

Additional Information for Examiners where a candidate is submitting for an MMus in Music Composition



In the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music at the University of Melbourne, all candidates for the MMus degree in Music Composition must submit a folio of creative work (original compositions). Candidates may choose to write either a major folio (50-60 minutes of music), or a minor folio (25-30 minutes of music) plus a minor research thesis. The title page of the folio will indicate whether it is being submitted in full or partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree. The information in this document concerns only the examination of the folio; examiners should refer to the general Masters by Research guidelines for additional information not covered in this document.

The folio is a collection of musical pieces that will normally take the form of written scores, but may also include material in other formats such as: audio, film, video; interactive software systems, or other forms of digital encoding. The works may be further illustrated by video or other recorded performances for the Examiners' convenience. The folio must be submitted with numbered pages, a table of contents, and any additional media included. The works must be comprehensively documented with full instructions for their performance or other realisation. The folio may also include a brief introductory essay on the works; however, this does not constitute part of the candidate's research and is not separately assessable.

Standard of examination

The folio should demonstrate the full range of the candidate's musical voice. To this end, it will typically include pieces for different instrumental and vocal forces. It should contain at least one substantial work (for an ensemble of 12 or more independent lines) and at least one sustained work (15 minutes or more in duration).

In order to pass the examination and thus qualify as the basis of the award of the MMus degree, the folio must have the following attributes:

- it demonstrates a professional level of familiarity with and understanding of contemporary work in the field;
- it demonstrates a sufficiently comprehensive investigation of form and creative content;
- the methods and techniques applied in the execution of the work are appropriate to the subject matter and are original and/or aesthetically effective;
- the music is presented in a sufficiently professional manner;
- the music demonstrates a sufficiently high standard of musical literacy and quality;
- the documentation of the work is sufficiently thorough and is of a standard that will ensure the work provides a reference for subsequent researchers.

Examiner's report

In writing their report, examiners of composition folios are requested to consider the following questions:

- does the candidate show sufficient familiarity with, understanding and critical appraisal of, relevant precedents in the repertoire?
- are musical concepts and techniques employed in a sophisticated and personal way?
- does the music demonstrate an understanding of dramatic flow and temporal proportion?

- does the candidate demonstrate clear command of their craft, including practicalities of instrumental and vocal writing; effective orchestration and sonic balance; understanding of standard notational practice and, where appropriate, extensions of it?
- is the folio presented as a clear, consistent, professional publication free from errors?
- is each score accompanied by clear and appropriate documentation and explanation?
- does the folio as a whole constitute a substantive original contribution to the discipline?

Examiner recommendations

In interpreting the general guidelines for recommendations, examiners of composition folios may find the following specific criteria helpful:

Recommendation 1 - be awarded the degree without further examination or amendment required by me.

The examiner is satisfied that any errors or omissions do not warrant amendment and that the award can be made credibly on the folio as presented. Sometimes examiners who make this recommendation include a list of suggested amendments for the candidate to use when publishing the material.

Recommendation 2 - be awarded the degree without further examination, subject to making minor corrections and/or additions as I have specified to the satisfaction of the Chairperson of Examiners, without further reference to me.

This recommendation is usually selected when the examiner detects minor problems such as inconsistencies or ambiguities in notation, errors of orchestration or instrumental or vocal technique.

Recommendation 3a - be awarded the degree subject to revising part or parts of the folio as I have specified to the satisfaction of the Chairperson of Examiners, without further reference to me.

This recommendation is selected where the examiner concludes that corrections to small detail will not suffice to remedy lapses in compositional coherence or logic and that parts of some pieces will need to be rewritten. The problems do not affect the substantive merit of the folio and the examiner is of the opinion that compliance can be determined by the Chairperson of Examiners.

Recommendation 3b - be awarded the degree subject to revising part or parts of the folio as I have specified, and subject to my satisfaction.

This recommendation is selected where the examiner concludes that corrections to small sections of the folio will not suffice to remedy lapses in compositional coherence or logic and that some pieces will need to be rewritten. The problems do not affect the substantive merit of the folio but the examiner is of the opinion that the Chairperson of Examiners may not be able to determine compliance.

Recommendation 4 - not yet be awarded the degree, but be permitted to resubmit the folio in a revised form for re-examination. Areas requiring major amendment are identified in my attached report.

This recommendation is made where the examiner concludes that the folio contains flaws that have the potential to affect its substantive merit and render it inadequate for award of the degree. If, however, the examiner is also of the opinion that with additional specified rewriting or work the folio could potentially fulfil the requirements of the degree, this recommendation provides a pathway by which the candidate can rectify the deficiencies. In cases where a candidate is permitted to revise the folio for further examination, the regulations require that, if possible, the examiners of the original submission re-examine the revised folio.

Note that when a revised folio is resubmitted for a second examination, examiners will be provided with the reports of all original examiners for their reference.

Recommendation 5 - not be awarded the degree and not be permitted to submit for re-examination.

This recommendation is only made when the examiner is of the opinion that the folio has substantive, irredeemable flaws that render it inadequate as a basis for award of the Masters by Research degree.

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