PhD by Project

Background

These guidelines were developed following consultation with the literature, reference to guidelines offered by other universities and discussion with experts. The guidelines should be considered in conjunction with Section 16 of the Research and Professional Doctorate Degree Regulations.

The Regulations document is available on the ACU website at:

http://www.acu.edu.au/about_acu/research/current_students/forms_and_policies/policies/

Description: A PhD by Project may take the form of a performance, exhibition of visual arts, writing (for example, poetry, film scripts or plays), design, film, multimedia, CD, DVD, software program or other creative work combined with a dissertation which addresses, illuminates and contextualises the work created. It is important that the dissertation must answer to the requirement of every PhD research thesis in that it contributes new findings to the international body of research, however it will also include information about the creative process, materials, and methodology with the purpose of placing the project within an intellectual, artistic and/or cultural context.

1. **Who might consider a PhD by Project?**
   1.1. Candidates where the traditional thesis may not be the most appropriate format to communicate the outcomes of their research.

2. **How and when should the decision be made to prepare a PhD by project?**
   2.1. The candidate who is contemplating a PhD by project should consult closely with their supervisor and, where appropriate, the relevant Research Committee within their School/Faculty.
   2.2. The decision to present a PhD by project would normally be made at the beginning of candidature and finalised at the time of confirmation of candidature and with advice from the confirmation panel. Such advice would relate to the scope of the project and an assessment of the cost in line with faculty policy governing the financial arrangements of PhD by project. Approval by the Associate Dean (Research) will be subject to submission of a comprehensive budget statement detailing expected project costs (e.g. hiring of an arts studio or exhibition space, project materials, equipment, computer software) to assess resourcing needs and the feasibility of the project.

3. **Requirements of Confirmation of Candidature**
   3.1. Candidates should comply with the requirements outlined in the Research and Professional Doctorate Degree Regulations (July, 2003) Section 9.2 for confirmation of candidature. In addition the candidate should also present the following:
   3.1.1. A resume demonstrating evidence of experience in the field of the intended project.
3.1.2. A brief description of the project to be crafted and the expected balance between the dissertation and work (e.g. 60:40).

4. **Preparation of PhD by Project**

4.1. Candidates must carefully consider the scope of their project in light of associated costs involved in production. The University is not responsible for costs incurred in the planning and/or implementation of the project.

4.2. Supervisors must monitor the development and quality of the project component as appropriate.

5. **Suggested Format of PhD by Project**

5.1. Title page

5.2. Declaration: “To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university”.

5.3. Abstract

5.4. Acknowledgements

5.5. Table of Contents

5.6. Introduction and Overview: The Introduction must establish a coherent and logical framework for the research. It must state the research question, the specific aims and overall objectives of the research and the design of the research project.

5.7. The Literature Review: The Literature Review must contain a clear statement of the significance of the project aims, a critical review of relevant literature, identification of knowledge gaps, and the relationship of the literature to the research.

5.8. The Project Explained: The project must be comprehensively documented in this section as the dissertation and project should be considered as complementary, mutually reinforcing parts of a single work. The candidate should coherently argue the relationship between the two parts of their dissertation in terms of their contribution to the originality and creativity of the whole. The process design and methods must be clearly articulated and the process followed explained. In some cases a portfolio may be the most appropriate form for documentation.

5.9. Project Materials – for example durable record of performance, exhibition of visual arts, writing, design, film, multimedia, CD, DVD, software program or other creative work

5.10. Conclusion: Critical reflection, recommendations and limitations.

5.11. List of References

5.12. Appendices for example, a program of the event, critical reviews

6. **Examination Process**

6.1. Thesis Submission – As stated in the regulations, three copies of the dissertation and the creative project must be submitted. It is expected that where the creative project cannot be submitted in full (e.g. live performance) the DVD, CD, photographs, or any other form allowing full access to the work, be submitted with each copy of the dissertation (i.e.
Project Materials chapter as described above in 5.9). The candidate is responsible for ensuring that any evidence of the creative work is readable in Mac or PC format using an internationally acknowledged program. The PhD by Project is therefore submitted as an integrated whole to examiners.

6.2. All candidates will be examined on the basis of dissertation and project and will be considered by examiners according to the following standards:

6.2.1. Demonstration of a professional familiarity with and understanding of contemporary work in the field;
6.2.2. Demonstration of a sufficiently comprehensive investigation of the artistic form and creative content;
6.2.3. Use of methods or techniques applied in a way that is appropriate to the subject matter and are original and/or aesthetically effective;
6.2.4. Presentation of the project is professional;
6.2.5. Demonstration of a high standard of literary, visual, digital, musical or design work;
6.2.6. Identification and testing of a research question has been undertaken;
6.2.7. Thorough documentation of the project ensuring that the work provides a reference for future researchers in this area;
6.2.8. Substantive, original contribution to knowledge in the subject area in which it is a part; and
6.2.9. Appropriate and valid interface between the dissertation and project.