

How to come to a determination of expected/required capabilities expressed/represented in the research output in different educational cycles

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While reviewing the thesis award procedure and outcomes together with the theory platform in September 2018, we concluded the need to determine with more certainty the expectations we have for theses written by students in different educational cycles. The main driver behind this conclusion was the experience of many theory tutors that, while it is wonderful to have students that are very talented researchers and writers, the majority of students struggle to find a research practice and articulation thereof that suits their work and aptitude. What are the realistic expectations for these students? We also realized that there is currently no determination of shared expectations towards master theses, which might result into much pressure on Bachelor theses.

Together we discussed practices in teaching and guidance, we shared handouts and criteria and formulated that shared understanding of expectations for theses in different educational cycles. We tested the outcome against our experiences with the thesis of summer 2019 and the feedback from the panel of the thesis award.

Most important to keep in mind is that the thesis is not a goal in itself. It is an instrument with which students display their level of competences reached, mainly with regard to the ability to *critically reflect, communicate effectively and show contextual awareness* in relation to the level that needs to be achieved in the respective educational cycle.

Expectation Preparatory Year:

- An exploration of personal fascinations
- A relating of personal motivation with the context of art education/art profession

Expectation Bachelor:

- Proof that the student is able to conduct a purposeful and planned research that benefits the development of his/her/their own work.
- An articulation of the research that presents traceable argumentation and conclusions.
- A positioning of the research and artistic work in relation to its chosen context and discourse.

Criteria:

- The research leads to content that is relevant in relation to the student's individual artistic or design practice.
- There is coherence in reflections, use of arguments and conclusions drawn.
- The use of sources and references is in line with MLA-standards.
- The articulation of the research makes the content accessible for others.
- There is a relevant relationship between content and form of the articulation.
- Through the research and the articulation thereof the student was able to reflect on his/her/their own work in the chosen field of art or design.

- Through the research and articulation thereof the student is able to draw relevant conclusions for his/her/their artistic practice.
- The student was able to reflect on and make use of supervision and feedback by tutors and peers.

Expectation Master:

- Proof that the student is able to choose from a variety of methods and articulations the approach that is relevant and conducive to the development of their own work.
- The research is conducted with awareness of and in relation to research and work that lies within the same discourse.
- The research is articulated and presented in such a way that the content, argumentation and conclusions are transferable to others and that its relevance in the discourse can be understood and discussed.

Criteria:

- The research shows authenticity of the subject or of the perspective on a particular topic.
- The research has deliberateness and relevance with regard to the chosen research method or approach.
- The content has relevance in relation to the chosen discourse and is therefore discursively up to date.
- There is a clear relevance of the content in relation to the student's individual artistic or design practice.
- There is coherence in reflections, use of arguments and conclusions drawn.
- The use of sources and references is in line with academic standards.
- The articulation of the research is deliberate and makes the content accessible for others.
- There is a relevant relationship between content and form of the articulation.
- The research is publicly shared in order to allow for transference and discussion.
- Through the research and the articulation thereof the student was able to reflect on his/her own work in the chosen field of art or design.
- Through the research and articulation thereof the student is able to draw relevant conclusions for his/her artistic practice.
- The student was able to benefit from supervision and feedback by tutors and peers.

Expectation PhD or other form of doctorate:

- Proof that the candidate can conduct a unique research.
- Generating knowledge or insight that did not exist before and the relevance of which is recognized by peers.
- The articulation of the research can be the starting point for further, augmented research.