



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

Research  
Services.

# **Guidance notes for examiners of research degree examinations**

**Revised November 2020**

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Contact details	3
1.2	Requirements for research degree programmes	3
1.3	Criteria for the award of a research degree	4
1.4	Publication format thesis	4
1.5	PhD and MD by Publication	5
2.	BEFORE THE ORAL EXAMINATION	5
2.1	Appointment of examiners	5
2.2	The examiners	6
2.3	Examiners' dos and don'ts	7
2.4	Thesis submission and despatch	8
2.5	Use of unfair means	9
2.6	Preliminary reports	9
3	THE ORAL EXAMINATION	10
3.1	Arranging the oral examination	10
3.2	The oral examination (viva voce)	11
3.3	After the oral examination	12
4.	REPORTING ON THE EXAMINATION	13
4.1	Joint report of the examiners	13
4.2	Section A: recommendations available to the examiners	14
4.3	Section B: joint report on the thesis	17
4.4	Section C: report on the oral examination	18
4.5	Section D: additional general remarks or recommendations	18
4.6	Pass with minor corrections	18
4.7	Pass with major corrections	19
4.8	Resubmission	20
5.	RESUBMISSION AND RE-EXAMINATION	20
5.1	Resubmission of the thesis	20
5.2	Re-examination of the thesis	21
5.3	Section A: recommendations available to the examiners	22

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This document has been produced by Research Services (RS) to provide guidance to examiners of research degree programmes. It contains important information on the University's regulations and requirements for research degree programmes. It also describes the recommendations open to examiners, with advice on when it is appropriate to use them and the roles and responsibilities of all concerned in the examination process.

Nothing in the content of this guidance takes precedence over University Regulations, which may be subject to amendment.

## 1.1 Contact details

1.1.1 Research Services is located at New Spring House, 231 Glossop Road, Sheffield, S10 2GW. The PGR Support Team is responsible for research student progression and assessment, including the following aspects of the examination process:

- Faculty approval of appointment of examiners;
- Thesis submission and despatch of theses to examiners;
- Faculty approval of examiners' report forms and processing of recommendations;
- Award of degrees;
- Processing of examiners' expenses and external examiners' fees.

1.1.2 For contact details, please see: [www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/contacts/student](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/contacts/student). Queries regarding any aspect of the examination process should be addressed to: [pgr-enquiries@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:pgr-enquiries@sheffield.ac.uk).

## 1.2 Requirements for research degree programmes

1.2.1 Before the award of a higher degree by research can be made each candidate is required to complete a prescribed period of training and research, and:

- present a thesis containing the results of the student's research and showing the sources from which the information it contains is derived and the extent to which the student has made use of the work of others; and
- pass an oral examination in matters relevant to the subject of the thesis<sup>1</sup>

1.2.2 For research degrees which incorporate taught elements and/or coursework, candidates are also required to have satisfactorily completed the taught Master's 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](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar)).

1.2.3 The oral examination is an integral part of the examination for research degrees and must be held. The purpose of the oral examination is:

---

<sup>1</sup> For the degrees of MMus and LLM only, the decision to hold an oral examination is at the discretion of the examiners.

- To enable the examiners to assure themselves that the thesis and the research it reports are the candidate's own work.
- To give the candidate an opportunity to demonstrate that they can defend the thesis verbally, clarify any issues that the examiners have identified and discuss the subject of the thesis in its wider disciplinary context.
- To enable the candidate to demonstrate a firm understanding of the field of research and thus give the examiners an opportunity to assess the candidate's broader knowledge of the field or discipline within which the thesis falls.
- To ensure that the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the subject are of the standard expected for the award of the degree.

1.2.4 The thesis should normally be written in English. Exceptionally, and with the permission of the Faculty, a student may present a thesis that is written in another language where this is of demonstrable significance to the impact and dissemination of the research.

### **1.3 Criteria for the award of a research degree**

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

1.3.2 A candidate for the degree of PhD, PhD with Integrated Studies, MD, DSc, 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.

1.3.3 In addition, the format 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.

1.3.4 The examiners' judgement of the thesis should be based on what may reasonably be expected of a diligent and capable candidate after completion of the prescribed period of research and with due regard to the University's criteria for the award of the degree.

1.3.5 A thesis for the award of an MPhil degree must demonstrate that it represents a contribution to the subject, either through a record of the candidate's original work or a critical and ordered exposition of existing knowledge; takes due account of previously published work on the subject; is an integrated whole and presents a coherent argument. For a full list of MPhil criteria see: [www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/code/mphil](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/code/mphil).

### **1.4 Publication format thesis**

1.4.1 Candidates may submit a publication format thesis, which comprises a collection of papers that are in a format suitable for submission for publication in a peer-reviewed journal or other

appropriate outlet for academic research. Those sections may comprise scientific papers, book chapters or other appropriate published formats. The papers may appear alongside traditional thesis chapters, or they may comprise the majority of the thesis as a collection of published works that forms a substantial and coherent whole, supported by a commentary that links the submitted works and outlines their coherence and significance.

