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**School of Culture and Communication**  
Minor Thesis Student Guide

# **Guide for Honours, Graduate Diploma (Advanced) and Coursework Masters Minor Theses**

**2024**

16 February 2024

This guide aligns with the University's Assessment and Results Policy ([MPF1326](#)).

This policy outlines the key principles for the production, supervision and examination of minor theses.

This guide is valid for students commencing in semester 1, 2024 and semester 2, 2024.

The term "minor thesis" refers to both Honours theses and Graduate Coursework theses.

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## School of Culture and Communication Minor Thesis Subjects

|           |  |      |
|-----------|--|------|
| ACUR90009 | Art Curatorship Thesis Part 1            | 37.5 |
| ACUR90010 | Art Curatorship Thesis Part 2            |      |
| AHIS40023 | Art History Thesis Part 1                | 50   |
| AHIS40024 | Art History Thesis Part 2                |      |
| AMGT90027 | Arts Management Thesis Part 1            | 37.5 |
| AMGT90028 | Arts Management Thesis Part 2            |      |
| CWRI40015 | Creative Writing Thesis Part 1           | 50   |
| CWRI40016 | Creative Writing Thesis Part 2           |      |
| CWRI90015 | Creative Writing Thesis Part 1           | 50   |
| CWRI90016 | Creative Writing Thesis Part 2           |      |
| ENGL40026 | English & Theatre Studies Thesis Part 1  | 50   |
| ENGL40027 | English & Theatre Studies Thesis Part 2  |      |
| GEND40006 | Gender Studies Thesis Part 1             | 50   |
| GEND40007 | Gender Studies Thesis Part 2             |      |
| INDG40003 | Indigenous Studies Thesis Part 1         | 50   |
| INDG40004 | Indigenous Studies Thesis Part 2         |      |
| JOUR90015 | Journalism Thesis Part 1                 | 37.5 |
| JOUR90016 | Journalism Thesis Part 2                 |      |
| MECM40018 | Media & Communications Thesis Part 1     | 50   |
| MECM40019 | Media & Communications Thesis Part 2     |      |
| MECM90029 | Media and Communications Thesis Part 1   | 37.5 |
| MECM90030 | Media and Communications Thesis Part 2   |      |
| MECM90032 | Marketing Communications Thesis Part 1   | 37.5 |
| MECM90033 | Marketing Communications Thesis Part 2   |      |
| PUBL90022 | Publishing and Communications Thesis Pt1 | 37.5 |

|           |  |           |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| PUBL90023 | <b>Publishing and Communications Thesis Pt2</b>    |           |
| SCRN40017 | <b>Screen &amp; Cultural Studies Thesis Part 1</b> | <b>50</b> |
| SCRN40018 | <b>Screen &amp; Cultural Studies Thesis Part 2</b> |           |

## The Thesis

The thesis has a weighting of 37.5 points or 50 points within the 100 points of a full fourth year, graduate diploma (advanced) or level five (second 100 points) of a Masters by coursework degree. Enrolment in the thesis is over **two consecutive semesters**. You must enrol in **Part 1** in your commencing semester and enrol in **Part 2** for your second *consecutive* semester.

If you are part-time, you are required to undertake the thesis only in the final two consecutive semesters of your enrolment.

You must achieve Honours-level grades (minimum 65%-H3) for each component of assessment to qualify for the BA Honours degree.

## Length

The word length requirement is 15,000 for a 50-point thesis and 12,000 words for a 37.5-point thesis. Assignments that exceed the word limit by more than 10%, **inclusive of footnotes**, attract a marking penalty of 10% of the marks that would otherwise have been awarded. Assignments that exceed the word limit by 25% or more may attract a higher penalty, including a cap on the maximum grade awarded.

If you are completing a Creative Writing thesis, the word length requirement is 15,000 words total, which comprises 7,500 words of critical writing and 7,500 words of creative writing on the same topic.

Please consult the [Handbook](#) for the time commitment requirement for your subject.

## Student responsibilities

You have a responsibility to contribute to your own learning. Please:

- Familiarise yourself with the guidelines for assessment.
- Be aware of the requirements and due dates for each of the components of assessment.
- Ensure that you consider the total time commitment to study for your subject.
- Make sure that your studies are not impeded by part-time work or other outside commitments.
- Regularly consult your subject's LMS site.
- Proactively communicate with your supervisor via email and in regular meetings.
- Seek assistance if you are experiencing difficulties with any aspect of your studies as early as possible.

It is also your responsibility to ensure timely enrolment in the correct number of subjects at the appropriate year level.

