Guidance
Notes for
Examiners
of research degree programmes
Revised September 2013
1. INTRODUCTION
1.1 Requirements for research degree programmes 3
1.2 Criteria for the award of a research degree 4

2. THE EXAMINATION
2.1 Appointment of examiners 5
2.2 Thesis submission and despatch 6
2.3 Preliminary report prior to the oral examination 6
2.4 Arrangements for the oral examination 6
2.5 Conduct of the oral examination 7
2.6 Use of unfair means 8

3. REPORTING ON THE EXAMINATION
3.1 Joint report of the examiners 9
3.2 Completing the Joint Report Form following first submission 10

4. RESUBMISSION AND RE-EXAMINATION
4.1 Resubmission of the thesis 15
4.2 Re-examination of the thesis 15
4.3 Completing the Joint Report Form following resubmission and re-examination 16

5. USEFUL INFORMATION
5.1 Responsibilities of the candidate 19
5.2 Responsibilities of the supervisor 19
5.3 Joint responsibilities of the examiners 20
5.4 Responsibilities of the internal examiner 20
5.5 Responsibilities of the internal coordinator 21
5.6 Responsibilities of the external examiner 21
5.7 Responsibilities of Research & Innovation Services 22
5.8 Additional information 22
5.9 Contact details 24
1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance has been produced by Research & Innovation Services and is intended to help examiners of research degree programmes. It contains important information on the University's requirements for research degree programmes and the criteria to be met before award of the degree can be considered. It also provides detailed information about the recommendations open to examiners, with advice on when it is appropriate to use them. Additionally, the roles and responsibilities of all concerned in the examination process are outlined. Nothing in the content of this guidance takes precedence over University Regulations, which may be subject to amendment.

1.1 Requirements for research degree programmes

1.1.1 Before the award of the degree of PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EngD, EdD, DEdCPsy and DClinPsy can be made, each candidate is required to complete a prescribed period of training and research, and:

(i) present a thesis containing the results of the candidate’s research and showing the sources from which the information it contains is derived and the extent to which the candidate has made use of the work of others; and

(ii) pass an oral examination in matters relevant to the subject of the thesis

For research degrees which incorporate taught elements and/or coursework, candidates are also required to have satisfactorily completed the taught Masters units/relevant coursework as specified in the University Regulations for each programme (full details of these requirements can be obtained from www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar). The taught elements act as a qualifying hurdle, but are not part of the examination process and should not be considered as part of the oral examination or the subsequent report.

1.1.2 Before the award of the degrees of MPhil, LLM and MMus can be made, each candidate is required to complete a prescribed period of training and research, and:

(i) present a thesis that must either contain a record of research carried out by the candidate or, in the Faculty of Engineering only, may consist of a critical dissertation prepared by the candidate; and

(ii) pass an oral examination in matters relevant to the subject of the thesis (for the degrees of LLM and MMus only, the decision to hold an oral examination is at the discretion of the examiners).

1.1.3 The purpose of the oral examination is to allow the examiners to test the candidate’s knowledge of his/her research and subject area. It allows the examiners to clarify any queries they might have following a reading of the thesis, and provides the candidate with the opportunity to defend the thesis in person. The oral examination is an integral part of the examination for research degrees (with the exception of the degrees of LLM and MMus, 1.1.2 (ii) refers) and must be held.
1.1.4 All full-time research students who registered prior to the 2010 academic session and who are intending to upgrade to the degree of PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD and DDSc are required to have achieved a minimum number of credits (including agreed exemptions) on the University’s Research Training Programme (RTP) before the award of the degree can be made. The RTP acts as a qualifying hurdle for PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD and DDSc candidates, but is not part of the examination process and should not be considered as part of the oral examination or the subsequent report.

1.1.5 All postgraduate research students who registered for the first time from the start of the 2010-11 academic year onwards are required to participate in the Doctoral Development Programme (DDP). Satisfactory participation in the DDP will be monitored by the supervisory team.

1.1.6 Candidates intending to upgrade to the degree of PhD with Integrated Studies are additionally required to have attended a series of cohort activities before the award of the degree can be made. The cohort activities act as a qualifying hurdle for PhD with Integrated Studies candidates, but are not part of the examination process and should not be considered as part of the oral examination or the subsequent report. Full details of the cohort activities associated with each PhD with Integrated Studies programme can be found in the University Regulations at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar

1.2 Criteria for the award of a research degree

1.2.1 The examiners are required to review the thesis in the light of the University’s criteria for the award of its research degrees.

1.2.2 A candidate for the degree of PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy, DClinPsy or EngD is required to satisfy the examiners that his or her thesis:

- is original work which forms an addition to knowledge
- shows evidence of systematic study and of the ability to relate the results of such study to the general body of knowledge in the subject
- is worthy of publication either in full or in an abridged form

In addition, the form of the thesis should be such that it is demonstrably a coherent body of work, i.e. includes a summary, an introduction, a description of the aims of the research, an analytical discussion of the related findings to date, the main results and conclusions, and sets the total work in context.

1.2.3 Although there is no equivalent definition of a successful MPhil, MMus or LLM thesis, it is generally accepted that it should contain a record of the research carried out and display a good general knowledge of the area of study, together with a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of some part or aspect of it.
2. THE EXAMINATION

2.1 Appointment of examiners

2.1.1 At least two examiners are appointed for each thesis presented for the degree. The supervisor is responsible for nominating suitable examiners, who must then be formally appointed by the Faculty. Examiners should normally be appointed well in advance of the thesis being submitted, so as to avoid delaying the subsequent examination process. Normally, there will be an internal and an external examiner. The internal examiner is a member of the University’s academic staff and is additionally responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the oral examination and ensuring that the University’s procedures are followed correctly. The external examiner is a senior academic or professional/practitioner in the relevant subject area of the thesis and is appointed from outside the University.

