

MSc Thesis Assessment Guidelines: School of Physics

Examiners may wish to consider and comment on the following attributes of the thesis in their reports:

- **AIM:** Is the point of the project evident?
- **CONTEXT:** Is the work placed in context?
- **EXPLANATION:** Are the methods used well explained?
- **PRESENTATION:** Is the report well crafted?
- **UNDERSTANDING:** Did the student reveal a significant level of understanding?
- **INNOVATION:** Did the student convey significant innovation in the project?
- **DIFFICULTY:** How complex was the project?
- **INDEPENDENCE:** What level of guidance from the supervisor was required?

In their written report, examiners need to justify the mark they give the project. The following scale is provided for guidance to MSc thesis examiners.

90-100% (H1)

- demonstrated a very high level of competence with respect to the questions listed under Expected Requirements (see below); and
- clear evidence of considerable original work of very high quality; and
- the research is substantially completed; elements of the thesis would be worthy of publication in a peer reviewed journal with only a small amount of revision and/or editing required.
- An absolutely outstanding student. Definitely capable of a largely self-motivated Ph.D.

85-89% (H1)

- demonstrated a high level of competence with respect to the questions listed under Expected Requirements (see below); and
- clear evidence of considerable original work of high quality; and
- the research is substantially completed; elements of the thesis would be worthy of publication in a peer reviewed journal with a small amount of further research and/or analysis.
- Undoubted high ability. One could anticipate a largely self-motivated PhD.

80-84% (H1)

- demonstrated a high level of competence with respect to the questions listed under Expected Requirements (see below); and
- clear evidence of considerable original work of high quality; and
- the research is substantially completed;
- Competent in research. Acceptable as a PhD student.

75-79% (H2A)

- demonstrated a good level of competence with respect to the questions listed under Expected Requirements (see below); and
- evidence of original work; and
- Certainly capable of a M.Phil and probably a PhD given sufficient guidance.

70-74% (H2B)

- demonstrated a good level of competence with respect to the questions listed under Expected Requirements (see below); and
- evidence of original work; and
- Capable of a M.Phil given sufficient guidance, but further study would depend on his/her performance in the M.Phil.

65-69% (H3)

- demonstrated an adequate level of competence with respect to the questions listed under Expected Requirements (see below); and
- evidence of original work; and
- includes some analysis or other evaluation of the proposal, even if not fully implemented or
- tested, however, the thesis is lacking some key components.

50-64% (P)

- demonstrated a minimum level of competence with respect to the questions listed under Expected Requirements (see below). The thesis is lacking key components < 50 (N)
- has not demonstrated a minimum level of competence with respect to the Expected Requirements (see below)
- has not demonstrated suitable research skills

Expected requirements

MSc candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate advanced learning in research skills and mastery of appropriate techniques;
- demonstrate specialist knowledge in the area of their research;
- present the results of their research in publishable quality or work towards incorporating their findings in further research; and

Examiners are asked to consider, where appropriate, the following questions:

- does the candidate show sufficient familiarity with, and understanding and critical appraisal of, the relevant literature?
- does the thesis provide a sufficiently comprehensive investigation of the topic?
- are the methods and techniques adopted appropriate to the subject matter and are they properly justified and applied?
- are the results suitably set out and accompanied by adequate exposition and interpretation?
- are conclusions and implications appropriately developed and clearly linked to the nature and content of the research framework and findings?
- has/have the research question/questions been tested?
- is the literary quality and general presentation of the thesis of a suitably high standard?
- does the thesis as a whole constitute a substantive original contribution to knowledge in the subject area with which it deals?

MSc Research Project assessment components (total 100)

- 1.1 Literature survey Pass/Fail
- 1.2 Initial oral presentation Pass/Fail
- 1.3 Advanced seminar Pass/Fail
- 1.4 Final oral presentation 10
- 1.5 Thesis 90

Thesis Examination Panel

Each student will have a three-person examination panel, including the primary supervisor, an infield examiner (usually someone within the same research group) and an out-of-field examiner.

Examiners will usually be members of the Teaching & Research staff within the School of Physics. Students will not be advised who their in-field and out-of-field examiners are to be.

Thesis assessment weighting

Supervisor	50
In-field-examiner	25
Out-of-field examiner	25