## Supervision

You will be assigned a supervisor based on the thesis proposal you submit and available resources. Your supervisor will help you firm up the topic; discuss methods of research, interpretation, and writing; answer any technical questions on presentation; and review drafts.

### Expected frequency and length of supervision meetings

Your supervisor will arrange regular meetings with you to discuss the design and conduct of your research, its outcomes and the preparation of your thesis or report and any oral presentations required ([MPF1326 section 5.11\(e\)](#)).

The expected frequency and length of your supervision meetings is fortnightly for at least half an hour (or equivalent) during teaching periods, as stated in the handbook entry for your subject.

### Communication

In addition to fortnightly meetings with you, your supervisor will communicate proactively with you via email or other means to sufficiently meet their obligations outlined in section 5.11 of the Assessment and Results Policy ([MPF1326](#)).

If you do not respond to your supervisor's communications and/or if you miss meetings, then your supervisor will meet their obligations outlined in the Student Fitness to Study Policy ([MPF1349](#)).

## Examination

Your Program minor thesis coordinator will appoint two examiners for your minor thesis. The two examiners, where practicable, are not to be made known to each other and are not also members of your supervisory team (5.15 in [MPF1326](#)).

These examiners are given clear guidelines about the assessment criteria and standards required for the various grades of assessment ([MPF1326](#)). This includes the rubric that is included in this document in Appendix 1.

The process for arriving at a single mark and grade is:

- a) If the examiners' numeric marks are within 10 or fewer marks of each other, the average of the examiners' marks is recorded as the final mark.
- b) If the examiners' numeric marks are 80 or above, regardless of the difference between the marks, the average of the examiners' numeric marks are recorded as the final mark.
- c) If the examiners' numeric marks differ by 10 or more and one or more marks are outside the Honours First Class grade (H1), each examiner is sent their co-examiner's report de-identified and asked to reconsider their mark. If after this process:
  - i) the difference in numeric mark remains 10 or more and one or more marks are outside the H1 grade, a third examiner is appointed. When a third examiner is appointed they are not informed of the other marks, nor provided with the written comments of the previous examiners. After additional marks and comments have been received, the final mark is the rounded average of the three marks.
  - ii) the difference in numeric marks is less than 10, the average of the adjusted marks is recorded as the final mark (5.16 in [MPF1326](#)).

### Human Research Ethics

Where possible and appropriate a [Student Coursework Program ethics application](#) will be prepared by your Program minor thesis subject coordinator to encompass similar, low risk student projects within the same minor thesis subject. Where your research project falls outside the parameters of your Program's Student

Coursework ethics approval or your Program does not have such approval, you, together with the active involvement of your supervisor, can submit a standard project ethics application through the usual University process.

## Examination Confidentiality, Transparency and Review

It is the responsibility of your minor thesis subject coordinator and examiners to treat the examination process confidentially. Once your thesis is submitted for examination, there is no further discussion of the thesis, the identity of its author, and/or the identity of the examiners until the result is made official. The only exception is discussion initiated by your minor thesis subject coordinator for the purpose/s of appointing suitable examiners and/or of finalising results.

Once your thesis result has been finalised and the examiners' comments have been released to you, your supervisor has the right to be informed by the minor thesis subject coordinator of your result and the anonymised examiner reports.

The review process for minor thesis results follows the [Assessment and Results Policy MPF1326 \(see 4.103 – 4.107\)](#).

## Minor Thesis Deadlines

### Semester 1, 2024 Commencement

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>End of week 1</b>   | Submit a thesis timeline to your supervisor.  |
| <b>End of week 3</b>   | Submit Human Ethics application if applicable.  |
| <b>Friday, 2 August 2024</b><br>(Unless otherwise negotiated with your supervisor) | <p>A full draft of the thesis to be submitted to your supervisor by 5.00 p.m.</p> <p>The draft should be fully written, with footnotes and up-to-date bibliography.</p> <p>The supervisor will read and comment on this draft. The supervisor is under no obligation to read drafts submitted later than this deadline. A supervisor is not required to read multiple drafts of a thesis.</p> |
| <b>Friday, 4 October 2024</b>  | The final submission date. An electronic copy must be submitted to the minor thesis subject's LMS page (Part 2 of the subject), via Turnitin on or before the due date. Please note that this is an examination date and unless there are exceptional circumstances, extensions will not be approved.   |

*Note:* You should not submit your thesis without your supervisor viewing and approving the final document.