2.1.2 For most University Staff candidates, two external examiners are appointed. In cases where two external examiners have been appointed, an internal coordinator will be nominated to oversee the arrangements for the oral and to attend the oral examination to ensure that the University’s procedures are followed. The coordinator should be an academic member of staff, but should not be the supervisor. In the case of a University Staff candidate holding a non-established appointment arising from external financing, one examiner may be a member of the academic staff of the University other than the grant-holder; at the discretion of the Dean, the grant-holder may be appointed as an additional examiner.

2.1.3 Where no suitably qualified internal examiner exists or is willing to act, the appointment of a second external examiner is an option which Faculties may exercise. Examiners should have no previous association with the candidate or direct involvement with their research project and must declare an interest in any past or planned future connections with the candidate. In cases of uncertainty, the Faculty Administrator in Research & Innovation Services should be consulted.

2.1.4 In the case of a resubmitted thesis, the original examiners will normally be required to undertake the re-examination.

2.1.5 Examination of the taught Master’s elements or coursework for the degrees of DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy, EngD, DClinPsy and PhD with Integrated Studies shall be undertaken by the Examination Board for that programme. A candidate who has progressed to Part II of the programme of study for the degree of DMedSci or EdD (research element) will already have been deemed to have passed the associated taught Master’s programme by the Examination Board and this degree is therefore available as an exit qualification for the examiners of the research element to award. A candidate who has progressed to the examination for the degree of PhD with Integrated Studies will already have successfully completed and been awarded the associated taught Master’s degree by the appropriate Examination Board and therefore the taught Master’s degree will not be available as an exit qualification for the examiners of the research element to award.

2.2 Thesis submission and despatch

Candidates are required to formally submit their thesis to Research & Innovation Services, whether it is their first submission or a resubmission. When the candidate submits their thesis, provided the examiners have already been appointed, Research &
Innovation Services will normally send the thesis to the examiners within three working days, along with a copy of these Guidance Notes and the examiners’ joint report form. If examiners have not yet been appointed, this will delay the despatch of the thesis and the subsequent examination process. Under no circumstances should examiners accept or examine a thesis for either a first submission or a full resubmission which has been sent to them by anyone other than Research & Innovation Services.

2.3 Preliminary Report prior to the oral examination

2.3.1 Prior to the oral examination, the thesis should be read by the examiners who are each required to prepare an independent preliminary report, using a designated form which will be provided by Research & Innovation Services. The examiners’ judgement of the thesis should be based on what may reasonably be expected of a diligent and capable student after completion of the prescribed period of research and with due regard to the University’s criteria for the award of the degree (see section 1.2). The preliminary reports should be prepared prior to the oral examination and should not contain any specific recommendations concerning the ultimate award of the degree. The content of the reports should remain confidential and should not be disclosed to the candidate or to a third party.

2.3.2 Preliminary reports must be appended to the final joint examiners’ report, when it is submitted to the Faculty Administrator at Research & Innovation Services. Following formal approval by the Vice-Chancellor, acting on behalf of the Senate, the candidate (and supervisor on request) will receive a copy of the final report (comprising the preliminary and joint reports), which will be issued by Research & Innovation Services.

2.4 Arrangements for the oral examination

2.4.1 Examiners are required to jointly test, by oral examination, the candidate’s knowledge of matters relevant to the subject of the thesis (the oral examination is at the examiners’ discretion for the degrees of LLM and MMus only). The examination should normally take place within 10 weeks of the receipt of the thesis by the examiners. The Faculty Administrator should be advised if, for any reason, this timetable cannot be met.

2.4.2 Oral examinations will normally take place in Sheffield. If a venue outside of Sheffield is proposed, agreement must first be reached by the candidate, the supervisor and both examiners, prior to approval being sought via the Faculty Administrator in Research & Innovation Services.

2.4.3 In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for an oral examination to be conducted via a video-conference link. Please note that Faculty approval must be sought prior to making any arrangements for video-conferencing. Guidelines have been developed and departments should contact the Research Degree Support Team for further information and to arrange for Faculty approval.

2.4.4 Arrangements for the oral examination are made by the internal examiner or, where the appointment of two external examiners has been approved, by an internal coordinator appointed by the candidate’s Head of Department. The internal examiner/coordinator should make sure that the external examiner(s) have received the thesis before setting the date for the oral examination. The arrangements should be confirmed with the candidate and the external examiner at least two weeks prior to the date of the examination.
In the case of candidates with additional support requirements, advice and guidance can be obtained from the University's Disability and Dyslexia Support Service (www.shef.ac.uk/disability).

The internal examiner/coordinator should ensure that the examination venue is appropriate and that the candidate’s supervisor, or other appropriate member of staff, will be available for consultation by the candidate immediately following the examination in order to offer advice and support.

Candidates should be advised of the names of their examiners at the earliest opportunity. The arrangements, including the date and venue of the oral examination, and the details of all those participating in it, must be provided in advance and with due notice to all those who are to be present.

It is expected that the examiners will liaise/meet prior to the oral examination to discuss such matters as the main points to be raised with the candidate and the structure of the questioning.

In cases where two external examiners have been appointed, the internal coordinator will attend the oral examination to ensure that the University's procedures are followed. The coordinator will play no part in the actual examination process.

