

# PHD STUDENTS- THINKING ABOUT SUBMITTING YOUR THESIS FOR EXAMINATION?

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*Here are some  
successful tips from  
students.*

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## 1. The best tips

Find a mentor, someone external to the research who is reliable and experienced and who you trust and who will 1) push you along, 2) support you, and 3) if necessary, make you face some hard facts about the discipline and actions required for you to successfully submit your work on time. Ask them to provide you with ongoing, open and constructive feedback.

Past PhD students want to emphasise that the period leading up to your PhD submission and examination is a "stressful time" for most students and even their supervisors, and that this stress needs to be managed. Talk to someone if you feel the stress is getting to you. Lincoln offers time/stress management advice which has been priceless for some.

How much time should you expect it to take for supervisors to read a full draft thesis?

- At least 4-6 weeks
- Think of a circulation system to make this process work well/efficiently

## 2. Where to find helpful information?

Search the web and talk to others. You may also start your search by visiting <http://library.lincoln.ac.nz/Documents/Library/Research/2015%20Style%20GuideThesisDissertation.pdf> .

You should also refer to Section 10 of the PhD house rules. This section covers;

- Copy editing
- thesis preparation
- thesis deposit (who pays)
- thesis length
- types of thesis
- thesis submission for examination
- third party copyright permission
- thesis examiners

### Grounds for Embargo Guidelines

The Supervisor should provide the student with guidelines about when an embargo or restriction may need to be applied to their thesis.

Link to Grounds for Embargo Guidelines and Form

<http://hub.lincoln.ac.nz/academic/Pages/Externally-funded-research.aspx>

If grounds exist then an 'Embargo Notification Form' needs to be completed by the Supervisor and Student.

Also allow yourself time for last minute challenges. You will need time for the more practical/logistical tasks, such as formatting the thesis and getting it printed and bound (and if overseas, sending the thesis). Things can go wrong here so it is best to have some contingency time available at the 11th hour

### **3. Should I be registered?**

Yes, you must be registered at the time of submission.

### **4. Submitting from off-shore or off- campus?**

The reality here is the process can be difficult and unsettling. It can also be lonely as you work in isolation. You need to be driven and be prepared to manage uncertainties into a timeframe.

If you have returned home to submit, it will take time for you to settle into a routine. If you are working – a planned submission date will be driven by your commitments at work and at home. It may be, that you will need the support and assistance from your employer and so the relationship you have with him or her is important since it may have an impact on your target date for submission. Therefore you will need to make sure you are disciplined in setting your target/goal. Discuss these with those important to you in meeting your deadlines.

### **5. What should I know about tuition fees?**

If you are completing from off-shore, you will be charged international fees as discussed below.

New Zealand permanent residents, and Australian citizens or permanent residents, who are not currently resident in New Zealand, will not be classified as domestic students and therefore fees at the international rate will be charged. This is not a LU policy. The directive from the Ministry of Education is that whilst students are residing as a PhD student in New Zealand they can be granted domestic student status and as a result eligible to pay domestic level fees.

However, when students are off-shore to remain eligible for domestic fees status it will be approved only:

- 1) for temporary absences and;
- 2) for the purpose of approved doctoral research.

If you are submitting from anywhere in New Zealand there is no change to the fee rate.

All students- once you have submitted, the Postgraduate Team Leader will adjust your student account to reflect your submission date and if appropriate a refund will be made to the payee, e.g. StudyLink if your fees are paid by a student loan.

## **6. How to manage employment in your final year of study**

The reality for some students particularly in the final year is the necessity to enter the work force. At this stage work on the thesis toward your planned submission date for examination can be driven by the relationship you have with your employer. Do not hesitate to discuss the setting of goals and your intended deadline with your line manager and for those who have a positive relationship with your employer this should not be difficult to achieve.

- Speak with your employer and work through the goals, timeframes and other associated deadlines;
- Be prepared to manage uncertainties into a timeframe.

This could be a win/win situation for both you and your employer but certainly needs to be managed well.

## **7. Thesis Submission deadline and Graduation**

Submission of theses for examination should occur in October to have some confidence in meeting the deadline for the next graduation ceremony. Graduation clearance and an application to graduate must occur no later than 1<sup>st</sup> March each year.

## **8. How many copies?**

When the thesis is completed and bound, 2 copies should be submitted to Student Administration where their receipt will be recorded. The student should also submit a digital copy to one of the following:

- PG Office (Student Administration); or
- Supervisor or
- Postgraduate Administrator in the Faculty

## **9. What is the Declaration Form?**

With the thesis must be a declaration (the form is held by the Faculty Postgraduate Administrator or in Student Administration) from the student and supervisor stating that the work was carried out under his or her immediate supervision and that the contribution of the associate supervisor and, where appropriate, the external supervisor, associate co-supervisor and/or adviser was consistent with normal supervisory practice. This declaration also acknowledges external contributions, including substantive input such as joint authorship and significant contributions of

intellectual property (for example, research and resource contributions from CRIs, and assistance from external authorities in the discipline), and copy editing. Details of the contribution (including the name of the contributor and a description of the input) should be included in the Acknowledgements section of the thesis.