## Semester 2, 2024 Commencement

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>End of week 1</b>  | Submit a thesis timeline to your supervisor.  |
| <b>End of week 3</b>  | Submit Human Ethics application if applicable.  |
| <b>Friday, 7 March 2025</b><br>(Unless otherwise negotiated with your supervisor) | <p>A full draft of the thesis to be submitted to your supervisor by 5.00 p.m.</p> <p>The draft should be fully written, with footnotes and up-to-date bibliography.</p> <p>The supervisor will read and comment on this draft. The supervisor is under no obligation to read drafts submitted later than this deadline. A supervisor is not required to read multiple drafts of a thesis.</p> |
| <b>Friday, 9 May 2025</b>   | <p>The final submission date. An electronic copy must be submitted to the minor thesis subject's LMS page (Part 2), via Turnitin on or before the due date. Students should note that this is an examination date and unless there are exceptional circumstances, extensions will not be approved.</p>  |

*Note:* You should not submit your thesis without your supervisor viewing and approving the final document.

## Footnote, Endnote, and Bibliography Styles

Essays and other pieces of written work should be set out according to the style guide prescribed for the relevant discipline. For example, APA7. See your supervisor for your discipline's particular system and pick up a copy of the school's [Essay Writing Guide](#).

## Extensions for Theses/Special Consideration

Extensions will only be considered well in advance of the due date. Applications for extension submitted in the two weeks before the thesis is due and without prior consultation will only be considered in extenuating circumstances. Workload (e.g. assessment due in other courses) will not be accepted as grounds for an extension. Students should be aware that the School has only limited ability to grant extensions.

Requests for extensions for up to 10 working days from the original due date for submission should be submitted to your minor thesis subject coordinator (with your supervisor's agreement) with supporting documentation attached to the appropriate extension form, which is available from the [School's website](#).

Applications for extension for a period longer than 10 working days from the original due date must be submitted as a formal request for Special Consideration. You may apply for Special Consideration through

your student portal, via the Special Consideration website. The Special Consideration team will assess your application and contact you with an outcome. Please be sure to also forward the outcome to your thesis Subject Coordinator.

**Please note that if you are seeking an extension, extending the submission date for your thesis may mean that results are not submitted in time for consideration for federal and university graduate scholarships or for graduation ceremony deadlines (mid-year/end of year).**

## **Penalties for Late Assignments and Theses**

If your assignment or thesis is received late without an approved extension:

It will be marked in the normal manner, and this grade (not the mark) will be indicated on the piece of work for your information as to the standard the work has attained.

It will have 5% of this mark deducted for each day that the assignment is late as a penalty. This will be the final mark for the piece of work.

The resulting grade, and the fact that a lateness penalty has been imposed, will be indicated on the piece of work.

Exceptions will only be made in the case of serious unforeseen circumstances, such as serious illness or an accident. In such circumstances, you have an obligation to inform your Honours/Masters Coordinator, as soon as possible.

Examiners are under no obligation to accept late work without an approved extension. If accepted, examiners will mark and return late work in due course, but are under no obligation to return late work promptly or at the same time as work submitted on time. This will also affect your eligibility to graduate, as your result may not be finalised by the official results release date.

## **Academic Integrity**

The University of Melbourne expects the highest ethical standards from its students and staff in all areas of their academic work and professional behaviour. The work of each individual reflects on the academic and professional standing of the University as an institution that upholds ethical practice in research, learning, and teaching. Academic work submitted for assessment or publication must be the original work of the author or authors. If the ideas or words of others have been drawn upon, this must be thoroughly and clearly acknowledged using agreed scholarly conventions.

The maintenance of academic integrity involves high quality scholarly practices, the use of reputable sources of information and the full acknowledgement of the authors and creators of ideas and materials that have informed one's work. Guidance on this is available [here](#).

## **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in theses**

The use of generative AI applications such as ChatGPT is against the spirit and purpose of the thesis form, which is designed to test a student's own ability to formulate original research questions, investigate them appropriately, analyse the resulting data and draw valid, even ground-breaking conclusions. Knowingly having a third party, including artificial intelligence technologies, write or produce any work (paid or unpaid) that a student submits as their own thesis work is deliberate cheating and is academic misconduct subject to University penalty.



The use of translation and editing tools is also covered by academic integrity principles because there is a risk these tools can be deployed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, in ways that go beyond mere editing for correct English. Unacceptable use involves *transformation* of part or all of a thesis: it relates to *developing* the work, *changing* or *extending* the meaning, and/or *concealing* plagiarism.

