

A3: Regulations for research degrees on the basis of published works: Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

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Eligibility

1. A full- or part-time member of staff¹ of the University of Surrey may apply to the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee (APESC) to become a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the basis of published works on the conditions that:
 - the applicant has held the appointment for at least three years
 - a substantial proportion of the research underpinning the papers must have been conducted during the applicant's appointment
 - the publications on which the application is based must have been accepted for publication or published
 - the applicant has at least five publications as sole or co- author

Application

2. The applicant will send to the Secretary of the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee:
 - (i) a list of the publications on which the application is based;
 - (ii) a cover letter of no more than 500 words outlining:
 - the area(s) in which the applicant has been working
 - a brief description of the research undertaken
 - a statement as to when and where the research was undertaken
 - for any co-authored works, a statement as to the contribution the applicant made to the publication
 - the applicant will also declare if any of the works on which the application is based have formed part of the submission for any other degree awarded to the candidate. Works submitted for another degree awarded to the candidate will not be accepted in the submission;
 - (iii) a letter of support for the application from an academic who knows the applicant professionally.

Role of the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee

3. The Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee will review the application in order to determine:
 - whether or not the applicant meets the eligibility criteria to be a candidate for the award
 - whether or not the applicant has made a sufficiently strong case for candidature
4. The Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee may refer the case to an independent reviewer. The independent reviewer will be an active researcher in an area related to the application and will not have had any personal or professional involvement with the applicant which may give rise to a conflict of interest. The

¹ Staff is defined as persons holding the appointment of: Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Professorial Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow, Research Fellow, Research Officer / Research Assistant, Professorial Teaching Fellow, Senior Teaching Fellow, Teaching Fellow, Emeritus/a, Visiting Academic, Honorary NHS Appointments, Associate Tutors. The Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee may extend this provision to other members of current or retired staff as appropriate.

independent reviewer may be internal or external to the University of Surrey.

Application approval

5. The Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee will be responsible for the approval or rejection of the application. A decision to approve an applicant for candidature will be made in the Subcommittee's best judgement. However, it must be clearly understood that the Sub-committee is neither qualified nor empowered to predict the outcome of the examination process: this judgement can only be made by the examiners.

Application rejection

6. Where the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee rejects an application, the applicant is at liberty to submit a revised application on one occasion only, on the condition that the revised application demonstrates a significant improvement such as additional published works.

Supervisors

7. Upon approval of candidature for the degree, the candidate will be allocated to a Faculty and the Executive Dean of Faculty will appoint two supervisors. In all cases, at least one of the supervisors shall have supervised solely or as a team member at least one research student through to successful completion of a doctoral degree.

Principal Supervisor

8. At least one supervisor, the Principal Supervisor, shall be a member of the University's staff holding an appointment as Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Professorial Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow, or Research Fellow.
9. The Principal Supervisor will:
 - be an active researcher in an area relevant to the student's field of research
 - have completed the relevant training as set out in the [Code of practice for research degrees](#) if new to supervision
 - have an expectation of holding the appointment with the University for at least the minimum period of the candidate's registration

Co-supervisor

10. The Co-supervisor should be appointed from among the following:
 - a member of the University's staff holding an appointment as Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Professorial Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow, Research Fellow, Research Officer / Research Assistant, Emeritus/a staff, and Honorary NHS Appointments
11. A Co-supervisor will:
 - have appropriate knowledge and normally be an active researcher
 - have an expectation of holding the appointment with the University for at least the minimum period of the candidate's registration
 - have completed the relevant training as set out in the [Code of practice for research degrees](#) if new to supervision

Submission of published works

12. Within twelve months of confirmation of candidature, a candidate is required to submit to the Student Services and Administration Directorate one temporarily bound copy of the submission for each examiner. The submission will consist of:

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- an introductory chapter which will: provide a literature review setting the research in context; demonstrate how the research and resultant publications have contributed to the advancement of the field
- copies of the published works on which the submission is based. Any co-authored papers will be accompanied by a statement declaring the contribution of the candidate. Normally, this statement should be reviewed and signed by the other authors
- a concluding chapter which will draw together the themes of the submission and propose areas for further research
- appendices – candidates may wish to submit a full CV and any additional publications which do not form a part of the submission but which may help the examiners to see how the candidate's research has developed over time

Lapsed registration

13. The registration of a candidate who fails to submit the thesis within twelve months of confirmation candidature will be deemed to have lapsed and will be terminated.

Entry form for examination

14. The candidate will submit the Entry Form for Examination no later than two months before submission of the thesis. The examiners will be nominated by the supervisory team and endorsed by the Executive Dean of Faculty. The appointment of the examination panel is subject to the approval of the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee.