## **10. When will my theses be sent out for Examination?**

Once you have submitted, the Postgraduate Team Leader will adjust your student account to reflect your submission date and if appropriate a refund will be made to the payee, e.g. StudyLink if your fees are paid by a student loan. The thesis is normally sent out for examination ASAP (but no longer than 4 working days) subject to the examination panel including the external examiner's being nominated and approved. So it is best to make sure that the submitted version is correct to go.

## **11. What is the convenor's duty?**

A convenor is usually appointed at the same time you submit your thesis. The convenor is an independent academic staff member, and not from the same Department as you the student, and whose role is to administer the examination.

The convenor will:

- collate the reports and assessment sheets and;
- chase up on outstanding reports after two months of the theses being sent out to the examiners;
- facilitate any disagreements between the examiners;
- send all the reports to the supervisor who will need to arrange a suitable date for the oral examination;
- meet with the student prior to an oral; and
- manage the oral examination in line with the guidelines as well as have excellent facilitation skills.

## **12. How long can it take?**

Let's assume that the whole process is sailing smoothly and if so approximately three to six months can be expected to elapse between the submission of a thesis through to a student being cleared to graduate (including a decision by the Academic Administration Committee on the award of the degree).

External examiners are given two months to mark a thesis. Often examiners are able to mark a thesis in a much shorter period of time but this should not be relied upon. It is inappropriate to expect the examiner to drop everything he or she is doing to mark a thesis.

Familiarise yourself with the following sections of the PhD House;

- criteria for Judging PhD Theses (Section 11);
- assessing the thesis (Section 11);
- the oral examination, pre-examination responsibilities and guidelines for conducting PhD oral examinations using telecommunications, and the criteria to be met for alternative arrangements (Section 12);
- recommendations following the Oral Examination (Section 12);
- completion of an oral examination.

### **13. Useful tips when preparing for the oral examination**

- Conduct a mock viva with someone external – this does help.
- Oral presentation- should be no longer than 10 minutes - the template can be found here- <http://www.lincoln.ac.nz/Lincoln-Home/Student-Life/Study-Resources/Postgraduate-resources/>
- Attend as many conferences and seminars during your PhD as you are able –this prepares you for the defence and will help in identifying gaps/holes much earlier.
- Pre-publish as much as you can, the peer review certainly helps.
- Revise the thesis, find articles relating to it.
- Review recent literature after your submission; keep yourself updated with new findings in your discipline.
- Read a few articles about viva preparation as this will help.
- Many examiners are seeking your answers to the following general questions;
  - What is it about?
  - What did I do?
  - What did I find?
  - Why does it matter?
- Treat the oral examination as a conversation; most examiners want to talk about the thesis itself.
- Remember it is too late to dwell on the technical side (this should have been covered with your supervision team before submission) so immerse yourself with the positive aspects of the thesis and take ownership of it, it is your work.
- Understand your weaknesses/ constraints in your research so prepare accordingly but;
- Respect the critique and go about preparing for how you are to explain what the thesis is about.
- At the oral celebrate your journey and identify all the positive aspects of your thesis.

### **14. Academic Administration Committee approval –after the oral examination**

- The oral has been successful.
- Copies of the recommendation and the reports and appropriate letters must be signed and hand delivered (normally) to the Postgraduate Team Leader.

- The paperwork with the recommendation is submitted to the Postgraduate subcommittee for confirmation to its weekly meeting.
- A letter with copies of reports released to student

## **15. Post oral respite or not?**

Work out the changes required and the recommendations from the oral examination with your supervisor. For those who have returned to Christchurch or New Zealand to attend their oral and have a restrictive timeframe, it is always best to be guided by personal restrictions e.g. other commitments, finances, milestones and where possible it is easier that you complete all the graduation clearance requirements before you depart. Otherwise you may encounter difficulties and lose momentum, allowing the process to drag on unnecessarily. You are also best to work on publications where appropriate and possible during this period.

However, if you do not have any time constraints, you should consider the following:

- Don't pick up any material for a couple of weeks;
- Reward yourself – go on holiday and relax;
- Celebrate this achievement and be proud and place yourself in a positive space.

## **16. Deadline for graduation clearance and to apply to graduate**

Graduation clearance and an application to graduate must occur no later than 1<sup>st</sup> March each year.

