

## Doctor of Clinical Physiotherapy

### Examination Guidelines and Marking Criteria

#### Thesis subject aims and standard of Examination

The thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Clinical Physiotherapy (DCP) is only one of the requirements of the degree. The DCP is a 3 year full-time course (or up to 6 years part-time). Approximately half of the degree is research, with the remainder comprising coursework and advanced clinical education.

In the third year of the clinical doctorate, students are required to work independently on an original research project and write a report (thesis) of not more than 30,000 words. The aim of the thesis is to enable students to develop research skills in an area of physiotherapy practice that complements the expertise developed in the previous 2 years of the Clinical Doctorate.

There is particular emphasis on the research methodology appropriate to the field of study. It is intended to provide candidates with the opportunity to develop their potential for research, enhance their skills of problem identification and specification, and their ability to develop and present solutions. The Clinical Doctorate degree differs from the PhD in terms of reduced length of candidature, size of thesis, complexity, originality and theoretical contribution to the field, and the impact and capacity for acceptance of the research in the international literature. The thesis therefore is not at the level of a PhD thesis and rather should be marked at the level of a Masters research thesis.

#### Examiner's Report

Each examiner is asked to submit a detailed independent report, together with a completed "Form to Accompany Examiner's Report". In their comments, examiners are requested to include comments on both the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis.

In examining this thesis, consider the following:

#### General

1. Was the research question clearly defined?
2. Overall, does the researcher make explicit the theoretical framework and methods used at every stage of the research?
3. Does the student demonstrate sufficient familiarity with, and understanding and critical appraisal of, the relevant literature?
4. Does the thesis provide a sufficiently comprehensive investigation of the topic?
5. Are the methods and techniques adopted appropriate to the subject matter and are they properly justified and applied?
6. Are the results suitably set out and accompanied by adequate exposition and interpretation?
7. Are conclusions and implications appropriately developed and clearly linked to the nature and content of the research framework and findings?
8. Has the research question(s) in fact been tested?
9. Is the literary quality and general presentation of the thesis of a suitably high standard?
10. Does the thesis as a whole constitute a valuable contribution to knowledge in the subject area with which it deals?

#### Qualitative Projects

1. Was the research question clearly defined?
2. Overall, did the researcher make explicit the theoretical framework and methods used at every stage of the research?
3. Was the research design appropriate for the study question?
4. Was the context clearly described?
5. Was the sampling strategy clearly described and justified?

6. How was the fieldwork undertaken? Was it described in detail?
7. Were the procedures for data analysis clearly described and theoretically justified? Did they relate to the original research questions? How were themes and concepts identified from the data?
8. Did the investigator give evidence of seeking out observations that might have contradicted or modified the analysis?
9. What evidence is there for the components of 'trustworthiness' of the data (credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability)?
10. Were the conclusions appropriate given the study findings?

In writing the report, examiners should clearly indicate any amendments or corrections the candidate is required to undertake. Normal practice is to release the examiners' reports to the candidate with no identification in the first instance. The examiners names will be revealed to the candidate following completion of all requirements. Examiners who do not want their name revealed to the candidate must sign the appropriate box on the "Form to Accompany Examiner's Report". If you wish to make comments which should not be shown to the student, these should be provided on a separate page and clearly marked as such. Please attach your completed written report securely to the "Form to Accompany Examiner's Report" and return to the Chair of Examiners at the School of Physiotherapy.

### **Time for examination**

Examiners are asked to complete the examination within 6 weeks of receipt of the written work. Examiners who feel unable to complete their examination within this period are asked to inform the Chair of Examiners immediately and provide an estimate of when they expect to be able to do so. Where a lengthy delay is envisaged, an alternative examiner may be appointed.

### **Disagreement between examiners**

Examiners should submit their reports without consulting with each other. In cases where there is substantial disagreement between the selected recommendations of the two examiners (as detailed on the report form), but where the Chair of Examiners believes the detailed reports show that their judgments of the written work to be similar, the Chair of Examiners may invite the two examiners to consult. If the differences are judged to be not resolvable, a third examiner is appointed. The result is then determined by the recommendation of the majority. The third examiner examines the written work independently on its own merit and is not provided with previously submitted examiners reports.

