



John Paul II Institute

for Marriage and Family, Melbourne

Characteristics and Assessment of a Masters Dissertation

1. Characteristics of Dissertation

- Demonstrates possession of advanced knowledge in a specialised field.
- Shows evidence of an original investigation and testing of hypotheses.
- Shows an ability to make critical use of published work and source materials as well as an appreciation of the relationship between the topic and the wider field of knowledge.
- Demonstrates competence in independent work and an understanding of the techniques and/or approaches which are appropriate to the research questions.
- Involves research the scope of which need not be a new line of development but which shows that the candidate has mastered research and synthesising skills in producing a contribution to knowledge.
- Demonstrates the contribution to knowledge by drawing generalisations or further hypotheses for testing that are well grounded in the findings.
- Should be presented in succinct formal English.

2. Approval of Topic and Supervision

The Academic Board will approve a Masters dissertation topic in accordance with the Academic Regulations and, on the advice of the Dean, appoint a supervisor. On the advice of the Dean, an associate supervisor may also be appointed.

3. Appointment of Examiners

The Academic Board on the advice of the Dean will appoint examiners for Masters dissertations after consultation with the supervisor (except in the event that the Dean is the supervisor, in which case the Board will consult the Associate Dean).

The Board will appoint two external examiners for Masters dissertations, but for the Master of Sacred Theology dissertation, two external and one internal examiner will be appointed.

A candidate's supervisor may not be appointed to be an examiner for a dissertation.

4. Examination of Dissertation

The examiners will examine the dissertation and make separate reports which will be submitted for consideration to the Academic Board.

Each examiner's report will include a recommendation:

- (a) That the student has met the dissertation requirements and has passed outright; or
- (b) That the student has passed the dissertation, subject to minor changes, as recommended in the examiner's report, being made to the satisfaction of the Dean acting on the advice of the supervisor; or
- (c) That the student be permitted to revise and re-submit the dissertation for re-examination within an appropriate time frame of no more than two semesters, as determined by the Academic Board, in consultation with the supervisor and in accordance with the Academic Regulations, or
- (d) That the student has failed to meet the dissertation requirements and has failed outright.

Examiners will also be requested to provide a grade for the dissertation in accordance with the following:

Grade	Code	% Range
High Distinction	HD	85-100
Distinction	DI	70-84
Credit	CR	60-69
Pass	PA	50-59
Fail	NN	0-49

These grades are awarded on the basis of the dissertation as submitted for examination and not on the basis of a version produced after revisions have been made in the light of examiners' comments.

5. Resolution of Differences in Assessment of a Dissertation

In the case of a serious difference of opinion between dissertation examiners, that is, more than one grade apart, the Dean or Associate Dean will either refer the issue to a designated sub-committee of the Academic Board or seek consultation and resolution of the issue in discussion with the examiners.

The sub-committee will be given copies of the dissertation and the examiners' reports and may:

- (a) seek consultation with and/or between the examiners to resolve the issue;
- (b) not re-examine the dissertation but make a recommendation to the Dean based upon the advice found within the conflicting examiners' reports;
- (c) ask the candidate to re-submit the dissertation within two semesters only to the examiner that required re-submission or both; or
- (d) appoint an adjudicator, external to the sub-committee, who will be given a copy of the dissertation and the examiners' reports.

The adjudicator's report will be provided to the sub-committee for it to make a final recommendation to the Academic Board.

In the case where one of the examiners has recommended a fail outright and this issue cannot be resolved amongst the examiners outright, the Committee must seek adjudication.

6. Revision and Resubmission

A candidate may be permitted to re-submit their dissertation in accordance with paragraphs 4.c and 5.c no more than twice. The final grade awarded when a dissertation is re-submitted will normally not to be higher than Credit.

A candidate who has been deemed to have failed to meet the dissertation requirements by the examiner(s) and has failed outright shall not be permitted to re-submit the dissertation for further examination.

7. Award of Degree

The Academic Board will receive the reports of the examiner(s) and, following successful completion of any requirements, will accept the candidate as a graduand.

**Approved: Academic Board
16th November 2009**

**Revised: Academic Board
13 June 2012**