



Faculty of Arts and Education Higher Degree by Research

General Questions Underpinning Confirmation

At the request of supervisors and students, what follows are some explanatory notes about the general questions underpinning confirmation; the first set deal with conventional dissertations and second with exegetical kind:

- a) The Confirmation Panel is collectively faced with a set of preliminary questions. These are based upon the candidate's documentation and verbal responses. The panel's overall task is to assess whether it is dealing with a careful, rigorous, and sustained piece of work, a submission demonstrating that the initial phase of research "apprenticeship" is complete and therefore that the candidacy should be confirmed.
 - Has the over-arching research question or problem not only been clearly articulated, but also has it begun to be appropriately evaluated?
 - Does the candidate show sufficient familiarity with, and a critical understanding and appraisal of, the relevant literature or debate in their chosen sphere of enquiry?
 - Are the methods and techniques adopted appropriate to the question or problem underpinning the thesis and are they appropriately justified and applied? In other words, does it show that the candidate has begun to develop a thorough grasp of the appropriate methodological techniques and an awareness of their limitations?
 - Are any initial results or implications able to be anticipated and presented suitably? Are they accompanied by adequate exposition, explanation, and/or interpretation? Are they clearly linked to the nature and content of the research framework?
 - Is the expression and the presentation of the documentation of a suitably high standard which conforms with conventions of its discipline or field?
 - Does the planned thesis as a whole constitute a substantive original contribution to knowledge in the relevant field or discipline? Does that contribution to knowledge rest upon an originality of approach and/or interpretation of the findings and/or, as will occur in some cases, the discovery of new facts?

- b) In the case where the Confirmation Panel is dealing with an exegetical research project, typically in the form of a creative or a folio component, there are a further set of questions directed at this component of the submission:
 - Does the sample of the creative or folio component presented demonstrate a professional level of familiarity with and understanding of contemporary work in the field?
 - Does the creative sample in particular demonstrate a sufficiently comprehensive investigation of the artistic form and creative content?
 - Are the methods and techniques applied in the execution of the creative or folio sample appropriate to the subject matter and are they original and/or effective?

- Has the over-arching research question or problem been identified and begun to be embedded or explored through the creative or folio component? Is there an appropriate and substantiated connection between the creative or folio component and the exegetical component?
- Do the creative or folio component and the exegetical component jointly and potentially constitute a substantive original contribution to knowledge in the subject area with which it deals?

Ultimately the aim of the Confirmation Panel is to provide constructive suggestions for the further development of the research project.

Discussion and recommendations of the Confirmation Panel will be summarised in the Confirmation Report which is submitted by the Chair within 10 working days of the confirmation. The report is then forwarded to the Faculty HDR coordinator for approval (which is conveyed to Deakin Research).

The Faculty Research Office will send an official letter to the candidate confirming the outcome of the confirmation and outlining any conditions attached. That may include a part 2 where the student must provide additional documentation for distribution to the panel. The panel will meet again to finalise the outcome. The candidate is required to attend the part 2. Where a part 2 is required, following the second panel meeting, the Faculty Research Office will send the final outcome to the student and a copy to the panel.

HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH (HDR) ACADEMIC PROGRESS PROCEDURE