Students produce a thesis during enrolment and under academic supervision.
2.3. The creative work should be constituted by a novel or a group of short stories or work of creative non-fiction, a play or a group of plays or a sequence of poems (book length, approximately 100 pages), or a portfolio of works of various genres. The creative component should be professionally presented.
2.4. The accompanying critical component can take the form of an exegesis or other work of scholarly research, or be a combination of both:
   • a scholarly exegesis which comments directly on the creative work (for example, from the perspective of a particular theory; or with a focus on style, composition, genre, or the influence of literary or non-literary contexts);
   • an independent but complementary work of scholarly research on a topic relevant to the creative work.
2.5. The creative work and the critical component must each be no less than 35,000 words. The combined word total of the two components must not normally exceed 100,000 words or be less than 75,000 words.
2.6. Students are required to submit an electronic and printed version of the doctoral work.
2.7. Monash permits doctoral students to submit a thesis including published works. The thesis may consist either wholly or in part of papers that have been published, are in press or submitted for publication. Theses in this format should still demonstrate a sustained theme, and should include clear statements on the student’s contribution to any co-authored work.
2.8. The examination of the thesis is undertaken by two independent and external examiners.
2.9. It is the practice at Monash to release the names of examiners who have agreed to act to the student.
2.10. The thesis is forwarded to an examiner in confidence. An examiner is under an obligation to maintain confidentiality and in no circumstance should the thesis or any part of the examination process be discussed with a third party without the prior approval of the Monash Graduate Education.
2.11. Normally neither the student nor the supervisor is allowed to contact examiners directly during the examination process.

3. Examiner’s assessment
3.1. The Committee wishes to receive clear advice (in English unless previously arranged) on specific aspects of the thesis and, to this end, the examiner is asked to place a tick as deemed appropriate in the report form. The examiner should also provide a written report.
3.2. To satisfy the requirements of the degree, the thesis must be a significant contribution to knowledge and understanding of the field concerned.
3.3. An examiner may request that the University obtains from the student clarification of specific points in the thesis. Such requests should be made only through the Monash Graduate Education.
3.4. Pass with minor amendments should only be made when the examiner can specify amendments so precisely that the Academic delegate of Monash (normally the head of department) decision is essentially a simple matter of fact.
3.5. Pass with major revisions should only be made when the examiner can specify amendments so precisely that the student can prepare an addendum.
3.6. Revise and re-examination will require the student to re-enrol for a period of up to 12 months. The revised thesis will be considered a new thesis. Revisions could range from extensive reformatting to conducting further research, analysis and clarification or re-analysis of results.
3.7. Fail should only be made when the examiner has determined that the student should not be awarded the degree and not be permitted to resubmit for re-examination.
3.8. Oral examinations are not normally a part of the examination process.
3.9. In cases where examiners deem it necessary to annotate a thesis, it should be done lightly in pencil or by the use of temporary adhesive labels.
3.10. The University makes awards on an annual basis for the best doctoral and research master’s thesis. Examiners are encouraged to make special mention of a thesis they believe is of exceptional quality.
4. Thesis merit
   4.1. Thesis merit is supplementary to the formal assessment and provides Monash with a metric on the quality of theses produced across the university. The merit descriptions are based on the agreement between Go8 Deans of Graduate Research, Australia to enable appropriate benchmarking.

5. Following receipt of both examiners’ reports
   Unedited copies of the examiners’ reports are forwarded to the student in due course.

   In the event that the two examiners disagree substantially in their assessment of the thesis, the relevant faculty is required to convene an examination advisory panel to determine a course of action. Most commonly the panel will recommend either a) the thesis be revised and resubmitted to the original dissenting examiner(s) or b) an adjudicator be appointed to review the two examiners’ reports, the student’s response to the reports and the thesis. The names of the examiners are not revealed to the adjudicator.

   For more information please visit the Graduate Research website.