



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Research & Industry Subjects Information for Supervisors



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1. How to use this document

The Office for Environmental Programs offers the multi-disciplinary, coursework Master of Environment on behalf of the University of Melbourne. Students in this degree can undertake a minor research project through one of nine research subjects offered by the OEP. The range of subject options provides both flexibility and variety of experience to students enrolled in the Master of Environment (100 or 200 point pathways). Students can take up to 25 per cent of their study as research.

This information document has been developed as a resource for:

1. supervisors of OEP students enrolled in a Research or Industry-based research subject, and;
2. prospective supervisors.

It contains information pertinent to all nine subjects. Where necessary specific details for each of these subjects is included, often in table form with the subject code clearly indicated. Much of the information and advice (for example, the role of supervisors, examination procedures including appointment and payment of examiners) is common across all subjects.

2. About the subjects

There are two main types of research subjects offered within the Graduate Environmental Program.

Research Subjects (ranging from 12.5 to 50 points)

Independent, original endeavours of enquiry, guided by an academic supervisor, researching a topic relating to the environment and/or sustainability which culminates in the presentation of a written report for assessment.

Industry-based Research Subjects (25-50 points)

Independent, original endeavours of enquiry developed in partnership with an industry supervisor and guided by an academic supervisor, researching a topic relating to the environment and/or sustainability issues which culminates in the presentation of a written report for assessment.

Industry-based research projects are distinguished by an opportunity to co-develop a research topic with an industry supervisor and a relevant academic supervisor, and to apply appropriate methodologies and analytical frameworks to interesting problems in real world contexts. Industry environmental research subjects are not internships; they are collaborative research partnerships between industry, the student and the University.

Both types of research subject require considerable degrees of independent, self-directed study. Students draw upon skills and knowledge gained in previous subjects and develop their capacity to integrate relevant theoretical and practical aspects of the problem identified as the specific area of inquiry.

Students can commence in any of the subjects in either semester one or two.

Table 2.1 : Research Subjects and Industry Projects

CODE	SUBJECT	POINTS	ASSESSMENT	DURATION
ENST90006	Environmental Research Review	12.5	5,000 words	One Semester
GENERAL EXPECTATIONS: Review of relevant academic literature				
ENST90007	Environmental Research Project (25)	25	10,000 words	One Semester
ENST90025	Environmental Industry Research (25)			
GENERAL EXPECTATIONS: Some original research, perhaps analysis of an existing data base, document analysis or collection of small amount of original data. Includes literature review, methodology, interpretation of data, findings...				
ENST90035/36	Environmental Research Project 25 Long	25	10,000 words	Two Semesters
ENST90039/40	Environmental Industry Research: 25 Long			
GENERAL EXPECTATIONS: As for ENST90007 and ENST90025				
ENST90016	Environmental Research Project (50)	50	20,000 words	One
ENST90020	Environmental Industry Research (50)			
GENERAL EXPECTATIONS: More substantial original research, data collection might include fieldwork, sampling, interviews. Report includes literature review, methodology, interpretation of data and findings.				
ENST70037/38	Environmental Research Proj: 50 Long	50	20,000 words	Two Semester
ENST90041/42	Environmental Industry Research: 50 Long			
GENERAL EXPECTATIONS: As for ENST90016 and ENST90020				

3. Eligibility and Research Topics

Students who are in the final semester or two of their degree may apply to enroll in a research project subject. Permission from the subject coordinator is required to enroll in a Research/Industry subject, and is dependent on having an approved project and supervisor.

Average grades are taken into account by the subject coordinator when students' submit application forms. To undertake a research project we normally expect students to have met the following grade point averages:

- 70% average - 12.5 – 25 points
- 75% average - 50 points

3.1. RESEARCH TOPICS

Research topics are developed by agreement from the student and supervisor, and with the approval of the subject coordinator. Topics can be generated by the supervisor of the student:

- Prospective academic and industry supervisors may advertise projects that they have available for a student to undertake in a future semester. On line forms are available for [academic supervisors](#) and [industry](#) on the OEP website. Information provided by academics and industry about projects will be widely circulated to OEP students.
- Students often approach supervisors with topics of their own generation. Students will normally require considerable support from supervisors to appropriately bound the scope and nature of their chosen topic. In many cases these students may be open to suggestions from the supervisor regarding topics.