- 1.4.2 Materials included in the publication format thesis may include those that are solely and/or partly authored by the student. The papers or chapters may have already been published, be accepted for publication, or planned for submission for publication where a specific format is expected. Equally, there may be no intention of submitting them for publication because of the nature of the results; the purpose is to prepare the candidate for academic publishing and to familiarise them with the conventions and formats.
- 1.4.3 The thesis must remain an original contribution to the field of research. Within the introductory section to the thesis, the student should provide a clear explanation of the nature and extent of their contribution to each of the publications presented, as well as the contribution of any co-authors and other collaborators. The materials contained within the thesis must normally be derived from original research undertaken by the student while supervised by a University of Sheffield supervisor.
- 1.4.4 More detailed information on the requirements for publication format thesis are available in the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes:  
<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/code/thesisformats>.

## 1.5 PhD and MD by Publication

- 1.5.1 The University offers the degrees of PhD and MD by Publication. The 'by publication' route is offered only to staff, as an alternative to the standard PhD or MD route. It is designed to enable recognition of the research activities of those members of staff who have published work but have not completed a PhD or MD.
- 1.5.2 The recommendations available to examiners of PhD and MD by Publication differ from those of standard PhD and MD degrees and are specified on the examiners' report forms. Please also see: [www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/phdbypublication](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/phdbypublication).

## 2. BEFORE THE ORAL EXAMINATION

### 2.1 Appointment of examiners

- 2.1.1 Supervisors are responsible for nominating suitable examiners with appropriate subject expertise and experience **well in advance of the student submitting their thesis**. The supervisor should informally approach the external examiner in advance to ask whether they are willing to act as examiner. Following this informal approach, the supervisor must ensure that the Appointment of Examiners form is fully completed and sent to Research Services for Faculty consideration.

- 2.1.2 Faculty Officers will consider all nominations of examiners and may request further information on an examiner's suitability or experience prior to approving the nomination.
- 2.1.3 To avoid any potential conflict of interest, examiners should have no previous association with the student or direct involvement with their research project and must declare any past or planned future connections with the student. This includes, but is not limited to, current or former academic supervision, pastoral relationships, family relationships, friendship, employment or professional connections. The examiners should also advise RS if they have a connection to the supervisor that might constitute a conflict of interest (such as those listed above). In cases of uncertainty, the PGR Support Team in RS should be consulted.

## **2.2 The examiners**

- 2.2.1 At least two examiners must be appointed for every examination, at least one of whom must be an external examiner. The external examiner is a senior academic or professional/practitioner with expertise in the relevant subject area of the thesis and is appointed from outside the University. The internal examiner is a member of the University's academic staff.
- 2.2.2 For student candidates it is normal practice to appoint one internal and one external examiner. If it is not possible to appoint an internal examiner for any reason, it may be necessary to appoint two external examiners and an internal co-ordinator. University staff candidates are normally required to have two external examiners and an internal co-ordinator.
- 2.2.3 An internal coordinator must always be appointed where there is no internal examiner. An internal coordinator may also be appointed if the internal examiner has not yet accrued much examination experience, in order to maintain the integrity of the examination process or in other circumstances where it is deemed desirable or appropriate. The coordinator must be an academic member of staff of the University who has knowledge and experience of University regulations and procedures governing the examination process. It is not appropriate for the candidate's supervisor to act as internal coordinator. The internal coordinator must hold the status of Senior Lecturer or above.
- 2.2.4 The role of the internal coordinator will vary slightly depending on whether or not there is also an internal examiner. Where two external examiners have been appointed, the internal coordinator will be responsible for arranging the oral examination and ensuring that University procedures and regulations are correctly followed. Where the internal co-ordinator has been appointed because the internal examiner has had limited examination experience, the role of the internal coordinator will be to oversee the arrangements made by the internal examiner and to provide advice and guidance on procedural and/or regulatory matters. In these circumstances, the internal examiner is responsible for including the internal coordinator in arrangements.
- 2.2.5 The internal coordinator must always attend the viva, but will play no part in the actual examination process and will not receive a copy of the thesis. The internal coordinator may be called upon for advice or guidance on viva procedures, including the most appropriate recommendation the examiners should make in the light of their discussions. The internal

coordinator is also responsible for ensuring that the examiners complete and return the appropriate forms to Research Services following the examination.

- 2.2.6 Where a student is required to resubmit their thesis for re-examination the original examiners will normally be expected to undertake the re-examination. However, there may be rare occasions when this is no longer possible, e.g. if an examiner has retired or is no longer willing or able to participate in the re-examination.
- 2.2.7 Examiners should treat the contents of the thesis as strictly confidential throughout the assessment process and afterwards and under no circumstances should they share the contents of the thesis with anyone who is not authorised to read it. In some instances, there may be a requirement for a confidentiality agreement to be put in place to cover the examination of the thesis, for example where specified in sponsorship agreements or when there are commercial considerations. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that arrangements are made for a confidentiality agreement at an early stage, e.g. when the examiners are nominated. Confidentiality agreements can be drawn up by RS and initial enquiries should be directed to the PGR Support Team (see: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/contacts/student>).
- 2.2.8 Research Services will write to the examiners, following approval of their nomination by the Faculty, giving the details of their appointment and providing the necessary forms and these Guidance Notes. RS will provide advice and information to candidates, supervisors and examiners alike on matters relating to the University's procedures for examining theses.
- 2.2.9 To comply with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, external examiners will be asked to confirm that they are eligible to work in the UK and to provide a copy of their passport or other relevant documents as evidence. Eligibility to Work checks are undertaken by academic departments and the evidence should be confidentially stored by the academic department undertaking the check.