Examiners should contact the Faculty Administrator in Research & Innovation Services if they have any queries relating to the oral examination. It is expected that any queries will be raised within an appropriate timescale, i.e. no later than one week prior to the date of the oral examination. It is therefore particularly important that the examiners make early contact with each other about the thesis and the procedures for the oral examination. Please note that Research & Innovation Services cannot make arrangements for the oral examination.

**Conduct of the oral examination**

The external examiner will normally be invited to chair the examination. As noted above, the internal examiner/internal coordinator remains responsible for ensuring that the University's procedures are correctly followed.

In exceptional circumstances, the candidate’s supervisor may be present at the oral examination at the same time as the candidate, subject to the prior agreement of the candidate and the examiners. If present, the supervisor should not participate in the discussion other than when asked to provide clarification on a specific matter and should enter and leave the room with the candidate.

Examiners should not contact the candidate directly or through the supervisor or a third party on matters relating to the content of a thesis. In particular, examiners should not pre-judge the outcome of the oral examination and must not under any circumstances advise the candidate of their expectation of the outcome before the examination has been completed. This is particularly important where examiners feel the thesis is poor, as the candidate must be given the opportunity to defend the thesis and answer any of the examiners' queries before a final recommendation is made.

Under normal circumstances, it is the examiners' responsibility to inform the candidate of their recommendation once the examination has finished. However, it should be
made clear to the candidate that this is an informal recommendation only, and can only be formally approved by the appropriate Faculty authority acting on behalf of the Senate.

2.5.5 Where amendments to the thesis are required prior to degree being awarded, the examiners are responsible for providing the candidate with detailed written advice as to the amendments to be made and should ensure that the candidate has fully understood their comments and is aware of the nature of the suggested amendments, i.e. whether they constitute a formal resubmission (in twelve months) or minor amendments (in three months). The candidate should not be told that he/she has been or will be successful, however minor the amendments may be.

2.5.6 Candidates required to make minor amendments to their thesis will be granted three months to complete these. This period starts from the date on which they receive details from the examiners of the required amendments. The examiners should ensure that the candidate receives their list of minor amendments as soon as possible following the viva. The examiners should return their completed report forms to Research & Innovation Services within two weeks of the date of the oral examination, but should retain the minor amendments form until satisfied that the candidate has completed the required amendments. Please note that Research & Innovation Services does not formally inform the student of the outcome of their examination at this point or send them the required amendments; this is the responsibility of the examiners.

2.5.7 Where more substantial changes to the thesis are required (i.e. a full resubmission), the candidate will be granted one year in which to resubmit their thesis. This year commences from the date the candidate is formally notified of this outcome by Research & Innovation Services. The examiners should ensure that they return their reports forms (along with the detailed comments on the required amendments) to Research & Innovation Services within two weeks of the date of the oral examination. Once the recommendation for resubmission has been approved by the Faculty, Research & Innovation Services will write to the candidate to inform them of the outcome and will send them a copy of the examiners’ report, including the required amendments.

2.5.8 Please note that a candidate may request that copies of the thesis are returned to them following the oral examination.

2.6 Use of Unfair Means

Use of unfair means is, fortunately, still a rare occurrence. However, if plagiarism is detected in a thesis following submission, it is essential that the viva examination is immediately postponed pending a disciplinary investigation by the academic department and/or Student Services. Departments/examiners should initially seek advice before proceeding further with the examination process. Further information to students and departments on use of unfair means, including details of actions that departments may take, is available at: http://www.shef.ac.uk/lets/design/unfair.

3. REPORTING ON THE EXAMINATION

3.1 Joint report of the examiners

3.1.1 Following the oral examination, the examiners should complete their joint report. A report form is provided by Research & Innovation Services for this purpose and is sent
to the external examiner when the thesis is despatched. The first page of the form (section A) is pre-filled with the candidate’s details and is therefore available only in hard copy. However, pages 2-4 (sections B-D) are also available electronically from Research & Innovation Services and can be downloaded from the following web site: (http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/pgr/code/forms). All sections of the report form must be completed jointly by the examiners. Once completed, the joint report form should be signed and dated by both examiners and, together with the examiners’ preliminary reports, returned to the relevant Faculty Administrator in Research & Innovation Services within two weeks of the date of the oral examination.

3.1.2 Where minor amendments are required, the candidate will be informed of these as soon as possible by the examiners and is allowed three months from the date of notification by the examiners to make the amendments. The examiners’ joint report form should be completed, signed and dated and returned to Research & Innovation Services, minus the separate minor amendments sheet, which should be detached and retained until the amendments have been completed to the examiners’ satisfaction. One of the examiners should be designated to approve the amendments once they have been completed (this is normally undertaken by the internal examiner). The candidate will normally submit a copy of the revised thesis direct to the designated examiner, either in hard copy or electronically, in order for the examiner to confirm that s/he is happy that all required amendments have been satisfactorily completed. Once the amendments have been checked and the designated examiner is assured that they have been undertaken, s/he should sign and date the separate minor amendments sheet and return it immediately to Research & Innovation Services. As a general guideline, examiners should aim to complete their checking of the minor amendments within approximately 4 weeks of receiving the revised thesis.

3.1.3 Where a full resubmission is required, please refer to Section 4: Resubmission and Re-Examination.

3.1.4 The examiners are responsible for ensuring that the candidate receives a comprehensive list of the required amendments to the thesis as soon as possible after the viva examination.

3.1.5 The candidate (and supervisor on request) will receive a copy of the final report (comprising the preliminary and joint reports), which may be released by Research & Innovation Services only, following formal approval of the Faculty’s recommendation concerning the award of the degree or resubmission.