4. Assessment

4.1. WORD LIMITS

The word limit expectations for each of the nine subjects are described in Table 2.1 above. The following principles underlie word limits for each subject:

- University standards about assessment in graduate course work subjects e.g. 5,000 words of assessment per 12.5 points.

4.2. THE FINAL RESEARCH REPORT AND ASSESSMENT

A significant piece of written work (thesis, research report, paper for publication) remains the central focus of assessment and is to be weighted at 60% (or above) of weighting towards overall assessment.

Students must also present their work either as a hurdle requirement or for a percentage of overall assessment.

In line with relevant disciplinary expectations and norms, supervisors may require some other scholarly activities. The types of activities and range of assessment weightings are prescribed in each handbook entry for the different subjects. This information is also summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Summary, additional assessment tasks and weighting (All OEP Research/Industry subjects)

ASSESSMENT TASK	SUGGESTED WEIGHTING RANGE	SUGGESTED EXAMINER ARRANGEMENTS
Detailed research proposal	10-40%	Supervisor and/or additional academic
Comprehensive literature review	Hurdle, 10-40%	Supervisor and/or additional academic
Research diary	Hurdle, 5-20%	Supervisor
Lab notes	Hurdle, 10-40%	Supervisor and/or additional academic
Fieldnotes	Hurdle, 10-40%	Supervisor and/or additional academic
Presentation	Hurdle, 5-20%	Supervisor and additional academic
Preparation of data, specimens for museum collections	10-40%	Supervisor and/or additional academic

Additional assessment tasks require consideration and action by supervisors in relation to several issues:

1. Choice of weightings, within the range specified should acknowledge the time involved in preparation and the complexity of the task.
2. All additional assessments must be documented on the [subject application form \(OEP](#)

[R1](#)); final approval lies with the subject coordinator.

3. Additional assessment tasks must be finalized prior to commencement of semester, in line with University policy.
4. The subject coordinator will provide administrative support for examination of additional assessment tasks.
5. The appointment of appropriate examiners for additional assessment tasks (for example the supervisor to provide sole assessment, or supervisor plus one other academic in a relevant field) in part depends on the assessment task and its weighting towards the overall assessment requirements and should be discussed with the subject coordinator.
6. All presentations must be assessed by two academics, as per University policy for live assessment tasks.
7. Where additional assessment is weighted as part of assessment, that material cannot be included in the final report. Where a piece of assessment is intended to be included in the final report, it should be a hurdle requirement only. For example, a supervisor might set a hurdle requirement of a literature review during the first month of a project. That material could then be included in the final report.

Where additional assessment tasks are required, word limits of the final research report will be reduced in recognition of the associated work load. University policy notes some generally accepted equivalencies.

- an hour of examination = 1 000 words;
- 10 minutes of individual oral presentation = 1 000 words

An example of how the handbook assessment requirements might be applied is below.

Table 4.2: Industry-based Research Subjects

TASK	WORDS (OR EQUIVALENT)	WEIGHTING
ENST90007, 90035/36, 90025, 90039/40 Main research piece/report publishable quality and size (including revised literature review)	7000 - 7500	70%
Separate literature review	2,000 - 2,500,000-	20%
Presentation (20 mins)	1,500	10%

OR

ENST70037/38, 90016, 90020, ENST90041/42 Main research piece	10,000 - 12,000	70%
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Further detailed proposal (submitted in week 4)	1,500	10%
Field notes, lab notes, research diary	(equivalent) 6,000	10%
Presentation (20 mins)	2,000	10%

4.3. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Major Research Report

Final research papers are assessed on the criteria in table 4.3, below. A distribution of marks across these criteria indicates to both students and examiners their weighting in relation to the final score. Please note these weightings are broadly indicative, this does not preclude examiners from using more a more detailed marking rubric in accordance with their disciplinary practice and expectations. The criteria and broad weightings should remain consistent, however.

This information is forwarded by the OEP to all examiners along with the project they are examining.

Table 4.3: Final Research Project: assessment criteria and marks weighting

CRITERIA	WEIGHTING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Definition of the problem to be investigated.· Demonstration of knowledge of the relevant literature and a capacity to analyse it in relation to the problem defined.	30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Use of literature and proven techniques of investigation, to solve or to clarify the readers understanding of the problem being investigated.· Explanations of limitations within the students' own work and the nature of any contribution made.	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Demonstration of competence in technical and/or discipline specific writing.· Assembly of a logical report that is well laid-out (presentation).	20%

Additional assessments

As per University expectations, additional assessments allow supervisors to provide ongoing feedback about progress to students. Supervisors must;

- Record tasks and deadlines on the application form,
- Provide assessment criteria for alternative assessments which meet the expectations of their discipline,
- Communicate assessment criteria to the students they are supervising,
- Examine and provide timely feedback to students on additional assessment tasks.

