Additional Instructions to Examiners For Practice-led Research Degree Candidatures

Doctor of Philosophy
Master of Philosophy

For PGRs commencing study after September 2010

Guidance to Practice-Led Examiners

The Graduate Board has provided the following additional guidance to assist examiners appointed to examine a practice-led research degree submission:

Advice for examiners

Practice must be integral within the methodology and dissemination of a practice-led research degree and the final assessment should consider the submission as a whole (practice and written element). In reaching a decision upon the quality of a practice-led submission it is important that examiners do not assess practice and written elements separately.

Assessment of live practice

There must be no formative feedback by examiners prior to the viva; feedback should be given after the final *viva-voce* examination. Any notes taken at a live practice/performance must not be disclosed and must be retained by the examiner until included in the preliminary report, immediately prior to the final viva-voce examination.

Guidance for preliminary report

As noted above, examiners should consider the submission as a whole. Where live practice is held on the same day as the viva, examiners may wish to add notes to the end of the preliminary report prior to the viva.

Guidance for referral

Current regulations allow examiners at either examination or at a resubmission to ask candidates to pass any tests which they prescribe to demonstrate knowledge. Therefore, for instance, examiners are permitted to ask a candidate to reproduce live performance or a similar task to demonstrate any aspect of practice.

Regulations for practice-led PGRs commencing from 01/09/10 onwards

The *Ordinances, Regulations and Programmes of Study for Research Degrees*[1] detail the formal regulations and requirements for all of the University's research degrees. The Learning Outcomes are attached. PGRs undertaking practice-led research may be granted permission by the relevant committee to present for examination an alternative form of thesis as shown below:

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Candidates in certain disciplines may be granted permission by the relevant committee to present for examination an alternative form of thesis as follows:

A body of work demonstrating an original contribution to knowledge and scholarship, which comprises of a substantial body of creative practice* produced by the candidate in pursuit of the degree, displaying critical understanding and being worthy of public presentation, together with a written submission, which provides an exploration of the research question(s) and indicates the manner in which the research is embodied in the practice, which will normally be between 15,000-50,000 words.

The degree of Master of Philosophy

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[1] Ordinance X (Research Degrees) http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22168/student_support-related_policies/646/ordinances

Candidates in certain disciplines may be granted permission by the relevant committee to present for examination an alternative form of thesis as follows:

a body of work demonstrating an independent contribution to knowledge and scholarship, which comprises of a substantial body of creative practice* produced by the candidate in pursuit of the degree, displaying critical understanding and being worthy of public presentation, together with a written submission, which provides an exploration of the research question(s) and indicates the manner in which the research is embodied in the practice, which will normally be between 10,000-30,000 words.

Footnote associated with the Regulations

* Areas of creative practice are currently offered in the following Schools: School of English, School of Fine Art, History of Art & Cultural Studies, School of Music, School of Performance & Cultural Industries, and School of Design; and at York St John University. Requirements for practice-led research degree candidatures are available in the relevant School/ York St John University Handbooks and from Postgraduate Research and Operations[2].

Types of Recommendation

Examiners are asked to submit **one** of the following recommendations:

   a)   that the degree of PhD be awarded

   b)   that the degree of PhD be awarded subject to editorial and presentational corrections

   c)   that the degree of PhD be awarded subject to the correction of minor deficiencies

   d)   that the application be referred for resubmission for the degree of PhD

   e)   that the degree of MPhil be awarded

   f)   that the degree of MPhil be awarded subject to editorial and presentational corrections

   g)   that the degree of MPhil be awarded subject to the correction of minor deficiencies

   h)   that the application be referred for resubmission for the degree of MPhil

   i)   that no research degree be awarded

Where an MPhil is awarded as a result of an unsuccessful PhD examination the degree may not be awarded with distinction.

Learning outcomes

The University's learning outcomes/level indicators for its different academic awards have been developed in the expectation that the learning outcomes will be achieved irrespective of the manner and location of the research and/or delivery of the programme followed by the students concerned. These general statements will be subject to continuous review by the Graduate Board.

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[2] The practice-led research protocols are published at:
http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22173/research_degree-related_policies/674/research_degree_candidatures_code_of_practice

Achievement is assessed by the examination of the thesis and performance under oral examination. However, examiners will not be expected to monitor/assess all the Learning Outcomes at the time of the viva. The main emphasis of the viva will be upon the research achievement and it may be difficult at that stage to assess expertise in '*generic and subject/professional skills'*. Instead, an ongoing process of monitoring and evaluation should be recorded within the Faculty/School (in the University's system for maintaining a record of the research degree candidature). Within one month of the commencement of study the University requires a training needs analysis to be conducted, and a training plan to be agreed between the PGR and the Supervisor(s). The PGR's progress against the training plan is then reviewed regularly. Examiners may ask that the School make available these records at the viva to enable them to audit the arrangements that have been made. This will typically include the training plan, training record and any relevant extracts from the progress reports where progress with the agreed training plan is reviewed. Examiners are not required to comment on achievement against the learning outcomes as part of their report form, although comments are invited.

For PGRs commencing study before 01 September 2011 the University learning outcomes reflected the then RCUK Joint Statement of Skills for postgraduate research students (JSS). The JSS was subsequently superseded by the Researcher Development Framework (RDF)3. The RDF incorporates the content of the JSS but also expands the statement to cover researcher skills and attributes from postgraduate researcher through to senior academic. The introduction of the RDF led to some minor modification of the University learning outcomes. Reflecting that there are still pre-2011 candidates registered at the University both pre and post 2011 learning outcomes are included here. Although the learning outcomes are ostensibly the same, examiners should refer to the learning outcomes appropriate for the registration date of the PGR.