3.1.6 In the exceptional circumstance that the examiners are unable to agree on the recommendation, separate reports may be submitted. In such circumstances another independent external examiner will be appointed. He/she will examine the thesis and has the option of requesting a further oral examination. Following this, a recommendation will be made to the Faculty. This process applies equally to first submissions and resubmissions.

3.2 Completing the Joint Report Form following first submission

3.2.1 Section A: Recommendations available to the examiners

Section A requires the examiners to indicate their overall recommendation on the outcome of the examination, based on the outcomes open to them under the University’s Regulations for Higher Degrees by Research. When completing Section A,
the following recommendations are open to the examiners. Not all recommendations apply to each higher degree, as indicated. The final choice of recommendation is entirely at the discretion of the examiners. In all cases, examiners are expected to provide full reasoning for the choice of their recommendation within the joint report. This is particularly important where the recommendation is for the non-award of a degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
<th>APPLIES TO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. That the degree be awarded without the need for any corrections to the thesis</strong></td>
<td>PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy, EngD, DClinPsy, MPhil, MMus, LLM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This option may be chosen where the examiners are fully satisfied that the written thesis and the performance of the candidate at the oral examination are worthy of an immediate recommendation for the degree, without any further amendment or examination.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **2. That the degree be awarded once specified minor amendments have been completed to the satisfaction of the examiner(s)** | PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy, EngD, DClinPsy, MPhil, MMus, LLM |
| This option may be chosen where the examiners are satisfied that they could recommend the award of the degree once minor amendments only have been made to the thesis. This may be exercised when the nature and extent of the required amendments are such that they can reasonably be completed within a period of three calendar months from the date the candidate receives notification of the required amendments from the examiners. In this case the examiners should stipulate whether the approval of one or both examiners is required prior to formal recommendation of the degree. The examiners are responsible for providing the candidate with the details of the required amendments. |                                                                                       |

<p>| <strong>3. That the degree be not now awarded, but that the candidate be allowed to undergo a further oral examination without modification of the form or content of the thesis</strong> | PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy, EngD, MPhil, MMus, LLM |
| This option may be chosen where the examiners are fully satisfied with the written thesis, but less satisfied with the candidate’s performance at the oral examination and would like the chance to examine the candidate in person again before making a final recommendation. A second oral examination should be held within 10 weeks of formal notification of the recommendation by Research &amp; Innovation Services. |                                                                                       |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>4. That the degree be not now awarded, but that the candidate be allowed to submit a revised thesis after such modification of form or content as the examiners may prescribe, WITH/WITHOUT oral re-examination</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This option may be chosen where the examiners do not feel able to make a recommendation for the award of the degree at this time and request substantial changes to be made to the thesis before they can do so. With this option, examiners are also required to indicate whether they wish the candidate to undergo a further oral examination, as well as to formally submit a revised thesis. Examiners are asked to consider whether an oral re-examination would help the candidate to justify the additions or alterations that are to be made to the thesis. Where the examiners’ original recommendation specifies that a further oral examination is required, this should take place, regardless of the outcome of the examiners’ preliminary assessment of the resubmitted thesis. Only in exceptional circumstances can such a recommendation be changed and then only with the written approval of both examiners, the candidate and the relevant Faculty Officer. The examiners should provide the candidate with full written details of the required revisions to the thesis, normally within two weeks of the oral examination. The candidate has one year in which to present the resubmitted thesis for re-examination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy, EngD, DClinPsy, MPhil, MMus, LLM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5. That the degree be not awarded, but that the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) be awarded (subject only to the necessary changes to the cover and title page of the thesis)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Examiners must be in agreement that the thesis would not reach the required standard for the degree of PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD or EngD, even given time for substantial revisions to be made. Detailed reasons for such a decision should be provided by the examiners. There must also be no doubts that the thesis is worthy of an MPhil immediately or with just titular changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, EngD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6. That the degree be not awarded, but that the candidate be allowed to submit a revised thesis for the degree of MPhil after such modification of form or content as the examiners may prescribe, WITH/WITHOUT oral re-examination</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This option should only be chosen if there is agreement that the thesis would not reach the required standard for PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD or EngD, even with time allowed for substantial revisions to be made. Nor could the examiners recommend the degree of MPhil until substantial changes are made to the thesis. Where this recommendation is chosen, it is particularly important that the examiners explain the reasoning behind their decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, EngD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
provide detailed advice to the candidate on the amendments to be made to the thesis. In making this recommendation examiners are asked to indicate whether a further oral examination is deemed necessary. Examiners are also asked to consider whether an oral re-examination would help the candidate to justify the additions or alterations that are to be made to the thesis. Where the examiners’ original recommendation specifies that a further oral examination is required, this should take place, regardless of the outcome of the examiners’ preliminary assessment of the resubmitted thesis. Only in exceptional circumstances can such a recommendation be changed and then only with the written approval of both examiners, the candidate and the relevant Faculty Officer. The candidate has one year in which to present the resubmitted thesis for re-examination. The same examiners will normally consider any modified thesis re-submitted under this recommendation.

7. **That the degree be not awarded**

This option may be chosen where the examiners are in agreement that the thesis is not worthy of the degree of PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, EngD, MPhil, MMus or LLM, nor will it be even given time for substantial revisions to be made. This recommendation is therefore an outright fail and no further submissions would be accepted. In such cases, the examiners will be expected to provide details of why they are unable to recommend major revision and re-submission of the thesis.

