

Notes for examiners of Masters in Science Communication Sub-Theses

Centre for the Public Awareness of Science

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Overview

Students enrolled in the Masters in Science Communication program at the Centre for the Public Awareness of Science at the ANU are required to complete a short research project – or ‘sub-thesis’ – as part of their coursework degree.

The entire degree equates to one-year of full time study, of which the research project is worth 40%. By way of comparison, this makes it a smaller research project than would normally be seen in an Honours program, or in more advanced research-only degrees.

In their project, students may construct a science communication artefact, develop a science communications strategy, or conduct more standard research into a science communication issue. The research may involve an empirical study (such as a survey of attitudes or knowledge), a media study on an issue, or a series of interviews with key stakeholders. Past research can be seen at cpas.anu.edu.au/research, though please be aware that requirements for the project have changed in recent years. The component of original research will vary depending on the topic. Students are not expected to make a ‘substantial’ contribution to learning (as required in a PhD), but it is reasonable to expect students to lay the foundations for more advanced study.

Research report

Students are expected to write their final research report in a manner that is suitable for publication in a science communication or related journal, whilst including – in a sensible manner – all additional information that a normal thesis would contain and milestone documents necessary for supervision purposes.

This requirement may vary in practice, but may mean that a sub-thesis submitted for marking includes these sections:

- An **introductory chapter** describing the topic at hand and the arrangement of the report
- A ~5000 word **literature review** for the topic and methods – students are required to develop this before progressing further in their research
- A **‘journal article’** chapter that is written following the guidelines of their nominated journal and is designed to stand alone when removed from the other chapters
- A **conclusion**
- Appendices as necessary.

Please note that this may mean repetition, with some of the literature, results and conclusions discussed both in the framing chapters and the standalone ‘journal article’ chapter.

Marking

When marking, please assess the work for its

- **Grasp of the relevant literature**
- **Appropriateness of research design, technical competence of data analysis and clarity reporting results;**
- **Quality of the general discussion**