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[3] http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/428241/Researcher-Development-Framework.html

PHD: For candidates commencing study <u>from 01 September 2011 onwards</u>

Learning Outcomes / Transferable Key Skills / Learning Context / Assessment for PhD

1. Learning Outcomes
On completion of the research programme students should have shown evidence of being able:
- to discover, interpret and communicate new knowledge through original research and/or scholarship of publishable quality which satisfies peer review;
- to present and defend original research outcomes which extend the forefront of a discipline or relevant area of professional/clinical practice;
- to demonstrate systematic and extensive knowledge of the subject area and expertise in generic and subject/professional skills;
- to take a proactive and self-reflective role in working and to develop professional relationships with others where appropriate;
- to independently and proactively formulate ideas and hypotheses and to design, develop, implement and execute plans by which to evaluate these;
- to critically and creatively evaluate current issues, research and advanced scholarship in the discipline;
- to demonstrate systematic knowledge of and be able to critically assess, analyse and engage with the ethical and legal context of their research and any ethical and legal implications of their research.

2. Transferable (Key) Skills
Students will have had the opportunity to acquire the following abilities through the research training and research specified for the programme
- the skills necessary for a career as a researcher and/or for employment in a senior and leading capacity in a relevant area of professional/clinical practice or industry;
- evaluating their own achievement and that of others;
- self-direction and effective decision making in complex and unpredictable situations;
- independent learning and the ability to work in a way which ensures continuing professional development;

3. Learning Context
This will include the critical analysis of, and decision making in, complex and unpredictable professional and/or clinical situations. The structure of the programme will provide research and/or professional training, breadth and depth of study and opportunities for drawing upon appropriate resources and techniques. Opportunities will be provided for students to:
- develop to a high level interests and informed opinions
- develop to a high level their design and management of their learning activities
- develop to a high level their communication of their conclusions;
- make an original contribution to the field

Students will be expected to engage in the exercise of autonomous initiative in their study and work in professional environments.

4. Assessment
Achievement will be assessed by the examination of the candidate's thesis and performance under oral examination. Assessment will involve the achievement of the candidate in:
- evidencing an ability to conduct original and independent broad and in-depth enquiry within the discipline or within different aspects of the area of professional/clinical practice normally leading to published work;
- drawing on and/or developing a range of research techniques and methodologies appropriate to enquiries into the discipline/area of professional practice;
- demonstrating independent critical ability in the application of breadth and depth of knowledge to complex issues within the discipline or specialist area of professional/clinical practice;
- drawing on a range of perspectives on the area of study;
- evaluating and criticising received opinion;
- making reasoned and well-informed judgements on complex issues within the specialism whilst understanding the limitations on judgements made in the absence of complete data
- the written style and overall presentation of the thesis.

MPHIL: For candidates commencing study from 01 September 2011 onwards

Learning Outcomes / Transferable Key Skills / Learning Context / Assessment for MPhil

1. Learning Outcomes
On completion of the research programme students should have shown evidence of being able:
- to interpret and communicate knowledge in their discipline through originality in their application of knowledge and a practical understanding of established techniques of research;
- to present and defend research outcomes much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of a discipline or area of professional/clinical practice;
- to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the subject area and expertise in generic and subject/professional skills;
- to take a proactive and self-reflective role in working and to develop professional relationships with others where appropriate;
- to convey ideas and hypotheses proactively and to design, develop, implement and execute plans by which to evaluate these;
- to critically evaluate current issues, research and advanced scholarship in the discipline;
- to demonstrate knowledge of and be able to critically assess, analyse and engage with the ethical and legal context of their research and any ethical and legal implications of their research.

2. Transferable (key) skills
Students will have had the opportunity to acquire the following abilities through the research training and research specified for the programme
- the skills necessary to undertake research at a higher level, for a future career as a researcher and/or for employment in a higher capacity in industry or area of professional/clinical practice;
- evaluating their own achievement and that of others;
- self-direction and effective decision making in complex and unpredictable situations;
- independent learning and the ability to work in a way which ensures continuing professional development.

3. Learning Context
For *MPhil* students the learning context will include the critical analysis of, and decision making in, complex and unpredictable situations. The structure of the programme will provide research training, breadth and/or depth of study and opportunities for drawing upon appropriate resources and techniques. Opportunities will be provided for students to develop:
- interests and informed opinions
- their involvement in the design and management of their learning activities
- their communication of their conclusions;
- their ability to undertake critical analysis

Students will be expected to progress to fully autonomous study and work.

4. Assessment
Achievement will be assessed by the examination of the candidate's thesis and performance under oral examination and will involve the achievement of the candidate in:
- evidencing an ability to conduct independent broad and/or in-depth enquiry within different aspects of the discipline which leads to the production of material at a level suitable for publication;
- drawing on, and selecting appropriately from, a range of research techniques and methodologies in their enquiries into the discipline;
- demonstrating the ability to apply breadth and/or depth of knowledge to a complex specialist area;
- drawing on a range of perspectives on an area of study;
- evaluating and criticising received opinion;
- making reasoned judgements whilst understanding the limitations on judgements made in the absence of complete data
- the written style and overall presentation of the thesis.