Examination Panel

15. The candidate will be examined *viva voce*. The examination shall be conducted by at least two examiners. All examiners will be external to the University.
16. Examiners must have expertise in examining at the appropriate level so that they are familiar with the standards expected and the achievement likely to be attained. The appointed examiners should, between them, normally have examined a minimum of six candidates at the appropriate level; an external examiner must have experience of at least one relevant examination.
17. An external examiner will:
 - (i) have expertise in the area relevant to the candidate's field of research and be demonstrably research active;
 - (ii) hold an academic appointment (a curriculum vitae should accompany any nomination to the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee);
 - (iii) have experience of examining at doctoral level;
 - (iv) not have, nor have previously had, a personal relationship with the candidate or member of the supervisory team;
 - (v) not have had any professional relationship with the candidate which may give rise to a conflict of interest (eg supervisory, collaborative research, co-author);
 - (vi) not have had a significant research relationship (for example, co-authoring of numerous research outputs such as papers and conferences) with any member of the supervisory team within the last five years;
 - (vii) not hold (nor have held) any appointment of the University, other than that of external examiner, during the last five years;

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- (viii) be appointed from within the European Economic Area (EEA) and have the right to work in the United Kingdom. In cases where the candidate is located outside of the EEA and is experiencing extenuating circumstances which render them unable to travel to the UK it would be permissible to appoint an examiner from outside of the EEA.
18. Normally, an external examiner would not examine more than three candidates of the University in any five year period without permission from the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee.
19. An Independent Chair will also be appointed. The Chair will be responsible for ensuring the proper and fair conduct of the examination and will sign the final joint examination report.
20. The Independent Chair will:
- be internal to the University
 - not have, nor have previously had, a personal relationship with the student
 - not have had any professional relationship with the student which may give rise to a conflict of interest (eg supervisory, collaborative research, co-authoring of papers)
 - have experience of examining at doctoral level
 - not be Emeritus/a or honorary staff

Viva voce examination

21. The *viva voce* examination should normally be held not less than 30 days and not more than 90 days after submission of the thesis. Only with the approval of the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee and with the written agreement of the examiners and the candidate, the *viva voce* examination may exceptionally be held earlier.
22. The content of the thesis, the conduct of the examination of a candidate and matters related thereto shall be regarded as confidential to those taking part in the examination and to appropriate officers of the University until such time as the outcomes of the examination are agreed by the Student Progression and Awards Board (SPAB).
23. Each appointed examiner will receive a copy of the thesis to be examined in advance of the *viva voce* examination and will prepare an independent, written report on the content and style of the thesis in advance of the examination. The reports will be submitted and considered at the *viva voce* examination.
24. The *viva voce* examination is concerned with the content of the thesis and any related matters which the examiners consider appropriate. The candidate should expect to be questioned by the examiners on matters including: the focus of the research, the existing literature, the methodology used, the conduct of the research, the outcomes and conclusions.
25. The *viva voce* examination shall be conducted in the presence of the examiners at the University in Guildford. Exceptionally, and subject to the approval of the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee, the examination may be arranged at another venue, provided all parties, including the student, agree. Exceptionally, and subject to the approval of the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee, the *viva voce* examination may take place via video-conference provided that the candidate is accompanied by at least one of the examiners.

- 26 Supervisors are not expected to be present at the closed *viva voce* examination but should endeavour to make themselves available for the conclusion of the examination when the verdict is given and any required corrections to the thesis are explained. In exceptional circumstances, candidates may make a written case to the Faculty Associate Dean (Doctoral College) to request that their supervisors attend the *viva voce* examination. The case must explain why the presence of the supervisors is necessary to ensure the effective and proper conduct of the examination. On the rare occasion that a supervisor is present at the examination they must not participate in the examination and may only speak at the behest of the chair.
- 27 No persons other than the above shall be present at or otherwise take part in the *viva voce* examination.
- 28 In examining the candidate the examiners should determine whether the works submitted show that the candidate had carried out a programme of research at least comparable with that required to prepare a PhD thesis in the field concerned, and whether the thesis demonstrates:
- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
 - a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
 - the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
 - a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry

Examiners' report

- 29 After the examination, the examiners shall prepare a report on the *viva voce* examination, together with any reports that may have been submitted by the supervisors in response to a request by the examiners. They shall preferably prepare a joint report but are at liberty to prepare separate ones if they so wish. They shall jointly make one of the following recommendations:
- (i) that the degree be awarded;
 - (ii) that the degree be awarded, subject to specified minor corrections² being made to any aspect of the thesis, other than the published works, to the satisfaction of the external examiners within a period not exceeding one month of receipt of the corrections;
 - (iii) that the degree be awarded, subject to specified, minor revisions³ being made to any aspect of the thesis other than the published works to the satisfaction of the external examiners within a period not exceeding six months;

² The phrase "specified, minor corrections" shall be taken to include the correction of minor corrections, minor errors of fact, typography, grammar, style, syntax and/or layout of graphs/tables etc., which would enhance the readers' understanding of the author's argument but which does not alter the intellectual content and reasoning of the thesis.

³ "Minor revisions" are those which do not involve further supervision or any further original research. Such additions might include, for example, additional sentences, tables, paragraphs or pages but not normally additional chapters. They may additionally include specified minor corrections.