### **Copy of the written work**

Examiners may retain their copy of the thesis unless it has been specifically requested for return.

### **Payment of honoraria**

Payment of the examiners' honoraria is made on receipt of the completed report form and detailed written report. The University of Melbourne is required, under the Income Assessment Act, to deduct tax from all payments to external examiners unless they are an independent contractor or a non-resident working outside of Australia.

The University of Melbourne normally makes these payments by electronic funds transfer. In order to do this it is necessary for examiners to complete the attached forms providing bank account details and tax file number (for Australian residents).

### **Examiner's Report**

Examiners are requested to submit a written report, provide a mark out of 100 and make a recommendation from a scale of 1 – 5. The mark and recommendation should be made on the enclosed "Form to Accompany Examiner's Report" and returned, with the written report, to the Chair of Examiners at the School of Physiotherapy.

Guidelines for the awarding of a mark and recommendation can be found on the following two pages.

**Examiners should provide a mark out of 100. The following scale is provided for guidance.**

**Outstanding (H1) 90 – 100%**

- Outstanding in exposition and scholarship;
- Includes significant original work;
- Significantly exceeds the criteria listed on page one;
- Expected to be of publishable quality.
- Would be in the top 5% of theses examined

**Excellent (H1) 85 – 89%**

- Excellent in exposition and scholarship;
- Includes original work of exception quality;
- Significantly exceeds the criteria listed on page one;
- Expected to be of publishable quality.
- Would be in the top 10% of theses examined

**Very Good (H1) 80 – 84%**

- Excellent in exposition and scholarship;
- Exceeds the criteria listed on page one;
- Expected to be of publishable quality.
- Would be in the top 20% of theses examined

**Good (H2A) 75 – 79%**

- Very good in exposition and scholarship;
- Meets the criteria listed on page one;
- Publishable quality but with minor amendments required

**Adequate (H2B) 70 – 74%**

- Meets the criteria listed on page one;
- Substantial amendments to the thesis required for publication;
- May lead to published works with significant modification

**Adequate (H3) 65 – 69%**

- Barely meets the criteria listed on page one;
- Major amendments to the thesis required for publication.

**Pass (P) 50 – 64%**

- Barely meets the criteria listed on page one;
- Unlikely to be published
- Needs major revisions

**Examiners are required to make a recommendation based on the following scale.**

**Recommendation 1** be awarded a pass in the Physiotherapy Clinical Doctorate Thesis without further examination or amendment.

The candidate has fulfilled the requirements of the subject.

**Recommendation 2** be awarded a pass in the Physiotherapy Clinical Doctorate Thesis without further examination, subject to inserting in the written work, the minor corrections and/or additions of the kind I have specified in my report to the satisfaction of the Chair of Examiners, without further reference to me.

The candidate will have fulfilled the requirements of the subject when the minor amendments and corrections specified are made to the satisfaction of the Chair of Examiners.

**Recommendation 3** be awarded a pass in the Physiotherapy Clinical Doctorate Thesis subject to revising parts of the written work or clarifying certain points as outlined in my report to my satisfaction.

The candidate will have fulfilled the requirements of the subject when the passages specified are rewritten to the satisfaction of the Examiner. This re-writing will not change the substantive conclusions of the written work.

**Recommendation 4** not yet be awarded a pass in the Physiotherapy Clinical Doctorate Thesis, but be permitted to re-submit the written work in a revised form for re-examination. Areas requiring major amendments are detailed in my attached report.

The candidate should not pass the Thesis on the basis of the written work, which contains flaws that have the potential to affect its substantive conclusions. However, if the additional work is done as specified, the written work should have the potential to fulfil the requirements of the subject. The examiners of the original submission will examine the revised thesis.

**Recommendation 5** not be awarded a pass in the Physiotherapy Clinical Doctorate Thesis and not be permitted to submit for re-examination.

The candidate should not be able to pass the Physiotherapy Clinical Doctorate Thesis because it contains substantive flaws that are irredeemable. These flaws make it inappropriate to contribute as a subject to the award of the Physiotherapy Clinical Doctorate degree.