

 <b>POLICY: EXAMINATION OF DISSERTATIONS AND THESES</b>			
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<b>Related documents</b>			
<b>Da Vinci documents</b> (e.g. Policies, Regulations, Guidelines, Contracts) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy: Nomination and Appointment of Internal and External Examiners</li> <li>• Policy: Students-Supervisor Relationships</li> <li>• Policy: Conducting Ethical Research</li> <li>• Policy: Da Vinci Research Policy Framework</li> <li>• Internal/External Assessment Form and Narrative report – Dissertation</li> <li>• Internal/External Assessment Form and Narrative report – Thesis</li> </ul>		<b>Other</b> (e.g. Legislation, DHET and CHE directives and guidelines) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution of the Republic of South Africa: 1996</li> <li>• Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997)</li> <li>• CHE: Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Criteria for Programme Accreditation: November, 2004</li> <li>• SAQA: National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa</li> </ul>	
		<b>Appendices</b> Appendix A	
<b>Website address of this document:</b>		<a href="http://www.davinci.ac.za">www.davinci.ac.za</a>	

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## 1 Introduction

This policy forms part of the quality management system (QMS) of The Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management.

Da Vinci offers outcomes-based, distance education opportunities. This policy details the principles and processes that will ensure that learning programme offerings are aligned to the principles of a Mode 2 higher education institution, whilst adhering to the required academic standards and empowering students with the knowledge, skills and values to contribute to their communities, society and economy of the future.

This policy serves to inform examiners, students and supervisors of The Da Vinci Institute's approach, to the examination of dissertations or theses. The Institute promotes the view that the student's final research project should represent original contribution, innovation, transformation of the self, the community, industry and society at large. The rationale for this view is that Da Vinci strives to contribute, as a micro-system, to the macro ecosystem in meaningful ways.

## 2 Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to introduce the examiner to:

- Assessment criteria and the report that should be completed when examining a dissertation/thesis
- Appropriate standards and processes to meet quality and academic integrity requirements

## 3 Characteristics of the Da Vinci Institute as a Mode 2 Higher Education Institution

The Da Vinci Institute, as a Mode 2 learning Institution, expects its postgraduate students to address a research problem in the context of the self, the community, industry and society at large. Applying Mode 2 problem-solving methodologies involves a close interaction of various systems, resources and people during a reflexive process of knowledge creation. Within this context, research should have a unique purpose, noticeable application and outcome and a positive impact on the community, be it locally, nationally and/or internationally.

For a Masters degree, the student should demonstrate that s/he has mastered advanced thinking, can critically engage with literature, and develop appropriate research design and methods to collect data, make sense of it, and apply the findings on local and/or national levels. This includes an appropriate literature review of the

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existing field of Business Leadership and Business Management as it is relevant to the study and meeting the NQF level 9 descriptors.

A further purpose of this qualification is equip students to debate and address societal transformation. This qualification seeks to transform individuals, organisations and the community at large, dealing with leadership and managerial challenges in various contexts such as the management of technology, innovation, people and systems. The resulting dissertation should comply with relevant technical and academic requirements, be comprehensive and appropriately edited to a high academic standard. This is done to enable effective reading and support the logical flow of the argument and conclusions presented.

For a doctoral degree, the student is required to make an original and significant contribution to the knowledge of the subject or field, and should demonstrate the ability to undertake a critical reflection and engagement with existing research in the relevant field, as well as demonstrate effective academic writing skills, the ability to critique current theory, and a contribution to the creation of new knowledge. The contribution should be tested and workable, and be applicable to organisations or communities on a regional, national and international level. This includes an appropriate literature review of the existing field of Business Leadership and Business Management as it is relevant to the study and meeting the NQF 10 level descriptors.

A further purpose of this qualification is equip students to debate and address societal transformation. This qualification seeks to transform individuals, organisations and the community at large, dealing with leadership and managerial challenges in various contexts such as the management of technology, innovation, people and systems. The resulting thesis should comply with relevant technical and academic requirements, be comprehensive and appropriately edited to a high academic standard. This is done to enable effective reading and support the logical flow of the argument and conclusions presented.