## 2.3 Examiners' dos and don'ts

### Please do:

- Declare any known conflict of interest, such as a previous association with the candidate or direct involvement with their research project.
- Follow the University's procedures in relation to the examination of its degrees, which are set out in this guidance.
- Examine the thesis according to the University's criteria for research degrees and within the specified timescale.
- Read the thesis and each complete an independent preliminary report prior to the oral examination.
- Produce a joint report following the oral examination and to make an agreed recommendation on the award of the degree.
- Informally notify the candidate of the outcome of the examination.
- Provide the candidate with written details of any required corrections to the thesis as soon as possible following the oral examination.
- Promptly return all examiners' report forms to RS as soon as possible after the oral examination.

- Contact [pgr-enquiries@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:pgr-enquiries@sheffield.ac.uk) if you have any questions about the examination process.

**Please don't:**

- Accept and examine a copy of the thesis sent to you directly by the candidate. For both first submissions and resubmissions, the thesis will be sent to you by RS, along with the examiners' report forms. The only exception to this rule is if a candidate has been given minor or major corrections, in which case it is expected that they will send the revised thesis directly to the examiner to check.
- Set the date for the oral examination before you have been sent a copy of the thesis by RS, and especially not before the candidate has even formally submitted their thesis.
- Provide any informal feedback to the candidate on their thesis or give any indication of the likely recommendation prior to completion of the oral examination.

## **2.4 Thesis submission and despatch**

- 2.4.1 Candidates are required to submit their thesis to Research Services, whether it is their first submission or a resubmission. All theses are now submitted and despatched in electronic format.
- 2.4.2 It is the responsibility of RS alone to receive the thesis from the candidate and arrange onward despatch to the examiners. This relates to both the first submission and the resubmission, where relevant.
- 2.4.3 Upon submission, candidates are required to submit their thesis through Turnitin, where it will first be checked to ensure that unfair means have not been used. This check must take place before the thesis can be formally sent out to both examiners and before the viva can be arranged. If the internal examiner is unable to undertake this check in a reasonable timeframe, e.g. due to annual leave/sick leave, this check may be delegated to another appropriate member of staff in order not to delay the thesis being sent out.
- 2.4.4 It is the responsibility of the internal examiner (or internal coordinator if applicable) to check the originality report which is produced when the candidate submits their thesis to Turnitin and to notify RS as soon as the thesis has been cleared for examination, so that the thesis can be formally sent out to both examiners.
- 2.4.5 Once confirmation has been received from the internal examiner (or coordinator) that the thesis originality report is acceptable, RS will normally despatch the thesis to the examiners within three working days, along with these Guidance Notes and the examiners' report forms.
- 2.4.6 Theses are normally despatched electronically to the examiners' email addresses, along with the relevant forms. If a hard copy of the thesis is required, examiners may request one and RS will arrange for it to be printed and sent.
- 2.4.7 Under no circumstances should an examiner examine a copy of the thesis sent to them directly from the candidate or the candidate's supervisor or any other third party. Only the thesis sent directly from RS should be examined.

## **2.5 Use of unfair means**

- 2.5.1 The University requires all theses for higher degrees by research to be submitted to Turnitin, where they will be checked to ensure that unfair means such as plagiarism have not been used. This applies to both first submissions and resubmissions. It is the responsibility of the internal examiner to check the Turnitin 'originality report' and to advise RS as soon as possible if the thesis has passed this check, so that the thesis can be despatched to the examiners as soon as possible.
- 2.5.2 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 for candidates and departments on use of unfair means, including details of actions that departments may take, is available at: [www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means).

## **2.6 Preliminary reports**

- 2.6.1 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 RS when the thesis is sent out.
- 2.6.2 The preliminary reports should be prepared prior to the oral examination and should not contain any specific recommendations relating to the award (or non-award) of the degree.
- 2.6.3 The examiners should not discuss their preliminary findings with the candidate at any point before the oral examination, or give any indication of the likely recommendation prior to the completion of the oral examination.
- 2.6.4 Examiners should not exchange preliminary reports too far in advance of the viva examination, as this may make it harder not to pre-judge the outcome of the viva examination. However, it is expected that the contents of the examiners' preliminary reports will be shared and discussed at the pre-meeting held just before the viva.
- 2.6.5 Preliminary reports are required for both first submissions and resubmissions and must be submitted with the final joint examiners' report.
- 2.6.6 Please note that the candidate will eventually receive a copy of all the reports. Examiners' reports are sent to candidates who are required to resubmit their thesis and all candidates automatically receive the report forms when they are awarded their degree, or when they receive formal notification of failure.