## **17. Final Corrections and Lodgement in the Library /Clearance to Graduate**

Following the examination, the supervisor's Faculty Administrator will be sent a graduation clearance form. If the thesis (usually) requires corrections and editorial changes, these required changes will have to be made and are usually set out in the reports of the examiners. The student's supervisor will normally be responsible for oversight of the work in making these changes. The thesis is not regarded as complete until all of the changes have been attended to.

## **18. What is the sunset clause?**

Section 13 of the PhD House Rules provides detailed coverage of this.

Candidates normally have three months following notification of the outcome of the examination in which to complete any changes required following examination.



## 19. How to apply for an extension to the “Sunset Clause”

Section 13 of the PhD House Rules provides detailed coverage of this. But essentially where advice from the Faculty Dean or the supervisor is compelling and the Academic Administration Committee may approve a longer term.

## 20. What is the graduation clearance process?

All masters (research and PhD students) must comply with rules and regulations and processes in order to apply to graduate. 20 below sets this out for you.

## 21. Research Graduation Clearance Form Excerpt

The Faculty staff – supervisor, must sign off the Graduation Clearance Form and **the separate signatory responsibilities is highlighted in bold below.**

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree: \_\_\_\_\_ Mark/Grade \_\_\_\_\_ / Pass  
Honours 1<sup>st</sup> Class / 2<sup>nd</sup> Class  
Division I / II

Thesis/Dissertation amendments required: YES / NO

**PLEASE NOTE: Student has until \_\_\_\_\_ to complete all requirements. If this form is not returned by this date, it will affect the student’s award and eligibility to graduate. Refer to House Rules for further clarification.**

### **Student Finance to Complete**

No outstanding fees and charges: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Supervisor to Complete**

1. Field of Degree (e.g. Accounting): \_\_\_\_\_  
*Note: This is endorsed on the parchment*

2. Amendments/minor corrections completed and summary report sighted to the satisfaction of the Supervisor: YES / NO

Note: “If there are grounds for your Thesis or Dissertation to be embargoed, embargo details need to be communicated in the ‘restrictions’ box of the online submission process when it is made digitally available.”

Supervisor’s name and signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Faculty PG / Research Committee Chair to Complete

All faculty requirements have been met: YES / NO  
(Dissertation only - One digital copy of the dissertation shall be deposited in the supervisor’s Faculty.)

Chair or Nominee’s name and signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Library Only**

Library requirements met: YES / NO

Name and signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Once this form is submitted and signed off by the Postgraduate Team Leader, the Graduation Office is informed and the student is sent the e-mail below (22) to apply to graduate. So, if you do not receive this information please contact [graduation@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:graduation@lincoln.ac.nz) .

**22. Email text from the Graduation Office -extract:**

**From:** Graduation  
**Sent:** 2016  
**To:** Graduation <[graduation@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:graduation@lincoln.ac.nz)>  
**Subject:** Congratulations - your next step: please apply to graduate  
**Importance:** High

Hi, please find below a forwarded copy of your invitation to graduate email sent today to your Lincoln student email account.

If you are no longer a currently enrolled student you will not have access to LEARN.

You can access your student email and LUCAS as follows:

- Log into LUCAS at: <http://lucas.lincoln.ac.nz>
- Access your student email at: [www.outlook.com/lincolnuni.ac.nz](http://www.outlook.com/lincolnuni.ac.nz). (enter your email address and Lincoln network password)

For access issues or login resets please contact IT HELP on +64 3 423 0100 / [ithelp@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:ithelp@lincoln.ac.nz)

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Your next step is to advise Lincoln University how you would like us to award your qualification to you by completing your online graduation form in LUCAS.

**Not sure if you can attend the Ceremony?**

If you are not sure if you can attend it is best to apply to graduate 'in Person' to secure your regalia and guest tickets. After your graduation application has been submitted we can manage any changes that need to be made on your behalf.

**REGULATIONS: financial and practical work**

**No degrees or diplomas can be awarded unless all University regulations have been complied with.** These regulations include payment of all outstanding fees and completion of all practical work (if applicable to your qualification).

**How do you want to graduate?**

You can chose only **ONE** of the three graduation options:

**1. In Person:**

This means you **WILL** be attending the 2016 Graduation Ceremony at the Lincoln Event Centre on **Friday 8 April 2016**. *(You will need to hire regalia in your application and say how many tickets you would like to have sent to you).*

**2. In Absentia:**

This means you will not be at the ceremony when your qualification is awarded and your parchment will be posted to you **AFTER** the ceremony. *(If you are not planning to attend the Ceremony then the fastest way to graduate is to graduate In Council.)*

*Your last day to apply to graduate on the ceremony date is **1 March***

**3. In Council:**

**If you are not planning to attend the Ceremony in person then having your qualification awarded in Council is the fastest way of graduating.**

You do not attend the Council meeting and your parchment and official transcript will be posted after the meeting date.

