Guidelines for Creative Production Theses

These Guidelines should be considered in conjunction with Rule 10: Degree of Doctor by Research and Rule 11: Degree of Master by Research. These documents are available on the ORD website at: http://research.curtin.edu.au/graduate/policies.cfm#rules.

1. What is a creative production thesis?

1.1 A creative production thesis is the product of a research program, and therefore meets Curtin University’s requirements in that it forms a substantial original contribution to the knowledge or understanding of a field of study and demonstrates the ability to design and carry out independent research.

1.2 A creative production thesis consists of two components—a production (such as a novella, a series of paintings, a film, etc.) and a discursive text (called the exegesis).

1.3 The two elements of the thesis form two complementary outcomes of a singular research program where the two elements are related in that both address the same central research question through articulating, in differing modes or languages, ideas or meanings which “answer” that question.

1.4 Both elements of the thesis maintain the integrity of the specific discourse (or language) in which they are created, and “speak to” each other through their common purpose of elucidating a response to the research question.

2. Who should consider preparing a creative production thesis?

2.1 A creative production thesis is a significant option for those who work in fields where ideas are explored and meanings are made not only through expository writing but also through the media (or languages) of the visual arts, creative writing, film, television, design, jewellery, theatrical performance, curatorial studies, among others.

2.2 A creative production thesis is relevant to those whose research question is best investigated and articulated through more than one medium (or language).

2.3 A creative production thesis is appropriate for those who have an educational or professional background in the field of the proposed research, and who wish to signify to future employers that their research specialisation has been in creative practice.

3. Issues to consider carefully

3.1 Candidates should consider carefully how the production element of the thesis functions as a mode of research (see “What is a creative production thesis?” [above] and “Further Reading” [below]).

3.2 Candidates should be committed to working in two modes (making and writing) - this may happen simultaneously or dialectically.
3.3 Given that a creative production thesis requires functioning in at least two roles (maker and writer), and sometimes in three (maker, writer and performer/director/exhibiter) (see “Submission of a creative production thesis” [below]), candidates should take care to devise a “doable” research project - setting clear limits on the project and planning carefully all its dimensions (making, writing and, in some cases, performing/exhibiting).

4. Submission of creative production theses.

4.1 A creative production is examined as a whole (as a thesis comprised by both exegesis and creative production). Thus the two components should be submitted as a whole:
- Where the creative production component of the thesis is text based (e.g., a collection of poetry, a novella, a collection of professional writings, etc.), the thesis should be submitted for examination as a single document (incorporating photographic images, illustrations, etc.). Candidates should consult with their Thesis Committee where an exception seems warranted.
- Where the creative production component of the thesis is in an electronic medium (e.g., filmic, televisual, web-based, etc.), the thesis should be submitted for examination in two components - the exegesis and the electronic production.
- Where the creative production component of the thesis is a live performance or exhibition, the thesis should be submitted for examination as two components - the exegesis and the creative production in “live” performance or exhibition. In these instances, candidates should ensure that the exegesis is submitted to the appropriate Curtin University office in time for it to be sent to examiners at least two weeks prior to any performance/exhibition (normally four weeks before any performance/exhibition).

4.2 As a creative-production thesis consists of two components (production and exegesis), the Abstract submitted with the thesis should address the thesis as a whole (i.e., both components) and should make clear to examiners what is the central research question of the thesis as a whole, and how the two components form two different but related answers to that question.

4.3 To meet these submission requirements, candidates should begin to imagine from the outset of their research program the final form of their submitted thesis, consulting with their Thesis Committee, and attending seminars, workshops, and performances/exhibitions that discuss and/or exemplify options.

4.4 Where the final form of the thesis entails the examination of a “live” performance or exhibition, candidates should familiarise themselves with available venues at Curtin University, ascertain and plan for associated expenses, and investigate any School- or University-level support. The selection of the venue for the presentation of a performance/exhibition should be appropriate to the creative production and made in consultation with the candidate’s Thesis Committee. Candidates need to be aware that venues require advanced bookings and plans should begin with the writing of the candidacy proposal and develop in parallel with the development of the exegesis and creative production.

Candidates whose thesis entails an exhibition have the opportunity of exhibiting their final submission at the John Curtin Gallery in its annual dOFa show (this is not compulsory). If the John Curtin Gallery is chosen as the exhibition site, forward planning should include early meetings between the candidate, the Thesis Committee and John Curtin Gallery staff. As candidates approach their final year of study, they should work closely with John Curtin Gallery staff to finalise specific details of their exhibition.
5. **Examination of creative production theses.**

5.1 Examiners will receive the creative-production thesis as a whole (see “Submission of creative production theses” [above]).

5.2 Examiners will be informed of Curtin’s model for creative production theses (the Research Question model), and will be asked to comment on both elements of the thesis in sufficient detail, as well as on success of the two elements in terms of each being a response to the central research question.

5.3 Examiners will be asked, when making recommendations for any revisions to one or both parts of the thesis and, especially, in regard to the production component, to distinguish between what should be revised before final submission and what could be addressed through future work.

6. **Permanent recording of creative production theses.**

6.1 The permanent record of creative-production theses should use technologies appropriate to the field of study. Such material must be presented in a stable and commonly accepted format. Candidates should discuss the options with their Thesis Committee and with the Faculty Librarian, so as to ensure archival quality.

6.2 From candidacy application forward, the candidate should consider carefully how they will prepare a permanent record of a performance/exhibition element of a creative production thesis, factoring this into the candidacy proposal’s timetable and statement of resources required.

6.3 Permanent records of a performance/exhibition element of a creative production thesis should be comprised of a video, audio or digital recording of a performance or exhibition, or a combination of these; in some instances a professional exhibition catalogue may be an alternative.

6.4 Where candidates use the services of an editor, web designer, video editor, camera operator, photographer or other technical support, full acknowledgement of the role of any person or people providing such support needs to be attributed in the thesis.

6.5 Candidates should familiarise themselves with Curtin University’s regulations for digital submission of theses, and ensure that the final submission of the thesis is in both hard copy (inclusive of any CD/DVD) and in digital format.

7. **Further Reading**


Gibson, R. (2010). The known world. *TEXT* (8), Special Issue: Creative and practice-led research –