## 3. THE ORAL EXAMINATION

### 3.1 Arranging the oral examination

- 3.1.1 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).
- 3.1.2 Arrangements for the oral examination are made by the internal examiner or, where the appointment of two external examiners has been approved, by the internal coordinator.
- 3.1.3 The internal examiner/coordinator should make sure that the external examiner(s) has received the thesis before setting the date for the oral examination.
- 3.1.4 The arrangements for the oral examination should be confirmed with all parties at least two weeks prior to the date of the examination.
- 3.1.5 The examination should normally take place within 10 weeks of the examiners being sent the thesis. Research Services should be notified if, for any reason, this timetable cannot be met. Although this is a guideline, rather than a regulation, it is important to note that delays in scheduling the viva can cause considerable inconvenience and stress to the candidate. Delays to the examination process can be particularly problematic and expensive for overseas students studying in the UK on a Tier 4 visa, and may result in a student having to apply for a new visa.
- 3.1.6 Oral examinations, where held in-person, will normally take place in Sheffield. If a venue outside of Sheffield is proposed, agreement must first be reached with the candidate, the supervisor and both examiners, prior to approval being sought via the Faculty Administrator in RS. In addition, during the current Covid-19 pandemic, faculty approval is required before any in-person viva can take place.
- 3.1.7 For the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic, where possible and appropriate, viva examinations should take place remotely and this should be considered the norm. All vivas must be arranged in accordance with the procedures set out on the video-conferencing approval form, which is available to download at: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/code/viva>. This includes a stipulation that vivas should be conducted using Blackboard Collaborate and must be recorded.
- 3.1.8 In the case of candidates with additional support requirements, the candidate can obtain advice and guidance from the University's Disability and Dyslexia Support Service ([www.shef.ac.uk/disability](http://www.shef.ac.uk/disability)) who will confirm if any reasonable adjustments to the examination process are required. Examiners will be notified if this is the case.
- 3.1.9 The internal examiner/coordinator should ensure 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.

- 3.1.10 Where the viva is taking place in-person, the internal examiner/coordinator should ensure that the venue chosen for the examination is suitable for the purpose and that appropriate social distancing measures can be put in place to ensure the safety of all participants. As a minimum, a table and chairs must be provided.
- 3.1.11 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.
- 3.1.12 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 viva with the candidate and may only participate in the discussion if invited to provide clarification on a specific matter.
- 3.1.13 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.
- 3.1.14 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 and will not be sent a copy of the thesis.
- 3.1.15 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 or major corrections to the thesis.
- 3.1.16 Examiners should contact the PGR Support Team in RS 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 RS cannot make arrangements for scheduling the oral examination.

## **3.2 The oral examination (viva voce)**

- 3.2.1 The role of the oral examination is to ensure that the work reaches the University standards for the degree; that the work has been written by the candidate; and that the work is understood by the candidate. The oral examination also gives the candidate the opportunity to answer questions in areas where the examiners are not satisfied. Where the evidence in the thesis is not compelling, the examiners should use the oral examination to encourage the candidate to provide convincing evidence that the stated criteria can be met and reflect on this in their report. Examiners may also wish to satisfy themselves that the candidate's general level of understanding in the subject area is sufficient for the award of the degree.
- 3.2.2 There are no University regulations regarding the length of the oral examination, but it should be completed within the allotted day.

- 3.2.3 The oral examination should normally be conducted in English, except in cases where there are pedagogic reasons for it to be held in another language, or where there is a formal agreement that requires the viva to be conducted in another language.
- 3.2.4 Where applicable, the internal coordinator will attend the oral examination in order to ensure that the University's Regulations and procedures are adhered to at all stages of the examination process, but will play no part in the actual examination.
- 3.2.5 The external examiner will normally lead the oral examination and oversee the direction and nature of the questioning. The internal examiner (or internal coordinator) remains responsible for ensuring that the University's procedures are correctly followed.
- 3.2.6 This procedure 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.
- 3.2.7 If present (only by prior agreement), 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.
- 3.2.8 Prior to the viva the examiners should not contact the candidate directly or through the supervisor or a third party on matters relating to the content of a thesis.
- 3.2.9 Examiners should not pre-judge the outcome of the oral examination and must not 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.
- 3.2.10 The candidate should promptly advise the internal examiner, the supervisor and the appropriate Faculty Administrator in the PGR Support Team if they are unable to attend the oral examination. Candidates must provide a valid reason for non-attendance, supported by documentary evidence (e.g. a medical note in the case of illness). Unauthorised absence from the examination, or absence without a valid reason or evidence, is likely to result in the candidate failing the examination and being withdrawn from the University.