The aim and outcome of learning and research at Da Vinci should show the following characteristics:

- ☞ **Knowledge generation in the context of application.** New knowledge is generated within the context of inconsistencies, imbalances or gaps identified in a real-life context. Contributions to knowledge should, therefore, be applicable to the self, enterprise or community and society.
- ☞ Research is undertaken through a **trans-disciplinary** approach. This approach is evident when epistemologies integrate and move beyond discipline-specific approaches to define problems and identify unique solutions. Knowledge is

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generated across disciplinary boundaries. Research is conducted with openness and flexibility.

- In terms of the concept of co-creation, **heterogeneity**, is embraced. This means that research takes place over a wide range of areas and actively seeks innovative, design and methodology. Research designs are viewed from different angles to find a solution to the issue at hand.
- Research outcomes also display **reflexivity and accountability**. Students and supervisors recognise an awareness of the impact and implications of the research problem within the self, the organisation and the broader community. The need for research on the problem, the goal and the outcome involves social accountability. This includes articulating the appropriate return on investment.
- **Quality control** is evident in the research. Research is guided by a substantial assurance of practice and usefulness. It should show validity, credibility, demonstrate evidence-based application and contribution towards the self, the industry, society and ecosystem.

## 4 Assessment of Qualification

### 4.1 Examination panel for dissertations

Each dissertation is examined by one internal and one external examiner and a non-examining chair who is appointed by the Dean: Teaching and Learning. The non-examining chair will be the relevant postgraduate programme Coordinator or the Dean of Teaching and Learning or the Dean of Research or the Executive Dean or an appropriate nominee of the Dean of Teaching and Learning. In addition, the panel will include an internal examiner and one external examiner.

"Internal examiner" refers to examination by a person who is a member of the faculty academic staff (including honorary appointments in The Institute) other than the supervisor(s).

"External examiner" refers to examination by a person, external to The Institute.

"International external examiner" refers to examination by a person external to The Institute, and from outside of South Africa.

Examiners are appointed independently of each other and their names may not be disclosed to each other during the initial examination assessment. Normally, all examiners must be in possession of a doctorate. However, in special circumstances, someone with a relevant master's degree coupled with other relevant experience

may be appointed.

Students may not know the names of their examiners until after they have completed the degree, and subject to the examiners' consent.

#### **4.2 Examination panel for Theses**

Two external examiners are appointed for the examination of a thesis, and one may be an international examiner. A non-examining chair is appointed by the Dean of Teaching and Learning. The non-examining chair will be the relevant postgraduate Programme Coordinator or the Dean of Teaching and Learning or the Dean of Research or the Executive Dean or an appropriate nominee of the Dean of Teaching and Learning. In addition, the panel will include two external examiners.

"External examiner" refers to examination by a person, external to The Institute.

"International external examiner" refers to examination by a person external to The Institute, and from outside of South Africa.

"International external examiner" refers to examination by a person external to the Institute, and from outside of South Africa.

Examiners are appointed independently of each other and their names may not be disclosed to each other during the initial examination assessment. All examiners of Doctoral theses must be in possession of a doctoral degree and relevant experience in post-graduate supervision and research publication. In exceptional cases, where specialist professional or technical expertise in the field is required, a third examiner may be appointed as a doctoral examiner and this must be fully motivated for and approved by the Examinations and Assessment Committee.

Students may not know the names of their examiners until after they have completed the degree, and subject to the examiners' consent.

#### **4.3 Assessment Form and Examiners' Report for dissertations**

The Assessment requirements are distributed to the examiners together with the dissertation to be examined. In addition, a copy of the National Qualifications Framework Level 9 Descriptors as well as the Exit Level Outcomes are also included in the examiner's pack. Dissertations should comply with The Institute's academic integrity requirements in terms of the Plagiarism policy (RG03) and Conducting Ethical Clearance (RS09).

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The Assessment requirements provide guidelines for the completion of the examiners' report. The examiner's report should be sufficiently comprehensive so as to guide the student and the supervisor, should there be a need to revise the dissertation.

The outcomes to be assessed in the dissertation are:

- The student has demonstrated an ability to engage in an innovative manner with a unique research problem, using evidence and theory and applying appropriate methods of research.
- The student has demonstrated the relevance and impact of his/her research study within a particular context both during the execution of the research and through the conclusions and recommendations.