This option is also open to the examiners in cases of unauthorised absence from the oral examination. In this case, the Faculty reserves the right to overrule the recommendation and request that a second oral examination be arranged if extenuating circumstances are subsequently revealed.

8. **That the degree be not awarded, but that the candidate be allowed/required to submit an entirely new and unrelated research thesis for the degree of DClinPsy, with oral re-examination.**

This option may be chosen where the examiners are in agreement that the thesis is fundamentally unsound and unsuitable for resubmission. Further guidance on this option is available in the DClinPsy Assessment Regulations and Coursework Guidelines publication. The candidate has one year in which to present the new thesis from the date of feedback following the oral examination.

9. **That the degree be not awarded, but that the candidate be awarded the taught Master’s degree incorporated with the programme, as specified in the University Regulations as an exit qualification**

This option may be chosen where the examiners are in agreement...
that the thesis is not worthy of the degree of DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy or MPhil, nor will it be even given time for substantial revisions to be made. In such cases, the examiners will be expected to provide details as to why they are unable to recommend major revisions and re-submission of the thesis.

This option is also open to the examiners in cases of unauthorised absence from the oral examination. In this case, the Faculty reserves the right to overrule the recommendation and request that a second oral examination be arranged if extenuating circumstances are subsequently revealed.

3.2.2 **Section B: Joint Report on the Thesis**

Section B requires the examiners to provide a joint report on the thesis, including detailed information on:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The subject matter of the thesis and the examiners’ assessment of it. The statement made here should be sufficiently detailed to justify the recommendation made in Section A. It should also address any points raised in the preliminary reports and explain/justify how any differences have been resolved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Whether the examiners are satisfied that the thesis is the candidate’s own work, or where it was completed in collaboration, whether the candidate’s share of the research is adequate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The presentation of the thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Whether the thesis is deemed to be a distinct addition to knowledge and worthy of publication, either in full or in abridged form - this option is only available to the examiners where a candidate submits a thesis for examination for the degree of PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy, DClinPsy or EngD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Whether the examiners are satisfied that the thesis is a coherent piece of work as defined in this booklet - this option is only available to the examiners where a candidate submits a thesis for examination for the degree of PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy, DClinPsy or EngD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Any comments the examiners might wish to make about the appropriateness or otherwise of the nature of the supervision/support received by the candidate whilst undertaking the research and preparing the thesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.3 Section C: Report on the Oral Examination

Note: The oral examination is at the examiners’ discretion for the degrees of MMus and LLM.

In Section C, the examiners are required to provide information as follows:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Their considered opinion on whether the candidate was adequately acquainted with the field of knowledge within which the subject matter of the thesis falls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>General comments on the oral examination, e.g. the candidate’s overall performance and ability to defend the thesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.4 Section D: Additional general remarks or recommendations

In Section D the examiners have the opportunity to make any additional comments. Where any specific modifications to the thesis are required, it is the responsibility of the examiners to ensure that the candidate is made aware of them. In all cases of referral, the report should contain detailed advice to the candidate on necessary amendments and improvements.
4. **RESUBMISSION AND RE-EXAMINATION**

4.1 **Resubmission of the thesis**

4.1.1 If, following the first examination of the thesis, the examiners’ recommendation is that the thesis be resubmitted, the candidate should have access to all three copies of their thesis for amendment prior to resubmission. The examiners should return their copies to the candidate directly or via Research & Innovation Services as soon as possible following the oral examination.

4.1.2 Where a candidate is required to formally resubmit their thesis this should be treated as a formal re-examination. As such, there should be no unauthorised contact between the candidate and the examiners prior to the re-examination. The candidate must not send a copy of the thesis to the examiners, either informally or for comment, prior to the formal resubmission. The candidate must formally resubmit their thesis to Research & Innovation Services following the same procedures that apply to first submissions. The examiners will be sent a copy of the resubmitted thesis by Research & Innovation Services only. Under no circumstances should an examiner accept or examine an electronic copy of a resubmitted thesis sent by the candidate, as there is no way to verify that its content is identical to the hard copy submitted to Research & Innovation Services. The only exception to this is where a student has been given minor amendments which require checking by the examiners. In such cases, it is acceptable for the candidate to send a copy of the revised thesis direct to whichever examiner has been designated to check the amendments.

4.1.3 Once a candidate’s thesis has been resubmitted, Research & Innovation Services will despatch it to the examiners, along with the relevant re-examination report forms and a copy of these Guidance Notes.

4.2 **Re-examination of the thesis**

4.2.1 Following receipt of the resubmitted thesis, the examiners should review it in the same way as they did the original thesis. Each examiner should prepare a **preliminary report** on the revised thesis. If a further oral examination was recommended after the first examination, this should take place within 10 weeks of receipt of the thesis by the examiners. After the re-examination, the joint report form should be completed, signed and returned to Research & Innovation Services, along with the preliminary reports.

4.2.2 Where the examiners’ original recommendation specifies that a further oral examination is required, this should take place, regardless of the outcome of the examiners’ preliminary assessment of the resubmitted thesis. This is to allow the candidate the opportunity to defend the thesis before a final judgement is made. Only in exceptional circumstances can such a recommendation be changed and then only with the written approval of both examiners, the candidate and the relevant Faculty Officer. The examiners should return their completed joint report form to Research & Innovation Services within **two weeks** of the oral re-examination.