### **3.3 After the oral examination**

- 3.3.1 Examiners are responsible for informing the candidate of their recommendation as soon as possible once the examination has finished. Full details of the available recommendations are outlined in the next section. 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.
- 3.3.2 The examiners will produce a joint report and make an agreed recommendation on the award of the degree (see section 4.2). The internal examiner, or internal coordinator where appointed,

is responsible for ensuring that the preliminary and joint report forms are completed, signed and returned to RS as soon as possible following the viva.

- 3.3.3 Where corrections to the thesis are required prior to a degree being awarded, the examiners are responsible for ensuring that they provide the candidate with clear written advice as to the corrections to be made, in addition to the joint report provided to RS. They should ensure that the candidate has fully understood their comments and is aware of the nature of the suggested corrections, i.e. whether they constitute a formal resubmission (within twelve months), major corrections (within six months) or minor corrections (within three months). Where the candidate has to undertake minor or major corrections, the examiners are responsible for sending the list of corrections to the candidate (see section 4.6). The candidate should not be told that they have been or will be successful, however minor the corrections may be.
- 3.3.4 Examiners should claim expenses and, where applicable, fees from RS upon completion of their examination duties. The examiners' expenses form, together with guidance notes on its completion, is issued with the thesis, and should be completed and returned with the joint report form.

## **4. REPORTING ON THE EXAMINATION**

### **4.1 Joint report of the examiners**

- 4.1.1 Following the oral examination, the examiners should complete their joint report. A report form is sent to the examiners when the thesis is despatched. The report form must clearly indicate the examiners' joint recommendation regarding the outcome of the examination.
- 4.1.2 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 PGR Support Team in RS within two weeks of the oral examination.
- 4.1.3 Research Services will arrange for the examiners' reports to be approved by Faculty. If the candidate is required to resubmit his/her thesis, they will be sent the full set of reports along with formal notification of the requirement to resubmit. In all other cases, the candidate will be sent a copy of the final report after their award (or non-award) has been processed.
- 4.1.4 In the exceptional circumstance that the examiners are unable to agree on the recommendation, separate reports may be submitted. Should this situation arise, examiners are advised to consult first with RS, who will advise on the correct procedure to be followed.
- 4.1.5 In such circumstances another independent external examiner will be appointed. He or 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.

## 4.2 Section A: recommendations available to the examiners

- 4.2.1 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.
- 4.2.2 Examiners cannot amend their initial recommendation once it has been approved by the Faculty, unless a compelling case is subsequently presented to the Faculty outlining why the original outcome requires amendment.

	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>APPLIES TO</b>
1.	<p><b>That the degree be awarded without the need for any corrections to the thesis</b></p> <p>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 award of degree, without any further corrections or examination.</p>	All higher degrees by research
2.	<p><b>That the degree be awarded once specified minor corrections have been completed to the satisfaction of the examiner(s)</b></p> <p>This option may be chosen where the examiners are satisfied that the thesis meets the requirements for the award of the degree, but where there are minor weaknesses or editorial errors that must be rectified before they can recommend the award of the degree. The nature and extent of the required corrections must be genuinely minor in nature such that they can reasonably be completed within a period of three calendar months from the date the candidate receives notification of the required corrections from the examiners.</p> <p>The candidate will be expected to make the corrections without undertaking any further original research. The examiners are responsible for providing the candidate with the details of the required corrections and must stipulate which of the examiners will be responsible for approving the corrections prior to formal recommendation of the degree.</p>	All higher degrees by research
3.	<p><b>That the degree be awarded once specified major corrections have been completed to the satisfaction of the examiner(s)</b></p> <p>This option may be chosen where the examiners are satisfied that the thesis has the potential to merit the award of the degree for which it has been submitted, but does not yet satisfy the requirements for award and contains deficiencies that are in excess of editorial or</p>	All higher degrees by research

	<p>presentational corrections. This may involve re-writing sections, correcting calculations or clarifying arguments, but should not require the candidate to undertake any further original research. The candidate will be granted 6 months to complete the required corrections from the date the candidate receives notification of the required corrections from the examiners.</p> <p>The examiners are responsible for providing the candidate with the details of the required corrections and must stipulate which of the examiners will be responsible for approving the corrections prior to formal recommendation of the degree.</p>	
4.	<p><b>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</b></p> <p>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 by RS.</p>	All higher degrees by research
5.	<p><b>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</b></p> <p>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. The thesis requires substantial corrections in order to meet the requirements for the degree, but the examiners feel that the candidate is capable of revising the thesis, to their satisfaction, within one year.</p> <p>The candidate is required to formally submit a revised thesis within one year and the examiners must indicate whether the candidate must undergo a further oral examination. 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. 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 same examiners will normally re-examine the candidate.</p>	All higher degrees by research, except PhD/MD by Publication
6.	<p><b>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 or very minor changes to content, as specified by the examiners)</b></p>	All higher degrees by research, except PhD/MD by Publication,

