For students who started after 01/08/2013

Confirmation Review: A Departmental Guide
School of Architecture, University of Sheffield

For all research students who are registered on a PhD programme, a formal confirmation process is required by the School of Architecture as well as the University of Sheffield.

THE CONFIRMATION REVIEW PROCESS AT THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

• There are no fixed deadlines for submission. Dates are dependent on the specific start date of the student. All full-time students are expected to attempt confirmation (first attempt) at around Month 9 (Month 18 if part-time) from their start date, and if required, to complete the second attempt before Month 12 (Month 24 if part-time) from their start date. (For example, a full-time PhD student who started at the beginning of August will have to first submit her or his documents by the end of April the following year).

• The upgrading process is initiated by a student submitting three confirmation review reports: (1) Summary Research Report, (2) Detailed Research Report, and (3) Research Training Report to the PhD Progress Tutor and to their Supervisors at the relevant time specified above.

  o The Summary Research Report gives an overview of the research project, and must be no longer than five A4 pages (ca 1,500–2,000 words). It should include: an introduction giving the context of the work; a statement of the research question(s) and hypothesis if relevant; a statement concerning methodology & ethics as well as an outline of the thesis structure. As an addendum to the 5 pages, a timetable for completion and full bibliography should be attached.

  o The Detailed Research Report should provide a sample of academic work (max. 7,500 words). This should be a substantial piece of work towards the thesis objectives. It could be for example a critical literature review, a single or joint-authored published journal/conference paper or any other research work which demonstrates the student’s ability to carry out and communicate research at doctoral level. The content and format may vary across projects.

  o A Research Training Report containing (1) Training Needs Analysis (TNA) (as agreed with the Supervisors and the Director of Doctoral Programmes), (2) a Portfolio of the outcomes from undertaking the research training activities to provide evidence of how the training needs are being met according to the student’s personal assessment of the Doctoral Development Programme (DDP).

• A Confirmation review panel consisting of two independent reviewers will be convened by the supervisor in consultation with the PhD Admissions & Progress Tutor.

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1 This could include, for example, reflective essays, formal submissions, reviews, presentations, publications as results of the training programme stated in the TNA.
If records of supervisor-student meetings or other progress reports have indicated problems, then the Director of Doctoral Programmes will join the panel.

- **Mini vivas** will normally be organised within 2 weeks of submission, attended by the student and the confirmation review panellists.

- Immediately following the mini-viva, the review panel will make a **decision** and inform the student. This decision will then be reported to the School’s Postgraduate (PGR) Committee by the PhD Admissions & Progress Tutor who will also send a formal report to the Faculty of Social Sciences and the University’s Research & Innovation Services. The outcome will be one of the following:
  1. Immediate confirmation is recommended
  2. Confirmation is recommended subject to minor amendments
  3. Confirmation is not recommended

- In case of “Confirmation is recommended subject to minor amendments,” the normal timeframe for the student/supervisors to carry out the amendments as required by the review panel is **1 month for full-time study**, or **2 months for part-time study**. The revised confirmation review reports will be reviewed by the same panel and the review outcome will be one of the following:
  1. Immediate confirmation is recommended
  2. Confirmation is not recommended

- In the above case of “Confirmation is not recommended,” a “Fail” will be the result to conclude the student’s first attempt at upgrading. The student will be allowed to undertake a second attempt within three months for full-time study (or six months for part-time study). The possible outcomes will be the same as the first attempt.

- Each student is allowed to have **two attempts** at confirmation. The 2nd attempt will follow the same process as the first attempt.

- In case of two failed attempts, the student will not be able to continue the research towards PhD but will be transferred to an MPhil Programme. A formal examination of the work towards the degree of MPhil may be arranged as soon as possible. It should be made clear that a second failed attempt at confirmation will mean that the student be registered for MPhil status.

- Following successful confirmation, students are required to give a mandatory presentation to other PGRs in their research group. This will usually take place in the second year of the PhD. Presentations are to be organised by the student, in conjunction with research group leaders.

Any questions regarding Confirmation applications should be directed to the current PGR Progress Tutor Prof. Steve Fotios (steve.fotios@sheffield.ac.uk).

All information correct at the time of publication (February 2018)