

# Requirements for PhD with a Creative Practice Component

## Postgraduate Studies

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

## OVERVIEW

A PhD which includes a creative practice component is an alternative to the traditional PhD by single 'unpublished' thesis document. This model is an option for students who intend to integrate a creative practice component such as a music or dance performance, composition, film or literary production, creative written work, exhibition or design, with a thesis. The PhD with a creative practice component involves both producing new and original works in the candidate's chosen medium/media, and engaging in critical reflection, examination, and analysis of both their own processes of creative production in the chosen field and the wider social, cultural, theoretical and conceptual contexts in which this occurs. As with all types of academic research, the PhD with a creative practice component is original, speculative and systematically pursues new knowledge. However, while the outcomes of research with creative practice can mirror the range of outcomes found in many different academic disciplines, it is the presentation of those outcomes that differentiates creative practice research from other approaches. These requirements should be considered in consultation with the PhD regulations which can be found online at <http://calendar.waikato.ac.nz/regulations/higher/phd.html>.

## THE PRESENTATION OF A PHD WITH A CREATIVE PRACTICE COMPONENT

A PhD with a creative practice component is presented in three interrelated parts:

- (i) **A Thesis Abstract** (max. of 2 written pages) that outlines the nature, scope and intent of the creative project. The abstract must provide a brief description that locates the creative and written components within their relevant fields of practice and theory. It must also outline the proportionate balance between the respective creative and written components, and their preferred 'reading/viewing' order.
- (ii) **A creative practice component** presented in a format that provides a durable record of the creative work undertaken for the creative project. In the case where the creative practice component of the research is a major live performance or exhibition for examination, this must be professionally recorded in an appropriate high quality medium. This will be submitted to the Postgraduate Studies Office with the written thesis component. A copy of the recorded material will also be submitted to the University Research Repository upon completion of the degree.
- (iii) **Written Thesis Component** of between 40,000 and 60,000 words which follows the general structural requirements of a thesis document, in terms of, for example, containing a literature review, methodology, findings, etc., and which provides a critical scholarly analysis of the creative project and its outcomes. A written creative practice component, such as prose fiction, poetry or script, can not be counted as part of the written thesis component.

## ▼ REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE INTO A PHD WHICH WILL INCLUDE A CREATIVE PRACTICE COMPONENT

In addition to meeting the entry criteria for the PhD, applicants who wish to include a creative practice component in their PhD are expected to have advanced training or professional experience in the relevant creative field. Advanced training may be understood as a postgraduate degree or diploma and professional experience may be understood as two or more year's employment or productivity in the relevant creative field.

At the application for confirmed enrolment stage (normally at six months of full-time study) PhD candidates are required to present a formal research proposal; candidates intending to include a creative practice component must outline the intended integration of the creative and written components as part of the draft methodology chapter.

The supervision team should comprise at least one supervisor who also has professional experience as a practitioner in the relevant creative field/s.

## ▼ EXAMINATION

The PhD is to be examined on the basis of the combination of the creative practice component and the written thesis. These components are not to be examined separately, but as an integrated whole constituting the original and substantial contribution to knowledge required of research candidates at doctoral level.

- Examiners for a PhD with a creative practice component should be nominated following the standard processes for appointing examiners. Examiners should normally have a PhD and at least one examiner should have professional experience as a practitioner in the relevant creative field/s.
- Examiners will be advised of the format of the examinable creative practice component at the time they are first approached by the Chief Supervisor to examine the thesis.
- For creative projects that require examiner attendance at an exhibition or performance, these additional requirements are to be followed:
  - a) Examiners will be advised of the requirement to attend a live performance or exhibition at the time of their appointment and costs associated with travel will be the responsibility of the relevant Faculty. Where the Postgraduate Research Committee consider that the quality of the work being examined will be retained through recorded media, they may allow an examiner to receive a recording of the performance or exhibition. At least one examiner must view the live performance or exhibition.
  - b) Examiners will be provided with the Abstract no less than 14 days prior to their scheduled attendance at the live performance or exhibition. If the candidate has opted for the written thesis component to be read prior to the viewing of the performance or exhibition, then this must also be provided no less than 6 weeks prior to the scheduled live performance or exhibition.

## ▼ CONCLUSION

The PhD with a creative practice component should not lessen the extent to which scholarship is developed during the PhD. It is an alternative designed to facilitate the development of new knowledge that can be expressed through creative practice. It is critical that the supervision team and student negotiate and clarify the relationship of the creative practice components with the written thesis component. Finally, the PhD candidate and the supervision team need to consider the following: Does the PhD with a creative practice component make a strong contribution to the research and indicate that the candidate can conduct independent research? Ultimately this is the goal of any PhD.