4.2.3 If a further oral examination is not required, the examiners should aim to complete the re-examination of the revised thesis within approximately 6-8 weeks of their receipt of the revised thesis. Once the examiners have reached their decision, the joint report form should be completed, signed and dated and returned to Research & Innovation Services as soon as possible.
4.2.4 Where minor amendments are required, the candidate will be granted three months to complete these. This period starts from the date on which they receive details from the examiners of the required amendments. The examiners should ensure that the candidate receives their list of minor amendments as soon as possible. The examiners should complete, sign and return the joint report form to Research & Innovation Services, minus the separate minor amendments sheet, which should be detached and retained until the amendments have been completed to the examiners’ satisfaction. One of the examiners should be designated to approve the amendments once they have been completed. The candidate will normally submit a copy of the revised thesis to the designated examiner, either in hard copy or electronically, in order for the examiner to confirm that s/he is happy that all required amendments have been satisfactorily completed. Once the amendments have been checked and the designated examiner is assured that they have been undertaken, s/he should sign and date the separate minor amendments sheet and return it immediately to Research & Innovation Services. As a general guideline, examiners should aim to complete their checking of the minor amendments within approximately 4 weeks of receiving the revised thesis.

4.3 Completing the Joint Report Form following resubmission and re-examination

4.3.1 Recommendations open to the examiners following Recommendation 4

In the event of a re-examination following Recommendation 4 on the original report form - that the candidate submits a revised thesis for the degree with or without oral examination - only the following recommendations are open to the examiners. Final choice of recommendation is entirely at the discretion of the examiners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
<th>APPLIES TO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. That the degree be awarded without the need for any corrections to the thesis</td>
<td>PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy, EngD, DClinPsy, MPhil, MMus, LLM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This option may be chosen where the examiners are now satisfied with the thesis and feel able to recommend the award of the degree without any further amendment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. That the degree be awarded once specified minor amendments have been completed to the satisfaction of the examiner(s)</td>
<td>PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy, EngD, DClinPsy, MPhil, MMus, LLM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This option may be chosen where the examiners are satisfied that they could recommend the award of the degree once minor amendments only have been made to the thesis. This may be exercised when the nature and extent of the required amendments are such that they can reasonably be completed within a period of three calendar months from the date the candidate receives notification of the required amendments from the examiners. In this case the examiners should stipulate whether the approval of one or both examiners is required prior to formal recommendation of the degree. The examiners are responsible for providing the candidate with the details of the required amendments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. That the degree be not awarded, but that the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) be awarded (subject only to the necessary changes to the cover and title page of the thesis and minor changes to content, as specified by the examiners)

Examiners must be in agreement that the thesis did not reach the required standard for PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD or EngD. Detailed reasons for such a decision should be provided by the examiners. There must also be no doubts that the thesis is worthy of an MPhil immediately or with just very minor changes to content.

**APPLIES TO**
- PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, EngD

### 4. That the degree be not awarded.

This recommendation is an outright fail and no further submissions would be accepted. In such a case, the examiners will be expected to provide details of the reasoning behind their decision.

**APPLIES TO**
- PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, EngD, DClinPsy, MPhil, MMus, LLM

### 5. That the degree be not awarded, but that the candidate be awarded the taught Master's degree incorporated with the programme, as specified in the University Regulations as an exit qualification

This option may be chosen where the examiners are in agreement that the thesis is not worthy of the degree of DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy or MPhil. In such cases, the examiners will be expected to provide details of the reasoning behind their decision.

**APPLIES TO**
- DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy only

### 4.3.2 Recommendations open to the examiners following Recommendation 6

In the event of a re-examination following recommendation 6 on the original report form – *that the candidate submits a revised thesis for the degree of MPhil only* - the resubmitted thesis would be sent to the examiners together with a new report form (*Report for Examiners for the Degree of Master of Philosophy (Re-examination)*) and only the following recommendations would then be open to the examiners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
<th>APPLIES TO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>That the degree of Master of Philosophy be awarded without the need for any corrections to the thesis</strong></td>
<td>PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, EngD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This option should be chosen if the examiners are satisfied that the thesis has now reached the required standard for the degree of MPhil and feel able to recommend the award of the degree without further amendment.
2. **That the degree of Master of Philosophy be awarded once specified minor amendments have been completed to the satisfaction of the examiners**

   This option may be chosen where the examiners are satisfied that they could recommend the award of the degree once minor amendments only have been made to the thesis. This may be exercised when the nature and extent of the required amendments are such that they can reasonably be completed within a period of three calendar months from the date they receive notification of the required amendments from the examiners. In this case the examiners should stipulate whether the approval of one or both examiners is required prior to formal recommendation of the degree. The examiners are responsible for providing the candidate with the details of the required amendments.

| PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, DMedSci, EdD, EngD |

3. **That the degree of Master of Philosophy be not awarded**

   This recommendation is an outright fail and no further submissions would be accepted. In such cases, the examiners will be expected to provide details of the reasoning behind their decision.

| PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DDSc, EngD |

4. **That the degree be not awarded, but that the candidate be awarded the taught Master's degree incorporated with the programme, as specified in the University Regulations as an exit qualification**

   This option may be chosen where the examiners are in agreement that the thesis is not worthy of the degree of DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy or MPhil. In such cases, the examiners will be expected to provide details of the reasoning behind their decision.

| DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy |
5. **USEFUL INFORMATION**

The following is a brief guide to the principal responsibilities of those involved in the examination process. It should be read in conjunction with the main guidance provided in this booklet.

