Appendix C - Guidelines for alternative format research degree theses using practice as research: School of Computing and Engineering

### Subject specialism: Music Technology and Games Design

(PhD - Music Technology)

(PhD - Games Design)

These guidelines are for supervisors and students who are considering including non-standard text-format presentation of research and practice elements as a part of a PhD research portfolio submission in the areas of music technology and games design. These guidelines should also be made available to the examiners of alternative thesis submissions.

**Word counts**

* The maximum word count for a thesis is normally 80,000 words. The exact percentage weightings between non-standard text format presentation, practice, and written elements are to be negotiated between the student and the supervisory team.
* The aims, objectives and methodology of a research project will dictate the structure of the submission.
* Practice-orientated PhD projects or non-standard text format thesis elements in the subject specialist areas of music technology and games design are normally balanced between 50–75% practice or non-standard text format and 25–50% written (20,000–40,000 words).
* The supervisory team, in consultation with the student, should discuss the percentage equivalents between the different elements of the PhD project. This will normally be done at the start of the research journey and reviewed in the Research Support Plan and at Progression Monitoring.
* At the first progression point, the student should outline the balance between practice/non-standard text format and written components. This will be subject to approval by the supervisory team and the Progression Monitoring assessors.
* The sector wide equivalents for PhDs that are practice-orientated and non-standard text format elements vary across the disciplines. Therefore, a clear rationale is needed for the percentage weightings. The rationale should explain how and why any divergence from existing subject convention is key to the specific underlying aims of the research project. This will normally be done at the start of the research journey and reviewed in the Research Support Plan and at Progression Monitoring.
* Candidates are encouraged to record discussion and agreement of the weightings and rationale in the online supervision recording system (currently SkillsForge).

**Submission**

* Students may include practice components as part of their PhD submission if it directly relates to the written research elements of the submission. Alternative format theses may include a portfolio of components appropriate to the field of study; for example: artefacts, film, photography, design prototypes, technical samples, software, code, multi-media designs, games, etc. These may be included alongside a written thesis or within a or non-standard text format such as a website or other multimedia presentational format. In all instances the rigour of the academic research must fulfil the criteria for the award regardless of the means of presentation.
* Research in, with and through practice ranges from substantial portfolios featuring research processes and completed artefacts or prototypes, to short practical extracts serving as examples of research ideas expressed in the thesis.
* The documentation of the portfolio must *always* be included as part of the submission alongside the written part of the thesis, but hyperlinks within the written text may also be used to point to the practice on-line. Images of practice may also be embedded with the written element of the thesis.
* Portfolios of practice and written elements must be related. The portfolio of work comprises practical elements AND written documentation. They should not be considered as two entirely distinct components, but rather sit together as a critical thesis or exegesis of the research undertaken. To be considered and assessed as a whole, the practice and the written work should inform each other and lead to new research insights. The submission of practical and written elements will be treated as an integral whole and components will not be individually marked.
* The structure of a PhD with practical components are informed by the existing conventions and accepted academic practices of subject specialist fields of study (for example, game design, audio technology component design, software development, APP development, spatial sound). It is expected that the supervisory team will work with the student to develop a suitable structure and presentational format for the research practice.
* The research practice outcomes should be of a professional standard. Where documentation is submitted, these should be of the highest quality possible. Published outcomes/exhibitions may be included, so long as permissions and credits have been provided and included within the written text and previous publications listed within the thesis.

Please refer to the standard university regulations on submission of PhDs under [Section A4 of the Regulations for Awards (Research Degrees)](https://www.hud.ac.uk/policies/registry/awards-pgr/section-a/)

**Please note:** A thesis submitted in alternative format and/or consisting of a portfolio of practical artifacts is considered as a standard PhD. For submissions consisting of a substantial body of published work such as high-impact academic and creative literature, they will be considered under the award framework for PhD by Publication.

**Additional information**

The supervisory team should oversee all aspects of the student’s progress, submission and examination. The supervisors should ensure the following:

* That the balance between practice, non-standard text format components, and written elements of the thesis are discussed at the first progression point and agreed and reported in the Progression Feedback Form. Any revisions to the agreed structure should be further reviewed by the supervisor and Progression Monitoring assessors and any changes agreed must be recorded in the Feedback Form.
* That the submission any code, tools, games, technology or other artefacts to be considered alongside the written elements of the thesis should be carefully planned in consultation with the student, as well as with internal and external examiners along with Registry as part of the Examination arrangements. For example, this may include: the “locking” of a website so that it remains exactly as it was at the point of submission; the physical delivery of artefacts to the examiners; or the secure online hosting of large data files so that they are accessible to the examiners.
* That any demonstration of the code, tools, games, technology or other artefacts at the viva voce examination should be carefully planned and scheduled in consultation with the student, as well as with internal and external examiners along with Registry as part of the Examination arrangements.
* That examiners understand the agreed relationship between the practice, non-standard text format elements, and written components. This includes the research aims of the portfolio, and the general criteria used for all PhD submissions at the University of Huddersfield.