	<p>Examiners must be in agreement that the thesis would not meet the required standard for the award of the degree for which it has been submitted, even with time allowed for substantial revisions to be made. The examiners must be completely satisfied that the thesis meets the criteria for the award of an MPhil immediately or with just titular changes. Examiners must provide a detailed justification for making this decision.</p>	<p>DEdCPsy, DClinPsy, MPhil, LLM, MMus</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>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</b></p> <p>This option may be chosen where the examiners are in agreement that the thesis would not meet the required standard for the award of the degree for which it has been submitted, even with time allowed for substantial revisions to be made. Nor could the examiners recommend the degree of MPhil until substantial changes have been made to the thesis. Examiners must provide a detailed justification for making this decision.</p> <p>The candidate is required to formally submit a revised thesis for the degree of MPhil within one year and the examiners must indicate whether they wish the candidate to undergo a further oral examination. 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. 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 same examiners will normally re-examine the candidate.</p>	<p>All higher degrees by research, except PhD/MD by Publication, DEdCPsy, DClinPsy, MPhil, LLM, MMus</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>That the degree be not awarded</b></p> <p>This option may be chosen where the examiners are in agreement that the thesis does not meet the required standards for the award of the degree for which it has been submitted, or for the degree of MPhil, nor will it meet those standards even given time for substantial revisions to be made. This recommendation is therefore an outright fail and no further submissions will be accepted. The examiners must provide detailed justification for why they are unable to recommend major revision and re-submission of the thesis.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>All higher degrees by research</p>

	subsequently revealed that could not reasonably have been presented at the time of the oral examination.	
9.	<p><b>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</b></p> <p>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.</p>	DClInPsy only
10.	<p><b>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</b></p> <p>This option may be chosen where the examiners are in agreement that the thesis does not meet the required standards for the award of the degree for which it has been submitted, or for the degree of MPhil, nor will it meet those standards even given time for substantial revisions to be made. This recommendation is therefore an outright fail and no further submissions will be accepted. The examiners must provide a detailed justification for why they are unable to recommend major revision and re-submission of the thesis.</p> <p>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.</p>	DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy only

### 4.3 Section B: joint report on the thesis

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

1.	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.
2.	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.
3.	The presentation of the thesis.
4.	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 a doctoral level degree.

5.	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 a doctoral level degree.
6.	Any comments the examiners might wish to make about the quality of the research training, supervision or monitoring of the student's progress.

#### 4.4 Section C: report on the oral examination<sup>2</sup>

In Section C the examiners are required to provide the following information:

1.	The date of the oral examination
2.	Their considered opinion on whether the candidate was adequately acquainted with the field of knowledge within which the subject matter of the thesis falls.
3.	General comments on the oral examination, e.g. the candidate's overall performance and ability to defend the thesis.

#### 4.5 Section D: additional general remarks

Examiners may use this section to add any additional general comments

#### 4.6 Minor corrections

4.6.1 Examples of minor corrections include, but are not limited to the following:

- Rewriting or re-ordering of sections;
- Correction of typographical errors;
- Clarification of arguments;
- Suggestions of minor improvements that would improve the quality of the thesis.

4.6.2 Candidates required to make minor corrections to their thesis have three months to complete the required amendments and send the revised thesis to their examiner for checking. This period starts from the date on which they receive details from the examiners of the required corrections. The examiners are responsible for sending the candidate a comprehensive list of the required corrections to the thesis as soon as possible after the viva examination and should notify Research Services when they have done so. This is normally the internal examiner's responsibility. Please note that RS does not formally inform the candidate of the outcome of their examination at this point or send them the required corrections.

4.6.3 The examiners' report forms (preliminary and joint) should be fully completed, signed and dated and returned to RS, minus the separate minor/major corrections sheet, which should be retained until the candidate has completed the required corrections to the examiners' satisfaction.

---

<sup>2</sup> For the degrees of MMus and LLM only, the decision to hold an oral examination is at the discretion of the examiners.

- 4.6.4 One of the examiners should be designated to approve the corrections once they have been completed; this is normally undertaken by the internal examiner. The candidate will normally send a copy of the revised thesis directly to the designated examiner via email in order for the examiner to confirm that he or she is happy that all required corrections have been satisfactorily completed. Please note that this is the only circumstance under which it is considered acceptable for an examiner to receive a copy of the thesis directly from the candidate.
- 4.6.5 Once the corrections have been checked and the designated examiner is assured that they have been undertaken, he or she must sign and date the separate minor/major corrections form and return it immediately to RS. As a general guideline, examiners should aim to complete their checking of the corrections within approximately four weeks of receiving the revised thesis. The examiner may informally tell the candidate that they are satisfied with the amended thesis; however, the minor/major corrections form must be submitted to RS in order for the award to be processed. Once the examiner has confirmed that all corrections have been satisfactorily completed, the candidate must submit an electronic version of their final approved thesis to the White Rose eTheses Online server.

