40 Word Summary Guidelines

When a doctoral (PhD or Professional Doctorate) 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. All Doctorate candidates 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 your 40 word 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!)
   - 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 that a non-academic audience will understand

   For example: ‘fish poisoning’ instead of ‘ichyotoxicity’ 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! Also, make it personal. Don’t say that your research discovered or investigated something, say that you did!

   For example: ‘Dr Woo discovered internationally significant new approaches to the provision of education in remote areas’ or ‘Dr Lou researched language discourse and discovered that…’

• Keep your language active rather than the passive

   For example: ‘Dr Jones investigated the effects on climate change on molluscs’ rather than ‘the effects of climate change on molluscs was investigated’

SUBMIT YOUR SUMMARY:

• Submit your summary via the Graduation Requirements tab in iGrad

   Your 40 word summary will need to be uploaded, along with the below documents, via the Graduation Requirements tab in iGrad:
   - An electronic, signed copy of your final thesis
   - A Thesis Access Form
   - A thesis abstract of strictly 2000 characters (including spaces)
AN EXAMPLE OF A 40 WORD SUMMARY:

Candidate: Dr Pritchard
Thesis Title: Juvenile Conferencing and Restorative Justice in Tasmania
Summary: Dr Pritchard 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.