

## **DOCTORAL THESIS**

### **RESEARCH THESIS ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The scope of the thesis should be what might reasonably be expected after 3-4 years full-time or 6-8 years part-time study. The thesis should not normally exceed the word limits given in the Academic Regulations for your award.

With regard to the structure and nature of the thesis, in each of the following areas the student will be expected to:

#### **Thesis contents**

- ensure that the contents of their thesis result from their own independent work, represent a new, substantial and original contribution to the field(s) of study and/or professional practice as evidenced by the discovery of new facts or by the exercise of independent critical analysis.
- ensure the research is of a quality able to satisfy peer review and merit publication in whole, in part or in a revised form.
- use the thesis to reflect a coherent research process from the acquisition of basic data to its final conclusions and provide an underlying rationale for the research which is clear and persuasive.
- show a critical appreciation of the context of the research, its relationship to existing literature and received opinion.
- apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of key concepts to a complex field(s) of study and/or professional practice.
- make reasoned judgements, possibly in the absence of complete data and show an appreciation of the limitations of their research and of areas worthy of further investigation.

#### **Presentation**

- lay out the thesis in a clear and readable manner with respect to both its language and structure and according to the presentation format stated in section 3 I of the Postgraduate Researcher Handbook.
- make effective use of cross-references, so that the text is readily navigable in order that the reader may extract the information sought.
- use references, bibliography and any headers/footnotes, avoiding both structural and stylistic inconsistencies.

#### **Methodology**

- demonstrate that the methodologies that they have adopted and/or developed are appropriate to the research undertaken and explicitly state and justify their underlying rationale.
- demonstrate, where relevant, that they understand and can clearly articulate any ethical implications of their research study.
- adopt and articulate clear and consistent criteria for the selection of data (or textual extracts) and the results of analyses.

## **AWARD DESCRIPTOR**

The following award descriptor is are from *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in January 2001. They outline the basic characteristics of study expected for Doctorate awards.

### **DESCRIPTOR FOR QUALIFICATIONS AT DOCTORAL (D) LEVEL:**

#### **DOCTORAL DEGREE**

##### **Doctorates are awarded to students who have demonstrated:**

- i the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- ii a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- iii the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- iv a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

##### **Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:**

- a make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- b continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches;

##### **and will have:**

- c the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.