

MONASH University



PROFESSOR GARY D BOUMA
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INQUIRY

EXAMINING A THESIS

WHAT DO EXAMINERS ACCEPT?

- **When the topic interests them**
 - Something to learn
 - It is in their area or one they want to explore
- **When they have the expertise**
- **When they have the time**

WHERE THEY START

- **The ‘Programmatic Para’**
 - This thesis aims to...
 - Assume this has been approved
 - Unless hopeless, they use this as the foundation of assessment
 - > Does the thesis do this?
 - > Is the issue addressed/question answered?

HOW DOES IT READ?

- Is there an argument?
- Does it develop?
- How is evidence / example used?
- Is it grammatical?
- Spelling?

REFERENCES

- **Look at Bibliography**
 - Does it look right
 - Consistency
 - Orderly
- **Are the references in the text ok?**
 - Following an appropriate format
 - Check a few against Bibliography

PLAGIARISM

- Are there inconsistencies in literary style?
- Are there passages that seem 'too familiar'?
- Do you recognise passages, word usages that seem out of context...?
- Does the referencing seem inadequate?
- If suspicious, check a few references

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

- **Assess the thesis as a whole**
 - Does it achieve the aims it set?
 - Does the argument work?
 - Is the evidence used convincing?
- **Does the author adopt the work of others uncritically?**
- **Is the argument clearly that of the author?**
- **Did you learn anything?**
- **Did you enjoy reading it?**

THE REPORT

- **Excellent Theses not a problem**
- **Poor theses take all the time**
 - Clearly note passages that you comment on
 - Provide evidence of the failings noted
 - > Not all if repeated, just examples
- **Clearly distinguish recommendations from required changes**
- **FAIL ONLY IF REALLY NECESSARY**