

FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

Guidelines for the evaluation of PhD degree theses

1. General guidelines

PhD candidates must be able to demonstrate that they are conversant with the relevant literature, have clear research capabilities, and are able to present their research in the required format.

In addition to these requirements, a PhD thesis must indicate a **clear contribution** to new knowledge and insights into the specific subject discipline or field. The work must be of adequate quality to satisfy peer review scrutiny and merit publication of findings. In this regard, a thesis must reflect original thinking through the uncovering of new facts and/or the use of critical and independent analysis.

A PhD degree is a full research degree, requiring a thesis which contributes 100% of the final grade.

2. Format options

PhD candidates must be able to present their research in a systematic, logical and persuasively structured thesis. The final thesis can be presented in either the **conventional** format or in the **article** format.

2.1 Conventional format's structure and composition

The thesis would typically comprise the following general layout and elements:

- Title page
- Abstract and key terms (English (compulsory) and Afrikaans (optional))
- Acknowledgements
- Table of contents, abbreviations, lists of tables and figures (if applicable)
- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2 and/or 3: Literature review and/or Research method (if applicable)
- Chapter 4 etc: Empirical analysis and results
- Chapter #: Conclusions and recommendations
- References
- Addenda (may include questionnaires, informed consent forms and other relevant information).

2.2 Article format's structure and composition

The thesis would typically comprise the following general layout and elements:

- Title page
- Abstract and key terms (English (compulsory) and Afrikaans (optional))
- Acknowledgements
- Statement to the effect that the article format was chosen.
- Table of contents, abbreviations, lists of tables and figures (if applicable)

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2 and/or 3: Literature review and/or Research method (if applicable)
- Chapter 4/5/6: Article(s) ^{Note 1}
- Chapter #: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations
- References (may be separate for each article or combined at the end of the thesis)
- Addenda (may include questionnaires, informed consent forms and other relevant information).

Note 1: A thesis must consist of **three to five** articles, depending on the school / research entity's specific requirements

Important additional information

- The article(s) of an article format thesis can either i) be unpublished manuscripts suitable for publication, ii) already published articles, or iii) a combination of the aforementioned.
- Even in the article format, the thesis **must** still form a well-rounded integrated unit in its entirety.
- The inclusion of a literature review in the thesis will depend on how comprehensively the literature was reported on in the article(s). In most cases, however, a literature review may be required.
- The students should indicate the journal to which they intend to make submission, or have already made submission, or where the article has already been published. Author (journal submission) guidelines of the applicable journal(s) should be added in the addenda to the document.
- Because of the lengthy review process associated with some journals, it is **not compulsory** for an article to have been published when it is incorporated into the document, nor is the publication thereof a **prerequisite** for the examination of the document.
- Each article should contain a declaration of input and the role of co-authors (including the study leader) towards the article (if applicable). It should be noted that co-authors must provide specialty expertise, such as statistical services or other supportive expertise, that contribute to the value of the research output and aims to compliment the candidate's learning experience.
- Please note that the thesis will be send out to at least three examiners. It may therefore happen that an examiner requests a resubmission (with 'option 5" as indicated below). Kindly indicate in your written report whether you would like to see the resubmitted version of the thesis in such an event.
- The examined thesis (if returned) will be **shared** with the student, therefore we kindly request that if **track changes** are used to either **remove or change your name** from all comments. Please **do not** remove your name from the **examination report**.



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PHD EXAMINER'S REPORT

Candidate	
Degree	
Title of thesis	
Promoter	
Co-promoter	
Assistant promoter	
Examiner	

NOTE:

An examiner of a PhD thesis should provide the faculty's *Examination Committee* with a separately narrative, qualitative report covering the factors indicated below. The estimated weighting may provide a guideline of the relative importance of the factor in the overall thesis. A PhD thesis does not get an awarded percentage mark, but rather a fail or pass grade on the above criteria.

