



Report of the **Overseas Examiner**

Examiner's Recommendation MPhil

Attached is my report as examiner of the following Master of Philosophy thesis:

Candidate's name: Kelly Roe (9753890)

Thesis title: Disability and Equity in Medicine and Public Health

Chief Supervisor: Dr Justine Kingsbury

My recommendation:

- ☐ That the thesis be accepted in its present form as fulfilling the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy.
- ☐ That the thesis be accepted as fulfilling the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy, subject to minor amendments and/or correcting typographical errors to the satisfaction of the Chief Supervisor, which are completed within 4 weeks.
- ☐ That the thesis be accepted subject to the candidate completing substantial amendments to the satisfaction of the examiner or chief supervisor**, provided that these amendments are not so substantial as to necessitate re-submission and are completed within 10 weeks.
- ☒ That an oral examination be conducted, and a further report, based on the oral examination, be provided by the examiner to the Postgraduate Studies Committee.
- ☐ That the candidate has failed to meet the required standard and that no degree be awarded.

The amendments should be checked by:

- ☒ The Chief Supervisor
- ☐ The Examiner

I understand that the full contents of my report will be made available to the candidate



Request for anonymity: (option available only to examiners who will not be taking part in an oral examination)



I have provided a separate, anonymous version of my report for the candidate (refer to 'confidentiality' on the Information sheet provided to external examiners)

Signed:



Date:

17/9/12

 – External Examiner (OS)

Mphil – Resubmission examination report

This is a thesis on an interesting topic which has a number of strengths, and weaknesses. As such I am recommending an oral examination to probe the specific weak points identified. I should note, this thesis has been greatly improved by the additional time taken, with an increased use of evidence, more clear signposting and structure all pointing to development.

In terms of strengths, I still think the central insight of the piece is a helpful contribution to what the author acknowledges that it is a messy and difficult topic to engage with given the space of time and words available to wrestle with it – on that note, I did think given this recognition that the author did a good job of defining their scope and bracketing off some side issues. And I agree with them, that a topic area is tough and hard to grapple with should not be a reason to avoid addressing it, indeed it might be a reason to think it is even more pressing to address. Clarity is in general good and the structural changes have improved further upon this.

In my previous report I identified three significant deficiencies, have these been addressed in the revised document?

The first was that there didn't seem to be an analysis of the concept of discrimination within the thesis – which given how central the notion was to the thesis was a substantial issue.

This issue has been partially addressed – there is now an analysis of the concept of discrimination present. However at several key points it seems that either that analysis has been forgotten, or more needs to be done to show that the discrimination being discussed is discrimination of the morally problematic sort. So for example, on page 100 insurance companies charging higher premiums to people due to their membership of 'equity groups' is decried as discrimination, which it clearly is – but more work needs to be done to show it is morally problematic discrimination, rather than simply a reflection of a higher likely cost to the company – in other words, it needs to be shown that this is discrimination on the basis of an irrelevant characteristic. Similarly I was confused how this showed that higher capitation funding was problematic – since again it is on the basis of providing for higher need – which would seem to be a relevant characteristic. This is dealt with better in the context of vaccination on page 122, where an argument is given for why we should view the immunocompromised as the primary beneficiaries of vaccination (though further work would have helped considerably on both why this is important, and why a sufficient amount of secondary benefits can't outweigh this). The same issues with the implementation of the concept of discrimination within the argument come up on page 160 regarding medical school admissions requesting disability information from applicants – the author is utterly right that this is discrimination – but they then do none of the further work to show that it is morally problematic discrimination, rather than simply selecting candidates on the basis of relevant information about likely fitness to practice. As such I do not feel that this issue has been appropriately addressed.

The second issue was the pattern of making significant empirical claims without referencing these claims. I'm happy to say I consider this largely addressed, both from the position of the author

weakening many of these claims, and from the inclusion of further empirical resources and underpinnings to strengthen the claims they do make.

The final issue was in making quite tendentious interpretations of those empirical claims, without being charitable. This issue is still present to some degree – and indeed some of the quotes I gave as examples of this remain intact in the thesis. Nonetheless this has had some work to address this. Most clearly this has been done in regards to the claims regarding Maori rates of immunisation where argument has been made to further reinforce the line of reasoning being followed. While I think further work on this would further improve the thesis I do believe this deficiency to be largely redressed.

There are still some minor issues outstanding, while signposting was improved and many minor errors have been corrected, sign posting could have been further improved within sections – partially due to the sheer scope being covered here some of the transitions between sections are quite jarring, with the reader left to their own devices to determine what was established in the previous section, and why a new section has begun.

So in sum, the second and third issues I identified have been largely addressed. However the first issue remains partially unaddressed and the implications of that flow through the thesis, leading to some fairly tendentious claims around particular activities being discriminatory in the normatively thick sense, without having done enough leg work to properly underwrite those claims. As such I find myself unable to recommend at this stage that this thesis fulfils the requirements for an Mphil.