The [University's staff website on academic integrity](#) notes that the risks for students in using translation and editing tools include:

- The use extends to the point where the student is no longer expressing their own ideas
- The use extends to the point where the student is no longer demonstrating their own understanding of the subject matter
- The tools provide an unfair advantage to the student in the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, particularly as they relate to clear expression and the communication of ideas
- The use represents other types of misconduct, such as plagiarism from non-English sources.

The University has also banned the use of AI by academics to assess student work or to provide formative or summative feedback.

**Academic Integrity standards apply equally to all modes of writing, including critical and creative writing.**

**Academic integrity policies apply to all assessment, including every part of the minor thesis.**

**Submitting the same writing for assessment in two subjects is also considered plagiarism, even if it is your own work.**

**There is one exception however: some overlap between written assessment submitted in Research Principles and Practices and the introductory chapter of the thesis is permitted.**

## Preparation of the Final Copies of the Thesis

You are required to submit your thesis via Canvas. You are also required to submit a signed copy of the thesis declaration form (available below).

### Order of thesis sections

Your thesis should contain, in this order:

1. Title Page (see below)
2. Abstract (see below)
3. Table of Contents (see below)
4. Acknowledgements (if desired, see below)
5. Introduction (which sets out the problem to be investigated and the way it is to be tackled)
6. The text – divided into chapters, according to the nature of the material (usually 4 to 6 chapters). The first chapter is normally an Introduction (see below) and the last chapter may be a Conclusion, although in many cases, the conclusion can be absorbed into the last chapter.
7. List/s of works cited
8. List of Illustrations (if only one volume is used)

[In a Creative Writing thesis, items 1-4 and 7-8 must be presented in this order, but there is some scope for variation in the presentation of the critical and creative components].

### **Abstract**

Your title page must be followed by an Abstract of 100-150 words in English that outlines the purpose of your thesis and its key outcomes/findings.

In the case of creative practice/non-traditional minor theses, your abstract must include a description of the form and presentation of the creative work.

### **Acknowledgements**

Your acknowledgements should acknowledge any special assistance provided by interviewees, librarians, archivists, correspondents and so forth. It may include thanks to friends, family, and others who provided moral or emotional support. If any part of your thesis has a contribution by someone other than the author, such as the drawing of diagrams, computer generated charts etc., this must be acknowledged. If any aspect of your thesis develops from, builds on, or relates in some way to work done for some other course, or job etc., this should be explained in a preface or in the introduction.

### **Page Layout**

- **Margins:** Use a left margin of not less than 4 cm, and top, bottom, and right margins of not less than 2.5 cm.
- **Font:** Text should be one-and-a-half spaced, set in 12-point type, using a legible font. Avoid fancy fonts. Palatino or Times Roman usually work well.
- **Headings and Subheadings:** Use display fonts sparingly, for headings and subheadings. The overall page layout should allow for easy navigation and immediate identification of textual elements. Check this by viewing the text in page preview form on your computer screen. In a clearly laid out thesis, the distinct elements (headings, paragraphs, quotations, notes) should be easily distinguished even in the reduced page size of the computerscreen.

[Sample Title Page]

**My Wonderful Thesis**

A thesis presented by

**Sarah M. Gellar**

[insert student number]

to

The School of Culture and Communication

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) / Graduate Diploma in Arts (Advanced) / Master of Arts

in the field of

[area of study and thesis subject number, e.g. Art History AHIS40021]

in the

School of Culture and Communication

The University of Melbourne

Supervisor: Ethel M. Dell

October 2024

## THESIS DECLARATION

I declare that:

1. I have read and understood the Student Academic Integrity Policy (MPF1310).
2. My thesis comprises only my own work, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text of the thesis to all other material used.
3. The length of the thesis is 15,000 words (for 50-point theses) or 12,000 words (for 37.5 point theses), including footnotes, but excluding appendices, acknowledgments, synopsis, table of contents and list of illustrations.
4. The length of my thesis is ..... words.
5. I authorise the School to keep a copy of my thesis in the Visual Cultures Resource Centre (if appropriate).

Signed: .....

Name of Student: .....

Date: .....