**You must apply by 5pm 24 November to be included for the Council meeting on 8 December. Please email Sonja at [graduation@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:graduation@lincoln.ac.nz) after you apply with your name and student ID number.**

### Who do I ask for help?

**FINANCE** (fees and fines): +64 3 423 0884 / [studentfinance@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:studentfinance@lincoln.ac.nz)

**PRACTICAL WORK** +64 3 423 0061 / [practicalwork@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:practicalwork@lincoln.ac.nz)

**GRADUATION** +64 3 423 0053 / [graduation@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:graduation@lincoln.ac.nz)

**LUCAS and EMAIL** (logins and access): IT Help: +64 3 423 0100 / [ithelp@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:ithelp@lincoln.ac.nz)

### Where can I find information about Graduation?

Find graduation ceremony times, all about 'on the day', what happens if it's wet, regalia hire and more at [www.lincoln.ac.nz/graduation](http://www.lincoln.ac.nz/graduation) or email [graduation@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:graduation@lincoln.ac.nz) with your questions.

### When do I pay my regalia hire?

You can pay online via the application form with your credit card, or make an online bank payment. If you accept regalia hire and don't make an immediate payment then Finance will email you an invoice. Payment of regalia hire must be made before 14 March 2016.

### When will I be sent my Graduation tickets?

Tickets are posted out to you two weeks before the Ceremony. Each graduand will receive a maximum of 3 tickets for guests to the Graduation Ceremony. You do not need a ticket for yourself.

### Can I get extra tickets for extra guests?

We cannot issue extra tickets due to the limits on numbers at the venue. All additional friends and family are warmly invited to celebrate your achievement with you at the University, see you set off on the procession from in front of the Ivey Hall, and then watch the live stream of the Ceremony at the campus Te Kete Ika Food and Function Centre venue (where Mrs O's Café and Bar is located). After the ceremony has taken place, graduates and guests are all invited back to the University to Te Kete Ika - Food and Function Centre, for a celebration and mingle. It will be easy to reconnect with any friends and family as this is where you must go to return your regalia after the Ceremony, as well as where the photographer, framer, Linc bookshop and Alumni Association stands are located.

### Lincoln University Alumni Association

As a graduate you automatically become a member of the Lincoln University Alumni Association and are part of our global alumni community. You are able to connect with each other, staff and former staff and friends of Lincoln University. Visit the [AlumniLinc](http://AlumniLinc) website to discover alumni events, news and opportunities.

### Contact Information

Please email [graduation@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:graduation@lincoln.ac.nz) or visit [www.lincoln.ac.nz/graduation](http://www.lincoln.ac.nz/graduation) for more information.

To assist with a quick response please ensure you provide us with:

1. Your full name
2. Graduating qualification
3. Student ID

## 23. PhD Biography Template

You will be expected to complete the PhD Biography Template that is published in the Graduation Handbook



Guide-to-creating-y  
our-PhD-Graduator

The biography should cover the following information:

- 1) The candidates full name.
- 2) The candidate's occupation before embarking on doctoral research.
- 3) An explanation in layman's language and everyday terms, the topic of the research.
- 4) An explanation of the significance of the research. (How will the results be used? Can you identify any benefits to society or industry from the research?)
- 5) What the candidate is doing now?
- 6) What the longer term career aspirations of the candidate are.

Please note: The biography will be edited before being published in the Graduation Ceremony Programme.

## 24. Can you apply to graduate through council?

Yes, you still need to apply as indicated above and indicate accordingly. The Lincoln University Council Meetings provide opportunities throughout the year for students to graduate without attending a graduation ceremony. Parchments are mailed to students after the meeting. The 2016 deadlines are **2016 Council meetings and application deadlines:**

- Apply by Friday 5 February for the Council meeting on Tuesday 23 February.
- Apply by Friday 6 May for the Council meeting on Tuesday 24 May.
- Apply by Friday 8 July for the Council meeting on Tuesday 26 July.
- Apply by Friday 9 September for the Council meeting on Tuesday 27 September.
- Apply by Friday 18 November for the Council meeting on Tuesday 6 December.

### Contact

Graduation Office, email: [graduation@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:graduation@lincoln.ac.nz)

## 25. Can you graduate through council as well as attend the graduation ceremony in April?

No.

## 26. Clearance confirmation letter to student

In most cases students need confirmation that they have been cleared to graduate and the time between clearance and receiving the certificate may take too long because there are processes that must be followed, so **yes, you may ask for a letter** confirming your clearance situation. However, note that a fee is payable.