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- (iv) that the degree not be awarded, but that the student be permitted to submit a revised thesis by a specified date, normally twelve months, with or without further research and be examined with or without a further *viva voce* examination;
 - (v) that the degree not be awarded but that the degree of Master of Philosophy be awarded, if appropriate, after specified minor corrections⁴ or minor revisions⁵ have been made to the thesis and the thesis for that degree to be submitted within a period not exceeding one month in the case of minor corrections or not exceeding six months in the case of minor revisions;
 - (vi) that the degree not be awarded but the student be permitted to submit a revised thesis for the degree of Master of Philosophy, by a specified date, normally twelve months, with or without further research and be examined with or without a further *viva voce* examination;
 - (vii) that the degree not be awarded.
- 30 The recommendation of the examiners shall be considered and approved, as appropriate, by the Student Progression and Awards Board.
- 31 If specified minor corrections or revisions are required to the thesis, the Chair shall inform the student of the nature of the corrections in the form of a written list, within 10 working days of the *viva voce*.
- 32 Any corrections required to the thesis shall be completed and the thesis uploaded to the online repository within one month of receipt of the corrections and minor revisions shall be completed and the thesis uploaded to the online repository within six months of receipt of the corrections, unless the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee allows a longer time.
- 33 The Chair will ask the panel to agree who will assume responsibility for certifying completion of the specified, minor corrections or revisions. Within 20 working days of completion, the nominated examiner(s) will certify that any specified, minor corrections or minor revisions have been carried out satisfactorily.

Submission of revised thesis

- 34 In the case of any resubmission, the student will normally be liable for re-examination fees.
- 35 A student may submit a revised thesis once only, on the recommendation of the examiners and with the approval of the Student Progression and Awards Board.
- 36 A student shall be informed in writing within 10 working days after the *viva voce* of the reasons for the examiners' rejection of the original thesis. This letter will normally be sent by the Student Services and Administration Directorate and include a Statement of Requirements prepared by the examiners listing the principal aspects of the thesis which require improvement, a copy of which will be appended to the Examination Entry Form.
- 37 The examiners shall determine the date by which the revised thesis shall be submitted, normally twelve months from the date that the Statement of Requirements is sent to the student. It is recommended that the student engages with supervisory support in the form of monthly meetings during the resubmission period.

⁴ See footnote 2.

⁵ See footnote 3.

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- 38 The procedure for submitting a revised thesis shall be the same as that for submitting the original one.
- 39 A revised thesis shall normally be examined by the original examiners but the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee may appoint different examiners in exceptional cases. Examiners may not recommend re-submission for a second time but may make one of the following recommendations, as appropriate, and should do so within 90 days of receipt of the revised thesis:
- (i) that the degree be awarded;
 - (ii) that the degree be awarded, subject to specified minor corrections⁶ being made to any aspect of the thesis, other than the published works, to the satisfaction of the external examiners within a period not exceeding one month of receipt of the corrections;
 - (iii) that the degree be awarded, subject to specified, minor revisions⁷ being made to any aspect of the thesis other than the published works to the satisfaction of the external examiners within a period not exceeding six months;
 - (iv) that the degree not be awarded but that the degree of Master of Philosophy be awarded, if appropriate, after specified minor corrections or minor revisions have been made to the thesis, to the satisfaction of at least one external examiner, the thesis for that degree to be submitted within a period not exceeding one month in the case of minor corrections or not exceeding six months in the case of minor revisions;
 - (v) that the degree not be awarded.

Disagreement between examiners

- 40 If the examiners are unable to agree on a recommendation according to Regulation 29 above, the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee shall appoint an additional external examiner to review the thesis and the original Examiners' reports which will be anonymised. The additional examiner may require the candidate to undergo another *viva voce* examination. The Student Progression and Awards Board shall consider the reports of all Examiners before reaching a decision.

Dissemination and access to works

- 41 Dissemination of knowledge is one of the objectives of the University. Copies of theses accepted for research degrees are stored in an online repository and are available for anyone to consult. A student is therefore advised to mark the thesis as copyright.
- 42 Under special circumstances it is possible to restrict access to a thesis.

Award

- 43 The degree shall be awarded to a successful candidate by the Student Progression and Awards Board. The date of the award shall be the date on which the Board approves the award.

Students in debt

- 44 No candidate shall be entitled to the award of a degree unless all tuition fees have been paid to the University.

⁶ See footnote 2.

⁷ See footnote 3.

Formal conferment

- 45 Degrees shall be formally conferred at a congregation held for the purpose.
- 46 After the formal conferment each graduate shall be given a degree certificate. The certificate shall either be handed to the graduate or sent through the ordinary post to the graduate's address as listed in the University's records. A replacement certificate can be issued only on receipt of a written request from the graduate and on payment of the appropriate fee.

Appeals and complaints

- 47 The grounds for and procedures for appeals are set out in the [Regulations for academic appeals](#) and the grounds and procedures for complaints are set out in the [Procedure for complaints](#).