

Creative Writing Thesis Format

Offered by: [School of English, Media Studies and Art History](#)

Objective: To provide a program of academic research and creative writing that leads to the completion of a degree through both a substantial piece of creative writing and a substantial piece of critical writing and analysis.

Rationale: The creative writing program offers candidates the opportunity to undertake a major creative writing and critical writing project in the genres of fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, drama, or script writing. Candidates study the research, composition, and editorial skills necessary for a career in writing, as well developing their capacities for critical writing about creative writing practice.

Structure: Candidates are required to complete a course of study that includes seminars, a creative project and a critical essay. The seminars are:

- **Advanced Research Methods (compulsory):** this is the standard compulsory course for all research higher degree candidates in the School.
- **Creative Writing Seminar & Creative Writing Workshop (both compulsory):** The workshop includes discussion of critical and creative texts, issues of narrative, structure and the creative process. It involves workshopping of candidates' work, through drafts, rewriting and editing. The Seminar is designed to support the creative process and development of the dissertation.
- **Advanced Studies Option:** Candidates can also take an optional research seminar. This can be chosen from Advanced Studies Options on offer in the existing postgraduate program.

These seminars are not available to remote candidates: candidates must attend the St Lucia campus to undertake and complete these seminars.

In addition, candidates must attend 6 (if PhD) or 4 (if MPhil) Faculty of Arts RHD Seminars during their candidature.

Thesis Format: The thesis is composed of a creative project and a critical essay that together constitute the thesis. In accordance with its proportional weighting in the thesis, the creative project is given greater weight in the assessment process.

The creative project normally takes the form of a full-length work or several short works, such as:

- a poetry manuscript (96 pages for PhD, 48 pages for MPhil);
- a work of prose, such as a novel, novella, collection of short fiction, memoir, biography, or work of creative non-fiction (up to 80,000 words for PhD, up to 40,000 words for MPhil - the work can be an extract from a larger work for the MPhil, but not the PhD); or
- a feature film screenplay, the script for a stage or radio play, or the transcript (or in some cases the electronic recording) of an original film, video, stage, or radio production (2 for PhD, 1 for MPhil).

The creative project should display originality and make a contribution to its form or genre. It should be in a state suitable for submission to a publishing or production house.

The critical essay will ordinarily be between 20,000 and 30,000 words for the PhD and about 10,000 words for the MPhil, except where the creative project is substantially less than full length. In such a case, the submission of a longer critical essay may be negotiated. Also, where

the creative project self-evidently contains substantial research and organised reflection upon creative writing practice the requirements for the critical essay may be re-negotiated.

A wide variety of approaches and rhetorical strategies are tolerated and encouraged. While the critical essay may engage with issues of literary theory and criticism, it need not primarily function as an exegesis on contemporary theory. The critical essay may respond to, or situate, the creative project in an insightful way, or reflect upon an issue germane to creative writing practice such as the processes or techniques of creative writing in the appropriate genre or in the creative project at hand. Alternatively, the critical essay may examine the contexts and conditions of the candidate's creative writing; the critical, industrial or historical issues relevant to the candidate's creative project; or explore a scholarly issue of, for example, genre, theory, or thematic in other creative work of demonstrated relevance to the candidate's creative project.

The critical essay should be assessed as to the quality and organisation of its insight into and contribution to knowledge on its chosen topic.