

40 Word Summary Guidelines

When a doctoral (PhD or Professional Doctorate) graduate is presented to the Chancellor at their graduation ceremony, the graduate's thesis title and a short layman's summary of their research is read aloud to the audience. All Doctorate candidates must provide such a summary, as distinct from the academic abstract.

To avoid the reader 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 they aren't 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 '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! 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.