
Notes for examiners for the Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA)

Reference: Doctoral Policy section 4.12.1

Outline of the Doctor of Musical Arts

1. The fields of study for this degree are composition and performance. Part 1 (year 1) comprises (i) coursework, (ii) the preparation of a research proposal that specifies the scope of the creative work and the relationship between the creative work and the exegesis, and (iii) creative research expressed through either a portfolio of compositions or sound-based works, or a public recital. Part 2 (years 2-3) comprises the continuation of research demonstrated through creative work, and the writing of an exegesis.
2. For composition, the research to be examined as the thesis comprises a portfolio of compositions and public presentation(s), and an exegesis not exceeding 25,000 words (including footnotes, bibliography, and appendices).
3. For performance, the research to be examined as the thesis comprises two recitals, two lecture-recitals, and an exegesis not exceeding 25,000 words (including footnotes, bibliography, and appendices).
4. Further notes on the thesis components:
 - a. "Creative work" comprises EITHER (i) a portfolio of compositions, OR (ii) a series of performances, which may include improvisations, demonstrations of new or created or revived performance techniques, or transcriptions of musical "works".
 - b. "Exegesis" refers to the extended written essay that complements the creative work of the candidate. It is intended to be a substantive piece of writing that offers a critical perspective on the creative work. Normally, the exegesis will take the form of a written piece that conforms to the academic standards and formatting expectations of a doctoral thesis. But in some cases the exegesis for the DMA may take other forms that have been pre-approved by Postgraduate Committee of the New Zealand School of Music and/or the Faculty of Graduate Research. In these cases, a short report detailing the rationale behind the atypical approach will be appended to the submission of the exegesis by the candidate.
5. The DMA degree is awarded for a thesis which demonstrates the following:
 - a. Professional competency at a high level;
 - b. Originality and creativity in the approach to composition or performance;
 - c. Familiarity with, and critical insight into, relevant literature and contemporary thinking in the subject;
 - d. A sufficiently comprehensive yet focussed study of the topic in the exegesis, which may present either new knowledge, an innovative re-interpretation of one or more existing concepts, or the formulation of new theories/ perspectives relevant to composition or performance.

Examiners

The DMA thesis is examined by three examiners who are people with standing in the field of study of the thesis. One of the examiners will normally be a member of an overseas university or similar institution (the overseas examiner); normally one examiner will be from another New Zealand university (the external New Zealand examiner); the third examiner will normally be an academic member of the New Zealand School of Music (the internal examiner).

Examiners must not communicate with the candidate except through the Faculty of Graduate Research (FGR) before the completion of the examination process. Any consultation between examiners and supervisors must also be conducted through the Dean FGR.

Conflicts of interest

The appointment of examiners is subject to the University's Conflicts of Interest Statute <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/conflicts-of-interest-statute.pdf> Current or former supervisors or researchers who have co-published (or collaborated) with the candidate, may not be appointed as

examiners. If during the examination process you discover a potential conflict of interest, or any other problem, please inform the Dean FGR peter.whiteford@vuw.ac.nz

Examiners' reports

You are asked to (1) write a report on the quality of the thesis (*as defined in section 2 and 3 of the Outline on page 1 of these notes*) and (2) to make a confidential recommendation to the Dean FGR on the outcome. Please **do not** include the recommendation in your report on the thesis, as this is released to the candidate. Instead, use the enclosed **Examiners Recommendation Form**. In addition you may wish to provide (3) a separate set of questions that are not released to the candidate. (**NB:** questions that are embedded within the report will be made available to the candidate in advance of the oral.) You are also invited to make a recommendation to the Dean FGR as to whether or not you consider the thesis is of sufficient merit to be considered for inclusion in the Dean's list. If you wish to comment on issues not specifically related to the thesis but of concern to you, such as supervision or resource matters please do so in a separate confidential report address to the Dean FGR.

Examiners' reports are typically of at least 3-4 pages in length and are expected to provide the candidate with constructive feedback. Where revisions to any part of the thesis are called for, you are encouraged to be very specific about those revisions that you feel are crucial to the acceptability of the thesis as a whole, bearing in mind that a specific set of revisions will be agreed upon by the examiners after the oral defence.

Examiners' reports must be independent. Consultation among examiners before their reports have been submitted is not permitted. In cases where examiners make differing recommendations in their reports, the Dean FGR may require consultation to occur before the oral defence.

Reports should be submitted to the Doctoral Examinations Administrator within two months of your receiving the thesis. Please **do not** send your report directly to the Head of School or supervisor.

Oral examination

An oral defence is a mandatory part of the examination process at Victoria University. The oral examination will usually be conducted by the New Zealand and internal examiners under an independent chair and questions provided by the overseas examiner will be presented to the candidate. It may also be possible for the overseas examiner to be involved via audio or video link. However, overseas examiners are still required to submit their questions in writing. For DMA candidates, both the primary and secondary supervisor will normally be in attendance, but not as part of the examining panel and not during the examiners' deliberations about the outcome of the oral defence.

Movement to an oral defence is not automatic, but requires scrutiny of all reports by the Dean FGR. As noted above, further consultation may sometimes be necessary before the oral can be approved. At such time, anonymised reports will be circulated among the examiners.

Distribution of reports

Once the decision to proceed to oral has been confirmed, all examiners' reports will be made available to the candidate, the supervisor/s and other examiners at least five working days prior to the oral. Reports will be released with the names of the examiners. The candidate will not receive a copy of the examiners' recommendations; however, the comments, suggestions and overall assessment of the thesis examination will indicate matters that may arise in the oral defence.

Any part of your report that you do not want released to the candidate or a third party should be submitted in a separate document and marked "Confidential to the Examiners". The University is subject to the provisions of the Official Information Act and the Privacy Act. Opinion from both the Ombudsman and the Privacy Commissioner indicates that your report may be considered personal information about the candidate. The candidate could request access to it under the Official Information Act. If such a request is made, the University must establish whether or not there is a reason to withhold the examiner's report under the provisions of the relevant Act.

Amendments or revisions and confirmation of results

The examination panel will determine, at the oral defence, what corrections or amendments the candidate is required to make to the thesis before the degree can be awarded. These will be documented by the panel and conveyed to the candidate. Approval of such corrections is managed by the School and usually delegated to the internal examiner. If a candidate is required to revise and resubmit the thesis for second examination, they will need to complete the revisions under supervision. The Dean FGR will confirm the overall recommendation of the examination panel.