## **4.7 Major corrections**

- 4.7.1 Major corrections can be chosen if the required corrections are more substantial or will require a longer timescale for completion, but are not significant enough to warrant a full resubmission and formal re-examination. Examples of major corrections include:
- re-writing sections
  - correcting calculations
  - clarifying arguments
- 4.7.2 Candidates required to make major corrections to their thesis have six months to complete the required amendments and send the revised thesis to their examiner for checking. This period starts from the date on which they receive details from the examiners of the required corrections. The examiners are responsible for sending the candidate a comprehensive list of the required corrections to the thesis as soon as possible after the viva examination and should notify Research Services when they have done so. This is normally the internal examiner's responsibility. Please note that RS does not formally inform the candidate of the outcome of their examination at this point or send them the required corrections.
- 4.7.3 The examiners' report forms (preliminary and joint) should be fully completed, signed and dated and returned to RS, minus the separate minor/major corrections sheet, which should be retained until the candidate has completed the required corrections to the examiners' satisfaction.
- 4.7.4 One of the examiners should be designated to approve the corrections once they have been completed; this is normally undertaken by the internal examiner. The candidate will normally send a copy of the revised thesis directly to the designated examiner via email in order for the examiner to confirm that he or she is happy that all required corrections have been satisfactorily completed. Please note that this is the only circumstance under which it is

considered acceptable for an examiner to receive a copy of the thesis directly from the candidate.

- 4.7.5 Once the corrections have been checked and the designated examiner is assured that they have been undertaken, he or she must sign and date the separate minor/major corrections form and return it immediately to RS. As a general guideline, examiners should aim to complete their checking of the corrections within approximately four weeks of receiving the revised thesis. The examiner may informally tell the candidate that they are satisfied with the amended thesis; however, the minor/major corrections form must be submitted to RS in order for the award to be processed. Once the examiner has confirmed that all corrections have been satisfactorily completed, the candidate must submit an electronic version of their final approved thesis to the White Rose eTheses Online server.

## **4.8 Resubmission**

- 4.8.1 Where more substantial changes to the thesis are required, either with or without another viva, the examiners should ensure that they return their reports forms (along with the detailed comments on the required corrections) to RS within two weeks of the date of the oral examination. Ideally, the corrections list will also have been provided separately to the candidate within two weeks of the oral examination.
- 4.8.2 Once the recommendation for resubmission has been approved by the Faculty, RS will write to the candidate to inform them of the outcome and will send them a copy of the examiners' report, including the required corrections.
- 4.8.3 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 RS.
- 4.8.4 Please note that a candidate may request that the examiners' copies of the thesis be returned to them following the oral examination.

## **5. RESUBMISSION AND RE-EXAMINATION**

### **5.1 Resubmission of the thesis**

- 5.1.1 If, following the first examination of the thesis, the examiners' recommendation is that the thesis be resubmitted, the candidate should be provided with full details of the required corrections. This may include marked up copies of the original thesis.
- 5.1.2 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, either directly or via a third party. If the candidate requires any clarification of the examiners' recommendations this should be sought via the candidate's supervisor.

- 5.1.3 RS will advise the examiners of any approved extension to the time limit in which the candidate must resubmit the thesis.
- 5.1.4 The candidate must not send a copy of the thesis direct to the examiners, either informally or for comment, prior to the formal resubmission. The candidate must formally resubmit their thesis to RS following the same procedures that apply to first submissions, including submission of the thesis to Turnitin.
- 5.1.5 The examiners should only accept a copy of the resubmitted thesis sent by RS. Under no circumstances should an examiner accept or examine a copy of a resubmitted thesis sent by the candidate, as there is no way to verify that its content is identical to the copy submitted to RS.
- 5.1.6 Once a candidate's thesis has been resubmitted and the Turnitin originality report has been approved, RS will despatch it to the examiners, along with the relevant re-examination report forms and Guidance Notes.

## **5.2 Re-examination of the thesis**

- 5.2.1 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.
- 5.2.2 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.
- 5.2.3 Where the examiners' original recommendation specifies that a further oral examination is required, this should take place regardless 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 Faculty Officer.
- 5.2.4 After the oral examination, the joint report form should be completed, signed and returned to RS, along with the preliminary reports, within two weeks of the oral re-examination. It is essential that examiners do not advise the candidate of the outcome of the examination until the full examination procedure has taken place.
- 5.2.5 If a further oral examination is not required, the examiners should aim to complete the re-examination of the revised thesis within approximately six to eight weeks of their receipt of the revised thesis. Once the examiners have reached their decision, the joint report form should be completed, signed, dated and returned to RS as soon as possible, along with the preliminary reports.
- 5.2.6 Following a resubmission, if further minor or major corrections are required, please refer back to sections 4.6 and 4.7.

### 5.3 Section A: recommendations available to the examiners

In the event of a re-examination following Recommendation 5 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 available to the examiners. Final choice of recommendation is entirely at the discretion of the examiners.

