



40 Word Summary Guidelines

When a PhD graduate is presented to the Chancellor at their graduation ceremony, the Dean of Graduate Research reads out the graduate's thesis title and a short layman's summary of their research. So, if you are planning to attend your graduation ceremony, you must provide such a summary, as distinct from the academic abstract.

To avoid the Dean getting into a carriwitchet over neologisms please let the following notes guide you when preparing this summary:

Ask the questions:

1. How would I explain my thesis in a couple of minutes to:
 - Someone at an average BBQ;
 - To my grandmother (provided she is not a nuclear physicist or the equivalent in your discipline!); or
 - To a reporter for a mainstream publication.
2. What difference will or could your research make to the world?

Some other tips:

- **Keep it short and simple**

In other words, avoid 'logorrhea', i.e. an excessive flow of words.

Use layman's terms, a non-academic audience will understand.

i.e. 'fish poisoning' instead of 'ichthyotoxicity';

or 'rock-dwelling legless lizard' rather than 'saxatile acolous lacertilian'.

Remember that you are preparing this for a general audience. Keep the language as simple and jargon-free as possible. If you must use scientific or technical words that are difficult to pronounce, provide a pronunciation guide to assist the Dean.

- **Don't be too modest**

If your research has made a significant contribution to your discipline area, say so. For example, 'Dr Woo's findings suggest internationally significant new approaches to the provision of education in remote areas.'

- **Keep your language active rather than the passive**

For example, 'Dr Jones investigated the effects on climate change on molluscs', not 'The effects of climate change on molluscs was investigated'.

- **Submit your summary electronically**

As well as eliminating the need to re-type, electronic submission ensures that difficult and unfamiliar words are spelt and therefore pronounced properly. Layman's summaries can be sent either within the body of an e-mail or as an e-mail attachment, and should reach the Graduate Research Office, along with the final thesis copies, **by 30 June 2010 for the August ceremony**, to ensure there is time to include them in the script for your ceremony.

e-mail: graduate.research@utas.edu.au

Some Examples of 40 Word Summaries from Previous Ceremonies

'Dr Hindrum's thesis is entitled: Factors Influencing Growth and Water Quality in Experimental Abalone Culture Systems.

Dr Hindrum investigated a range of factors that influence stock health and growth rates for commercial abalone farms. He showed that the impact of factors such as organic wastes, stocking density and refuge provision can influence biomass production by affecting water quality and abalone behavior.'

'Dr Pritchard's thesis is entitled: Juvenile Conferencing and Restorative Justice in Tasmania

Dr Pritchard's study evaluated the new youth justice system, which incorporates problem-solving meetings between offenders and victims. He found positive features in Tasmania's system which are of international significance, and developed new theories about offenders and their parents.'

'Dr. Jones' thesis is entitled "Molecular evolution and genetic control of flowering in the *Eucalyptus globulus* species complex.

Rebecca studied the genetic relationships among populations of *Eucalyptus globulus* (blue gum), and the genetic and environmental factors influencing its flowering. This contributes to a gene pool conservation strategy for this species, and a risk assessment model to determine the probability and consequences of gene flow from blue gum plantations into native populations.'

'Dr Davidson's thesis is entitled: A New Methodology for the Study of the Magmatic-hydrothermal Transition in Felsic Magmas: Applications to Barren and Mineralised Systems.

Dr Davidson's study involved examining how fluids that ultimately form ore deposits, such as the immense porphyry copper deposits of Chile, separate from their precursor magmas. This involved developing new experimental methodologies to examine fluids and melts trapped in igneous rocks.'