### 5.1 Responsibilities of the candidate

**5.1.1** It is recommended that the supervisor will have read the final draft of the thesis and be in agreement with the candidate about the appropriate moment to submit the thesis. However, it is ultimately the candidate’s responsibility to decide when to submit their thesis. In the case of a first submission and a resubmission, the candidate MUST submit the thesis directly to Research & Innovation Services and inform their supervisor when they have done so. Under no circumstances should a candidate attempt to send an electronic version of the thesis direct to the examiners, as there is no way to verify that its content is identical to the hard copy submitted to Research & Innovation Services.

**5.1.2** To advise the supervisor and Research & Innovation Services before the point of formal nomination if they have any previous or planned future connections with one or both of the nominated examiners.

**5.1.3** To attend the oral examination on the specified date, and at the time and location, as arranged by the internal examiner/coordinator.

**5.1.4** To complete any minor amendments within **three months** of the date of receiving written advice from the examiners as to the amendments to be made. To send the revised thesis directly to the internal examiner/external examiner as agreed following the oral examination. For minor amendments only, the candidate may send the examiner a copy of the revised thesis directly, either in hard copy or electronically.

**5.1.5** To complete more substantial amendments (resubmission) within **twelve months** of receipt of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination from Research & Innovation Services and to resubmit the revised thesis directly to Research & Innovation Services (and NOT to the examiners). There should be no unauthorised contact between the candidate and the examiners prior to the re-examination. If the candidate has any queries regarding the examination process these should be addressed to Research & Innovation Services in the first instance.

**5.1.6** To promptly advise the internal examiner, the supervisor and the appropriate Faculty Administrator at Research & Innovation Services if they are unable to attend the oral examination. Unauthorised absence from the examination will result in a fail.

### 5.2 Responsibilities of the supervisor

**5.2.1** To identify appropriate examiners for the examination well in advance of the submission of the thesis. Verbal or written agreement of the examiners to undertake this task should be obtained prior to their formal nomination, which should be made on the appropriate form. Once authorised by the Head of Department, the completed nomination form, together with any additional information (e.g. CVs, lists of publications), should then be returned to the Faculty Administrator in Research & Innovation Services. Late appointment of examiners (i.e. after the thesis has been
submitted), will result in a delay in the overall examination process and can cause considerable distress and inconvenience to the candidate.

5.2.2 To be available to the candidate prior to and immediately after the oral examination in order to offer advice and support. Where the supervisor is not available, another member of staff should be nominated for this role.

5.2.3 To provide continuity and support to the candidate where corrections to the thesis are required, whether this be minor amendments or a full resubmission.

5.3 **Joint responsibilities of the examiners**

5.3.1 To examine the thesis according to the University's criteria for research degrees within the specified timescale.

5.3.2 To follow the University's procedures in relation to the examination of its degrees.

5.3.3 To read the thesis and each complete an independent preliminary report prior to the oral examination.

5.3.4 To produce a joint report following the oral examination and to make an agreed recommendation on the award of the degree.

5.3.5 To informally notify the candidate of the outcome of the examination. Formal notification will be sent by Research & Innovation Services following Faculty approval of the examiners’ report.

5.3.6 To provide the candidate with written details of any required amendments to the thesis. This should be provided as soon as possible following the examination.

5.3.7 To attach to the joint report form a list of any required amendments to be made to the thesis prior to a formal resubmission (if required). Ideally this will also have been provided separately to the candidate within 2 weeks of the oral examination.

5.3.8 For first submissions and full resubmissions examiners may **only** examine a thesis sent to them via Research & Innovation Services. A resubmission is a re-examination and the candidate should therefore have no unauthorised contact with the examiners, either directly or via a third party, prior to the first examination/re-examination on matters relating to the thesis. Examiners should not accept an electronic copy of a thesis (e.g. a PDF file sent by email) sent to them by the candidate, as there is no way to verify that its content is identical to the hard copy submitted to Research & Innovation Services. The only exception to this is where a student has been given minor amendments, which require checking by the examiners. In such cases, it is acceptable for the candidate to send a copy of the revised thesis direct to whichever examiner has been designated to check the amendments.

5.4 **Responsibilities of the internal examiner**

5.4.1 To ensure that the University’s Regulations and procedures are adhered to at all stages of the examination process.
5.4.2 To advise the supervisor and Research & Innovation Services, before the point of formal nomination, if they have any previous or planned future connections with the candidate.

5.4.3 To make the arrangements for the oral examination (or re-examination) and to inform Research & Innovation Services, the external examiner and the candidate of the time, date and venue.

5.4.4 To set the date for the oral examination only after ascertaining that the examiners have received a copy of the thesis from Research & Innovation Services. The oral examination should normally take place within 10 weeks of receipt of the thesis.

5.4.5 To ensure that the venue chosen for the examination is suitable for the purpose. As a minimum, a table and chairs must be provided.

5.4.6 In the case of minor amendments to the thesis being required, to retain the separate minor amendments sheet until the amendments have been completed to the examiners' satisfaction. Once the amendments have been checked, to sign and date the separate minor amendments sheet and return it immediately to Research & Innovation Services.

5.5 Responsibilities of the internal coordinator

5.5.1 A coordinator is appointed where there is no internal examiner, e.g. when two external examiners have been appointed, as in the case of (most) University Staff candidates. The coordinator should be an academic member of staff of the University. In such cases the coordinator will be responsible for taking on the responsibilities of the internal examiner in relation to the arrangements for the oral examination and ensuring that University procedures are adhered to.

5.5.2 To attend the oral examination where two external examiners have been appointed, in order to ensure that the University's procedures are adhered to. The coordinator will play no part in the actual examination process. It is not appropriate for the candidate's supervisor to also act as coordinator in such cases.