	RECOMMENDATION	APPLIES TO
1.	<p><b>That the degree be awarded without the need for any corrections to the thesis</b></p> <p>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 corrections being required.</p>	All higher degrees by research
2.	<p><b>That the degree be awarded once specified minor corrections have been completed to the satisfaction of the examiner(s)</b></p> <p>This option may be chosen where the examiners are satisfied that the thesis meets the requirements for the award of the degree, but where there are minor weaknesses or editorial errors that must be rectified before they can recommend the award of the degree. The nature and extent of the required corrections must be genuinely minor in nature such that they can reasonably be completed within a period of three calendar months from the date the candidate receives notification of the required corrections from the examiners.</p> <p>The candidate will be expected to make the corrections without undertaking any further original research. The examiners are responsible for providing the candidate with the details of the required corrections and must stipulate which of the examiners will be responsible for approving the corrections prior to formal recommendation of the degree.</p>	All higher degrees by research
3.	<p><b>That the degree be awarded once specified major corrections have been completed to the satisfaction of the examiner(s)</b></p> <p>This option may be chosen where the examiners are satisfied that the thesis has the potential to merit the award of the degree for which it has been submitted, but does not yet satisfy the requirements for award and contains deficiencies that are in excess of editorial or presentational corrections. This may involve re-writing sections, correcting calculations or clarifying arguments, but should not require the candidate to undertake any further original research. The candidate will be granted 6 months to complete the required corrections from the date the candidate receives notification of the required corrections from the examiners.</p> <p>The examiners are responsible for providing the candidate with the details of the required corrections and must stipulate which of the</p>	All higher degrees by research

	examiners will be responsible for approving the corrections prior to formal recommendation of the degree.	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>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 or very minor changes to content, as specified by the examiners)</b></p> <p>Examiners must be in agreement that the thesis would not meet the required standard for the award of the degree for which it has been submitted. The examiners must be completely satisfied that the thesis meets the criteria for the award of an MPhil immediately, subject only to changes to the cover and title page. Where very minor editorial changes to content are also required, e.g. corrections to spelling and grammar, this is acceptable; however, there is no option for major corrections or a second resubmission at this stage. Examiners must provide a detailed justification for making this decision.</p>	All higher degrees by research, except PhD/MD by Publication, DEdCPsy, DClinPsy, MPhil, LLM, MMus
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>That the degree be not awarded</b></p> <p>This option may be chosen where the examiners are in agreement that the thesis does not meet the required standards for the award of the degree for which it has been submitted, or for the degree of MPhil. This recommendation is therefore an outright fail and no further submissions will be accepted. The examiners must provide a detailed justification for their decision.</p> <p>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 that could not reasonably have been presented at the time of the oral examination.</p>	All higher degrees by research
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>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</b></p> <p>This option may be chosen where the examiners are in agreement that the thesis does not meet the required standards for the award of the degree for which it has been submitted, or for the degree of MPhil. This recommendation is therefore an outright fail and no further submissions will be accepted. The examiners must provide a detailed justification for their decision.</p> <p>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.</p>	DMedSci, EdD, DEdCPsy only

In the event of a re-examination following Recommendation 7 on the original report form – **that the candidate submits a revised thesis for the degree of MPhil only, with/without oral re-examination** – only the following recommendations are available to the examiners.

	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>APPLIES TO</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>That the degree of Master of Philosophy be awarded without the need for any corrections to the thesis</b></p> <p>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 correction</p>	MPhil
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>That the degree of Master of Philosophy be awarded once specified minor corrections have been completed to the satisfaction of the examiners</b></p> <p>This option may be chosen where the examiners are satisfied that the thesis meets the requirements for the award of the MPhil degree, but where there are minor weaknesses or editorial errors that must be rectified before they can recommend the award of the degree. The nature and extent of the required corrections must be genuinely minor in nature such that they can reasonably be completed within a period of three calendar months from the date the candidate receives notification of the required corrections from the examiners.</p> <p>The candidate will be expected to make the corrections without undertaking any further original research. The examiners are responsible for providing the candidate with the details of the required corrections and must stipulate which of the examiners will be responsible for approving the corrections prior to formal recommendation of the degree.</p>	MPhil
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>That the degree be awarded once specified major corrections have been completed to the satisfaction of the examiner(s)</b></p> <p>This option may be chosen where the examiners are satisfied that the thesis has the potential to merit the award of the MPhil, but does not yet satisfy the requirements for award and contains deficiencies that are in excess of editorial or presentational corrections. This may involve re-writing sections, correcting calculations or clarifying arguments, but should not require the candidate to undertake any further original research. The candidate will be granted 6 months to complete the required corrections from the date the candidate receives notification of the required corrections from the examiners.</p> <p>The examiners are responsible for providing the candidate with the details of the required corrections and must stipulate which of the</p>	MPhil

	examiners will be responsible for approving the corrections prior to formal recommendation of the degree.	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>That the degree of Master of Philosophy be not awarded</b></p> <p>This recommendation is an outright fail and no further submissions will be accepted. The examiners must provide a detailed justification for their decision.</p> <p>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 that could not reasonably have been presented at the time of the viva.</p>	MPhil
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>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</b></p> <p>This recommendation is an outright fail and no further submissions will be accepted. The examiners must provide a detailed justification for their decision. The examiners must provide a detailed justification for their decision.</p> <p>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.</p>	MPhil