	Contribution				
1. Research theme	10%				
	Poor	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
• Is the theme worthy of research?					
• Has the field of research been demarcated in an applicable manner?					
• Is the title a satisfactory representation of the content?					
• Additional examiner comments:					
2. Problem statement and objectives	15%				
	Poor	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent

• Is the problem statement clearly formulated?					
• Are the objectives specified, sufficient and attainable?					
• Is the research problem contextualised by means of literature?					
• Additional examiner comments: 					
3. Literature analysis/handling of sources	20%				
	Poor	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
• Does the work provide sufficient evidence of knowledge of the relevant and recent research?					
• Has said knowledge been applied in a critical and integrated manner?					
• Have central concepts been sufficiently defined?					
• Has the study been placed within a fundamental theoretical framework (where applicable)?					
• Are the hypotheses logically deduced from theoretical problem statements (where applicable)?					
• Additional examiner comments: 					
4. Research methodology	15%				
	Poor	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
• Is the research design or method(s) appropriate to answer the research question(s)?					
• Has the student mastered the applicable research methodology?					
• Has the method been sufficiently conceptualised with regard to research design, participants or data sources, measuring instruments/methods of measurement with regard to the collection of data and/or the statistical/mathematical/qualitative analysis?					
• Additional examiner comments: 					

5. Problem-solving/reaching of objectives	20%				
	Poor	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
Is an acceptable solution to the research problem provided?					
Are the results clearly linked to the research problem and the study objectives?					
Are the implications, conclusions/generalisations logically justifiable?					
Have recommendations from the actual findings of the investigation been made?					
Have the limitations of the study and possible future research recommendations been made?					
Additional examiner comments:					
6. Logical structure	10%				
	Poor	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
Is the work as a whole systematic, logical and well structured?					
Were the arguments clearly unpacked from the problem statement to the conclusions?					
Additional examiner comments:					
7. Documentation and technical finishing	10%				
	Poor	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
Has the document been presented in an acceptable manner (e.g. references, tables and figures)?					
Is the stylistic and technical refinement in order?					
Has the document been written in acceptable language and is it technically well edited?					
Additional examiner comments:					

I have examined the above-mentioned thesis and my recommendation is as indicated by an X in the applicable block:

1.	Accepted unconditionally (<u>Definition</u> : Spelling errors, technical/layout/format changes, minor changes to sentences and explanations that do not affect the science or the way in which the results were interpreted and presented, but give clarifications where necessary may be included in this option)	
2.	Accepted on condition that specified revisions be made to the satisfaction of the promoter (<u>Definition</u> : Revisions of a larger extent than mentioned in option 1 may be included, for instance improving logical arguments or critical discussions. Changing the layout and/or technical finishing. The research must however be scientifically sound and acceptable)	
3.	Accepted on condition that specified revisions of a substantive nature be made to the satisfaction of the academic director concerned (<u>Definition</u> : Revisions of a substantive nature refers to major or sizable changes for instance rewriting specific parts, updating missing information or completing half-finished arguments. The research however, must still be scientifically sound and acceptable)	
4.	Accepted on condition that specified revisions of a substantive nature be made to the satisfaction of the examiners concerned (<u>Definition</u> : The student will pass. Revisions of a substantive nature refers to major or sizable changes for instance rewriting specific parts, updating missing information or completing half-finished arguments. The research however, must still be scientifically sound and acceptable)	
5.	Not accepted in its current format , in which the case is referred back to the candidate for revision, elaboration or amendment and resubmission for re-examination (<u>Definition</u> : The student will not pass at this stage. This option means that the research is scientifically not-acceptable or in order and should be revisited, elaborated on and/or changed and re-submitted for examination. Candidates will only be able to resubmit a specific research product once for resubmission. The thesis will be submitted to the examiner for re-examination unless it is decided otherwise by the Faculty Board or its delegates in which case the examiner will receive notification from the Dean)	
6.	Not accepted at all , in which case the candidate fails (<u>Definition</u> : This option means that the research has failed in its totality, that it cannot be reworked or resubmitted and that the student has to start all over)	

Signature

Date