



**AK3688 Master of Computer and Information
Sciences (MCIS)**

Guidelines for Students

**To be read in conjunction with the
Postgraduate Handbook**

**Examination of
DISSERTATION 60 points**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The following information has been collated to assist examiners to understand the requirements and expectations of Master's dissertations at the Auckland University of Technology.

A normal full-time programme of study is based on achievement of 120 points in one year. Master's degrees require a minimum of 240 points including a thesis or a dissertation.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Dissertation 60 points

Through the writing of a scholarly dissertation the student will demonstrate a capacity for independent research, conducted under supervision, which exhibits an ability to critique prior work, to define, design and conduct research in a rigorous and robust manner, and to deliver original high-quality work grounded in the body of knowledge in the chosen research domain.

There should be an appropriate balance between the different parts of the dissertation. In particular, the original work should be clearly distinguishable from the introductory material, the survey of relevant literature in which it is grounded, research methodology employed, data analysis and evaluation. The dissertation should also acknowledge which work has been performed by the candidate and where results obtained from other sources have been included.

Where the dissertation is focused on the preparation of a scholarly edition of a text or texts, or original artefacts, the completed submission includes a copy of the edited text(s) or collection of artefact(s), together with appropriate textual and explanatory annotations and a substantial introduction and critical commentary which sets the text(s) or artefact(s) in the relevant theoretical, historical and critical context.

A dissertation is presented in English unless approved otherwise by the University Postgraduate Committee.

2.2 Dissertation Length

A 60 point Master's dissertation which is wholly in written form is normally between 10 000 and 20 000 words (excluding bibliographies), depending on the topic and the specific research undertaken, with an upper limit of 30 000 words.

3.0 EXAMINATION AND EXAMINER REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Dissertations are examined by a minimum of two examiners, one of whom must be an external examiner who is not a member of the academic staff of the University.

3.1 Examiner's Report

Each examiner is asked to examine or consider the dissertation, and present an independent report.

Examiners are asked to specifically comment on the items listed below, under each heading in the attached grade ranges document (Appendix 1), in their written report:

Examiners are asked to examine or consider the student's dissertation, and present an independent report to the Master of Computer and Information Sciences Programme office under the following areas:

- a) **Defines a research problem, formulate a research question or issues, designs and justifies an appropriate methodology or approach which addresses the question or research issues;**
- b) **Critically reviews relevant research contexts, including literature in the field, citing the investigation within those research contexts;**
- c) **Applies research skills relevant to the specific areas of interest, such as; appropriate methods of collection, analysis, creative processing and interpretation;**
- d) **Demonstrates application of research methodology and methods developing critical analysis and complete a scholarly body of work;**
- e) **Critically reflects and evaluates the significance of the research in the discipline area.**

3.2 Examination Outcomes

There are a number of possible outcomes from the examination process and the examiner will be required to identify the one they recommend as the most appropriate for the candidate.

The outcomes are:

- a) that the candidate be granted the following pass grade for the dissertation without amendments;
- b) that the candidate be granted the following pass grade for the dissertation subject to the candidate making minor amendments (as identified by the examiners) to the satisfaction of the supervisors and the Dean of the Faculty;
- c) that the candidate be required to revise and re-submit for further examination within a specified time;
- d) that the candidate be granted a fail grade for the dissertation.

4.0 RELEASE OF EXAMINER'S REPORTS

It is the policy of the University that candidates will not normally be given copies of the examiners' reports when the examination process has been completed, unless these are specifically requested. Any reports that are provided will not normally include the name of the examiner. However, if you an examiner is willing to have their name made available to the candidate they can indicate this on the Dissertation Examination Report Form

It is also the policy of the University that all copies of the dissertation sent to examiners be returned to the Master of Computer and Information Sciences Programme Administrator. Examiners will be asked to return their copies for forwarding to the candidate.