5.5.3 To contact the examiners and request the completion and return of the examiners' preliminary and report forms, if they have not already been submitted to Research & Innovation Services.

5.5.4 In the case of minor amendments to the thesis being required, to retain the separate minor amendments sheet until the amendments have been completed to the examiners' satisfaction. Once the amendments have been checked, to sign and date the separate minor amendments sheet and return it immediately to Research & Innovation Services.

5.6 Responsibilities of the external examiner

5.6.1 To chair the oral examination. This is the usual procedure but may be varied following agreement between the examiners when they liaise/meet prior to the examination to discuss the format of the examination, assignment of questions etc.

5.6.2 To advise the supervisor and Research & Innovation Services before the point of formal nomination if they have any previous or planned future connection with the candidate.
5.6.3 To inform the candidate of the likely recommendation of the examiners following the oral examination. It should be emphasised that, at this stage, the examiners’ recommendation is subject to formal approval by the Faculty.

5.6.4 Where two external examiners have been appointed, there should be agreement on who will liaise with the coordinator, chair the oral examination and be responsible for approving any minor amendments to the thesis.

5.7 **Responsibilities of Research & Innovation Services**

5.7.1 To write to the examiners, once their nomination has been formally approved by the appropriate Faculty Officer, regarding the details of their appointment and providing the necessary forms and a copy of these Guidance Notes.

5.7.2 To receive the thesis from the candidate and arrange onward despatch to the examiners. This relates to both the first submission and the resubmission, but not to minor amendments.

5.7.3 To provide the candidate with formal notification of the results of the examination, following approval by the Faculty Officer.

5.7.4 To advise the examiners of any approved extension to the time-limit in which the candidate must resubmit the thesis.

5.7.5 To act as a source of advice and information to candidates, supervisors and examiners alike on matters relating to the University's procedures for examining theses.

5.8 **Additional information**

The following information may help to answer any additional questions you have about the examination process.

5.8.1 A supervisor may only be present at the oral examination at the specific request of the candidate and with the prior agreement of the examiners. If the supervisor does attend the examination, he/she must enter and leave the room with the candidate and may only participate in the discussion if invited to provide clarification on a specific matter.

5.8.2 The oral examination is an integral part of the examination for research degrees and must be held. Where the examiners’ original recommendation specifies that a resubmission with oral examination is required, this should take place, regardless of the outcome of the examiners’ preliminary assessment of the resubmitted thesis. This is to allow the candidate the opportunity to defend the thesis before a final judgement is made. Only in exceptional circumstances can such a recommendation be changed and then only with the written approval of both examiners, the candidate and the relevant Faculty Officer. It is essential that examiners do not advise the candidate on the outcome of the examination until the full examination procedure has taken place.

5.8.3 The candidate (and supervisor on request) will receive a copy of the final report (comprising both preliminary and joint reports), which may be released by Research & Innovation Services only, following formal approval by the Vice Chancellor on behalf of the Senate.
5.8.4 Where a candidate is required to formally resubmit their thesis this should be treated as a formal re-examination. As such, there should be no unauthorised contact between the candidate and the examiners prior to the re-examination. The examiners will be sent a copy of the resubmitted thesis by Research & Innovation Services only. Under no circumstances should an examiner accept or examine an electronic copy of a thesis sent by the candidate, as there is no way to verify that its content is identical to the hard copy submitted to Research & Innovation Services. The only exception to this is where a student has been given minor amendments, which require checking by the examiners. In such cases, it is acceptable for the candidate to send a copy of the revised thesis direct to whichever examiner has been designated to check the amendments.

5.8.5 Where a student is undertaking minor amendments to their thesis s/he should normally submit a copy of the amended thesis to the designated examiner, either in hard copy or electronically, in order for the examiner to confirm that s/he is happy that all the required amendments have been satisfactorily undertaken. Once the examiner has confirmed that all amendments have been completed, the candidate must provide a hard copy of the final, approved version of the thesis to Research & Innovation Services. In addition, students who registered from the start of the 2008-09 academic year are also required to submit an electronic version of their final approved thesis to the White Rose eTheses Online server.

5.8.6 Formal notification of the degree award and the date of any award ceremony may only be provided by the appropriate central University department.

5.8.7 Awards will be withheld until payment of any outstanding debts to the University, deposit of a Library copy of the thesis and satisfactory completion of the Research Training Programme (if applicable) or Doctoral Development Programme.

5.8.8 Examiners should claim expenses from Research & Innovation Services, using the form provided. This form, together with guidance notes on its completion, is issued with the thesis, and should be completed and returned with the joint report form. Please note that fees and expenses cannot be paid until the final report (comprising the preliminary and joint reports) is received.

5.8.9 Candidates may not claim expenses incurred in relation to their oral examination.

5.8.10 The submission of non-standard material with the thesis will be accepted only where the candidate has obtained prior written permission from the Faculty Officer. In granting permission, the Faculty Officer will have queried the relevance of submitting the non-standard material.
5.9 Contact Details

Research & Innovation Services is located at New Spring House, 231 Glossop Road, Sheffield, S10 2GW. The Research Degree Support Team is responsible for research student progression and support, including the examination process.

There is a team of Faculty Administrators who, amongst other things, deal with:

- Approval of examiners
- Queries on the examiners’ report forms
- Submission of examiners’ report forms
- Student requests to extend the time-limit for submitting/resubmitting a thesis

Thesis Management/Reception deals with:

- Thesis submission and despatch of theses to examiners
- Processing of external examiners’ expenses

For contact details, please see: http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/contacts/rdst

Guidance Notes for Examiners/Revised September 2013