5. Funding and the Project Budget

Projected expenses associated with the proposed research must be detailed on the Subject Application Form. It is requested that any resources and facilities required for completion of the project be discussed carefully by supervisor and student prior. Where appropriate, resources/facilities should be supplied by the Faculty of supervisors. Faculty support of student research is underpinned by the following:

1. The Supervisor's Faculty will receive a portion of the income for each project supervised. The amounts will vary according to fee type (domestic full fee, domestic with CSP, international) and in different budget years. Up to date information is available from the OEP.
2. The funding is dispersed to Faculties to cover the costs of supervision, overheads and any direct project costs. Expenses incurred for research projects should be deducted from the fee allocation to Faculties for supervision of the research project.
3. Allocation of these funds to supervisors and students is a Faculty/Departmental matter and should be discussed with your HOD prior to confirmation of your supervision of a specific project.

Funding is dispersed to Faculties after the census date in each semester.

6. Role of the Supervisor

Students enrolled in any of the OEP research subjects are supported by an academic or academic and industry supervisors. There are three key elements to the supervisorial role:

Support development of a research proposal (including ethics and fieldwork risk processes*)

Proposals should be submitted to the OEP by students in the semester prior to their enrollment in a research subject (usually mid-May and mid-October).

To produce the proposal students will have been in contact with potential supervisors. If an academic has agreed to supervise a student it is expected that they will assist the student in the development of the proposal. This may involve one or two meetings, some email correspondence and reading and commenting on one or two drafts of the proposal.

Supervisors are required to indicate their intention to supervise by partly filling in and signing a form ([OEP R1](#)) that will be provided by the student. Supervisors are asked to address four key elements on the application form.

- Indicate they have seen a final version of the 500 word proposal
- Specify assessment requirements in line with handbook rules.
- Identify requirements for ethics and/or fieldwork risk assessment and support commencement of application processes.
- Review the proposed research budget and discuss with the student potential resources to support the research. Supervisor (and HOD) approval of the budget is essential (see section 5 above).

Ethics and fieldwork risk assessment processes should be undertaken through the home faculty of the main supervisor. Students are encouraged to discuss ethics requirements and deadlines at the earliest opportunity.

Supervision throughout semester

As per University guidelines, supervisors are expected to consult with students about their research, (on average) one hour each fortnight, for the duration of the research subject.

Students are encouraged to discuss with supervisors arrangements and expectations that are appropriate to the nature of the work they are undertaking. They are also encouraged to keep a record of meetings (date, time, what was discussed, work undertaken, work to be completed, steps of work required prior to next meeting, next meeting date etc).

Supervision involves the fundamentals of good teaching including concern for students, interest in their progress and provision of thoughtful and timely feedback.

Examination

Supervisors are asked to provide details of confirmed examiners to the OEP one month prior to the submission of their student's final research project. The subject coordinator will write to supervisors at the relevant time.

In addition, for 12.5 and 25 point subjects, supervisors act as examiners of their student's project. Supervisors of 12.5 point projects may request that another examiner be appointed and if so, will have to find an academic with appropriate expertise.

Supervisors seeking examiners can advise their colleagues of the following payment plans.

- Examiners whom are supervisors are not paid for this additional work.
- Examiners who are not supervisors are paid as expert markers, at a rate of 4000 words per hour.
- Examiners who do not live and work in Australia cannot be paid as they do not have work rights.

Payments to University of Melbourne examiners are dispersed to Faculties in a similar manner to supervisor payments after the results are finalized each semester. Payments for casual examiners who work at the University of Melbourne, and examiners not from the University of Melbourne, will be arranged separately.

7. Role of the Subject Coordinator

Student support and supervisor liaison

The Office for Environmental Programs provides support for research subjects to students and supervisors both prior to commencement in a research subject and during enrollment through the subject coordinator:

- Information sessions and individual advice to students about getting started in a research subject.
- Review all proposals and ensures that students and supervisors have clarified the scope and budget of a project before approving enrollment.
- Liaison with supervisors about the proposal and additional assessments as required at both proposal submission and examination stages.

