

# Research: An Explanation

## Research defined

Research is defined in the AQF as follows:

*Research comprises systematic experimental and theoretical work, application and/or development that results in an increase in the dimensions of knowledge.*

## Research explained

In the AQF the term 'research' is intended to cover all types of research including original, exploratory, experimental, applied, clinically or work-based, and other forms of creative work undertaken systematically to increase knowledge and understanding, deploying a range of research principles and methodologies.

Research is specified in the learning outcomes for the Doctoral Degree, the Masters Degree and the Bachelor Honours Degree. The amount and type of research in each of these qualifications types will vary.

## Research applied

It is the responsibility of organisations developing and/or accrediting qualifications to exercise professional judgment to ensure that design of programs of learning leading to qualifications enables students to achieve the learning outcomes for both the qualification type and the discipline. Decisions about design of qualifications must take into account students' likelihood of successfully achieving qualification outcomes and also must ensure that integrity of qualification outcomes is maintained. Those developing and/or accrediting qualifications should be able to provide a pedagogical rationale to justify a decision about the research component. Specifically professional judgements must be made about the proportion of research in a qualification, the means through which the learning outcomes are demonstrated and the type of research.

Research is the defining characteristic of both forms of Doctoral Degree and the volume of learning required for the research component is specified. Research in the Doctoral Degree (Research) may be pure, exploratory, experimental or creative while the Doctoral Degree (Professional) allows for research that may be more applied within the context of the profession.

Both forms of the Doctoral Degree permit structured learning comprising advanced coursework to facilitate the achievement of the learning outcomes and support the research. In both cases, it is in addition to the requirements for research. For the Doctoral Degree (Professional) research may be minimally fifty percent if the volume of learning for the qualification is four years or more.

Research must be evident in all forms of the Masters Degree. The Masters Degree (Research) is a pathway to a Doctoral Degree so its design must prepare graduates for the research expected of a Doctoral Degree. Because a minimum of two-thirds of the volume of learning for the Masters Degree (Research) is for research, research training and independent study, the volume of learning for the qualification needs to be sufficient to take this into account and may need to be greater depending upon the pathway into the qualification. The outcome of the research component of the qualification is the execution of a substantial piece of research.

Research in either a Masters Degree (Coursework) or Masters (Extended) needs to be demonstrated by the execution of a substantial piece of research which may take the form of a project, capstone experience or piece of scholarship. The research is likely to be more applied or professionally-oriented than for a Masters Degree (Research). The programs of learning for these forms of the Masters Degree are intended to have a greater focus on structured learning, including research training, than the Masters Degree (Research). The proportion of research, the amount of research training and the size of the research output is likely to vary depending on the purpose of the qualification and the pathway into higher level qualifications.

The Bachelor Honours Degree may be undertaken as a pathway to a Masters Degree (Research) or for a Doctoral Degree. The amount and the type of research in a qualification for this purpose must comprise adequate preparation for research at a higher level demonstrated by the execution of a piece of research. Research in a Bachelor Honours Degree designed for advanced learning or for professional outcomes may comprise applied research or professionally-oriented research and the outcome of the research is likely to be the execution of a project.

## See also

[AQF explanation on Bachelor Honours Degree](#)

[AQF explanation on proportion of components of a qualification at a level](#)