## Appendix 1

### School of Culture & Communication Minor Thesis Examination Rubric

| Criteria            | Research Question                                    | Research Context   | Research Methods  | Organisation of Argument  | Written Expression   | Referencing   |
|---------------------|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| Result              |  |  |   |   |  |   |
| <b>H1 (87+)</b>     | Highly significant, original, nuanced.               | Highly developed understanding of the field or fields, draws original, insightful connections. | Highly suited, thoroughly justified, innovative, multi-dimensional. | Exceptionally strong, clear structure. Original structure well aligned with research question, context and methods. | Lucid, precise, exceptional presentation.                          | Outstanding precision, completeness and adherence to style.           |
| <b>H1 (80-86)</b>   | Significant, original, nuanced.                      | Well demonstrated understanding of the field or fields, covers essential connections.          | Clearly suited, well justified, draws on innovative approaches.     | Excellent organisation and coherence.   | Lucid and controlled expression.                                   | Precise referencing and adherence to style, few errors.               |
| <b>H2A (75-79)</b>  | Substantive, well articulated.                       | Adequate coverage of the field or fields, makes key connections.                               | Suitable, justified.  | Standard thesis organisation, logical flow.   | Clear expression that contributes to the argument's effectiveness. | Generally efficient referencing, clear use of citations, some errors. |
| <b>H2B (70-74)</b>  | Clearly articulates a focused question.              | Some clear connections, with room for improvement.   | Partially suited and justified, capable.                            | Functional organisation, mostly adheres to standard thesis style.   | Mostly clear expression with some lapses and gaps.                 | Systematic referencing and citation, several errors.                  |
| <b>H3 (65-69)</b>   | Identifies a research question, requires more focus. | Identifies context, needs to make more connections.  | Partially suited and justified, developing.                         | Developing organisation, recognisable ideas.  | Developing expression with room for improvement.                   | Attempts systematic referencing and citation.                         |
| <b>P (50-64)</b>    | Identifies an area, without a clear question.        | Identifies area but limited context.   | Minimally suited and justified, limited.                            | Limited organisation, challenges in clarity.  | Limited expression with numerous challenges for understanding.     | Inconsistency, limited completeness.                                  |
| <b>N (below 50)</b> | Question not articulated.                            | Not sufficiently articulated.  | Not suited and justified, insufficient.                             | Insufficient organisation, lacking structure.   | Undeveloped expression, lacking clarity and flow.                  | Insufficient citation and referencing.                                |

## Appendix 2

### Additional instructions for creative practice theses

A Creative Practice minor thesis – which comprises both a creative component and a component of critical writing – must remain compatible with this overarching definition. Consequently, the Project should:

- make a clear statement, or present a clear argument, relating to the area with which it deals.
- afford evidence of originality;
- demonstrate a clear link between the critical and creative components;
- contain material suitable for publication or cultural output in another medium.

In particular, the creative component should:

- proficiently handle the chosen medium;
- afford evidence of originality in conception and/or execution;
- conform to the standards of presentation as determined by conventional practice in the chosen medium of expression.

#### Weighting of Components

The creative and critical components are considered to be equal in weight. This means that an underlying principle of all Projects is that the two components are equal in significance. The equality of both segments implies the following:

- the critical component will the same length as the creative component; each component will be half of the total word count;
- the time spent on both components is similar;
- shortcomings in one component reflect an overall weakness in the whole of the minor thesis.

#### Integration, Nature and Significance of the Two Components

The two components must form a coherent whole in which modes of understanding and ways of experiencing are clearly linked. The focus of the critical component is rigorous critical engagement with theoretical literature relevant to the minor thesis. In addition, it should discuss the relationships between theoretical literature and relevant creative works. Creative works discussed in the critical component must predominantly be authored by someone else – this is not an exegesis of one's own creative processes or outputs. The minor thesis must include a clear statement that clarifies for the reader how the two components are interrelated, which may include some discussion of the writer's own creative processes, aims and influences – this may be included within the structure of the critical component or in a separate bridging statement up to a maximum of 5% of the total word count (and included in the word count of the critical component). Together the two components should demonstrate that the minor thesis is a cohesive work of research performed in two modes: critical and creative. In the rare cases where a creative practice minor thesis comprises one integrated piece of writing incorporating both creative and critical modes (such as a fictocritical thesis), all requirements and expectations of both the creative and critical components must be met.

Creative practice minor theses will be assessed on the following criteria:

- The work demonstrates a sufficiently comprehensive investigation of the artistic form and creative content;
- The methods and techniques applied in the execution of the work are appropriate to the subject matter and are original and/or aesthetically effective;

- The work is comparable in standard and approach to contemporary published material in the field or cultural output in another medium;
- Appropriate attention is paid to aspects of style (diction, rhythms, imagery, awareness and handling of tone in relation to content);
- The work demonstrates appropriate attention to aspects of narrative, rhetorical or poetic structure;
- The work demonstrates appropriate engagement with a central idea, theme, question, image or dilemma;
- The work demonstrates that care and consistency has been taken in the use of details;
- The creative work is presented in a sufficiently professional manner, with close attention to proofreading and expression.



**School of Culture and Communication**