### **4.4 Assessment Form and Examiners' Report for theses**

The Assessment requirements are distributed to the examiners together with the dissertation to be examined. In addition, a copy of the National Qualifications Framework Level 10 Descriptors as well as the Exit Level Outcomes are also included in the examiner's pack. Theses must comply with The Institute's academic integrity requirements in terms of the Plagiarism policy (RG03) and Conducting Ethical Clearance (RS09).

The Assessment requirements provide guidelines for the completion of the examiners' report. The examiner's report should be sufficiently comprehensive so as to guide the student and the supervisor, should there be a need to revise the theses.

The outcomes to be assessed in the thesis are:

- The student has demonstrated an ability to engage in an innovative manner with a unique research problem, using evidence and theory and applying appropriate methods of research.
- The student has demonstrated the relevance and impact of his/her research study within a particular context both during the execution of the research and through the conclusions and recommendations.

### **4.5 Oral Examination for dissertations**

After successful completion of the dissertation examination and effecting of the required changes if applicable, the student is required to complete an oral examination. The oral examination is a presentation by the candidate of the research undertaken as an oral defence in response to questions from the panel. The supervisor and student may invite additional panel members from the field or workplace. The panel should include the relevant non-examining chair, one of the examiners (in

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person or via an online medium) and a minimum of two additional academics or alumni at the relevant qualification level. Additional feedback may be given to improve the quality and content of the dissertation.

The examiners' reports and total scores given by the academic members of the panel are taken into consideration during deliberations on the decision of whether the student passes the oral examination.

### **4.6 Oral Examination for theses**

After successful completion of the thesis examination and effecting of the required changes if applicable, the student is required to complete an oral examination. The oral examination is a presentation by the candidate of the research undertaken as an oral defence in response to questions from the panel. The supervisor and student may invite additional panel members from the field or workplace. The panel should include the relevant non-examining chair, one of the examiners (in person or via an online medium) and a minimum of two additional academics or alumni at the relevant qualification level. Additional feedback may be given to improve the quality and content of the thesis.

The examiners' reports and total scores given by the academic members of the panel are taken into consideration during deliberations on the decision of whether the student passes the oral examination.

### **4.7 Additional Aspects of the dissertation**

Before finalisation of the dissertation, the examination panel will confirm that all required changes have been made, as per examiners' feedback above.

The title must be provisionally approved by the Research Committee and recommended to the Examination and Assessment committee. The title should be unambiguous and should convey the focus of the study. Additionally, the title will be finalised based on feedback from the examiners.

### **4.8 Additional Aspects of theses**

Before finalisation of the thesis, the examination panel will confirm that all required changes have been made, as per examiners' feedback above.

The title must be provisionally approved by the Research Committee and recommended to the Examination and Assessment committee. The title should be unambiguous and should convey the focus of the study. Additionally, the title will be finalised based on feedback from the examiners.



## 5 Version Control

Author	Revision
Research Manager: Dr Marthie de Kock	2014/10/23
Dean: Research: Dr Ronel Blom	2018/01/19
Dean: Research: Dr Ronel Blom	2018/08/06
Executive Dean: Prof Niel Viljoen	2018/10/17

## 6 Appendix A

### 6.1 Assessment requirements for dissertations

The student is required to submit his/her dissertation via the Learning Management System (MOODLE). The programme convener is required to manage and monitor the submission for compliance. The programme convener needs to include a Turnitin Report with a Similarity Index of no more than 10% in the examination pack submitted to the examiner.

In terms of the overall assessment of the dissertation, one of the following recommendations should be considered:

- Pass without revision (mark equivalent range 75%+)
- Pass after minor revision (mark equivalent range 60-74%)
- Major revision and resubmission for examination (mark equivalent range 50-60%)
- Fail: resubmission and re-examination (mark equivalent range <50%)
- Fail: Not eligible for resubmission ( based on examiner's recommendation)

Should there be a discrepancy in final assessment of more than 10% between the examiners, the non-examining chair may request a sitting of the Examination and Assessment committee for purposes of determining the final mark. If the discrepancy exceeds 10 %, a Moderator may be appointed (RS05 – Policy: Appointment of Academic and SMEs).The Moderator will be provided with a copy of the dissertation together with the examiners' reports.The mark awarded by the Moderator will be accepted as the final mark Upon passing, a student will be permitted to proceed with oral examination.