Appendix 1 Grade Ranges

The criteria in the following grid are provided to examiners to guide the dissertation grading process:

Examiners Comment on	Grade Range A	Grade Range B	Grade Range C
1. Define a research problem, formulate a research question or issues, design and justify an appropriate methodology or approach which addresses the question or research issues.	<p>Sound knowledge of the subject area.</p> <p>Competence in clearly articulating a research question or issue.</p> <p>In depth analysis of the question or issue, is informed by the rationale underlying the study and based on appropriate evidence and creative processes.</p> <p>Clearly articulated and sound rationale for the methodologies adopted (through, for example, explicit validation processes and/or critique of other available approaches).</p>	<p>Is very good overall.</p> <p>Research question or issues justified.</p> <p>Analysis of the question / issue based on evidence and rationale for the research, evident.</p> <p>Some discussion of a range of methodologies and justification of methodologies adopted.</p>	<p>Is satisfactory overall in knowledge of subject area.</p> <p>States a research question or issue stated.</p> <p>Adequate development of analysis in answering the stated hypothesis / question / issues.</p> <p>Acknowledgement of weaknesses / strengths of the methodologies adopted.</p>
2. Critically review relevant research contexts, including literature in the field citing the investigation within those research contexts.	<p>Evidence of an in-depth comprehension of the literature relevant (e.g. text or artefact) and appropriate to the research context with key issues raised.</p> <p>Comprehensive and consistently reported bibliography.</p> <p>A high level of synthesis and critique of the relevant literature, text or artefact</p>	<p>Evidence of reading across the research context with comprehension of key issues.</p> <p>Bibliography reflects critique.</p> <p>Critique of literature, text or artefact and some evidence of synthesis.</p>	<p>Evidence of reading across the research context.</p> <p>Basic ability to evaluate and critique referenced material.</p> <p>Adequate comparisons made with cited literature, text or artefact.</p>

<p>3. Apply research skills relevant to the specific areas of interest such as appropriate methods of collection, analysis, creative processing and interpretation. Interpretation.</p>	<p>Confident and imaginative use of research methods.</p> <p>Clear presentation and elaboration of a research question/issues, the research process and analysis.</p>	<p>Justifies and uses research methods appropriately.</p> <p>Appropriate presentation and some elaboration of a research question/issues, the research process and analysis.</p>	<p>Uses research tools appropriately.</p> <p>Major points relevant to the problem/issues presented with evidence of the integration of ideas evident.</p>
<p>4. Demonstrate application of research methodology and methods developing critical analysis and complete a scholarly body of work.</p>	<p>Mastery of the research process.</p> <p>Demonstrates significant capacity to present at a scholarly level.</p> <p>The work is highly organised and integrated. The intent of the researcher is explicit and expressed with clarity and insight.</p> <p>An in-depth articulation of the communication frameworks used.</p>	<p>Argument of results against cited literature.</p> <p>Presents at a scholarly level supported by appropriate application.</p> <p>The work is well organised and integrated.</p> <p>A clear articulation of the communication frameworks used.</p>	<p>Understanding of the research process evident.</p> <p>Referencing and presentation appropriate.</p> <p>The work is organised and integrated.</p> <p>Presents the communication frameworks used.</p>
<p>5. Critically reflect and evaluate the significance of the research in the discipline area.</p>	<p>Ability to draw sound conclusions or findings through the research conducted.</p> <p>In-depth evaluation & reflection evident in relation to the significance of results, their limitations, implications and relation to the wider literature on the topic.</p> <p>A clear articulation of the significance including limitations, implications and recommendations as appropriate.</p> <p>A clear demonstration of originality or innovation in research outcomes.</p>	<p>Thorough knowledge of subject area.</p> <p>Critique and discussion evident of findings: conclusions, implications and significance.</p> <p>A good level of reflection & evaluation evident.</p> <p>A good articulation of the significance including limitations, implications and recommendations as appropriate.</p> <p>A good demonstration of originality or innovation in research outcomes.</p>	<p>General implications and significance of findings discussed appropriately.</p> <p>Some reflection & evaluation evident.</p> <p>Some articulation of the significance including limitations, implications and recommendations as appropriate.</p> <p>Some demonstration of originality or innovation in research outcomes.</p>