Leadership of subject workshops, organization of presentation sessions

Students are required to attend a minimum of 8 hours of subject based workshops throughout their enrollment in a research subject.

Workshops achieve both scholarly and practical objectives including:

- General academic support including research training and skills development.
- Strategies and challenges of communication about research for specialist and non-specialist audiences as well as group discussion about the shared experiences common to research students regardless of discipline.
- Support for management of administrative and other general issues that arise from conducting research, preparing projects for submission and completing on time.

Workshop topics include: writing an abstract, structure and presentation for a minor thesis, writing for examination, data analysis and management, revision and editing techniques.

Presentations: A formal presentation day towards the end of each semester, about four weeks from submission of the final report is organized by the subject coordinator. Formal assessment can occur in these presentation sessions. Two academic assessors (the supervisor and one other nominated academic arranged by the supervisor) must be present at a live assessment task.

8. Extensions Policy, Special Consideration (and Late Penalties)

The OEP follows the [University extensions policy](#). Extensions will be considered only if grounds for extension or special consideration can be established.

For extensions of up to ten business days, students' must fill out an [Application for Extension for Research Project Form \(OEP R4\)](#) to be returned to the Office for Environmental Programs. Final approval for short extensions lies with the Subject Coordinator.

An extension of more than ten business days can only be supported with an approved special consideration application made online via the student portal.

Please note: extensions of any duration will impact on the possibility of completion of the subject and resolution of assessment in time for the next available graduation ceremony.

Supervisors cannot grant extensions, however, students are advised to consult with supervisors about the need for an extension. Supervisors should consider their availability to continue supervision into the time being required for an extension and advise both students and the subject coordinator if there are any problems with continuing to support the student.

8.1. LATE PENALTIES

Where extensions or special consideration do not apply, late submissions of final research reports or alternative assessments will incur a Late Penalty.

A penalty of 3% per day will be applied to all final research reports and any additional assessment tasks that are submitted late without approved extension or special consideration.

9. Submission (Final Research Report)

Students submit via Turnitin. For our records the OEP requires that students also provide one hardcopy.

9.1. SUBMISSION DATES

All final research projects are due on the Monday of the week following SWOT vacation.

9.2. Submission of additional assessments

Dates are determined at the application stage.

Extensions can be granted by supervisors to meet the needs of the emerging research process during the semester. Students and supervisors should advise the subject coordinator of the revised submission dates as soon as possible.

Students submit electronic copies of the work to their supervisor and to the subject coordinator (OEP-Research@unimelb.edu.au).

Supervisors provide timely feedback directly to the student, but should forward a copy including the result to the subject coordinator (OEP-Research@unimelb.edu.au)

10. Examination Procedures

Supervisors are asked to nominate and confirm the availability of suitable examiners. This occurs four weeks prior to the final report submission date and ensures that examiners will have sufficient expertise to complete an assessment of the thesis in terms of the stated assessment criteria. Students should not know the names of examiners (except where the supervisor is included as an examiner).

We encourage supervisors to select examiners internal to the University, where possible. Examiners internal to the University are more familiar with the grading standards associated with Masters level minor research projects. Arrangement of contracts for internal payment for examination work is considerably less consuming of staff time.

External examiners with relevant expertise may, however, be appointed, and payment will be arranged through the subject coordinator at the same rate as University of Melbourne examiners (see section 6 above).

Table 10.1: Number of examiners

SUBJECT	NUMBER OF EXAMINERS
ENST90006	One - the supervisor or nominated Academic
ENST90007 ENST90025	Two - the supervisor plus one additional academic
ENST90024 ENST90026	Two - the supervisor plus one additional academic
ENST90016 ENST90020	Two academic examiners, neither of whom is the supervisor
ENST70001 ENST70002	Two academic examiners, neither of whom is the supervisor

10.1. EXAMINATION TIMELINES

Examination of research projects takes time. Examination delays can occur, for instance where an examiner is not able to submit a report in the required time or when a replacement examiner becomes necessary. In addition, in some cases the score is not resolved by the results received by the initial examination process.

A two stage examination process gives students, supervisors and examiners clear understanding of the timelines required.

This understanding is particularly important if a student is keen to graduate at the end of a semester but is not able to because their research subject score has not been resolved in the time required by the University. **If a student's result is not resolved at the first stage of examination, this may well mean that a student cannot graduate in the ceremony nearest the completion of their degree.**

Please note that the subject coordinator **will not** ask examiners to complete their work in any less time in order to meet graduation deadlines.

Examination Stage one - TWO WEEKS (commencing from submission date) (ALL STUDENTS)

1. The OEP electronically forwards final research reports to nominated examiners as soon as possible after they are submitted. Examiners are provided with a short information guide and links to relevant forms for submission of results and comments. The date for return of the result is clearly indicated, i.e. TWO WEEKS from the submission date.

Examiners are asked not to contact each other about the examination, and should not release their mark directly to the student.

2. Upon return of examiners reports, the subject coordinator reviews both comments and scores.

Where there are two examiners, the subject coordinator will derive one mark, generally by averaging the two. If the difference between two examiners' marks is less than a whole grade level, then the average of the two becomes the final result and the score is entered.

Examination Stage two - TWO WEEK (commencing two weeks after submission) (ONLY STUDENTS WITH SCORES UNRESOLVED AT THE END OF STAGE ONE)

If the difference between two examiners' marks is greater than 10% then the subject coordinator consult with both examiners, providing access to all written comments on the thesis, requesting consideration of the grade in the light of this feedback. This normally leads to a resolution of grades, However, where the grade cannot be resolved, a third examiner will be sought nominated by the subject coordinator who will be given up to TEN DAYS to complete their assessment. The result of the third assessment will be forwarded to the subject coordinator who will review the result in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Examiners for OEP Subjects. A result will be derived (usually by averaging the two marks that lie closest together of the three).

Only the final agreed grade and mark is released to the student. This will occur after it has been confirmed by the Office for Environmental Programs. Students and supervisors will receive a copy of examiner comments after the result has been resolved.

11. Appeals

Students who wish to appeal against the grade and mark must make a case in writing to the Chair of the Board of Examiners for OEP Subjects within a month of the official release of results.

The Chair of the Board of Examiners for OEP Subjects (the Director of the OEP) will review the appeal and undertake one or two of several steps as required:

- Dismiss the appeal if s/he believes an adequate case for re-marking has not been made
- Ask the subject coordinator to appoint an additional examiner to make a further independent assessment of the research and provide a mark and a 300 word report as per subject examination policy and procedures.
- Act as arbiter of the appeal process, based on the three reports and a letter from the supervisor indicating the supervisor's position. The original mark will then be confirmed or adjusted.

Any reduction (or change) in the mark as a result of the appeal will be reported to the Academic Board. Students retain the right of appeal beyond the Office for Environmental Programs to the Academic Board, but it should be noted that such appeals will address only procedural matters and not questions of academic judgment.

12. Casual Supervisors

In some cases supervisors who are experts and have relevant supervision experience are not regular University staff members. They are paid on a casual basis according to a formula which incorporates University recommendations about supervision time, administration, reading time and examination (if required).

Table 12.1: Casual Supervisor hours

TASK	RATE	ENST90006	ENST90007, ENST90025	ENST70035/36 ENST90039/40
		No. of hours	No. of hours	No. of hours
Meetings with student	Tutor	8.0 0.0	8.0 0.0	14.0
Reading time	Other Academic	4.0 0.0	8.0 0.0	8.0 0.0
Administrative	Other Academic	2.0 0.0	3.0 0.0	3.0 0.0
Examination of	Other Academic	1.7 5.0	3.5 0.0	3.5 0.0
TOTAL		15.75	22.50	28.50

TASK	RATE	ENST90016, ENST90020	ENST70037/38, ENST70041/42
		No. of hours	No. of hours
Meetings with student	Tutor	8.0 0.0	14.0 0.0
Reading time	Other Academic	11.0 0.0	11.0 0.0
Administrative	Other Academic	4.0 0.0	4.0 0.0
Examination of	Other Academic	0.0 0.0	0.0 0.0
TOTAL		23.00	29.00

Notes:

- *Reading time: assumes 2 reading sessions, at 4000 words per hour*
- *Meeting time: Once a fortnight during semester time, 6 per semester, 12 for year long, initial 2 hours of meetings*
- *Admin work: takes into account liaising with ethics committees and finding examiners*
- *Examination: not required for 50 points.*

www.environment.unimelb.edu.au

Office for Environmental Programs
Ground Floor, Walter Boas Building (163)
The University of Melbourne
Ph: +61 3 8344 5073
query-environment@unimelb.edu.au
www.environment.unimelb.edu.au

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